



WAGE WAR WITH STRATEGY

About Leadership,
Teamwork and
Spiritual Warfare

Josef Bajzík & Jan Kukla

Connect Disciples Prague | Církev bez hranic

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Introduction

Leadership, teamwork and spiritual warfare. All of these topics are crucial for the further development of Christianity. In the following pages you will find insights on these topics gathered over the past years of our lives, since we received Connect. Connect was originally a CBH (Church Without Borders) youth ministry and we have gradually transformed it into a disciple-making ministry, Connect Disciples Prague, and expanded its reach across the Czech Republic.

Over these few years we have grown from rookies with almost no leadership experience and minimal knowledge of real spiritual warfare, to leaders capable of victoriously leading others into more than one battle. Though still young in age, the verve and intensity with which we have gone about the work has caused an above average growth in experience relative to time as we and the enemy have accelerated our progress. We believe, therefore, that the knowledge contained in this book will enrich you, whether you have just turned to the Lord or are already a battle-refined leader or war veteran.

Let us not pretend that the teaching presented here is new and has come to us as a revelation directly from the Lord. Rather, we would say that the Lord pointed it out to us so that we could move to where He needed us to be. Therefore, it was also strongly on our hearts to process it, rework it, enrich it with our experience, and make it available to all Christians in the Czech Basin so that everyone can move forward in leading others, in teamwork, and in spiritual warfare. We believe that the time is coming when this knowledge will really be essential.

The time has come when new leaders are rising up and their pace and themselves need to be accepted by the church. These leaders will stand against individualism and call for teamwork, for the church to function as a body of Christ. They will insist that the church community becomes a „community with mission“, that the church gets moving, stops being static and strategically spreads the kingdom of God. This, of course, will not be without the attention of Satan and his minions. This will put the church in the firing line of trials in which it needs to be united, steadfast and committed to the Lord. Therefore, it is good for us to be ready before we do not know where our heads are at.

We believe this book is truly for everyone. For leaders, so that they are not afraid to stand up, to know how to lead a team, and to know how to fight the *good fight of faith*. For their disciples, that is, for other people in the church, so that they know how a leader thinks, how they can be helpful, and how to come together in the heat of trials and not be scattered. The book is also essential for everyone else to get a picture of what is going on and to understand what Christians are all about, what Christians are meant to do and be like.

So, whatever point you are at in your spiritual journey, we believe this book is *right* for you. Read it, study it, meditate about it. You can fill yourself up with it alone or with other people. Memorize it and live it. Do not remain untouched by it, but let it become a part of you. Encode it into yourself. Incorporate it into your DNA.

Anyways, enjoy your reading and if you have any questions or objections, do not hesitate to contact us.

Josef Bajzík & Jan Kukla

The War We Did Not Ask about, the War We Are in

Do we all remember fairy tales? The romantic stories of princes and princesses? How they found their way to each other through all the difficulties? In the end, the prince and the princess got married and the cliché „And they lived happily ever after“ rang out. However, life has shown us that the wedding was just the beginning of a long journey of life that no fairy tale taught us about. We have learned that we make the content of this relationship with our wonderful women ourselves and no fairy tale can help us anymore. Have you found that out, too?

It is similar with God. We give Him our lives and everyone in the church is happy. But what now? What are we to do for the rest of our lives? We were not taught that during the evangelistic campaign. We start going to meetings together, we get involved in lots of ministries and church events. But why? Why does God continue to leave us here on the Earth? Why did not we go straight to him? What does he need us here for? What has changed from our previous life? Why should we do all these good things? Why do we devote our time and our lives to them? What fruit do we bear? And what good is our new life purpose? These are the same questions we have been thinking about. Just as we have wondered why there is so much evil in this world, whether God is to blame for it, and whether He is not, as He is *good*, why do we see so little of the good.

Because of these questions that many Christians ask, and that many of our friends ask us, we have written this book, which we believe will answer many of these questions. Over several years of searching for answers, God has gradually been answering our questions and revealing spiritual realities – yes, *spiritual* realities. A reality that is hidden at first glance, but ultimately much more real than the physical. A reality in which, if we learn to move, we can influence events in the physical reality. A reality that many ignore and others access through the wrong door, the door of the occult, satanism and witchcraft. So we want to say at the outset that only the Lord Jesus is the right way, and although many of the principles described in the book are applicable in different ways, because they are *general* principles, everyone should approach them with awe and respect and use them only for the glory of God.

Man is the Ruler

We have come to a clear conclusion. God is not the only driving force in this universe. God is not the root of all problems, and God is not to blame for people being in trouble. God has shown us and continues to show us how little we know Him. How many things we as humans attribute to Him even though He is not responsible for them and how many things He does for us and we do not see them. The Lord Jesus said:

„The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. “

John 10:10

If we want to have a clear view of God, we must look at Him through the Lord Jesus. This means that we must accept that the Lord Jesus has *depicts* us our heavenly Father. And when we look at the Lord Jesus, we see the Father. The Lord Jesus did not describe the Father as Zeus, as a bloodthirsty

legalistic God. He portrayed Him as a loving Father who *desires* that we really know Him and live in fellowship with Him.

The passage above describes just that. God does not steal, kill, or destroy. If we attribute this to him, we are doing him a disservice. Instead, God, the Lord Jesus, gives *life*. And life in abundance. Imagine that! Our Heavenly Father wants us to thrive, to experience life and not death in every area of our lives. In our health, in our relationships, or in our provision. Our Father is good and works on our behalf. He is not unpredictable, but He is our good dad.

However, we must not forget that there is also an enemy. The enemy. Satan. The devil. Ex-Lucifer. He works evil on the Earth. You may have wondered the same question we did – why, if God is by definition more powerful and more capable, why does not He remove the Devil? If the Devil were more powerful, he would be God, would not be? Why does not God remove him if He, God, is good and the Devil is evil? If evil and death in the world is not caused by Him, but by the Devil; and He, God, is stronger and more powerful, is He not morally *obliged* to help mankind at least?

If one of us invented a cure for leukemia, for example, the blood would be on our hands if we did not provide it to others. If God is good and embodies all moral values for us, He cannot act against the principles of morality. So how is it? How can someone embody all the moral values we imagine and seemingly violate a basic moral principle?

There is only one option. God, though omnipotent, does not have the authority to stop evil in the world. Do not misunderstand what we are trying to say. We may have all the power in terms of resources to help people in poor parts of the world, but if the local government, the authority in that place, refuses us, we cannot help even if we could or wanted to. But then, of course, the fault is not on our side, but on the side of that government. In this situation it is God towards humanity:

„Then God said: ‚Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground. So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them: ‚Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground‘““

Genesis 1:26-27

God created man to have dominion over the earth, to rule and conquer it. God has thus delegated to man the authority to rule and *reign here on the Earth*. So God is not responsible for what happens here on the Earth. He created man with free will. God trusts man. But man is responsible for how he thinks, speaks, and acts, and therefore for what happens here on earth. And man, right from the edge of his existence, handed over the *dominion* he had over the earth to Satan. We all know the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. And so the world is at the rudder the Thief who steals, kills, and destroys. But because authority has been *handed* over to him. He ruled the world for a long time. It was like that until the coming of the Lord Jesus. The devil himself bragged about it to the Lord Jesus:

„The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. 6And he said to him, ‚I will give you all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. If you worship me, it will all be yours.‘“

And so we see that the origin of evil on earth *not* with God, but with *Devil*. But God in His goodness did not let mankind down. God sent His only Son, the Lord Jesus, to give the government back to mankind. And the Lord Jesus did this by *defeating* the devil on the cross. He gained all authority for himself. The Lord Jesus speaks of this at the end of Matthew's Gospel:

„Then Jesus came to them and said, ‚All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age [Amen.]‘“

Matthew 28:18-20

If we read this text carefully, we notice that not only does the Lord Jesus have *all* authority, power, in heaven and on earth, but He has delegated the exercise of this authority to us, His disciples. Thus, the responsibility for what happens here on the Earth is now not His, but ours, church's. Jesus delegated this authority to us, to the new creatures. We who have been redeemed from the power of the devil through faith in the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus has entrusted the church with the authority to act in authority here on the Earth. This makes us God's representatives, ambassadors. We are therefore God's representatives here on the Earth and act in His name, on His behalf. This is explained, for example, by the apostles Paul and John:

„We are therefore Christ's ambassadors...“

2. Corinthians 5:20a

„Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.“

John 16:23b-24

We have been *entrusted* with a great responsibility. We are placed here on earth in the role of kings and stewards in the spirit world. It was God's original intent that we should rule, reign, and subdue the earth. So let us face it head on.

Satan's Defeat

Hence we can see that God is good and that man has authority here on the Earth. Although we often pray that we „put everything in God's hands“, the Lord Jesus was *aware* that the Father had put everything in his hands (John 13:3). We do not just need to know (intellectually) about God's goodness and our authority on the Earth; we can live and experience it all, just as the Lord Jesus did. However, let us take a closer look at Satan's defeat.

Just imagine! You have been used to dominate, steal and destroy the Earth for the whole history of mankind. Then the Lord Jesus will come, completely take you over, disarm you, and give the reign back

to the people you oppress. And that's exactly what happened to the Devil. The Lord Jesus *transferred* everyone who believes from the devil's dominion to His kingdom:

„For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have [through his blood] redemption, forgiveness of our sins.“

Colossians 1:13-14

Elsewhere, the apostle Paul writes that the Lord Jesus took Satan captive and literally disarmed him:

„But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: ‚When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave [a] gifts to his people. ‘“

Ephesians 4:7-8

„... He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. “

Colossians 2:13b-15

What would you do in Satan's situation? Would you give up easily? Or would you not? Satan, in Greek *Satanas*, *adversary* is a very stubborn adversary and he does not want to give up easily. Even though he is already lost, he does not give up. The Apostle Paul attributes this task, the fight against a defeated enemy, to us, the church:

„For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. “

Ephesians 6:12

The word for world rulers, Greek *kosmokratōr* is in the singular in the original. It is the Devil himself. The powers, Greek *archē* means *beginning*, *origin*. So we see that the church is now to fight against Satan himself and the origin of all evil. The church is to fight against the spiritual powers of evil from which all evil on earth originates.

Who Are Our Enemies

This brings us to the question of *who* are the spiritual enemies. Who are the powers we are fighting against? The speculative nature of this question lies fundamentally in who *perceives reality*. How we perceive reality may differ rapidly from how our neighbor perceives it. Our perception of reality today may also differ from our perception a few years ago. For example, in recent years we have learned that *what is standard* can change very quickly. What is *normal* today may not be the norm tomorrow. And that is the point, the Devil does not want to be seen and wants us to see everything around us as *normal*. If we find events in our environment *normal*, we do not fight. And that is why we need to

put into our perception of *normal* what we read about the Lord Jesus instead of what we see in our surroundings. The Apostle Paul writes:

„And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. .“

2. Corinthians 4:3-4

Until we take what the Lord Jesus experienced as the truth and standard of what humanity is to live by, we will be deceived and robbed. That is why the Apostle Paul prays for the church to recognize the reality of the *spiritual*:

„For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God’s people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength.“

Ephesians 1:15-19

If we do not see the problem, we have no reason to *fight*. But if we think and focus more, we start to recognize our subtle enemy more and more. Our enemies are not markedly distinguishable. They are often very hidden. And therein lies their danger. When you have a glass of pure water, it only takes one drop of ink to make the entire contents of the water cloudy. And it is a tactic the enemy has been happy to use throughout history. He tries to do everything he can to lead mankind away from the truth and often uses good things with a few drops of poison to seduce mankind away from the true God and the nature of life. Now that the devil has lost on the cross, he has only one thing in mind – that people not know the *truth* of the gospel. And the hardest lie to expose is the one that is *almost* like the truth and contains some of its elements.

There are basically two Satanic influences in the church that make it difficult for the gospel to move forward. The first is the *religion* which substitutes communion and personal knowledge of God for a mere collection of traditions and meetings. People caught up in religion do not hear God’s voice or perceive the urgency of the gospel’s relevance to them. The second insidious influence in the church is *legalism*. People then cultivate a list of rules instead of a personal intimate relationship with God, and instead of doing the Lord’s work from the heart, they do it out of duty. We need to be aware of these two influences in the church, avoid them, and identify them in the lives of others. People need to see and experience the *true* gospel. They need to experience freedom. There is nothing like hearing God’s voice, really knowing him and walking with him every day.

Other influences can then be observed in society. For example, *atheism*, which denies the existence of God. If people rule out God’s existence in their minds from the beginning, how can they believe in Him? Another temptation is *mammon*. Not that God does not want to provide for us, but he wants us to seek *Him* and *His* kingdom first and everything else will be added to us. He does not want money to be our god. He doesn’t want it to determine our mood or our actions. He wants it to be a tool we use for God’s glory.

Then there is fornication in our society, meaning any sex outside of marriage. It also includes adultery, the downplaying of divorce and the LGBT agenda. The devil has twisted the idea of love and sex from commitment and relationship to pleasure and the mere satisfaction of desires. We do not think God wants to deny people anything or discriminate against anyone, but how are we going to experience communion with a God who is holy if we do not live holy lives?

There are also influences in society such as humanism and communism. Humanism originally aimed at the development and the enhancement of the value of man, which is a godly idea. But the problem is that in recent decades this development has not led to the glorification of God, but directly to the exaltation and worship of man. And that is already a problem. Similarly, communism started with the nice idea of equality, but its application within communism has lagged far behind the idea itself.

Moreover, none of these teachings, and that includes Eastern religions and New Age, discuss the need for forgiveness of sins and the need for a redeemer. These doctrines often talk about self-development and a change of mindset, yet Christianity speaks of something much deeper. It speaks of transformation. About the transformation of our sinful nature into a holy nature, about a complete transformation of our character, and about knowing the living God, our Creator.

Yes, it is important to name and address this in contrast to the teaching of God's Word, the Bible. Even a slight deviation in direction can have serious consequences. For the main problem is that if we miss the mark, we sin, the consequence is death, which means separation from relationship with God. And relationship with God is what we were created for. Without God, we will never fulfill our purpose and mission.

But the role of Christians is not to constantly fight and define ourselves against these influences. We cannot keep choosing defensive tactics based on fear. God does not work with fear. If Christianity has anything to give, and it does, we should instead begin to actively promote our values, such as family, holiness, and relationship with God. Besides we cannot leave out the power of God. We think that the active promotion of Christianity is the role of all of us. If we are defensive, we will be backed into a corner. If we want Europe to be Christian, we have to take a different, *active* approach based on prayer and the preaching of the Gospel. It is God's words and God's Spirit that should determine the spiritual atmosphere around us.

You Are Redeemed from the Power of Death

If we generalize and accept the previous chapter, we can see our final enemy to defeat. For all the Devil's other directions and influences point to him. The Bible defines this enemy as *death* itself. Death does not mean only physical death, but *separation*. For every other direction than Christianity separates people from God, their Creator. The consequence of separation from God is poverty, disease, sin, and various other evils. And only reunion with God – through the forgiveness of sins – will eradicate these evils. Simply put, if we have any idea of heaven where God reigns, we imagine it without sin, sickness, pain, and death. Death came only with sin, and if the cross of Christ removes sin, it also removes all its effects. And so death in whatever form it takes is our enemy. The apostle Paul spoke of Jesus this way:

„...He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it

has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.“

2. Timothy 1:9-10

Get this right. Eternal life has been here since the coming of the Lord Jesus (John 11:25), so we do not have to wait until eternity for it. It is already here and now. The Lord Jesus brought something into the world that has not been here since Eden. So Jesus lived Heaven on the Earth. The Lord Jesus brought *life* into the arena of *death*. What we Christians have to bring now is in complete contrast to what we are taught by this worldly system we live in, whatever it may be. It is not about the new *traditions and customs*. It is about the Words and the Spirit that this world does not know. We may not see it at first because we were born into this system and find its workings *normal*. However, the more we study and live God's Word, we see that there are marked differences in the state of the world around us and how we can live:

„Because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.“

Romans 8:2

Ans elsewhere:

„For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ!“

Romans 5:17

Not surprisingly, the life of God of which the Bible speaks destroys death, just as light illuminates darkness. That is why the Lord Jesus healed *all* who came under his hand, performed miracles, raised the dead, walked on water, and multiplied bread. From a human perspective, he lived „supernaturally“. From a biblical perspective, he simply operated in life and not in death.

Emanate Life

The Bible refers to us as the *challengers of death*. It shows that as death, sickness, hunger and poverty rule the world, so is the church to bring change, to bring life, and it is through individual believers. But it is not possible from our strength. It is only possible through the Spirit of God, the Spirit of life, who has moved into us. The Lord Jesus discusses this in two places in the Gospel of John. He says that the fountain of life will be in us:

„Jesus answered: „Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.““

John 4:13-14

In the second passage he even speaks of the Holy Spirit Himself, emphasizing that He *flows* out of us like streams of living water wherever and whenever we are:

„On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, ‚Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.‘ By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.“

John 7:37-39

Let us note this clearly. If we have surrendered to God, we are no longer parched, thirsty, or hungry for Him. On the contrary, we walk in fellowship with Him and bring the knowledge of Him alone wherever we are. Wherever we go we are a blessing, a refreshment and living water.

Think Differently

One thing is obvious from the above. We need to *think* differently. We were born into a world where *death* reigns and we have been reborn into the kingdom of *life*. The change could not be greater. But why do not we see that change, why do not we as a church bring it? The reason is simple. Because we are used to thinking in terms of *death*. That is exactly what the apostle Paul writes to Rome about:

„Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so.“

Romans 8:5-7

Moreover, this passage says that if we do not think in terms of life, we are unusable for God’s purposes. Given what we have discussed so far, we trust that this statement will not offend anyone. But God wants us to understand Him and to *transform our minds* to *know His will*:

„Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.“

Romans 12:1-2

Let us understand God well. He wants to *cooperate* with us. He wants us to be a blessing and bring life wherever we are. If He is to succeed, He needs us to be on the same wavelength with Him. And how can we be on the same wavelength with someone who thinks in terms of life? By thinking the same way. We can cooperate with God the more we have our minds renewed in his direction. And that is what the whole spiritual battle is about. The minds of men are the focus that is at stake here. We need people’s minds not to be hostile to God, but to think in harmony with Him:

„For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We

demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. ,...“

2. Corinthians 10:3-5

Let us take a broader perspective than just our lives. Let us grasp it that we want change to reign in Europe and, by extension, the whole world, the powers to fall and God to be glorified. Let us step out of our comfort zone and bring light to whole nations.

That is why we will talk about leadership. We need ministry leaders, teachers, pastors, prophets, politicians, managers or businessmen to rise up. We will also discuss teamwork. For social change is not based on individuals, but on the church as a body, as a team. We will also get to the spiritual battle itself, so that we can *learn to walk* in this battle. We hope that this book will also appeal to you, and that you will become part of the movement of God's people that is being prepared all over Europe.

1 Team Leader Lord Jesus

If we want to experience a *revival*, we need to think about the following questions: if people will be converted, who will lead them to the Lord? Do we have enough people grounded in the Lord who are able and willing to lead others? If not, are we able to disciple them to lead other people? Because once people join the church, someone has to be committed to them. Someone has to support them. Otherwise, these new believers, potential co-workers in the work of the gospel, will leave again.

If we are leaders in the church, are we able to give others space to *lead* others? Or, on the contrary, are we afraid that the moment they begin to have influence, we will be threatened? These are key questions for the development of the church and our closest co-workers. And are not we ourselves, as leaders, holding back the church when we limit our community to only what we and a few of our closest colleagues can handle?

We firmly believe that people will come to the Lord, and we are also convinced that *everyone* who is already part of the church *has the potential* to lead others. And the development of new leaders is precisely the key to the development of the whole church. There are several reasons for this: First, we all have a limited capacity for how many people we can devote ourselves to. If we want the church to grow, we need more people willing to get involved. People who want to continue to grow; people who want to devote themselves to others. Second, without responsibility, people will not grow. If we want our children to grow up and mature, there will come a time when they will leave their parents' home and start their own families. It is the same in the church. It is healthy for people to become independent and start leading others themselves. On the contrary, if they never lead anyone, they will not mature. Furthermore, if we do not teach others the art of leading others, we miss the essence of discipleship. The essence of discipleship is that we lead others, and they in turn lead others. This is what the Bible shows us (2. Timothy 2:2). If we do not make disciples, people who will develop our vision will not grow up around us. At best, they will only be people who serve it. Discipleship is not just about leadership; it involves many other aspects. However, leadership development is an essential part of it. It may surprise some of us, but even the Lord Jesus was referred to as a *leader*:

„The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead—whom you killed by hanging him on a cross. God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might bring Israel to repentance and forgive their sins.“

Acts 5:30-31

We see that the Lord Jesus *is* our leader. Leader, in Greek *archēgos*, means *chief leader, prince, originator, pioneer, or one who leads others in a certain matter, is their example, predecessor*. It is therefore clear that the Lord Jesus was a leader. Some argue against discipleship and leadership for everyone by pointing to James's words: „Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.“ (James 3:1). However, this letter was written to newly converted believers, and the truth is that no one expects newly converted believers to immediately start teaching others. But the context of Scripture is clear: every believer should find other people to teach and pass on the truth of the gospel to. And at the same time, they should lead them to do the same. This will create an unstoppable wave of Christian growth. This change will not threaten pastors. *Pastor* (Latin; Greek *bishop*) is originally a *military term* for someone who oversees a given area. Therefore, a pastor does not have to be the one who does everything from start to finish,

but rather the one who oversees that everything is done and developed correctly. Pastors and leaders therefore do not need to feel threatened by the new generation of leaders. On the contrary, they can help them develop.

Let us now examine what the Bible says about leadership. Let us look at the characteristics a leader must have and how he should lead a team. On the following pages, we will discuss some aspects and situations from the life of the Lord Jesus that clearly show that he is a leader and works with a team. Based on God's Word and the actions of the Lord Jesus, we will reflect together on what leadership is and what it is not. We will ask questions such as: Is leadership about my development or the development of others? To what extent is leadership about control and, conversely, about the uncontrolled empowerment of others? Does leadership involve working on my vision or also supporting the vision of others?

1.1 Think as a Leader

The mind is one of the most important parts of a person. The mind decides our victory or failure. The mind is where bad ideas or great innovations come from. God knows the potential of the mind, so He refers to it in God's Word as the battlefield. Those who want to win must first fight the battle in their own mind.

A man works in the following way: Something comes to mind and at that moment he considers whether he will think about it further. If he does, then he thinks about it, which can take minutes, hours, days, years. The moment he is full of it, he starts sharing it with others. And, eventually, he reaches a point where he acts on his thought. That is why it is important to watch your mind from the beginning and not to play with dangerous thoughts.

First we think, then we talk and finally we act. It is the same with leadership. A leader will always be under pressure, whether external (from people) or internal (their own thoughts), and therefore needs to have the mind set well. And to protect that mind-set, otherwise he or she may lose vision, his or her own perspective and, in the worst case, his or her life.

Change the Mindset, not the Position

The key to becoming a biblical leader is to start *thinking as a leaders*. Some people have more natural inclinations to leadership, some people have been helped more by their environment, but anyone can become a leader. They need to see themselves as leaders and act accordingly. Let us look at the example of the apostle Paul:

„Much time had been lost, and sailing had already become dangerous because by now it was after the Day of Atonement. So Paul warned them, ‚Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous and bring great loss to ship and cargo, and to our own lives also.‘ But the centurion, instead of listening to what Paul said, followed the advice of the pilot and of the owner of the ship. After they had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up before them and said: ‚Men, you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete; then you would have spared yourselves this damage and loss. But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed. In an attempt to escape from the ship, the sailors let the lifeboat down into the sea, pretending they were going to lower some anchors from the bow. Then Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, ‚Unless these men stay

with the ship, you cannot be saved.’ So the soldiers cut the ropes that held the lifeboat and let it drift away. Just before dawn Paul urged them all to eat. ‘For the last fourteen days,’ he said, ‘you have been in constant suspense and have gone without food—you haven’t eaten anything. Now I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive. Not one of you will lose a single hair from his head.’ After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat. They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves.’“

Acts 27:9-11.21-22.30-36

The apostle Paul was a prisoner, but he apparently became involved in decision-making processes during the voyage. In the town of Lasaia, where this passage begins, no one had yet paid attention to him. But Paul did not let this discourage him, and during the very dangerous voyage he began to encourage everyone on the ship. Eventually, he even got the final word, and although he was a prisoner, the centurion put it to him at a crucial moment when the sailors wanted to escape from the ship. At the end, Paul still served the Lord’s Supper to everyone. That Paul acted as a decisive leader is evident, for example, in the story from the prison at Philippi (Acts 16:25-34). Here, Paul was best able to navigate a sudden and tense situation and save the life of the jailer. But Paul is not an isolated example of a leader in the Bible. Others were, for example, King David or the prophet Elijah. We read of King David that long before he became king, there were already people flocking to him who naturally took him as a leader, even though he was an outlaw at the time. Elijah, in turn, led a national awakening, even though the king himself wanted to kill him.

Be Sure of God

In order to act boldly and courageously and to lead others, we need to be very sure of our identity. Better said, we need to be sure of *who we are* and *who our God is*. For we will often be in situations where we, our vision or our motives will be questioned. If we are not sure of ourselves, it shows that we are not sure of our God or what God says about us in His Word. For God’s word is God’s view of man in terms of human identity.

It is not only when we lead others that we need to be sure of our identity. We need to be aligned with who we are, what is behind us, and what the Lord is calling us into. We need to be aware of what we are losing by *our choice* to follow the Lord. We need to consciously come to terms with the fact that, for example, career and hobbies will never be a priority. The best way to be at peace with ourselves and our lives is to accept what God’s Word says about us and put everything else aside.

So each of us really needs to be firmly rooted in the Lord. When we know who our God is and who we are, a sense of confidence begins to come out of our lives. This is key to leading other people. A leader needs to bring peace not only to his team, but also to those around him. Other people often look for confidence. And as God’s representatives, they see confidence in us.

If we are not sure of our identity or God’s identity, we will tend to prove or compensate for something in people. Both are *destructive* for any work. Moreover, insecure people often act in fear and not in love. Acting in fear causes people to make *irrational* decisions that are detrimental to both their team and the Lord’s work. So let us lay everything aside, including our views and past and our views of ourselves (1. Corinthians 4:3-4, Colossians 3:13-16). The Lord has accepted us as His own, cleansed us from our sins, and given us *hope* for the future (Jeremiah 29:11).

As leaders, then, we must be sure of *God* and our calling, because then we can take the steps that are *needed*. For certainty in the Lord gives us *gives us the freedom* to act. Notice how the Lord Jesus dealt with one of His *best* men:

„But what about you?’ he asked. ‚Who do you say I am?’ Simon Peter answered, ‚You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.’ Jesus replied, ‚Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.’“

Matthew 16:15-19

We see that God revealed to the apostle Peter who the Lord Jesus is. The Lord Jesus, who was present at the moment Peter spoke, did not at all put him down, He had no need to defend His position. He did not start claiming that he was the only one who should hear from God or anything like that. The Lord Jesus did not gnash His teeth thinking, „Now Peter hears from God and people will start following him instead of me“. On the contrary, the Lord Jesus lifted up the Apostle Peter before those around him and said that God would use him mightily. Not long after that, however, another situation arose where the Lord Jesus did not exalt the Apostle Peter, but *confronted* him in front of everyone. The certainty of who he is, and who his God is, gave the Lord Jesus the freedom to act, even though many of us would have feared at that moment that we would *loss* the Apostle Peter.

Put Your Ego Aside

Of course, being dead to ourselves does not just apply to the Lord Jesus or to leaders. Anyone who wants to follow the Lord must come to the point where he is fully surrendered to the Lord and put everything else aside if necessary. We ourselves and our self-realization will cease to be important, only what the Lord wants to do will be important, and we will begin to think in terms of „What will help the kingdom of God“ and „How to get it forward as quickly as possible in the shortest time with everything we have at our disposal without losing anyone“. God’s plans will become so important to us that they will become our priority. If we don’t, the Devil will either make us ineffective for God’s plans or destroy us completely.

But if we are leaders, there is much more pressure on this area. At the same time, our failure to do so will bring much more destruction into the lives of everyone around us. So we must be aware of the Devil’s traps and not be seduced by success, fame, the riches of this world (possessions, finances), the opinions of others, or our unfulfilled desires – for example, in the area of relationships. For this reason, the Apostle Paul writes that we have died to self, to sin, and have been crucified with Christ to the world and the world to us. If this does not become a conscious reality of our lives, the Devil will continually push and prod us. For the devil knows no pity and his goal is to destroy us and the work of God (Ephesians 6:10-12). And if we don’t allow ourselves to be seduced, he will withdraw from us and wait for a better opportunity:

„Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he

was hungry. The devil said to him, „If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.“ Jesus answered, „It is written: »Man shall not live on bread alone.«‘ The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, „I will give you all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. If you worship me, it will all be yours.‘ Jesus answered, „It is written: »Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.«‘ The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. „If you are the Son of God,‘ he said, „throw yourself down from here. For it is written: »He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.«‘ Jesus answered, „It is said: »Do not put the Lord your God to the test.« When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.‘

Luke 4:1-13

Notice that not only did the Lord Jesus communicate with God, but we see Him here in *direct conversation with the Devil*. The Devil was offering Him *all* that He had, and they were indeed tempting offers. Let us not kid ourselves, these offers are tempting to both unbelievers and believers, unless they have a renewed mind. The only effective long term way to resist all these offers is to be *consistently filled with the Holy Spirit*. At that point we see the world from a different (God’s) perspective and the Devil’s temptations are easier to resist.

In addition, when we begin to lead other people or when we receive from God the vision that God wants to fulfill through us, the verses talking about being „dead to self“ take on another dimension. This dimension relates to the personal level and interaction with others. When we are leaders, we find that there are far more important things than our ego or our ideas. When we have a vision, the *fulfillment* of that vision is much more important to us than arguing about details, personal recognition or anything like that. We learn to approach life differently. We begin to evaluate the situation as follows: „Is winning this argument important for the realization of the vision or not?“ or „Is this worth my time or do I have more important things to do?“ or „Do not these things just take my attention away from the things of the kingdom of God?“

Do Not Be a Victim, but Sacrifice Yourself

Some people like to say that leadership is sacrifice. Whether leadership is a sacrifice or not depends on your point of view. It is all about priorities. If we are concerned about the kingdom of God, we cannot look at the things we leave behind (former opinions, hobbies) as things that are *sacrificed*. Leaving them behind was and is our *choice*. There are simply important things in life and unimportant things. We need to redeem time and attend to the important instead of the unimportant.

Often many of the things we leave behind are things we are ashamed of. Moreover, they tend to be the reason we are afraid to lead others. We have no interest in them knowing about those things, or in *mimicking* us in them. Acts we are ashamed of are often in our lives because we simply had time for them. The apostle Paul did not want to give anyone cause for offense:

„We put no stumbling block in anyone’s path, so that our ministry will not be discredited. Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and

in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.“

2. Corinthians 6:3-10

It is important, therefore, that we imitate the apostle Paul in this as well. Let us be the first to arrive and the last to leave. Let us live in such a way that God's work is not disgraced for our sake. It is also important that we be morally pure, have nothing to be ashamed of, and be an example to others in all things (2. Timothy 2:11-16).

Have a Plan

It is already written in Proverbs that „Without vision men perish“ (Proverbs 29:18). So it is clear that if we, as God's people, are to rise up, we need to always have a clear vision, direction, and plan. We need to look at the whole world from a broader perspective than just our lives or today. We must not just go through life from morning to night with plans for the next holiday at most. Our life needs perspective. God's perspective. Even God has an overall plan that He wants to accomplish. He is gradually implementing that plan. Notice that our God plans His steps carefully and thoughtfully:

„From the beginning I announce the future and from ancient times what has not yet happened. I say, My plan will come to pass, and I will carry out every wish I have.“

Isaiah 46:10

God's ultimate goal is for the whole earth to be full of His glory (Habakkuk 2:14). Let us look retrospectively at His steps. Look at the steps he had to take to achieve his ultimate goal. To achieve it, he needed to have room on the Earth to act. He created that space by moving into man and making him His temple. This makes it possible for God to act anywhere in the world. In order for Him to move into man, He needs to have His temple cleansed of sin. Therefore, before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, God *gave* the Lord Jesus for the sins of *the whole* world. The Holy Spirit can only be received by one who *believes*, one whose sins are forgiven.

But in order for people to be forgiven of sins, they must know that they have some *have*. Thus, long before the Lord Jesus, God gave people the *Law* that brings knowledge of sin (Romans 3:20). Because of the Law, every person has knowledge of what is good and what is evil. But God did not want His relationship with man to be based on following rules. So even before the Law, God found a man, Abraham, who trusted Him. He gave him a promise, and because of that, God did not have to look to the Law. He can act today on the basis of grace. Through this gradual implementation of the plan, we see that God was able to restore the relationship with man that was broken in Eden. At the same time, by cooperating with man, God is able to take the gospel to the ends of the earth (Matthew 28:18-20). So we see that God is a brilliant strategist and follows *consistently* His plan.

Notice also that the people in the Old Testament *knew their God* and thought strategically ahead. God told Noah about the flood 120 years before it began. Because of this, Noah prepared the ark and *saved* a whole other generation of people. Similarly, Abraham went out into Canaan several generations

before God promised to give it to the Israelites. Abraham was a visionary, he trusted God and thought not only of himself but of the next generation. This may be something that is inconsistent with your current understanding of things, but it means one thing – we need to grow up and start thinking in a broader context.

Follow God's Vision

A true leader has a vision from God that is beyond his abilities and he is aware of it. A leader knows that in order for his vision to be realized, he needs to involve more people. The Lord Jesus first carried God's vision alone, but then He involved first 12 disciples, then 70, and finally all of us in His vision. The involvement of the first 12 disciples came even at a moment when he was being challenged in his own homeland:

„Jesus said to them, ‚A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home.‘ He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. He was amazed at their lack of faith. Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village. Calling the Twelve to him, he began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over impure spirits. “

Mark 6:4-7

Not long after the seizure of the twelve, another interesting situation arose. The apostle John told the Lord Jesus that they had seen a *somebody* casting out demons in the name of the Lord Jesus, and because the man was not walking with them, *they hindered him*. From the Lord's response we see that He never intended to make His twelve disciples prominent persons, but that He was concerned with *realization of the vision*. Notice that the Lord Jesus immediately directed the apostle John and the others and then even „officially sent“ seventy more disciples to do the same thing that He and the first twelve had done. The Lord Jesus did not compete with anyone, He did not try to prove that *He* had done the most miracles and gained the most disciples. He did not say to himself: „This one is getting ahead of me, I am going to throw some sticks at his feet.“ On the contrary, the Lord Jesus rejoices in our successes and guarantees us that *whatever* we do according to His vision, He will personally fulfill. So let us not be narrow-minded, let us not just do our ministry, but let us spread God's kingdom and realize God's purposes.

Stay on Course

In addition to having a vision that he and others follow, it is the leader's duty to *keep the direction*. I have noticed that quite a few people *manifest* themselves as leaders, or at least show these tendencies in certain areas of life. However, most people fail to start or begin but fail to *hold direction* for the necessary length of time. They get distracted, discouraged by their immediate surroundings, family, friends, or initial failures. Unfortunately, because of this, others do not even have a chance to follow them. We can think of it as a small seed in the ground. People, like leaders, begin to sprout and grow, but they cease to *nourish* these abilities within themselves before the seed ever breaks through the ground. Thus, no one even notices their abilities.

This is also true for emerging leaders in the church. If we are serious about following the Lord, we need to be armed and have what is called „thick skin“, Biblically „have root in ourselves“. Goal setting helps us to accomplish what the Lord is calling us to do. The Lord Jesus himself set the goal:

„As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, ‚Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?‘ But Jesus turned and rebuked them. Then he and his disciples went to another village.“

Luke 9:51-56

We see that during His ministry, the Lord Jesus came to a point where He firmly decided when and where His ministry would end, and He set out in that direction. Immediately, of course, there was a detour from His plan, but He *knew* what He was up to, and so He did not get *distracted* from His path. At another time, the apostle Peter tried to explain to Him that going to the cross was not a good idea (Matthew 16:22-26). Even then, the Lord Jesus resolutely objected and showed that He *wanted to stay* on the course He had set. We see that as leaders or future leaders, it helps us to first set a goal from which we will not deviate. This goal needs to be big enough to motivate us not to give up too soon, and at the same time achievable enough not to give in to scepticism. We need to stick to this goal, and we need to meet it.

Embody Your Mission

When we step into leading other people, or when we choose to give direction, we need to realize that as leaders for people, we are *embodying* the vision that we carry. People will not follow what we say or preach. People will follow what we live. So we have to be *absolutely committed* to the vision that we have. People observe *their* leader, and it is very natural:

„Jesus answered: ‚Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ›Show us the Father?‹?‘“

John 14:9

We see that the Lord Jesus Himself embodied the heavenly Father to us. In all that He did, how He spoke, and how He acted, He showed what He was like. He reflected God the Father in character and in power. It is literally written of the Lord Jesus: ‚No man hath seen God at any time; the only God, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath told us of him‘ (John 1:18). Elsewhere, the Lord Jesus says: ‚Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.‘ (John 14:10) The Lord Jesus literally *embodied*, portrayed to us the heavenly Father. Therefore, the Lord Jesus is the Apostle and High Priest of our *confession*. Let us also follow Him and exhibit the same character traits as our Father and walk in His power. Let us embody our mission.

1.2 Act as a Leader

Of course, it is not enough to *think* as a leader and have a vision. We also need to *act*. By thinking, by good ideas or by the desire to start something we will not change *anything* if it is not connected to action. Even the Lord Jesus first *did* things and then taught. It is by what we do that people decide whether they will follow us or our vision. So let us not be afraid and act according to what God has put on our hearts. Let us act like leaders.

Do Not Rule the People, but Serve Them

Leadership is not about ruling to other people. Man may be meant to rule on the Earth, but nowhere in the creation of man is it mentioned that this includes dominion over other men. On the contrary, even the Lord Jesus Himself took the position that we are not to rule over one another:

„When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. „Do you understand what I have done for you?‘ he asked them. „You call me »Teacher« and »Lord,« and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.‘“

John 13:12-15

The job of a leader is not to have control over other people’s lives. His role is not to be self-centered, but to serve others and inspire them to do the same.

Lead by Example

A leader does not rule, he serves and thus sets an example to follow. The Apostle Paul was aware of the fact that a leader sets an example to follow. Notice that in his epistles he does not say listen to me because I am an apostle and the Lord Jesus has appeared to me. On the contrary, he says:

„Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.‘“

Philippians 4:9

We can see that the apostle Paul lived a life worthy of imitation, and he was aware of it. Paul was a leader, not ruling over people, serving them and being an example to them. Let us also think and act like leaders and live lives worthy of imitation.

Act in Faith

Whichever way you look at the leader, one thing is clear. Leader *must* believe. We have to believe that we hear God. If we do not believe we hear God’s voice, our steps are tentative and we will be reluctant to make decisions. But when we know what God wants us to do, everything becomes easier, including unpopular steps. We must believe that our vision has value and that we can fulfill it. If we do not trust God, no one knows if we are only pursuing our own ambitions. Our lives must show the „command from above“. We must believe in what we are doing. If we are not convinced and surrendered

to what we are doing, everyone around us will feel it and will also not be surrendered to the work. Then the whole work will stop. On the contrary, if we build together, God's principle of teamwork will be fulfilled:

„So we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart.“

Nehemiah 4:6

As leaders, we cannot act in fear, but must make decisions that are more or less fundamental. This too requires faith. Fear and faith are mutually exclusive (2. Timothy 1:7). If we act more in fear than in faith, we may be in a leadership position, but we are not leaders.

We must believe in our people. If we do not trust the people around us, we will do everything ourselves and the work will stand. Plus, the people around us will sense our lack of trust. The important thing is that people often do not leave because of their company or denomination, people leave because of their *leader*. Let us believe in our people and see more in them than they see in themselves. Often we will find that the people around us will not trust themselves or will be small-minded. But it is the role of the leader to hold on the vision and direction.

Keep People's Morale up

As we have already seen in the story of the shipwreck of the apostle Paul, the leader *keeps the morale of the people up*. The leader wants to go forward all the time. A leader does not fight because he *must*, he fights on the principle that it is *right*. This is something that makes a leader unstoppable. A person who has a vision is unstoppable, *always* has something to fight for. Such a person is a leader or will soon become one. Such a person is one of the greatest weapons of God's kingdom because nothing can stop him. An example of such a man was the Apostle Paul:

„Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?“

2. Corinthians 11:23-29

It must have been and must be very difficult to stop a man who takes even a *death* as gain (Philippians 1:21). So we can see that this constantly motivated, biblically speaking, *zealous* attitude of a leader is something that is very crucial in stirring up others. This attitude will keep the morale of everyone around up and inspire them. Let us be that kind of people for those around us too!

Strengthen Yourself in Your God and Lead even in the Midst of Crisis

By stepping into leadership we also step into responsibility and soon we learn that without responsibility there is no personal growth from a certain point. We find that in addition to taking care of ourselves, we need to take care of the people around us. Let us look at a story from the life of King David. David and his men were returning to the city where they were staying, but it was laid waste and their wives and children were taken captive. David's men felt sorry for them for a while, but eventually decided to *stone* David for everything. David was in distress, but *knew his God*:

„David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the Lord his God.“

1. Samuel 30:6

So as leaders, we have to be able to strengthen ourselves in our God in dealing with various crisis situations. We soon find that when we lead others, we begin to see and deal with things that never occurred to us before. This is due to the fact that our perspective is broadened. We begin to see the world in a broader context (2. Corinthians 11:28). This will teach us to appreciate other leaders, even if they are not perfect. Leaders deal with realities that often do not bother others at all.

Act with Authority

Authority, especially authority in the church, is a tricky subject. However, if we are leaders, we *must* act in authority. Authority, properly grasped, brings peace to team members and confidence in yourself. But what does that authority look like? Matthew reveals that the hallmark of authority is that one is *subordinate* to an authority. If we want to act in authority, we *need* to be submissive to God, and it must show in our lives. This manifests itself especially in the way that if God tells us to do something, we do it. In Elijah's example, we can see that he was obedient to God and *quickly* responded. Even King Ahab, who did not like him very much, responded to him in this way:

„Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah: ‚Leave here, turn eastward and hide in the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan. You will drink from the brook, and I have directed the ravens to supply you with food there.‘ So he did what the Lord had told him. He went to the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan, and stayed there. When he saw Elijah, he said to him, ‚Is that you, you troubler of Israel?‘ ‚I have not made trouble for Israel,‘ Elijah replied. ‚But you and your father's family have. You have abandoned the Lord's commands and have followed the Baals. Now summon the people from all over Israel to meet me on Mount Carmel. And bring the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table.‘ So Ahab sent word throughout all Israel and assembled the prophets on Mount Carmel.“

1. Kings 17:2-5.18:17-20

Similar obedience can be found in the lives of the apostle Paul, the apostle Peter, Abraham, and Moses. These are men who acted toward others in great authority – and others accepted their leadership. This was because they were not men who just „barked“ around, but they were men of *action* and God's action was evident in their lives. At the same time, they were leading others into action. Everyone in their time was leading people into battle, whether physical or spiritual.

And leading in battle is the key for applying authority. If we are having a party at home, eating chips, watching TV and lounging in a chair, and someone starts to bother us to take out the trash, we take it as bullying. But if we are on the war front, in a trench, with bullets flying around us and we lose track of the situation, then we accept and obey every command from a more experienced soldier. Because we believe it can save our lives.

And this is where we need to move as a church. We as leaders need to step out in obedience to get people out of their chairs and into the fight. Let us take them into the battle where everyone will be grateful for our advice and tips and not think they are meaningless. Let us not try to organize people's lives at a party.

We are not saying here that we have to follow someone *blindly*. We make the choice of leader ourselves, and if we do not trust someone or someone's vision, we can simply walk away. If we want to be team players, it is not right to boycott what a given leader wants to achieve. On the other hand, it is important to remember that if we do not follow the leader, he is not our leader. A leader has a vision, sets the direction, the pace, and needs the support of others to accomplish what the Lord wants. Otherwise, nothing would be accomplished.

Bear Responsibility

Hand in hand with authority goes responsibility. Each of us will eventually give an account to God for what He has entrusted to us (Luke 19:11-27). Without accountability, we will not grow, but at the same time, we cannot wield by authority. When we begin to lead others, it brings us responsibility in addition to authority – responsibility for the team, for the flow of the meeting, and for the results. And that is okay. Even Moses perceived responsibility for the nation entrusted to him, even to the point of arguing with God over it:

„That night all the members of the community raised their voices and wept aloud. All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, ‚If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this wilderness! Why is the Lord bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?‘ The Lord said to Moses, ‚How long will these people treat me with contempt? How long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the signs I have performed among them? I will strike them down with a plague and destroy them, but I will make you into a nation greater and stronger than they.‘ Moses said to the Lord, ‚Then the Egyptians will hear about it! By your power you brought these people up from among them. And they will tell the inhabitants of this land about it. They have already heard that you, Lord, are with these people and that you, Lord, have been seen face to face, that your cloud stays over them, and that you go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. If you put all these people to death, leaving none alive, the nations who have heard this report about you will say, »The Lord was not able to bring these people into the land he promised them on oath, so he slaughtered them in the wilderness.« ,Now may the Lord's strength be displayed, just as you have declared: »The Lord is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.« In accordance with your great love, forgive the sin of these people, just as you have pardoned them from the time they left Egypt until now.»““

Numbers 14:1-3.11-19

It is bad when we have responsibility for areas, in which we do not decide. For example, when our meetings look different than what we have to say because someone else is making decisions for us. Or if our team is going in a different direction than we are trying to lead. Having responsibility and not making decisions is a position that is hard to live in and one that every leader tries to avoid (Matthew 16:21-23). But a huge role model for us in this is the aforementioned Moses, who *knew* what his role was, but the people around him *prevented* him from fulfilling it. Nevertheless, Moses did not give up and *humbly* kept trying to move in the right direction.

Set Boundaries

In addition to the key decisions in crisis situations, being a leader involves other unpopular actions and decisions that are necessary to make. However, *nobody* except the leader will put things in order, so we need to be unafraid of clear statements, even if we *fear* that we will lose some people by doing so. For example, the Lord Jesus had to clearly define who was on his team and who was not:

„Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons. “

Mark 3:13-15

We see that at the beginning of His ministry, the Lord Jesus called twelve men, whom He Himself wanted, and gave them the privilege of being sent to preach the gospel and heal the sick. Of course, the Lord Jesus wanted the same for everyone else (Hebrews 8:11; Mark 16:15-18), but it is probably obvious to all of us that when we come up with an innovative idea, we need to first introduce it to a few reliable people with whom we can work on a daily basis. It is better for the quality of the work than just talking to a crowd to whom we would just *generalize* the ideas.

Our collaborators should know who is *is* on the team and who is *not*. For me personally, this was one of the things I had to learn. Because I like people and telling someone „no“ was really challenging for me. However, I came to the conclusion that the people who work on our common vision should also be aware of the fact that I am aware of this selection. So I always want my closest collaborators to know that I have time for them. They are my priority. There is a clear distinction for me between the people who are on my team and those who are not.

Be Readable

One of the important qualities of a leader is to be *readable* for others. Readability brings *stability* to the team, it is a fixed point for others and helps to create mutual trust. For me, again, the *greatest* role model in this is God. Let us remember that his word has been the same for thousands of years, and when we read it today, it is the same as when we read it 20 years ago. Moreover, God says of His word that it is *forever* established in Heaven (Psalm 119:89). And elsewhere he says that even from the position of God he will not change *his word* (Psalm 138:2). Yet we would say that God is *sovereign* and can do whatever He wants. But God is first and foremost a *good leader*, and He knows that He has to *bring stability*. But we must constantly remind ourselves that God does not change. Even the apostle James knew this when he wrote:

„Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.“

James 1:16-17

Thus we see that in his sovereignty he *carefully chose* the words so that he never had to change them. Because of this, we can experience the assurance of salvation and know God's will for every area of our lives through God's promises, the promises that God *plans* to make real in our lives.

Do Not Be Afraid of Making Decisions

Still, there may be situations when you as a leader simply *need* to make a radical change or decision. For example, this happened to the Apostle Peter, one of the leaders of the early church:

„He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. Then a voice told him, ‚Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.‘ ‚Surely not, Lord!‘ Peter replied. ‚I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.‘ The voice spoke to him a second time, ‚Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.‘ This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.“

Acts 10:10-16

On the basis of this vision, the apostle Peter took the unprecedented step of preaching to the Gentiles without any discussion with others. In doing so, Peter clearly demonstrated his leadership tendencies and did what the Lord told him to do without regard for others. But a chapter later, we find that he had to explain his actions in Jerusalem. Nevertheless, Peter had already built a reputation over his years of service as head of the church. Not only was he able to *defend* his actions, but even the resulting change was *unanimously* accepted by the others. On the other hand, this was the only *substantial* change Peter made in the leadership of the church. In recent history, Oral Roberts, for example, had made a similar experience. There came a point in his ministry when, instead of evangelistic campaigns, he began to build a Christian university (ORU). His team did not identify with the change at first, but eventually unanimously accepted this major change in direction.

So when we lead others, we need to set a clear direction. We must know what the Lord is telling us to lead, but not to mislead. Unexpected changes must be warranted and not too frequent. Otherwise, they carry the risk that others will stop supporting us. Our leadership should bring peace and certainty, not create confusion, uncertainty and doubt.

Get Things Done

Another key aspect that makes a leader trustworthy is that he *gets things done*. When we do this, those around us see that we *keep our word*, that we are trustworthy and that we *mean what we say and do*. The Lord Jesus knew this and his disciples, especially the apostle John, noticed it:

„Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, ‚I am thirsty.‘ A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, »It is finished.« With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.“

We see that the Lord Jesus came to earth with a *some purpose* that was *completed* on the cross. We know that the Lord Jesus was „the Word of God made flesh“ and so His purpose was *healing mankind* (Psalm 107:20). We also know that He had to fulfill the 53rd chapter of Isaiah and other prophecies (Matthew 8:16-17). The Lord Jesus even announced why He had come right at the *beginning* of His ministry (Luke 4:18-19). Of course, much more could be found, but it is enough to illustrate that the Lord Jesus *was bringing things to an end*.

Finishing tasks is essential to our work as leaders. We will not bear the sin of the world as the Lord Jesus did, but we still need to speak clearly to our people at a minimum about our plans and intentions. The more clearly we define what we are about, the less room there will be for misunderstanding, not only within our team, but within the church or the public. For example, if we are concerned about church building, we should be clear about the fact that we want to help the churches, not overwhelm them. If we want to work with young people, we need to make it clear that older people will not be comfortable with our congregations.

1.3 Become a Team Leader

In our lives, the Lord Jesus also calls us to take the next step. He does not just want us to be visionaries and take steps. He wants us to *share* our visions with others. In all our work for the Lord, let us teach the people who are *closest* to us. *Let us* do things together. Let us form a team. Let us build disciples who will carry the gospel forward in the Word and power of God as we do. This will make Christianity an unstoppable *wave* that will only grow and gain momentum around the world.

Step out first

If a person has a vision from God, it is possible that at first *nobody else* understands it or believes it. A leader needs to go out and give direction, not wait for someone to join in. That makes the leader who he is. It is possible that in the beginning we will work alone. And that is an insurmountable problem for many people. Let us remember that even the Lord Jesus did not work with a team of people in the beginning. He called and sent out His disciples only when He could not do the whole work by Himself:

„Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, ‚The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.‘ Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.“

Matthew 9:35-10:1

If a person has a vision from God that is bigger than his personal life, it is obvious that he cannot fulfill it on his own. He needs to involve other people in that vision. However, we cannot wait for other people to show up to begin. If we have a vision from God, we need to take action. The fact that we are also working on something on our own (meaning that even without the support of others we are going

for it) will give us credibility and then others will join in. I had a similar experience. At the first weekend events we did with Connect, I gathered and provided most of the supplies myself. It was difficult to find someone else. But now, after a few years, we have plenty of ministers to help at the events. Some of them even take the initiative to offer help and organize the events themselves.

Do Not Work Alone

Even if the leader works alone in the beginning, it is important that it does not end up that way. It is not good to do everything alone and try to keep everything under control. When it comes to the kingdom of God, it is never about *us*, our ambition, our ego, or our service. It is always about the whole work of God going forward. That is why it is important that we do not work alone. If we were to work alone, our death would stop the work, or at least the work would fall. Let us now look at the story of Moses and Joshua who passed the baton. But it was not just that they had arranged it that way. It was because they had spent time with God:

„The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. Then Moses would return to the camp, but his young aide Joshua son of Nun did not leave the tent.“

Exodus 33:11

Spending time together with God is key to working together in the church. By conversing with God, praying and sharing, in addition to establishing mutual trust, what happens is that our co-workers begin to receive the same things in their hearts, as we have in our heart from God. So they take, or at least have the opportunity to take, the vision as their own. This will result in our co-workers following the same vision and it will not end with our death or departure. Recently, in our opinion, Reinhard Bonnke and Daniel Kolenda have done this best in the church. After Bonnke's departure, CFAN's evangelism in Africa did not end, but rather grew even more.

Call People to Work

Let us remember that we are to call people to *work* in God's work. We are to get the *doers of God's word*, not the *hearers* of the gospel. A related point is that when we want someone to join our vision, we must expect that they want to be discipled and trained by us. Consequently, they will be able to do what we do. The Lord Jesus did the same with His disciples:

„As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ‚Come, follow me,‘ Jesus said, ‚and I will send you out to fish for people‘ once they left their nets and followed him. Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.“

Matthew 4:18-22

This is a challenge for all of us. Let us not only want to win people, but let us want to make disciples. One of the main ideas about leadership and discipleship is that we have to do things together. It is not just about talking to people. It is about teaching people to talk to people.

Share the Vision

Krom In addition to spending time and praying together, it is crucial that the leader *shares* the vision with others. Without this, it is quite possible that he will remain misunderstood. We can see this in the example of the apostle Peter. Peter was in a situation where the risk of being misunderstood was great, but he explained his actions and his vision to the church, and eventually this vision from God was universally accepted:

„Starting from the beginning, Peter told them the whole story: ,I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. I saw something like a large sheet being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to where I was. I looked into it and saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, reptiles and birds. Then I heard a voice telling me, »Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.«“

Acts 11:4-7

It is important to maintain team unity if the vision is shared well in advance. Everyone knows where they are, where they are going, and they have the space to express themselves. However, even our experience shows that sometimes this is simply not possible. This is fundamental in situations where we need to act now or when we see that co-workers do not understand what we are trying to tell them. It is easier for them to understand when they see it in practice. But it is good to eliminate these often unpredictable behaviors.

Teach Your Team

In order for the vision from God to be fulfilled, the team needs to be in unity. Unity is achieved by the same teaching. Again, the leader is responsible for this. If we want to move in the same direction, we need to have the same foundation. That foundation is teaching. The team should be united with the leader at least on the level of teaching, which is essential to fulfilling the vision they are following. Even in the example of the Lord Jesus, we can notice that He taught His disciples and did not leave the rest of humanity to chance before He left:

„After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. “

Acts 1:3

In addition to unity, coherent teaching brings the possibility of multiplication of work. For we can more easily delegate to those whom we know are going in the same direction as we are. With our team, we have done this teaching in different ways. Sometimes I would teach the team directly, other times we would each study the same sermon series at home and then share them. Other times we enriched the program by attending a conference together. All of this helped us get people on the same wave.

Help Others to Grow

The leader has a key role in the growth of their team members. If the leader is good, and dedicated to his team, the people around him will grow. If he is not committed to them, they will run away from

him. One example of a great leader was King David. Even before he became king, we see that different people started to flock to him as a leader:

„David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and his father’s household heard about it, they went down to him there. All those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him, and he became their commander. About four hundred men were with him.“

1. Samuel 22:1-2

And they were a fine bunch – people in distress, in debt, with bitterness in their souls. But David was not afraid and turned them into giant-slaying men – literally. In the lists of his heroes, we find, for example:

„In another battle with the Philistines, Elhanan son of Jair killed Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, who had a spear with a shaft like a weaver’s rod. In still another battle, which took place at Gath, there was a huge man with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot—twenty-four in all. He also was descended from Rapha. When he taunted Israel, Jonathan son of Shimea, David’s brother, killed him. These were descendants of Rapha in Gath, and they fell at the hands of David and his men.“

1. Chronicles 20:5-8

But let us remember that David did not *have* to behave like a leader. He was an outlaw on the run at the time. However, he faced the position of leader head on. He instilled faith in others and *turned* them into heroes. That bodes well for us. We *have* about the same number of people around us that we are in personal contact with. we just might not act like leaders and treat them as our team. So we can start to think about it differently and show the world what God can do through us with „our twelve.“

Lend Your Authority

For others to grow up, they need to get *space*. David’s heroes would never have become heroes if David himself had wanted to kill all the giants. In the same way, the Lord Jesus never wanted to be the only one to cast out demons, heal the sick, or preach the gospel. On the contrary, he wants to involve us in everything he does:

„ He said to them, ,Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.“

Mark 16:15-18

The Lord Jesus gives space to everyone who *trust* in Him. He has enough space and trust for everyone. Let us grasp it too. Let us give others space and opportunities. Let us allow them to make mistakes and allow them to grow. Personally, we delegate or are willing to delegate anything we believe someone else can do 70-80 % as well as we can. At the same time, we empower siblings who are in motion, goal-oriented, and show potential for growth. Both increase the capacity of what we are able to accomplish.

Provide the Means to Achieve the Vision

When we give space to other people, we need to give them sufficient context and competence to carry out their tasks. This is also what the Lord Jesus has prepared for us:

„Ježíš přistoupil a promluvil k nim: ,Byla mi dána veškerá pravomoc na nebi i na zemi. Jděte [tedy] a činite učedníky ze všech národů, křtěte je ve jméno Otce i Syna i Ducha Svatého a učte je zachovávat všechno, co jsem vám přikázal. A hle, já jsem s vámi po všechny dny až do skonání tohoto věku. [Amen.]“

Matthew 28:18-20

Notice that the Lord Jesus sends us out in His authority, in His representation. This is sufficient qualification to do whatever He asks us to do. Furthermore, He has given us His Spirit, His Word, His power, and His name. If we learn to handle all of these, we are able to fulfill all that is expected of us from heaven.

Help Others to Stand on Your Shoulders

It is not just about the people around us growing, but about them to *outgrow* us. When a leader wants to fulfill the vision God has given him, he must remember that it is not *just about him*. If we are part of God's plans, we need to think in terms of *future* generations. For example, Abraham went at God's command, even though he *did not know* where he was going. Then God revealed to him that He was leading him to the *Promised Land*. A land that future generations would inherit. Based on Abraham's faith and his deeds, *future* generations were able to fulfill what God had destined for them. The Lord Jesus thought the same way. Through his ministry, he *laid* the foundation on which *we* can now build:

„Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.“

John 14:12

Let us think about it in the same way. Let us not think only about what we can do. Let us think about how to build and prepare the church for the times to come. Let us not think small, but dream together with our God.

Give Space to Those Who Have Failed

We can see how much *trust* the Lord Jesus has in his disciples, and by extension, in us. Handing over to someone else what we do ourselves is never easy. Many of us have trouble delegating even the smallest of tasks. But we can see that the Lord Jesus delegated everything that was possible. For example, he once sent his disciples to fetch a colt, and another time he sent them to prepare the Passover meal. But the Lord Jesus saved the greatest expression of trust for the end of his ministry:

„ Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen. He said to them, ,Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.“

The Lord Jesus did not stop trusting people even though they *failed*. The Lord Jesus trusted his disciples so much that even though they *all* abandoned him before his crucifixion, it did not stop him from *entrusting* them with spreading his mission. Let this be an inspiration for us too, and let our disappointment in people not lead us to prefer to do everything ourselves, but rather let us be free from ourselves, let us want to fulfill the vision we have, and let us constantly seek ways in which others can help us. However, let us not be naive in our trust.

Give People Challenges

In order to empower others and give them room to grow, we must give them appropriate challenges. That is why we need to *observe* the lives of others. Thanks to this, we often begin to see more in them than they see in themselves. Sometimes it can be a direct challenge, other times just encouragement in what others are reluctant to do themselves. Let us note this in the example of the Lord Jesus and the apostle Peter:

„Lord, if it's you,‘ Peter replied, ,tell me to come to you on the water.‘ ,Come,‘ he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, ,Lord, save me!’ Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. ,You of little faith,‘ he said, ,why did you doubt?’ And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. “

Matthew 14:28-32

The Lord Jesus knew our Father more than the apostle Peter, and therefore was able to believe for him. Moreover, the Lord Jesus acted as a proper leader even when Peter began to sink. He reached out to him and resolved the situation for him. Therefore, let us stand with others and move them in the knowledge of God so that they can do far greater things than they could ever imagine.

Let the Team Rest

Leadership and teamwork is not just about work and growth. It is also about spending time together. It is also the leader's role to create space to relax. We should keep this in mind. We as leaders set the entire culture of our team. People unwittingly adopt our behavioral patterns from us. So we need to set an example for them in everything – in the fear of God, zeal, work, diligence, respect, humility, obedience, and even rest:

„The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, ,Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest. “

Mark 6:30-32

Once again, it is only the leader who can prescribe rest for the team. Its members will listen to us and will be reluctant or even feel guilty about doing something that we have not given the green light to. So let us rest with our team. I am not saying we should be lazy. On the contrary, quality rest at the right time can boost morale, increase motivation, and deepen relationships.

Be Committed to Your Team

Agape love is the strongest driving force in the universe. The same is true in a team. If team members feel that we love them and care about them, they enjoy working for us. If they do not feel this, cooperation is cooler. The disciples of the Lord Jesus *knew* that the Lord Jesus loved them and was devoted to them:

„It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.“

John 13:1

Most of what we know about leadership and teamwork can be applied to areas other than Christianity. Love and commitment are what make the difference. Love and mutual devotion are what should characterize us as a church. The devil will never be devoted to anyone—not even *his own* people—he will never love or honor anyone.

Pray for Your Team

One of the hallmarks of a biblical leader is that he *prays and intercedes* for his team, not to mention the realization of his vision. Prayer is a powerful weapon that changes physical reality and replaces the Devil's plans with God's plans. The Lord Jesus was aware of this, and so instead of the apostle Peter falling (the Devil's plan), the apostle Peter encouraged his brothers (God's plan):

„Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.“

Luke 22:31-32

Believe us, we must not neglect or trivialize prayer. Prayer transforms our attitudes, changes our perspective, transforms circumstances, and influences the thinking of those around us. Prayer is also our investment in people. When we pray for our people and our vision, we care more about them and they matter to us. It is as if we have already put a piece of ourselves into them.

1.4 You Are Already in a Team

When we talked about leadership, it was evident that God the Father, or rather the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit, are our *leaders*. They share their vision with us, they give us everything we need to realize it, and they believe that we can realize it. Moving on to the chapter on teamwork, we will see that our relationship with God – our personal and the church as a whole – is largely about *teamwork*. Teamwork can work well or it can work poorly. If we want it to work well and we want to help the team *maximally*, we need to be *adaptable*, as versatile as possible, and *giving* to the team.

Obviously, the Lord is a great team player. He is adaptable, he approaches us individually. He is versatile, he meets our every need. He is delivered to us, laid down His life for us, and gave us everything we need to live. On the other hand, are we equally committed to him or to his team? If not, what can we do to be surrendered to our teammates and work well with them?

You and the Lord Are a Team

We all want to be part of a good team. That is clear. No one wants to get stuck in life because of a bad team choice. But when we think about a good team, we should first look at what kind of players we actually are. If we are not a for team, we should work on that. If we are, praise the Lord. But let us think for a moment about our relationship with the Lord Jesus.

We call him the Lord Jesus. He is our Lord, our leader. But do we really follow him and his commands? We may never have thought about it, but if we want to live life with God, we need to be good partners with Him. If we want to experience with God all that He promises, we must give ourselves to Him as fully as He is given to us:

„And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.“

2. Corinthians 5:15

And mutual commitment is the basis of *every quality* teamwork. It is not just about leaders, as we wrote in the first part. It is about the *approach* of everyone involved. Only if the relationships are mutually harmonious can everything work as it should. It is about mutual commitment. We are committed to God and He is committed to us. The same applies to basic interpersonal cooperation. We are committed to our team and the team to us.

Marriage is a Team

The purpose and meaning of marriage is for two people to go through life victoriously together, showing the world that God created man and woman (Genesis 1:27). But for this to happen, it is important that both the man and the woman understand that their individual lives have come to an end through their union. Marriage as a team will only work optimally when both of them put aside their ambitions, plans and past and let the new that God has placed in them and intends for them arise.

Unfortunately, people in marriage often do not see themselves as team players, but rather see their spouse as a competitor. For these reasons, spouses may not even *ever* think of working together and fighting together *against the outside enemy*. In doing so, they are guaranteed to miss what God has for their relationship and experience hell rather than heaven on earth. Let us now look at the most famous passage in the Bible about the workings of marriage:

„Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— for we are members of his body. ‚For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.‘ This is a profound mystery—but

I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.“

Ephesians 5:21-33

Man and woman are a team, in which each has a unique *role*. The man is the head, he is the leader. But the woman is an equal help. She is not just a number. She is an important helper, a collaborator. In marriage, as in any other team, we see that the man, the leader, is to *attach* to his wife, *love her*, and *lay down his life for her*. He must also be subject to God's authority. These aspects, which are often lacking in marriage, along with *disrespect*, cause the dysfunction of this team unit. If both spouses begin to approach their relationship as a team effort with all of the above, it will shift to another dimension.

The Church Leaders Are a Team

When we think about leadership and teamwork in a Christian setting, let us remember that not only are we a team with God, but the church is a team. So our thinking should be team through and through. The Apostle Paul describes the church as a body. And the church, like our physical body, is a *clearly defined* team. We all know what parts our body is made up of. We know where the leadership of our body is and we know that the rest of the body must follow that leadership. As soon as some parts of the body do not respond to the signals sent to them, or respond badly, we have a problem. We call this condition *disease*. It is the same with the church. The church has a clearly defined leadership, the Lord Jesus or the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we need to follow and obey him. The Bible is clear in several places about how the different parts of the body are to look, interact, and function in mutual *symbiosis*. For example, look at this passage:

„So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.“

Ephesians 4:11-13

We see that the Lord Jesus put this team together for a purpose. His purpose is that we would grow into His likeness. The team includes the apostles – they de facto give the church *direction*; the prophets – they emphasize *relationship with God*; the teachers – *train* the saints; the evangelists – they want to *reach* the outside world; the shepherds – *keep everything* together. This complex five provides all that is needed for the church to move forward, have a relationship with God, train people, reach the world, and provide fellowship for people. We talk more about this in the chapter on Team Training. If we do not have those people on our team, we as leaders need to keep that in mind and balance that out. The Lord Jesus handled this as well.

The Church Is a Team

In addition to the five ministries described above, the Bible is clear that *every* other person is very important to the body as a whole. Each of us needs the fellowship of the church; we depend on each

other. The Bible clearly speaks of teamwork in the church, not the individualism that is often presented to us today.

„Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many. Now if the foot should say, ‚Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,‘ it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, ‚Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,‘ it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, ‚I don’t need you!‘ And the head cannot say to the feet, ‚I don’t need you!‘ On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.“

1. Corinthians 12:12-26

Let us note that God Himself *assembled* this team. It is a team in which everyone has a place. Let’s find it for ourselves. Let us remember that we are not to compare ourselves with others, but to be careful to do the task God has given us.

1.5 Advantages of Teamwork

But the question that arises for many of us is – why to have a team? Why should we work in a team and not do everything ourselves? Why, for example, should we spend time with people even if we feel they are holding us back? There could be several reasons. For example, sharing testimonies with like-minded people will encourage us. People with different views can in turn enrich us. A team can multiply our potential and eliminate our weaknesses. In a team, we are also confronted with the opinions of others and this, too, moves us forward. Last but not least, as a team that works, we can do much more than we can as individuals.

The Team Will Multiply Your Potential

There are many wonderful examples in the Bible of how two or more people accomplished far more than an individual. The letters of the Apostle Paul would not have reached us without the people who wrote them. The Acts of the Apostles and Luke’s Gospel, again, we would not have had without the writer Luke. And even all of Israel could have been wiped out long ago if it were not for people like Mordecai and Esther working together. Let us take a closer look at this story. Mordecai had wisdom from God, and Esther, the daughter of Mordecai’s uncle, had a prominent position in the empire. By the *united* forces in their time, they were able to avert the *evil* that was about to befall the Judeans. They

could not have done it without each other. Their cooperation did not come about by itself. Mordecai had to initiate the cooperation. In a tense situation, Mordecai told Esther:

„he sent back this answer: ‚Do not think that because you are in the king’s house you alone of all the Jews will escape. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?‘“

Esther 4:13-14

So let us be inspired by it, let us want to work with others. Let us think and pray about with whom we can cooperate in God’s work, so that the effect will be as great as possible. Let us also multiply the potential God has given us. We will help God’s cause more and better as a *team* than as individuals.

The Team Eliminates Your Weaknesses

The previous example already shows that the team multiplies the potential of individuals. Moreover, the team helps to *eliminate* our weaknesses. We will illustrate this aspect in the story of Elijah and Elisha. Elijah was given three tasks by God at Horeb – to anoint Elisha as prophet instead of himself, Hazael as king over Aram, and Jehu as king over Israel:

„The Lord said to him, ‚Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet. Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death any who escape the sword of Jehu. ‘“

1. Kings 19:15-17

But of these tasks, he fulfilled only the last, the anointing of Elisha. The other tasks, apparently because of his disobedience, he did not fulfill. And it was his co-worker and disciple Elisha who eliminated this weakness in the future. And he completed the other two tasks.

The Team Will Develop You Personally

Teamwork has another advantage. Working and communicating with others develops our personality. Obviously, if we are alone, we are not confronted with the opinions of others. Alternatively, if we talk to someone and disagree with them, we do not have to talk to them in the future. But that changes if we are on the same team. Because we cannot just *escape* from the team. And that is the beauty of teamwork. People are forced to think about their opinions, to respect others, to humble themselves, and to learn to listen. As it says in Proverbs:

„As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another. “

Proverbs 27:17

This is one of the benefits I appreciate most about working as part of a team. How many times have I been in a situation where my opinion was not the best, or not well supported or communicated. By working in a team, I learn to *think* about my beliefs from more angles, communicate better, and understand others better.

The Team Provides You Fellowship

Last but not least, working in a team gives us a community, a fellowship. I have heard this observation from many sides within the church that people have the strongest relationships with people with whom they have done and experienced something. With whom they have held joint events or evangelism. If we work together as a team, we experience the ups and downs together. We experience things with God, we move together, we rejoice and we cry together. People without a team do not have all that. As the Apostle Paul writes in Romans:

„Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.“

Romans 12:15-16

Community is something that a lonely person does not have and that is a shame. So let us want to be part of the team too. But let us not forget that in order to have a community, the relationships *must* be mutual. Let us not only want to take love from others, let us also want to give it. We can do it!

The Team Will Provide You with Solid Relationships

The Lord's Last Supper with the disciples reveals another reason *why* the choice of the team is so important. One reason is the *relationships*. The fact that the Lord Jesus *dined* with His disciples *expressed friendship and relationship*. Eating together had the meaning of *I am a friend, I will not betray you*. This is one of the reasons why it is really *important* to be part of a good team that is also going in the right direction. Because people who *do* and *experience* something together form strong relational bonds – these people know each other and can rely on each other. Unless they are traitors as Judas. On the other hand, a lot of people who *know* that they are part of the wrong team will not leave that team because they have *relationships* there. Relationships are very sensitive, but when we need to, let us not be afraid to leave. It is the only way to make room for new challenges and new relationships:

„While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, ‚Take it; this is my body.‘ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it. ‚This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many,‘ he said to them. ‚Truly I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.‘ When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.“

Mark 14:22-26

The Lord's Last Supper with the disciples reveals an even deeper reality than just solid relationships. The Lord Jesus anchored His relationship with the disciples in a *covenant*. If we are really going to go into deep things with the Lord and with those around us, we need to know that we are bound to those around us. Generally speaking, our covenant with God means that we are *automatically* in covenant with everyone who is also in covenant with God. We are not saying that we are mutually committed to everyone we work with in this way, but there is nothing like finding a team of people with whom we can and *want* to have such relationships. So let us want to find a team and relationships where mutual

surrender is automatic. For example, the blood covenant implies that if our covenant brother is in need, we are obligated to help him, or that if our blood brother *dies*, we are obligated to *take care* of his family.

1.6 How to Put Together a Team

It really *matters* in what team one is. We can see this in the example of the Israelites going to the Promised Land. They decided to pick a team of 12 scouts. They were all leading men of the people. These spies *explored* the land and reported on it. However, only Joshua and Caleb encouraged the people that they would take the land with God. The other ten *slandered* the land. Based on this, the people *decided* not to go to the Promised Land. And all the brave ones, Moses, Caleb, and Joshua, had to submit:

„At the end of forty days they returned from exploring the land. They came back to Moses and Aaron and the whole Israelite community at Kadesh in the Desert of Paran. There they reported to them and to the whole assembly and showed them the fruit of the land. They gave Moses this account: ‚We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit. But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak there. The Amalekites live in the Negev; the Hittites, Jebusites and Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live near the sea and along the Jordan.‘ Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, ‚We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it.‘ But the men who had gone up with him said, ‚We can’t attack those people; they are stronger than we are.‘“

Numbers 14:25-31

In life we come across teamwork very often and this story shows how crucial it is to be part of a *good* team. Joshua and Caleb could have trusted God all they wanted, but because they were part of the *bad* team, they had to submit in the end. God, of course, saw who was doing the voting, and eventually Joshua and Caleb were the only ones to reach the Promised Land. However, it took 40 years longer. So if we have a choice, it is very important not to underestimate the choice of the team we are or will be part of. It is better to be an average member of a good team than to be an excellent member of a bad team. With a good team, we can *fulfill* God’s plans and expand ourselves. With a bad team, we can shine, but we can also get pretty stuck in life.

The Team Must Match Your Vision

We now understand the importance of the team, its benefits, the position of leadership, and that everything about the church revolves around teamwork. So now the question becomes: what is the vision God is showing you? Obviously, everything will align with the Great Commission that our Lord has given us. However, within His mission, the vision we have to say may be somewhat specific. And depending on what vision we have, we need to assemble a team. Let us look at what the Apostle Paul’s vision was, for example:

„It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else’s foundation. Rather, as it is written: ,Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand.‘“

Romans 15:20-21

It is clear that if we want to start new churches, different people will join us than if we have at heart to teach the church, change the church culture, bring some forgotten truth back into the church, stir up the church, bring people more into relationship with God, improve existing fellowship, or improve the church’s outreach to the outside world. All of these things have their place, and teams that focus on these different aspects should seek to understand and work together. Let us also remember that visions from God are born through prayer and are shaped, developed and implemented through prayer.

What Kind of Vision Do You Have?

If we know what God is putting on our hearts, it is good to define what type of vision we have. Is it a new challenge? Is it a short-term idea, or rather a long-term plan? Do we want to reach the church environment or the whole society? Will it be a vision that is challenging to implement? Do we need a diversity of perspectives on the team to achieve the vision, or do we need people to think alike? These are all important questions you need to ask yourself sooner or later. Because what we deliver may not be suitable for everyone. We can see this in the example of the Lord Jesus:

„As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, ,I will follow you wherever you go.‘ Jesus replied, ,Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.‘ He said to another man, ,Follow me.‘ But he replied, ,Lord, first let me go and bury my father.‘ Jesus said to him, ,Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.‘ Still another said, ,I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family.‘ Jesus replied, ,No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.‘“

Luke 9:57-62

Answering these questions and articulating what we are actually after may not always be easy. When I started Connect, there was already a vision from the Lord in my heart. At the time, I was not able to articulate it. The co-author of this book, Honza, was especially helpful in articulating the vision. Over time, he then gave me tips on how to move the vision forward, for example with thought-provoking questions. This is also why it is good to have people around you and not to work solo.

How Big Is Our Vision?

Another good question is how *great* is our vision. Is it a vision for our congregation or for our neighborhood? Do we want to reach the whole nation or the whole world? Obviously, our vision, whatever it is, is not going to start big. It starts small. It is also possible that our vision will grow bigger and bigger over time. We can see the same thing in the example of the Lord Jesus. First, he did everything by himself, then he called 12 disciples, then 70 more, and finally empowered all Christians across the ages:

„When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases. After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. And these signs will accompany those who believe... “

Luke 9:1.10:1 + Mark 16:17a

So whatever stage our vision is at, it is clear that the size of the team must match the size of our vision. We had a similar situation with Connect. At first, we did and organized everything in a few people. Over time, as the work grew, we grew the team. Hand in hand with this, we also empowered team members to make decisions about parts of the vision. As a result, the work did not stop, but rather evolved, and no one got overworked.

What Kind of Team Do You Need?

The type of vision and the size of the vision is also related to the type of team we need. If we have a new challenge, we need creative people. For a long-term challenge, we need committed and persistent people. In a difficult challenge, we need to motivate people. Sometimes we do not mind having beginners on the team, other times we need really experienced people. The good news for all of us is that our Lord Jesus also thinks strategically. When he wants to do something, he pulls people to him who are suited for the job. This happened to the church in Antioch for example:

„Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‚Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.‘ So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. “

Acts 13:1-3

So it is clear that we need to reckon with God in everything we do. He is the genius and chief strategist. When we pray in faith, things happen. We see the Lord Himself doing. He brings the people we need – or He needs for the work. He links and connects us. We just need to not be blind, to find the courage to reach out to these people, to explain the vision, and to engage them.

Set up a Team

Another issue related to team building is *how* to bring people into the team. If we are just putting together a team, we do not have to worry too much about anyone else when making our choice. If we already have a team and we want to add or expand it, it is a good idea to consult with *other* team members. It is possible that they will want to have their say as well. Personally, whenever the team has been renewed or expanded, I have always gone around individually to all the people involved to discuss my future plans with them. I am not saying it is the only way, but I avoided a potential disagreement. The apostles Paul and Barnabas, however, did not escape it. However, this did not mean that the Lord would use them any less:

„Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord. He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.“

Acts 15:37-41

One of the principles that has also worked well for us is that we agree with people for a certain period of time, for example, one year. We know that this is unusual in the church, but it gives us a sense of security for a period of time, and again the people on the team feel free that there is a time when they can easily leave or move on in life and ministry. At the same time, this setup helps us *keep the morale* of the team, maintains *dynamics* and the common ministry is not indefinite and dispersed. We also try to mix more experienced people with less experienced people. We give the more experienced more responsibility and the less experienced have space to grow.

1.7 A good team

As we mentioned above, it is not enough to be part of a team, it is important to be part of a *good* team. Coworkers significantly influence the success and failure of our actions and therefore have an impact on the *where* we go in life. Let us now look at some of the characteristics that a good team needs to have.

Follow God Together

The essential characteristic of a good team is that it *goes in a good direction*. This is only possible when *the whole team* is determined to follow the Holy Spirit fully. At that moment, there is unity in the team, not forced, but by the same Spirit of God. Everyone is then united and in the same boat. The early church followed God and it is evident that even God Himself spoke to their decisions:

„So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul—men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing. It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things.“

Acts 15:25-29a

We have been part of several teams and we have to say that if we want deep relationships, we need to be of the same conviction and we need to be all surrendered to God. For we soon discovered that it is the unity, not the quantity, that the spiritual world responds to (Matthew 18:18-20). On the other hand, there is a risk that if we are all of the same beliefs and opinions, we will live in a bubble and begin to lose touch with the environmental world. So it is good to talk even to people with whom we disagree. But let us do it in wisdom.

Embrace a Vision

Not only is a good leader committed to his team and a good team committed to its leader, but a good team is committed to the vision of the leader. If we are committed to something, we are not concerned with time, overtime, amount of work or finances. If we are truly living for the Lord, there are no limits to that:

„Calling the Twelve to him, he began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over impure spirits. These were his instructions: ‚Take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. Wear sandals but not an extra shirt.‘ The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, ‚Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.‘ So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. “

Mark 6:7-9.30-32

Let us also note three other aspects that this release brings up. First, the closer we are to the leader and his vision, the more the leader *shares* with us. The second aspect is that if we are part of a good team, we take it *as a privilege* and want to be a part of *everything* the team does. Nobody is forcing us to be everywhere all the time, we simply want to be there. And thirdly, if we are part of a good team, if the team chemistry works, we feel a *responsibility* to the team and we simply do not want to let them down.

See Yourself as One

And what else does it mean to be given over to vision? To be given over to a vision also means that we are *identified* with it, we take it as our own and present it as such. It means that we do not separate ourselves from the team, but see ourselves as part of it. Note, for example, that even our Lord had His own will, but He knew the Father's will, united Himself with it, and referred to Him in everything He did. The same is expected of us in our relationship with God. And it is the same with the vision of the team we are on. Look at how the Apostle Peter, for example, saw himself as one with the Lord Jesus:

„As Peter traveled about the country, he went to visit the Lord's people who lived in Lydda. There he found a man named Aeneas, who was paralyzed and had been bedridden for eight years. ‚Aeneas,‘ Peter said to him, ‚Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and roll up your mat.‘ Immediately Aeneas got up. All those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord. “

Acts 9:32-35

We may not always get it, but the apostle Peter used *the* name: Jesus. With the Lord Jesus, as in marriage, we share the same name. It is our privilege and right when we are on His team. So let us think about how much we separate ourselves from God and how much we separate ourselves from people. Do we speak of God's Word as something precious to us or as something abstract? And how do we talk about the vision of which we are a part? Do we present it as our own or as someone else's vision?

Pray Together

To see ourselves as one, we need to switch from carnal thinking (what we see with our eyes) to spiritual thinking (what God's Word says). This, in addition to studying God's Word, is aided by corporate prayer:

„When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. ‚Sovereign Lord,‘ they said, ‚you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: »Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed one.« Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.‘ After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.“

Acts 4:24-31

Prayer is something we agree on as believers. Prayer releases the operation of the Spirit, and the Spirit works a unity among us. That same Spirit gives people the same ideas, and thus greatly facilitates and effects teamwork. In addition, his action spurs us to action. And as we see in the early church, when *all* were filled with it, *all* then acted boldly.

Trust Each Other

A good team *can* and *must* trust each other. We can take an example here from David and Jonathan. Saul, Jonathan's father, sought David's life. But Jonathan had a covenant with David, and that covenant meant more to him than family ties. Because of his relationship with Jonathan, David was finally able to learn how serious the situation was and was able to save his life:

„Then Jonathan said to David, ‚Tomorrow is the New Moon feast. You will be missed, because your seat will be empty. The day after tomorrow, toward evening, go to the place where you hid when this trouble began, and wait by the stone Ezel. I will shoot three arrows to the side of it, as though I were shooting at a target. Then I will send a boy and say, »Go, find the arrows.« If I say to him, »Look, the arrows are on this side of you; bring them here,« then come, because, as surely as the Lord lives, you are safe; there is no danger. But if I say to the boy, ‚Look, the arrows are beyond you,‘ then you must go, because the Lord has sent you away. And about the matter you and I discussed—remember, the Lord is witness between you and me forever.‘“

1. Samuel 20:18-23

Obviously, we need to trust each other. To the extent that we trust each other in the team, to that extent we can go together. Let us all think about what is it that is preventing us from trusting each other in our team and how we can strengthen that trust. For it is on mutual distrust or betrayal, even between the closest people, that everything can ultimately fail, as in the case of Judas and the Lord Jesus.

Keep Each Other Informed of all Developments

It is the job of the leader and the team to keep each other in the loop. The leader should communicate to the team how they are doing – if everything is going according to plan, where the weak spots are, where they are doing better. Each team member has the right to *know* how the team is doing. On the other hand, team members can also take an active interest and want to be kept in the loop. Such interest will make many a leader happy. Even the Lord's disciples were interested in how things were going:

„As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. ‚Tell us,‘ they said, ‚when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?‘“

Matthew 24:3

Communication in general is the key to success and concealment leads to nothing. In addition, if we are leading other leaders, it is obvious that at least they want to be in the loop. They want to evaluate the situation themselves and discuss the state of affairs. They also want and need to know how they themselves stand within our vision. This is of course fine, it belongs to the learning process.

But these people, our collaborators, are not here to be our puppets and to be controlled by us. These people need to spend time with us and they need to know what the vision is, how we plan to achieve it and they need to see clear steps to achieve it.

Work Together

If we want to have a successful team, we need to be able to work together in all conditions, moods and situations around us. This means that sometimes working as a team will be uncomfortable or detrimental to our comfort. We can look at the example of the disciples Philip, Peter and John in the book of Acts:

„Simon himself believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw. When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria. When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.“

Acts 8:13-17

This example is not the only way for the church to act – who is to bring people to the Lord, baptize them in water, and who is to baptize them in the Holy Spirit. However, it illustrates one fact beautifully. When the apostles heard that there was a revival in Samaria, they immediately sent the apostles Peter and John to help Philip. Note that Peter and John *were not complaining* that Philip had given them more work, on the contrary, they *were glad* that they could lend a hand to the work (Acts 8:4-17). A similar cooperation and division of tasks can be noticed, for example, with Joshua, Aaron, and Hur (Exodus 17:8-13). This ideal state is only possible when all are surrendered to the *vision*, have it as their own, they breathe for it. If anyone is set up otherwise, he will slow down the team.

Communicate Together

Open, natural communication is the basis of all cooperation. The leader needs to discuss everything with the team and the team with the leader. The team needs to communicate with each other and at the same time everyone needs to have contact with the outside world. It is important to set up the functioning of the team so that people are not afraid to talk. So that they are not afraid to bring their suggestions, ideas, or make comments or express disagreement. If we stifle communication within the team, it will not solve the problems, but rather start to accumulate skeletons in the closet:

„Then after fourteen years, I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. I went in response to a revelation and, meeting privately with those esteemed as leaders, I presented to them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. I wanted to be sure I was not running and had not been running my race in vain. On the contrary, they recognized that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised. For God, who was at work in Peter as an apostle to the circumcised, was also at work in me as an apostle to the Gentiles. James, Cephas and John, those esteemed as pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised.“

Galatians 2:1-2.7-9

We can notice that communication can be really at a *high* level. The apostle Paul was not afraid at all to go to the apostle Peter with what the Lord was putting on his heart, and we can notice that Peter, even though the Spirit of God was working in him in a different way, did not hinder Paul, but gave him the *green light* to continue what he was called to do. So let us be open, let us not trample on the work of God in other people, especially those on our team.

It is also important that we agree on appropriate channels of communication and forms of discussion. Appropriate communication channels help efficiency and avoid misunderstandings. For example, we have proven that it is not good to use text messages, Messenger and similar applications to resolve conflicts. People do not see each other, do not know what each other is thinking and problems escalate rather than get resolved. Let us create an environment of respect amongst each other where people are not afraid to bring ideas and different opinions.

Solve Problems Together

Where there are people, there were, are and will be problems. One of the signs of a good team is that it solves problems. In such a team, problems can be solved by the individuals themselves without taking offence or transferring negative emotions to others. At the same time, the leader can talk about problems in a substantive way. It is only natural for people in a team to bump into each other, grind, confront and move on. But everything must be done in love and with the goal of moving forward together. Let us look at problem solving in the early church:

„The apostles and elders met to consider this question. After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: ‚Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe.‘ Then the apostles and elders, with the whole

church, decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas (called Barsabbas) and Silas, men who were leaders among the believers.“

Acts 15:6-7.22

However, when it comes to communication and problem solving, we can go further. *We can solve problems as a team together.* I do not mean that we discuss every little thing in front of everyone. Even the Bible leads us to discuss problems first in person, then with witnesses, and finally with everyone. I am writing here about a team where there are people who *really want to be on it, agree with the vision* and are determined *to go in the same direction.* Then the basic issues are no longer dealt with, but relationships can go deep and we can *talk together about the problems that arise because no one who is on the team feels threatened.* The team prays together for the issue and seeks the Lord's will without anyone being oppressed or manipulated. This is the desired state where people walk together in the light and can afford to live open lives with each other because they feel safe with each other.

Have a Broad Base

One of the characteristics and advantages of a good team is that it has a *broad team*. Note that even though Judas betrayed the Lord and his team, the apostles were able to *immediately* replace him. This was very important in order for the work to continue to the same extent and intensity as originally planned:

„For,‘ said Peter, ,it is written in the Book of Psalms: »May his place be deserted; let there be no one to dwell in it,« and, »May another take his place of leadership.« Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus was living among us, beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection.‘ So they nominated two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. Then they prayed, ,Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs.‘ Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.“

Acts 1:20-26

It is always important to have a broad base. If we have more quality people than we need, it keeps the motivation of our „base“ to keep them from being replaced, for example in the further development of the community or in the redistribution of tasks. At the same time, it increases the overall quality of the team by having people train against their peers during training activities. And last but not least, when anyone is absent, we have adequate back up.

On the other hand, we must not forget to actively involve our co-workers from the „bench“ in the action. They need to know that they are valuable to the team. They need to know their *why*. Why they are here, why they do what they do, and get kind and factual answers to all their questions. They need to know their plan of engagement. Otherwise, the risk is that they will leave wherever they get a place in the „base“.

1.8 The Challenges of Teamwork

In addition to its undeniable advantages, teamwork has its pitfalls. We truly believe that working in a team is much better than working alone. Anyway, if we want to enjoy teamwork and not suffer, it is good to avoid some situations. We indicate these aspects in the following points. Some of them are directed to the team members, some to the leaders and some to everyone involved.

It Is Not Determined Who Is the Leader

From time to time it is necessary to clarify who is actually the *leader* of the team. Sometimes it is obvious, sometimes not. There can be a number of reasons *why* it is not clear. For example, the team may have been formed spontaneously or out of passion for the cause and no one initially addressed the question of *who sets the direction*. At other times, *another* strong personality may grow up in the team alongside the leader and may *disagree with him/her*. Either way, the problem has to be addressed. One way of dealing with it was shown by the apostles Paul and Barnabas when they quarreled over John Mark:

„Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, ‚Let us go back and visit the believers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.‘ Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. “

Acts 15:36-39a

Joshua showed a different approach to functioning on the team. He was apparently spending more time with God than Moses, but *never* going against him. Finally, it was he to whom Moses *gave* leadership (Exodus 33:11; Deuteronomy 31:7-8). Whatever our case, let us not be afraid to leave if we really cannot identify with the vision, nor be afraid to stay if there is no pressure to leave.

Inability of the Leader to Lead Other Leaders in the Team

The skill we need to learn is the art of *lead* other leaders. It is possible that there will be people in our team who are leaders, or at least have the inclination to lead. Of course, everyone has the potential to be a leader, but there are some people who are more *inclined* to lead others. If we do not learn to work with them, there is a risk that they will go in a different direction than we are going and that will bring tension to the team. The Lord Jesus had such people on his team:

„From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ‚Never, Lord!‘ he said. ‚This shall never happen to you!‘ Jesus turned and said to Peter, ‚Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns. “

Matthew 16:21-23

Naturally, leaders exhibit some specific characteristics. For example, they have an opinion. Other times they talk too much into leadership itself. They also want to be in the loop all the time. They are not content to follow us blindly. They want to know *why*. Why they are going in a given direction, where they are going, how they will be involved, or why they are part of the team. These are all legitimate questions that make our lives as leaders uncomfortable if we are unsure of ourselves, the functioning of the team, or the overall vision. But we should not silence such people. On the contrary, we should speak clearly, keep them informed, give them space and opportunities, and make it clear that they are *necessary* for the whole work.

Diversity of Team Members

Keep in mind that the team includes *various* people. The Bible is written quite generally and makes it clear what every disciple of the Lord is to do. But that does not mean we are all supposed to be the same. We occupy the same position as sons of God in relation to the spiritual and physical world. Let us imagine this in the example of a police department. Every police officer you meet on the street has the same uniform, equipment and authority. If you knew each of the police officers personally, you would find that they are very diverse people. And so we, too, have the same mission from God, but we are different from each other, and in teamwork we need to reflect that. Even Lord Jesus had to wrestle with that. In addition to the initiative disciples already mentioned, the apostles Peter, James and John, he had the nationalist Simon the Zealot, the tax collector Matthew, and the cautious Thomas on his team:

„Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, ‚We have seen the Lord!’ But he said to them, ‚Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.’“

John 20:24-25

As leaders and as team members, we will often be confronted with the fact that people *are* different. On a team we may have brothers who are enthusiastic, reserved, discreet, abrupt, reluctant, and subtle. We will have brothers on the team who are spontaneous, immediate, flexible and those who plan long in advance. As leaders, we need to learn not to put anyone down, but to approach them as they require. In fact, in addition to fulfilling our vision, we are here as leaders to develop those on our team, to guide them, to help them grow, and to work with them in a way that they can move in the direction God calls them.

For example, we need to give clear *direction* to beginners. Cautious people should be encouraged. Hard-working people should be given responsibility, but also be mindful of not taking on too much of the agenda. We will tell some people on the team that they can do more, and we will hold others back from working harder. But these are things we will only learn through practice, and team to team will be different. Either way, we all need to learn to work together, to have each other's backs and move past our weaknesses and in turn give each other room in our strengths.

Not Everyone Has His Place

When we lead a team we also need to find everyone's place. To work effectively, it is ideal if a person holds a position within the team in which they have a clear advantage over others. This division of labour, where everyone *specializes* in what they are best at, brings maximum benefit to the whole team. Of course, a person's role can change over time, both *of the team* as well as *in the team*. Therefore, it is best if our co-workers are as versatile as possible. We can use them for practically anything, which as leaders we will appreciate sooner or later.

„The eye cannot say to the hand, ‚I don't need you!‘ And the head cannot say to the feet, ‚I don't need you!‘“

1. Corinthians 12:20-21

Let us always keep in mind that every *team* role is important. I think this is also the dilemma of many Christians. They often want to live someone else's life and forget that what they do is important too. Obviously, as the *body of Christ*, we need each other. Let us also remember that our primary motivation for working as a team should not be to take from others, but to *give* something.

A Weak Link

Each team is only as strong as its *weakest* link. This is important to remember in the work of the church. Yes, the church *is* for everyone and everyone has access to it, no matter what their personal qualities, merits in life or social status. But if we want to work in the common work, we have to think in a different way. Otherwise, it is possible that the work will fail on lazy people or Judases:

„But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, ‚Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages.‘ He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.“

John 12:4-6

Our team is not for everyone. Let us define what we want to achieve or what type of people we need in the team. If we do not do this, it is possible that we will have someone on the team who will *block* the work, we will have to *wait* for them, and we will risk that other, key team members will want to *leave* the team.

On the other hand, we are not saying that every seemingly incompatible person should be fired. But if a leader is unable to help someone grow, that person should be given space elsewhere. In deciding what is an appropriate solution in a given situation, the attitude of not only the leader but everyone, including the weak link himself, is important. If there is good communication and a willingness to *balance* the gaps in the team, anyone can become better. If the weak link himself does not want to move on for whatever reason, it is better for him to leave the team without shame. If people are malleable and want to work, such separations will be minimal.

Superstar in the Team

For teamwork one needs *team* players. And that is where the problem comes in with what we call *superstar* players. We do not see the problem with their success. The vice of the *superstar* is their career as a soloist. And that can be a stumbling block to teamwork and discipleship:

„So Joseph went after his brothers and found them near Dothan. But they saw him in the distance, and before he reached them, they plotted to kill him. ‚Here comes that dreamer!’ they said to each other. ‚Come now, let’s kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we’ll see what comes of his dreams.’“

Genesis 37:17b-20

The *Superstar* are mostly gifted people, in whose presence we *want* to be. However, unless they learn humility and submission, working with them will be difficult. It is easier to work with those who are *want* to work and are persistent in their efforts than with those who are *gifted* but do not want to work hard. Plus, hardworking and disciplined people will go *further*. If we motivate *superstars* to work as a team, it is great. If not, the presence of such a person should be considered. *Superstar* can have a great added value. On the other hand, they can have a negative impact on the team’s morale with their mannerisms that no one else will allow themselves. *Every* man is replaceable in God’s work.

Division

One of the biggest pitfalls of any teamwork is *division*. The devil tries to achieve it at all levels. He tries to achieve it between us and God, between us and our spouse, and within our team. All of us involved need to be aware of this and not get caught in this trap. For example, we can take inspiration from the Lord who lost only one person in three years:

„While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.”

John 17:12

As leaders, we also do not have to wait for the risk of division to occur. We can proactively take steps to prevent potential division. For example, we can cultivate an atmosphere where people trust each other, know each other, know who is who, how each person handles finances or how they spend their free time. We can say that our privacy is nobody’s business, but when disputes arise, immature people will start to bring this to the surface. So it is good, and actually necessary, to be accountable to each other.

At the same time, we as leaders need to sense problems, prevent them and address them as soon as possible. We are responsible for the atmosphere in the team. If we do not do this, the risk of division increases. That is why we try to nip every problem at Connect in the bud. This has not always been the case, but we have concluded that this approach brings the least pain and loss.

Independence of Team Members

When someone on the team becomes overly confident and starts to succeed, they may feel that they would do even better *without the others*. This can be a strong temptation, but as a rule, it is good *not to abandon* those with whom we started. Lot, for example, paid dearly for violating this principle:

„And quarreling arose between Abram’s herders and Lot’s. The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land at that time. So Abram said to Lot, ‘Let’s not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herders and mine, for we are close relatives. Is not the whole land before you? Let’s part company. If you go to the left, I’ll go to the right; if you go to the right, I’ll go to the left.’“

Genesis 13:7-9

Abraham knew that wherever he went, he would prosper because God was with him. Lot did not know much about God, in fact, he prospered because of Abraham. So let us not grow wings, let us learn to trust in God and let us also think that our success does not always have to depend on us.

Lack of Vision, Imbalance of Work and Rest

Already Proverbs 29:18 says that *without* vision people perish. So, if our team, congregation, or youth do not have a clear vision and direction, after the initial excitement, people will either get off track or start looking for work elsewhere. Vision is the engine and people are willing to sacrifice their time, resources and comfort for it.

„Then Peter spoke up, ‘We have left everything to follow you!’ Truly I tell you, ‘Jesus replied, ‘no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life.’“

Mark 10:28-30

On the other hand, if we do not lead people to a relationship with God, it is possible that they will begin to work mechanically and the life will be drained out of the work together. If we do not train them, there is a risk that we will not have enough experienced people for the next steps the Lord is preparing for us. Without work, we will be detached from reality. Without rest, our people can be overworked. So it is important to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit and bring what is needed to keep the team healthily balanced and not suffering.

The Loneliness of the Leader

As leaders we will initially be on *different wavelength* than our followers. There is nothing surprising about that. It is clear that the leader has a *vision* that he needs to gradually get others excited about. Moreover, it is possible that the leader has more experience or different experiences than others. The leader’s job is to get everyone on the *same page*. If the people on the team really have the *interest*, the thought processes will align:

„The disciples had forgotten to bring bread, except for one loaf they had with them in the boat. Be careful,‘ Jesus warned them. ‘Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod.’ They discussed

this with one another and said, 'It is because we have no bread.' Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked them: 'Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear?'“

Mark 8:14-18a

The great danger for a leader is that despite having a good team, he or she will experience *loneliness*. One of the causes of this is that the people he or she leads are inexperienced in leadership. Thus, they do not understand how a leader thinks. This can be fundamentally addressed in two ways: the leader can give space for others to lead and then they too will gain leadership experience. Or he can team up with other leaders who will understand him.

Micromanagement

As leaders we should be able to delegate work, activities and responsibilities. If we do not delegate, not only can others not grow, but we are in danger of not doing what we are supposed to do. But eventually the people in our environment will be dissatisfied:

„In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, 'It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.' This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. “

Acts 6:1-5

The burden of the first tasks rests on the shoulders of leaders. It is clear that a person with a clear vision knows best how to implement everything. However, there comes a point when leaders *must* begin to delegate. Even Jesus managed to do this. Jesus first *organized* 12 people and sent them out in pairs. But then he was able to organize up to 72 people. If we do not delegate, others suffer and we do not devote ourselves to what we should. Our distrust of people then affects both the development of our vision and our colleagues. So let us not be afraid of a larger team. More people create a more stable environment and eliminate unwanted excesses. However, with more people, it is even more important that everyone knows what their role is and who is responsible for what. This will prevent inefficiency and *public grazing*.

2 Get the Team Ready for Battle

We have already gone over the basics of leadership, teamwork and the state of the outside world. Now we can look at how to wage a more systematic war. A war that involves many more people than just us.

Imagine ourselves as soldiers. When we join the army, what happens? They shave our head, give us a uniform and immediately expect us to start thinking and behaving like soldiers. So we have a completely new identity and if we do not accept everything that being a soldier means, we have a problem. We have to get up early, go to roll call and warm-ups, undergo hard training and say: „Yes, Lord!“ Our lives become secondary and our priority is suddenly to represent our country, defend it and, if necessary, lay down our lives for it. We have a battle mission, a calling.

The state, on the other hand, takes care of us. It provides us with housing, food, health care and security for our families. The government takes care of our needs, but we are obliged to take care of theirs. It is the same with God. Once we are born again, we are given a new identity. Our old life must go. We have become citizens of God's kingdom. With Christ, God has given us *everything* we need for life and godliness. We lack nothing; every area of our lives is taken care of. However, God expects us to live for Him and for the interests of His kingdom now.

By maintaining this conscious balance, we avoid two possible extremes. First, our Christianity will not be all about us, about the promises God has to fulfill in our lives. Second, we will leave a passive role – there is a mission to fulfill. It is *our battle* that we must fight and win for the kingdom of God.

2.1 Church, a Place of Training

When we talk about the church, many people think of terms like family or community. That's okay, of course. However, the Bible also speaks of the church as a place of *training*. And we must not neglect this aspect either. The Apostle Paul writes:

„So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.“

Ephesians 4:11-16

We see that the apostle Paul clearly speaks about *training and building up* believers. This *training* is to be carried out in the church by five ministries. As we have already said, these called servants are like any other believers in relation to the surrounding world. However, as far as the church is concerned, they have *greater* responsibility and authority over others. The goal of these ministries is that we may grow in every way into Christ, our model, and be built up in love. It is therefore clear that in all aspects of our lives we are to walk as our elder brother, the Lord Jesus, in the power of the Spirit and in the fruit of the Spirit.

If we want to successfully *fight the spiritual battle*, we need to have *trained* warriors. The Bible reveals that the place for their training should be *church gatherings*. There is nothing wrong with evangelism-focused gatherings, as long as there are other meetings focused on *building up* believers. However, if there are no meetings focused on the growth and development of believers, it has a devastating impact on the entire church. We have dozens or even hundreds of willing people at our disposal, and we are not utilizing their potential.

Understand the Purpose of Ministries

Let us look again at the purpose of the ministries, the reasons why they are given to the church:

„until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.“

Ephesians 4:13-16

So we see that the role of the ministries is to train, build up, edify Christians to grow up into Christ in all things. As adults, we avoid the Devil's traps and snares. Each of the ministries leaves its imprint on believers. And when we look at the Lord's life, all five traits of the ministries are evident. This is the goal for each of us. If we lack any imprint in our lives, we will be a „spiritual hybrid“ rather than a mature believer. If a ministry is missing in the church, there are a number of „spiritual hybrids“. Note that the ministries were never meant to do all the work of the church. Rather, their role is toward the church, and the church, the body of Christ, is then to serve the world. The ministries are not meant to pack people in and make them dependent on themselves. Their goal is to *send forth the believers*.

We see that without the ministries we will not be *adults* in Christ and we will not fully understand love. Let us also note the consequences of the absence of the ministries in the church: Without proper training, we will never be strong in the Spirit of God; we will be weak individuals, driven hither and thither by every breath of doctrine. This is how you know spiritual children. Moreover, children, in Greek *nēpios*, means *children, unlearned, untrained, without ability*, and in spiritual warfare they are easily subject to the enemy. the enemy is methodically working against us by *the deceitful way*, Greek *methodeia*, English *to follow a prepared plan, to use deceit*. It is obvious, therefore, that the Devil has prepared plans to follow against us, and the institute of the five ministries is intended to teach the church so that God's plans are fulfilled and not the Devil's.

Without the complete five ministries, the church will be childlike. The devil knows this, and as a true fundamentalist, he *makes sure* that he *suppresses* the ministries in the church. People are thus formed only by pastors, they do not have enough teaching about the spiritual world (from the prophets), spiritual warfare (from the apostles), or they are not skilled in preaching the gospel (teaching from the evangelists). The ministries are thus crucial to the success of the church. It is through the ministries in the church that people will grow into the likeness of Christ and reveal God to this world in *all*. And until we grow into the fullness of the likeness of Christ, there will be ministries.

Note the Order of the Ministries

Furthermore, ministries give structure and order to the church. But it is still important only for its *internal* organization. In relation to the outside world, the believer is as a believer. Think of it like a police force – there is a police chief and rank-and-file officers. But the other citizens do not care which police officer has which role. As soon as they see the badge, the uniform, and the baton, they recognize the authority of the police officer. It is the same in the spiritual world. Once we are *new creatures*, it does not matter whether we are five minutes or twenty years. The spiritual world recognizes each one of us as an authority. So the church needs quality, battle-hardened, spiritual world-knowledgeable, top-notch trainers in addition to trained and battle-trained warriors. And hand on heart, how many years have we been going to church and how many years have you been trained, coached and prepared by someone? Were we even expecting this? Now let us look at the roles of the various ministries and their order in the church:

„Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues.“

1. Corinthians 12:27-28

As long as there is a church, there are ministries. They are ordained in it. Without the ministry *is not* the church. And the first in order are the *apostles*. God does not want them to just hear His will (prophets), know the Word of God (teachers), preach to the people (evangelists), and experience rest with the Lord (pastors). All of these are important, but God wants his whole church to *know* his thoughts, intentions, purposes, strategies, and plans in the first place. He wants everything to have a head and a tail. He wants us to mobilize, understand what is going on, and act in a coordinated way. If ministries are not functioning in the church in this order, the church is not functioning properly. If we are just resting (and even this we have to in war), no one fights, we get nowhere, and eventually we get slaughtered. If we are just preaching the gospel, we may miss the point of why we are doing it. If we just want to listen to prophecy, we miss the big picture of what God is up to. Now let's look at the ministries in more detail.

Understand to the Ministries

Apostle: The word apostle comes from the Greek *apostellō*. *Apostellō* was a military unit that was sent by Rome into newly conquered territory with the aim of *bringing Roman culture*. This unit included everything from musicians to teachers. It was the experience of the Romans that when they conquered a territory, the barbarians living there tended to rebel. But when they took their native culture and gave them the Roman one with all its customs and habits, the barbarians no longer rebelled. For they had been given a new Roman identity and had nothing to go back to. The aim of the *apostellō* was to make the emperor not even *notice* that he had left Rome, to make him feel at home everywhere. We see that apostle is a military term and it is someone who is sent on a *mission* and acts with the authority of the one who sent him. Characteristically, an apostle is steadfast, firm, constant, and unshakable. Rather than teaching people, he *trains* them. He ignores his title and is always busy with the things of God. He works alone when necessary, but is delighted when someone joins him. He is strongly mission-oriented

and sees more of the needs of the church as a whole than just the needs of the local congregation. He is one who brings strategies and exposes various tactics of the enemy. He is fundamentally concerned with getting people out of their old culture enhanced by their secular upbringing and establishing Heaven on the Earth with new creatures. The apostles also bring discipleship. They are not about getting the job done, but about doing things *together* with others. In this way others will grow and the gospel will spread more easily. The apostle Paul was a typical example. We can note that he *always* brought the culture of the kingdom of God to a given place and when he had already trained a group of believers, he moved elsewhere and had the locals spread the kingdom of God around the area.

Prophet: In reading the New Testament, we find that the prophets often worked in groups (Acts 13:1; Acts 21:8-9). Prophets reveal what is currently happening in the spirit world. Their main role is to show through words of knowledge and words of wisdom what will happen and what the church is to do (Acts 11:28-30). The role of prophets in the church is crucial. For people, believers and unbelievers alike, perceive the spiritual world. But without a quality prophetic ministry, unbelievers resort to witchcraft and the occult, which reveal the spiritual world as well, but through the *other spirit* (1. Samuel 28:3-14). Again, without a prophetic ministry, people in the church do not learn to work with dreams, images, different perceptions, and the different voices they hear (1. John 4:1-6). The apostle Paul makes it clear that he wants *all* in the church to have practical experience (Greek *manthanō*, 1. Corinthians 14:31) with prophecy. Elsewhere he speaks of *all* speaking in tongues (1. Corinthians 14:5) and *all* interpreting them (1. Corinthians 14:13). These are skills we need to have *practiced* like writing and reading so we can use them in an emergency. For example, in a difficult conversation or in discerning spirits and doctrines.

Evangelist: The role of the evangelist is not just to do a great evangelism to which thousands of people will be converted. The Bible shows that the task of the ministry is not to do the *all* work, but to *equip* the saints, i.e. all believers, for the work of the ministry. Thus, the evangelist is to train other believers in healing, words of knowledge, and for the salvation of people. We have nothing against large conferences, but let us realize that even if we spend 15 days a year at conferences, the other 350 days are spent in *everyday* life. And during those days, there are plenty of one-on-one opportunities – in the workplace, at school, or in the family – where we can witness for God. In these moments, the spiritual battle is then lost or won. Evangelists will not do the work for us, but they can help us to do the Lord's work well.

Pastor: The pastoral ministry is often the most developed in the church. Shepherds make sure the flock is not attacked, protect the sheep, and heal lame sheep. When a sheep is lost, the shepherd finds it and rescues it. The most famous texts about shepherds are Psalm 23 and John chapter 10. In Psalm 23 we find aspects of a good shepherd: his sheep are not in want, he gives them rest, keeps them alive, protects them, sets a table for them even in the midst of enemies, and is kind and merciful to his sheep. Everyone loves to return to such a shepherd. In John chapter 10, we notice again that the sheep know the good shepherd, he knows them. He knows their lives and shares with them, the sheep trust him and follow him, he gives the sheep an abundant life and finally he lays down his life for them. A good shepherd is *completely* given to his flock, because he cares for the sheep.

But if the pastoral ministry that protects people is not balanced by apostles who give vision and direction, evangelists who draw people out, apostles who are concerned about reaching the whole society, prophets and teachers who build up and move believers in the prophetic realm and in knowledge, people

under pastoral ministry easily become comfortable and get the impression that all is well, and yet years later they may still be spiritual babies. At the same time, the shepherd is not there to do everything. He is not even to rule over the flock. On the contrary, he is to set an example for the flock – to become an example to emulate and to create a background from which his adult children will come out and found their own families. That is the purpose of servants.

Teacher: And the last of the five is a teacher. In the original Greek, it is associated with the shepherd. The teacher is to *teach the body of Christ* and lead the people to independence (2. Timothy 2:7, 1. John 2:27). The teacher functions as a traveling servant, when he settles down, he functions as a shepherd. It is easy to recognize a teacher. He often and gladly speaks structurally from God's Word and knows where to find what in it. We appreciate a good knowledge of God's word not only in verbal skirmishes with people who take God's word out of context and try to throw us off balance, but also when we are under the oppression of the enemy, he condemns us in thought or wants us to feel guilty. The more we stay in God's Word and know it, the more confident and stronger we are in every battle.

Know the Holy Spirit, Your Coach

In addition to the people from whom we are to draw, let us not forget the Holy Spirit. He has been given to teach us everything (John 14:26) and to guide us into all truth (John 16:13). He is at the same time our Helper, Comforter and Advocate. Let us notice the unlimited possibilities the Holy Spirit brings. He shows us that He will teach us *all* and bring us into *all truth*. Elsewhere the Apostle John even talks about the Holy Spirit, the anointing we have from the Lord Jesus, teaching us everything and we do not need someone else to teach us. All of these texts underscore God's omnipotence and the unlimited possibilities behind walking with God. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God and knows all the depths of the Almighty:

„However, as it is written: »What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived« – the things God has prepared for those who love him – these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words.“

1. Corinthians 2:9-13

We see, then, that the Spirit of God is here to reveal to us all that God has already *gifted* to us. And these are knowledge and skills that have neither entered our minds nor entered our hearts. But let us remember that we do not learn them in the world. We learn them only from the Spirit of God. If we are not experiencing close communion with God, feel that God is not speaking to us, or that we do not know His workings, let us begin to seek the Holy Spirit, to study Him in the Scriptures and in the lives of God's people, and to ask God and the believers in our environment.

Speak God's language

In order to begin to hear the Holy Spirit better, we need to acquire the *God's speech*. We need to know *how* God speaks. As the previous text indicates, the Holy Spirit teaches in spiritual words, not in the words that human wisdom teaches. So we need to discover and learn how God communicates. This spiritual language has several aspects. Let us look first at the book of Acts, chapter two:

„In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.“

Acts 2:17

One way of communicating is prophesying, where we quiet our minds and let the Spirit of God who dwells within us speak through us. We are to discern these words so that they are not modified by our thought processes. We will have a vision, we will perceive physical and spiritual reality at the same time. Let us not be surprised at this, for when we are *immersed* in the Holy Spirit, baptized by the Holy Spirit, we are able to perceive the physical and spiritual world simultaneously. Just as under water we see „as under water“, so in the Holy Spirit we see the spiritual world through His eyes. Another way God speaks to us is through dreams. God communicated in this way with Joseph, Jacob, and Abimelech in the Old Testament. And in the New Testament, for example, with the apostle Paul. Sometimes God resorts to this method because we are too busy during the day to talk to Him in any other way. From reading the New Testament, we see how God also reveals His will through open visions, the rapture, or through angels. Let us not be surprised either by images, perceptions, or „aha moments“ when we simply *know*. For the language of heaven is *know* not „try to invent“ (that is from the soul). And we are living heaven on earth already.

Last but not least, we must not forget to pray in tongues. It is even said to be a means that God Himself *designed* for communicating with us:

„In the Law it is written: ,With other tongues and through the lips of foreigners I will speak to this people, but even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord.“

1. Corinthians 14:21

Let us not be surprised that God does not speak to us when we ignore the way He has chosen to communicate. It is the same as waiting on a train platform for the arrival of someone who has already told us that he will come to our house by car. We will wonder why he is not getting off the train, and he will wonder why the doors are locked and no one is home. Tongues is our direct communication with God that no one even needs to understand. This, too, was the experience of the early church. In addition, verses five and six describe some of the effects of praying in tongues. When tongues are interpreted, it brings revelation, knowledge, prophecy, and teaching:

„For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to people but to God. Indeed, no one understands them; they utter mysteries by the Spirit. I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be edified. Now, brothers and sisters, if I come to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you, unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or word of instruction?“

And that is why the letters of the apostle Paul are bursting with revelation, knowledge, prophecy, and teaching. For Paul spoke in tongues *more than all* (in Corinth). And this was obviously not in public, but in the time when he was alone. When we pray in tongues, quieting our minds and focusing on particular topics, we begin to notice thoughts, perceptions and images flowing through our minds that are not of us, but of the Spirit. Then just write them down and pray for wisdom on how to deal with them. So let us be inspired and understand how the Holy Spirit communicates!

Get to Know the Work of the Spirit

In addition to understanding who the Holy Spirit is and how He speaks to us, we need to understand how the Holy Spirit works. He should not be some unknown force to us, but someone very close to us. The Apostle Paul even talks about us being the temple of the Holy Spirit and Him *abiding* in us.

The Holy Spirit is a spirit, and spirits function somewhat differently than human beings who think bodily (according to the senses, not according to the workings of the spirit world). If we want to work effectively with the Holy Spirit, we need to align our thinking with His thinking and functioning. The first aspect of this cooperation is understanding the Holy Spirit's thinking:

„The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.“

Romans 8:6-7

The Bible teaches that death rules in the world. No wonder then that our thinking, trained by what we have experienced, felt, eaten, seen and heard, operates in terms of degradation, death and decay. By this I mean not just thinking about physical death per se, but all hopeless thoughts, thoughts of doom, illness, depression, broken relationships, arguments or hostility. We find no such disharmony with God the Father. If we want to cooperate with him, we need to learn to think in terms of *life* – healing, correction, forgiveness, love, encouragement, restoration, and cooperation. God's Spirit is a creative Spirit, and He makes the impossible possible.

At the same time, we need to grasp the fact that He dwells in us. He is not a being sitting on a cloud somewhere with a flash in his hand, but He dwells in us. We are his temple, his body. Therefore, we need to unite with Him in thought and surrender to Him daily so that He can live His life through us. This is true for each of us *believers*:

„On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, ‚Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.‘ By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.“

John 7:37-39

Besides the fact that the Holy Spirit works from the *our interior* and that this action of the Holy Spirit concerns the *each believer*, let us notice that the Holy Spirit flows. This is important to grasp in order to understand the ministry of the Holy Spirit. He flows out of us and gives life wherever we

are. When we heal the sick, it is the Holy Spirit, the power of God, that flows out of us. When we prophesy or pray in tongues, we are letting God's speech flow as more and more words come to us. When we interpret in tongues, we do likewise, perhaps taking pencil and paper or a cell phone to be able to record God's unfolding thoughts. The Spirit's workings can also be quite powerful and varied (for example, through the various gifts), because it is *streams* of living water that flow out of us, not a single stream or trickle.

In addition to the streams of living water, the Holy Spirit is also like fire. If we want to experience his action consistently, we must kindle it and then persistently add to it. Both of these things are done, for example, by praying in tongues, preaching, proclaiming the Word, or remembering the testimony. This is how we get the Holy Spirit to boil (He is like water or fire) and He begins to release more and more from us:

„For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. “

2. Timothy 1:6-7

At the same time, we are urged not to quench the fire of the Holy Spirit. When we perceive that he wants to act. Let us follow him and not harbor him within ourselves:

„Do not quench the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all; hold on to what is good, reject every kind of evil. “

1. Thessalonians 5:19-22

Let us also never forget that when the Holy Spirit manifests through us, we can always stop Him. We cannot, therefore, make excuses that we „could not have done otherwise, etc.“ (1. Corinthians 14:32-33).

In short: we need to understand the workings of the Spirit of God who dwells within us. We are not to hinder it by our carnal thinking, but at the same time we are to stir Him up (it is our role, not God's), let it flow and not quench it. His workings in our lives are conscious, He desires that we submit to Him willingly.

2.2 Be a soldier

Now we come to spiritual warfare itself. Let us begin from the beginning, with the fact that *everyone* is a soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ, then we come to the weapons we have, and then to the war itself. Spiritual warfare is not some phrase based on biblical concepts. As we will see in the next few pages, spiritual warfare is our whole life. It can be reacting in crisis situations, healing the sick, praying, teaching others, or just plain talking, watching TV shows, or reading the news. When we look at the Lord, *all* as He lived was *spiritual warfare*.

We, as believing Christians, must realize that every day we wake up, we wake up on the war front. We need to recognize this and adopt the necessary attitude. So, like a soldier who has just joined the army and must immediately begin to behave like a soldier, we must begin to devote ourselves intensely to the Word of God, prayer, and the study of spiritual warfare.

Only when we realize the urgency of the situation around us will we begin to live differently. We will live each day prepared. Every day we will devote ourselves to preparing, training, fighting and analyzing the battle. We will begin to live with discipline. We will fast and pray. When one joins the army, one *begins to behave like a soldier with everything*. When we realize the spiritual reality, we will naturally begin to move towards behaving like soldiers as well. We will hold on to good things and *reject* every kind of evil.

Do Not Let Yourself Get Eliminated

As for *fight* on a personal level, it is not without interest that the word for wrestling in Ephesians 6:12 is *palē* in the Greek and means *wrestling, with the goal of hold the enemy down with his hand upon his neck*. So as we enter into spiritual warfare, *we must* realize that the Devil's approach will be just that. He will want to *destroy* us at all costs if we let him. For he is the *warrior* and he is the world ruler we are up against. At the same time, the word *palē* is a cognate word of the word *again*, the Greek *palin*. It signifies the nature of our struggle. The devil will attack *again and again*. So we need to remain vigilant and at the same time take a similar attitude.

The battle we fight is *personal*. Just like when you fight with someone, once he is within your reach, you are within his. Let us strike blows to the enemy without giving him the space to strike us. Let us push back on him when we know how he attacks. When we know he will attack relationships, let us strengthen them. When he attacks health, let us teach about it and minister healing to others. Let us keep moving. A moving target is much harder to hit, whereas a static target is relatively easy. We will now list five classic strikes used in combat. If we do not master them, it is possible that the Devil will take us out of the game before our fight against him even begins.

Combination: Most people who do martial arts know that if you want to land a punch on an opponent, it is not enough to hit once. It is necessary to have a whole series of punches. The Devil knows this too, and usually when he starts attacking us, he hits each area in turn, such as relationships, finances and health. Alternatively, it hits one area repeatedly. His goal is that we do not know whether we are coming or going. When we are disoriented and frustrated in this way, we become hopeless in our thoughts, give up and do not fight.

Draw attack: Another proven method in combat is to put your opponent in a position that is disadvantageous to them – once they are in it, they do not know what to do with it. This is the devil's way of trying to get us into conversations or situations we cannot escape from. On the other hand, if we have nothing to hide, the Devil has limited scope. Even God was able to get the Devil to the point of no return. If the Devil had known what the cross of Christ would do, he would never have crucified Him.

Direct hit: This type of strike is used when, for example, someone close to you throws something in your face that you were not expecting. Other times it may be an unexpected situation that leaves us completely shaken. It can also be when a family member questions what the Lord has just told us.

Sequential Indirect Attack: In this type of attack it is important to constantly ask what the Devil is actually up to. For a while it may look like he is doing one thing, but his goal is something else entirely. For example, an argument may arise in the home, but the Devil is not concerned about the argument, but about keeping us distracted from ministering to a sick person or a sermon not long

after. If we are not vigilant, the Devil often reveals his plans only when there is nothing that can be done about the situation.

Paralysis: By attacking us with paralysis, the Devil wants us to be numb, unable to speak or act. Paralysis attacks include paralysis of the head and paralysis of the hands or feet. A head attack can be a witching attack of headache, confusion or „panic attack“. Another type of head attack is fear of people, fear of not speaking the truth or not speaking at all. Under paralysis of the hands or feet are various methods that prevent us from reaching people. For example, all of a sudden our legs get heavy and we are unable to reach people. Other times it may be fear of failure that puts us out of the game.

Once we are familiar with these types of blows, a dividing line appears which each of us must sooner or later consciously cross. Either we will be ordinary soldiers who need to be constantly motivated and urged to fight and not be discouraged. Or, we will be warriors who take up the cause of God and fight because it is the *right* thing to do. We will continue on through all obstacles. We will be courageous and stay in the fight even when others scatter. We will be disciplined and look to the Scriptures for answers. We will advance in the things of God, not because someone is forcing us, but because it is necessary to accomplish God's purposes. We will have no limits, we will touch the people in our environment and meet their needs. We will consistently overcome and live in the knowledge that the fulfillment of people's needs and destinations are based on our obedience or disobedience.

Strengthen Your Weak Spots

In the basic strikes described above, the Devil loves to use our weak points to take us out of the fight altogether. We need to be aware of this and strengthen these places so that we are able to bear fruit for God instead. As we said, *everything* that the Lord Jesus did was *spiritual warfare*. Therefore, everything we do *is related* to spiritual warfare. We really mean everything – from watching TV to talking to friends to preaching in church or in public. The basic weaknesses of people that the Devil uses to take us out include the following:

Sowing and reaping: Even though we are in a *spiritual warfare*, the devil uses *carnal* things to stop us. The devil knows that we will reap what we sow. So if he gets us into sin, he is content to let us fall into it more and more. For we can never satisfy sin. The devil does not even need our sin to come out right away. He will let it *come out* when it is least convenient for us and will do the greatest *harm* to the kingdom of God. The solution is simple: let us stop sinning, do what the Lord did, and not do what He never did. We can stop every sin we commit (Romans 6:11).

Fear: It can be fear of any kind. It can be fear of flying or fear of speaking in public. Both of these fears are in direct conflict with the *Great Commission* (Matthew 28:18-20). Other times the Devil tries to push us to disbelieve God's Word. For example, we believe that God protects us and that He has healed us of all sicknesses. But what happens is that we get robbed or we get sick. Then we tend to *stop* believing God's word and withdraw. Thus we begin to act in fear and not in faith. We need to remember that God's word has not changed and we need to bring our experiences in line with faith in God's word, not reduce God's word to the level of our experiences.

Hopelessness, depression: Another common tactic of the Devil is to get us into despair and depression. We often fall into it when we think about the things of this world, the state of this world, or our situation. Another reason may be a long-standing struggle or when the Devil is pressing in on

us on multiple fronts. We need to keep our eyes on the Lord and His Word (Hebrews 12:1-3). He alone will fill us with peace (Isaiah 26:3).

To exalt you, to humble you: Another one of the Devil's tricks is that he tries to hold us back by thinking „Who do you think you are?“, „Let us look at you,“ or „God will not use you!“ But let us not act on these thoughts, but on *God's thoughts*, God's word. If we *deal* with these thoughts, the Devil will try the other side and tell us „Look how great you are,“ „You are somebody!“ We must also pacify these thoughts and stay sober. What we do can be done by *anyone* else of God's people (Romans 12:3).

Separation from the herd: Another principle of war is separation from the herd. We all know that one-on-one conversations, for example, go more easily than facing opposition from five people. Even the devil knows this, and he tries to *separate* us from the herd like a lion tries to separate its prey and then drive us away. Knowing this, it is everyone's *responsibility* to *not get* separated and *not to* separate anyone. This is true for us, even if we are new Christians and even if we are long-time *leaders*. The devil does not choose and seeks his opportunity.

Misunderstanding: The devil likes to use misunderstandings and miscommunication between people. In the age of messengers and chats, this is doubly true. So let us have relationships with each other that are just so *does not break down* and do not assume evil of others (1. Corinthians 13:4-7).

The biggest enemies in your household: As we mentioned, whenever the enemy is within our reach, we are within his. That is why it is important to remember that a person's greatest enemies are the *those in their household*. They are the people we love, the people we respect, and the people who support us. They are also the people who can most quickly bury what God is doing in our lives, our dreams and visions. So let us be prudent, let us not be stopped by them either, and let us remember that God's kingdom is the highest priority. If not, the Devil will *always* find a way to stop us. And if it is through our family, we will eventually make them the target of the Devil's attacks. So let us stay awake, let us not be stopped, and let us seek God's kingdom first.

Our weaknesses: Our weaknesses can be anything, but the enemy uses exactly *that* to take us out. It could be any of the above or anything else. The ideal is to analyze your weaknesses and become aware of them. It is also good to think about what situations are crises for us and when our weaknesses come out most. We must then strengthen these *weaknesses* and make *everything* so that the Devil cannot get us through them. So we really need to be *dead* to ourselves and not give space to the Devil. If we do not give it to him, he does not have it.

Mind: Let us note that *everything* mentioned here is actually *the battle for our mind*. Whether it is sin, misunderstanding, reactions in our weak moments, or thought battles, it is always about how we battle the thoughts *in our mind*, how we evaluate them and how we deal with them. So we need to be able to work very well with thoughts, to create subconscious reactions in „love“ mode, not to be stopped, offended, separated. In that moment, the Devil does not stand a chance.

Win

If we are constantly in a state of fighting with ourselves, with God, and questioning God's Word in our thoughts, we are exactly at the point where the Devil wants us as believers. It is not for our condemnation, but we can do better. We are called to a life of *victory*. Not just to fight, but to be victorious. Just think of it: We would not fight in our minds, but we would be comforted by the Word of God. We would respond to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and not contradict them. We would

stand in authority and not experience condemnation. We would not sin, but we would mortify the deeds of the flesh by the Spirit. Each of these aspects we can realistically adopt. This is exactly how the Lord Jesus lived. And it is where God wants us to be. Let us look at a few passages that testify to that:

,But thanks be to God, who always leads us as captives in Christ's triumphal procession and uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere.‘

2. Corinthians 2:14

,Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: »For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.« No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ‘

Romans 8:33-37

There are other such passages in the book of Revelation. There in the letters to the churches are promises only to those who overcome. And that is the frame of mind God wants us all in. For example, the promises for the overcomer are: he will eat of the tree of life, the second death will not harm him, he will receive the hidden manna and a new name, he will be given dominion over the nations and shepherd them with a rod of iron, he will put on white robes and never be blotted out of the book of life, he will be a pillar in the sanctuary of his God – the people in the church will be able to rely on Him, he will sit with God on his throne and God will be his Father and he will be his son.

Living in victory is a blessed state. It is life in the Holy Spirit. It is a life of faith. It is a place where each of us can dwell. It is possible right here and now. Let us not rob ourselves of the life God has for us.

Live Disciplined

In order to *win*, not to be swayed and to defeat the Devil consistently, we need to live in a disciplined way. The apostle Paul himself exhorts us to live as *warriors* of the Lord Jesus:

,You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others. Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer. Similarly, anyone who competes as an athlete does not receive the victor's crown except by competing according to the rules. The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops. Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.‘

2. Timothy 2:1-7

Notice what the apostle Paul is talking about here. First of all, he *expected* Timothy to be strengthened in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. So Paul did not expect Timothy or anyone else to draw

their hope and support from people. He expected us to go straight to God and be strengthened by *Him*. In addition, Paul expected Timothy to *find* people to teach and those people in turn to teach others. Each of us, too, should resolve to find and teach other people who will in turn teach others. Otherwise, there is a great risk that our gospel will end up with us.

After that, Paul had already got to being a *good soldier*. Timothy was to live to please *God*, not men. Paul knew that difficulties awaited *all* believers, even the newly converted (1. Thessalonians 1:2-6). At the same time, Paul wanted Timothy to *not get involved* in the cares of everyday life. We may find this challenging, but we find that the Lord was speaking in other words about the same thing. The Lord Jesus Himself was telling us that if we want to follow Him, we must our whole life and not be seduced by *human* thinking (Matthew 16:21-28). Elsewhere, he said that if we want to *bear fruit*, we need to avoid the cares of this world that distract us from the things of God (Matthew 13:1-23). In conclusion, Paul again exhorts Timothy to *discuss* everything with the Lord. Our close communion with God is really the foundation of everything.

Be available

Paul's discourse in 2. Timothy on what our lives are to look like in order to be useful to the Lord is still ongoing. He mentions that we are not to quarrel over words, avoid idle worldly talk, spread strange doctrines, turn away from iniquity, flee from youthful lusts, and reject foolish and foolish questions. All this is a matter of discipline. On the contrary, we are to strive to be certified workers and to pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace with those who call upon the Lord from a pure heart:

„Keep reminding God's people of these things. Warn them before God against quarreling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen. Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have departed from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some. Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: »The Lord knows those who are his,« and, »Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness.« In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for special purposes and some for common use. Those who cleanse themselves from the latter will be instruments for special purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work. Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will..“

2. Timothy 2:14-26

I would like to point out that we are to be a vessel of honor. In other words, we are to be a vessel that the Lord Himself values. When we are truly set apart, sanctified, we are *useful* (Greek *euchrēstos*)

and *prepared* (Greek *hetoimazō*) for every good work for the Lord. Our sanctification and purification from the aforementioned things – as well as *being a vessel for honor*, is purely our choice.

At the same time, as we have already mentioned, our following the Lord is not a one-time decision. Even once we have decided to follow the Lord and have purged ourselves of all superfluous things, we need to remain *conscious* in our decisions. We are at war and the Devil is waiting to take us out of the fight, or at least deal us a nasty blow. Therefore, it is obvious that we need to be sober and vigilant (1. Peter 5:8-11). When we do this, victory is ours.

Live Holy in Communion with God

The above includes holiness. People often associate holiness with obedience and discipline, but honestly, if our life is all about the *submission* of something, then we miss that Christianity is all about *transformation*. Our holiness is supposed to come from a transformed life where we love what God loves and hate what He hates. And the key to this harmony and life transformation is *communion* with God:

„We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete. This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.“

1. John 1:3-10

Christianity is easy. The fact, that the holiness is a burden to us is not due to the character of God, but to religion. Holiness is not a burden on our lives, but brings us joy. Sin brings sorrow, grief, and doom (Hebrews 1:9). Just think of the Lord Jesus. Do we think He looked holy while drooling at the sight of every pretty girl? Or do we think he was attracted to prostitutes, testifying to them of the kingdom of God, but would rather have sex with them? Our Lord was different. He did not operate in the carnal mind, He was not guided by the senses, but He operated in the spiritual mind, the mind of Christ, which we have access to after the new birth also:

„for, »Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?« But we have the mind of Christ.“

1. Corinthians 2:16

We just need to settle into this mind and start functioning in it at the expense of our old, worldly thinking. Let us let the Lord Jesus be the new normal and standard for our lives. Let us strive for holiness and sanctification, without which no one will see the Lord, and become holy in all of our lives. Let us remember that sin has no flesh, but wants to manifest itself through ours, however we are no longer under its power and we can therefore surrender to the Holy Spirit who also has no flesh except ours and let it manifest. For we are not under the Law, but under grace!

Listen to Your Lord

In addition to all of the above, obedience is a key aspect to a fruit-bearing Christian life. By obedience we mean that when the Lord tells us to do something, we do it. This follows directly from his title – He is Lord. If we call him that, we should obey him. Obedience shows our trust in Him. If we see that he is good, obedience to him is easier. We should have this trust towards the most moral, righteous, faithful and noble being in the whole universe. We understand that some of us are *fearful* of legalism, where we mindlessly follow something, but God leads us to *in faith* do what He prompts us to do. We are in right standing before God not by *doing* works, but by acting in faith in God's promises. The forefather of our faith, Abraham, is said to have been justified before God not by the act of circumcision, but by the faith on which he was circumcised:

„We have been saying that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness. Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before! And he received circumcision as a sign, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. And he is then also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also follow in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.“

Romans 4:9b-12

So let us not fall into the deception of legalism, but neither into the deception of disobedience. Obedience has tremendous results, it makes us shine like lights in the world, and through obedience based on love for God (not fear), He reveals Himself to us:

„Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.“

John 14:21

Lester Sumrall saw yet another dimension in humility. He took every task the Lord gave him as a task to be accomplished. And he looked forward to completing that task, if only so that the Lord could entrust him with something else. He did not take the tasks entrusted to him lightly, but worked hard to complete them. When God speaks to us and wants us to do something, it is often because a way has opened up in the spiritual battle, the enemy has a weakness somewhere, or is regrouping his forces. When we respond, it is for the good of God's kingdom; when we miss the opportunity, it closes. This applies in principle to everything from personal evangelism to reaching the whole of society. So let us desire to obey God in all that He has said to us – whether in His Word or personally.

Be Humble

„The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.“

Proverbs 1:7

Fear of God and humility are the basis for being useful to Him at all. God will not give His glory to anyone, and if we do not remain humble, it will limit us greatly in life. The Lord teaches us humility, for example, by fasting, by caring for us, by keeping silent even when we are in the right, and so on. Humbling experiences create in us brokenness and compassion for others who are struggling with the same problems we are. Conversely, too much humbling can lead us to bitterness and apathy. But we do not have to fear that in our relationship with God. He promises that:

„A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he has brought justice through to victory.“

Matthew 12:20

And elsewhere He promises, that we will not be tested beyond our strength:

„No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.“

1. Corinthians 10:13

So it is good that we have a teacher we can rely on. He gives us room to grow and at the same time helps us and does not let us try more than we can bear.

2.3 Weapons of our fight

In addition to living a disciplined life and knowing how to fight on a personal level, we need to be trained in the use of the weapons God gives us. The best way to learn how to use these tools is to *learn* from someone who is already using them. If we do not know anyone like that, we can learn directly from the Holy Spirit.

You Are the Weapon!

God's greatest weapons in spiritual warfare are we ourselves. If the church, or any other group of people, wants to advance its interests, it needs someone to advance its interests. The military may have the best fighter jets, bombers, tanks and guns, but unless it has someone to run and use them, they are of no use to it. The Apostle Paul is clear about this, he says that we are not to give our bodies as instruments of sin, but as instruments of God who dwells within us:

„Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness.“

Romans 6:12-13

Each one of us therefore needs to realize our unique role in God's work and decide to make the kingdom of God all that we are. God Himself says that He makes His servants *flames of fire* and elsewhere to give Him our *bodies* every day. As we surrender our lives to God every day, we will see how God's fire in us can ignite all the places we will be.

Be Aware of the Covenant Partner

The most fundamental aspect of all spiritual warfare is the covenant. When we make a covenant with someone, we are making an alliance with them. We have a covenant with God Most High, and in doing so we have gotten the most capable and powerful warrior of all time on our side. Tribes in Africa made treaties with each other when they did not want a larger tribe to destroy them or when they needed an ally against a stronger enemy. The Bible describes it no differently. For example, the Gibeonites tricked Joshua because they did not want him to slaughter and occupy them:

„Then Joshua summoned the Gibeonites and said, ‚Why did you deceive us by saying, »We live a long way from you,« while actually you live near us? You are now under a curse: You will never be released from service as woodcutters and water carriers for the house of my God.‘ They answered Joshua, ‚Your servants were clearly told how the Lord your God had commanded his servant Moses to give you the whole land and to wipe out all its inhabitants from before you. So we feared for our lives because of you, and that is why we did this.‘“

Joshua 9:22-24

In addition, the treaty has other aspects. It has always been a blood contract, with gifts being given at the time of its conclusion, and it implies that if one party is in trouble or needs help, he has at his disposal *all* belonging to the other party. A blood covenant makes the worst of enemies into the greatest of all allies. That is why even the Gibeonites, when they were in trouble, called Joshua and he fought their fight without hesitation:

„The Gibeonites then sent word to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal: ‚Do not abandon your servants. Come up to us quickly and save us! Help us, because all the Amorite kings from the hill country have joined forces against us.‘“ So Joshua marched up from Gilgal with his entire army, including all the best fighting men. “

Joshua 10:6-7

It is the same between us and God. He has given us the gift of the Holy Spirit, the earnest of our inheritance, and *all* that is available is ours in time of need. That is why it is important to step out and take action, at that point all of heaven is behind us. But let us remember that the covenant brings blessings for us when we stand in it and curses when we do not. Let us not take our calling by God lightly. If He did not have the *need* to engage us, He would not do it.

Stand in the Armour of God

When we are the weapon, we need to be very well equipped. We need to be well armed in and of ourselves. And that is why the armor of God is nothing other than our new, born-again identity in Christ. Spiritual warfare is then simplified to just being who we are. That our armor is our new identity in Christ is revealed by the Apostle Paul in Romans:

„The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.“

Notice – putting on the armor of light is connected to putting on Christ. Let us take a closer look at each aspect of our armor, our identity:

„Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.“

Ephesians 6:13-18

The Parts of Armor You Have

We are to wear the *whole* armor of God. It is God’s armor, not ours. We do not have and are not capable of fighting the spiritual battle on our own. Second, since it is *God’s* armor, it is obvious that it is the armor *used* by God Himself. It is therefore properly tested. We are also to have this armor *whole*. If we are missing something from it, it is as if we do not have it at all.

Breastplate of Righteousness: Being reconciled to God, righteous in His sight, is the foundation of the Christian faith. We must therefore live in the consciousness of Christ’s justifying sacrifice more than in the consciousness of sin. We must be able to work with the thoughts that accuse us. How miserable would God feel if He succumbed to the piles of accusations that are heaped upon Him every day and ceased to be conscious of His righteousness?

The Belt of Truth: We must always hold on to the truth and live by what God’s Word tells us and not by what our senses tell us. If we are not sure we stand in the truth, our certainty is there. But we can always ask the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, who will surely guide us into the all truth (John 16:13).

Shoes of Readiness: When we pray, we expect God to be ready to listen to us. The same, but God expects us to. Even Smith Wigglesworth talks about how if we are not ready – filled with the Spirit – someone’s need will not be met. We as a church need to adopt the mentality of doctors or firefighters and be ready to be called into service at any hour of the day or night with a word of faith, encouragement, healing or deliverance.

Shield of Faith: The shield of faith will extinguish all the fiery missiles of the evil one. This also relates to what the Scriptures tell us about living in the *continuous* victory of the *redemption* people of this generation. But let us not forget that the shield was not just taken as a defensive tool in Rome. On the contrary, in body-to-body combat it was used to *press* the opponent. So, too, when the Devil is badly pressing us, let us stand and push him.

Helmet of Salvation: We are saved from the power of the Devil. Here and for eternity. However, we need to keep a steady mind and be aware of our salvation even during all kinds of circumstances. Can we imagine God doubting that He is beyond the power of the Devil? I do not think so. So let us

also use his helmet and not be so easily small-minded, let us think like *children of God*, let us be sure of our Father.

Sword of the Spirit: Let us never forget the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. God's Word is our primary weapon in one-on-one combat. It is the word of God that the enemy is trying to steal from us. It is the word of God that has the power to save us. It is the word of God that the Lord Jesus used to defeat the devil and to instantly silence the apostle Peter when needed. Let us learn to use the Word of God as a sword, as a hammer, as a fire and as a rock. At the same time, we need to know how to use the word. Let us guard our tongue, for there is power in the word. Moreover, the word is the *rudder* of our life, and it is mostly where our tongue has taken it. This is how the Lord Jesus worked.

Carry the Character of God

The other weapons we have are the fruits of the Spirit. Let us realize that when we *fight* with our carnality, it manifests itself, for example, *impurity* or *competition*. You will know carnality far and wide. The apostle Paul speaks of the *acts* of the flesh. The only way to permanent, constant *victory* is in *continuous* submission to the Spirit of God. As we yield to God's Spirit, or as we ignite it (e.g., through Acts of Love, praying in tongues, preaching the Word), God is working in us, and we are not acting according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit:

„So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.“

Galatians 5:16-26

There is nothing in between. We either act according to the flesh or according to the Spirit. There is no other way, and if we want to *defeat* the flesh, we *must* submit to the Spirit of God continually. If we live in the flesh, we experience condemnation, depression, self-blame, and we do not do much for God. If we are in the Spirit, we are usable.

The wonderful thing about the fruit of the Spirit is that there is *no* law against it. That means we can love as much as we want, we can be patient as much as we want. We can experience as much peace as we like, or we can be as *constantly* joyful no matter how many people it irritates. Let us remember that God bears the fruit of the Spirit continually. He is patient with us, loves us unconditionally, is in control, and is faithful. It is great to have a God like that, so let us be like Him in this world.

Let the Spirit Flow

We have to learn to work with our thoughts in the sense that we must not condemn ourselves, question ourselves, or think arrogantly; rather, we must let God's thoughts out of us. We must be able to stop one current and let the other flow. And this is the manifestation of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit dwells within us, and the Bible describes His workings as streams of living water flowing from within us. It may be healing, prophecy, a word of knowledge, or whatever God wants to say or do through us. If we stop it, nothing will happen. But it is written that He will *speak* in us and *walk* in us. God wants to act in this world, so let us let Him be Himself and not hinder Him. Let us learn to think differently.

The manifestations of the Spirit are for the *common good* and their purpose is not just to *have* them in the church. The manifestations of the Spirit are *tools for warfare*. Some manifestations of the Spirit are more for building up the army and their individuals, others are more for defensive or strategic actions, and others are for offensive actions. Others are for a combination of the above:

„Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.“

1. Corinthians 12:7-11

How the Spirit Manifests

If we take, for example, *prayer in tongues* we see that its purpose is *spiritual growth* of believers. The same is true for the interpretation of tongues and prophecy. Moreover, these manifestations of the Spirit are not only for the *growth* of individuals, but help the growth of the whole church. They make the community grow faster and thus the whole work can move forward more quickly. Furthermore, praying in tongues is an *encrypted* communication between God and us. God wants to reveal to us through tongues who we are, who He is and what His intentions are here. That is why the interpretation of tongues is also important, as it serves as a decryption code for us, and then we understand what God wanted to say. By praying in tongues with the interpretation *we know* what is happening in the spiritual world and we know what to focus on or prepare for.

Along with these gifts, the words of knowledge, by which God reveals to us what is going on, and the words of wisdom, by which God reveals what we are to do with the words of knowledge. So we see that these are again strategic tools for warfare. Through them the Lord gives us insight into situations, or helps us to discover the plans of the enemy, or even spies and scouts within our ranks. As far as *strategic* gifts are concerned, there is also *spirit discernment*, which enables us to know which thoughts are of God and which are of manipulation, fornication, or legalism. It is always good to know where the wind is blowing from.

In addition, we have manifestations of the Spirit designed to win the hearts of men. In addition to the words of knowledge already mentioned, we can win people by *working miracles* and ministering *healing*. Note that these gifts often require our *action*. We cannot just watch and fear embarrassment,

we must *step* and act. Not the least of which is the gift of faith. Faith is always and everywhere useful. In offensive actions, defensive actions and planning.

All manifestations of the Spirit are for every believer. Not only does this passage speak to that (the word *one* can be translated as *one*), but the life of the Apostle Paul or the Lord Jesus, whose disciples we are. When we need to know what is going on, we cannot wait for a man to appear with the discernment of spirits or with the word of knowledge. The same is true in the ministry of healing. There is not always room for delay; often help is needed immediately.

Of course, everyone adopts more readily something different or the Lord uses it more in something. However, let us not give God limits. The gifts of the Spirit are in the gift of the Spirit. If we are baptized with the Holy Spirit, we have received the Holy Spirit and with him all his gifts. Let us learn from one another, not to be self-conscious about *our gift, our anointing*, but to be aware of *the loving and almighty God* and meet the needs of people with it. Let us let the streams of living water flowing from within us flood the arid land around us. The Lord did the same with the apostles Paul and Peter, who had the same Spirit as we do (Acts 11:17).

Use your authority

As we have already said, the main spiritual battle is about the minds of men. When we think of a spiritual attack, it is often *irrational* thoughts that attack a person. They may be thoughts of suicide, bouts of anxiety, fear, or depression. But the Church is attacked by the same principle. Through our prayers, people get thoughts from God, think more about Him, and are more inclined to Him. Therefore, it is important for the Church to *work* in the spiritual realm. We have things to *bind* (Greek *deō*) and *unbind* (Greek *lyō*):

„Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ,Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.“

Matthew 18:18-20

This assertion of authority then manifests itself in the physical realm. So it is important to pray in authority. However, we are not to just pray in authority at home in secret. We are also to act in it. We are to speak in authority to the sick, to the demons, to the storm, and to the wind. But that we are not only to pray, but also to do, is revealed by the Lord Jesus in Luke's Gospel:

„When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, ,Woman, you are set free from your infirmity.‘ Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God. Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue leader said to the people, ,There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath.‘ The Lord answered him, ,You hypocrites! Doesn't each of you on the Sabbath untie your ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water? Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?‘“

Luke 13:12-16

The words *deō* and *lyō* are used again in this text, and they are connected directly with the Lord's action and speaking in authority. This also indicates that when we pray for something, *must* expect to have to deal with it in the physical realm as well. We have had similar experiences with praying for Christian marriages and ministering to such couples, for the sick in general, and personally. So let us not let the authority entrusted to the Church lie fallow. Let us take hold of it in our lives and spread the Kingdom of God!

Pray

The binding and loosing of things here on earth is closely related to *prayer*. Prayer has several aspects, for example it is our communication with God, God's communication to us, communion with him, we can ask for and receive things during it, but it is also our tool for spiritual warfare. And this is the aspect we would like to emphasize right now. The Lord Jesus Himself taught us to establish God's will here on earth during prayer:

„Your kingdom come. [May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.]“

Luke 11:2b

We see that even directly in the Lord's Prayer, the Lord Jesus leads us to pray in authority. In the literal translation, the Lord Jesus exhorts us to pray „God's will be done!“. Our prayer is never meant to end with us asking God for something. It is to end with us accepting and being grateful that God hears us:

„Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.“

Philippians 4:6-7

Even the Lord Jesus Himself invites us to *accept* what we have asked for. By our receiving, the Father is glorified:

„Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they 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 Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.“

John 14:12-14

And in Mark's Gospel, the Lord even explains to us *how* to receive. He says that we should *believe* that whatever we *say* is happening at the same time and that we *will have it*. In other words, he says to pray in *authority*:

„In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. Peter remembered and said to Jesus, ‚Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!‘ ‚Have faith in God,‘ Jesus answered. ‚Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain,‘ »Go, throw yourself into the sea,« and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.“

So let us not stay only with *requests*. Let us want to know God, let us learn to receive from Him and fight the spiritual battle through prayer. Everything must be formed first in the spiritual world before it is released in the physical.

Pray more than everyone else

When it comes to prayer, we must not forget to pray in tongues. We have already mentioned that prayer in tongues serves to build up and grow believers and that through it we communicate with God. However, praying in tongues is also a great tool for spiritual warfare. The Apostle Paul encourages us to let the Holy Spirit pray through us, *how* He wants us to, even if we do not know *how* and what to pray for:

„In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God. And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him“

Romans 8:26-28a

When we do not know what to pray for and how to pray properly, the Holy Spirit Himself *prays* God’s perfect will through us. At the same time, He causes everything to work for our good. It is very important to grow and learn to use prayer in tongues to communicate with God, for personal edification, praise, intercession and spiritual warfare. The Apostle Paul says that we are to pray every kind of prayer at every kind of time. So we have to learn to do that:

„And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.“

Ephesians 6:18

To learn this, it is necessary to pray regularly, intensely and for more than five minutes. Praying in tongues is the same as praying in any other language. We get better at it the more and more regularly we use it. The Apostle Paul was obviously aware of this, and he tried to pray as much as possible. Evidently this did not fill mostly the corporate assemblies, but all his spare time. Let us take that as inspiration:

„I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue.“

1. Corinthians 14:18-19

Be Thankful, Praise and Worship

Other aspects of our spiritual warfare are gratitude, praise and worship. We may wonder how these virtuous acts can be considered weapons, but the reason is simple. We change our perceptions and our surroundings. If instead of complaining and cursing, we are grateful and joyful at all times, it makes a

big difference, our lives are better, and the people around us are sure to notice. To be thankful in all circumstances *is* God's will for us:

„give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.“

1. Thessalonians 5:18

It is similar with praise. Through it we turn our attention from ourselves and our problems to God. We praise him for what he has done on the cross, what he promises in his word, what he has done for us in our lives and what he is doing for us today. By praising, we simply take the focus off of ourselves, our feelings and problems, and focus on *Him*. This is an important aspect of spiritual warfare and a great method to not stay in the flesh, but in the spirit. Moreover, praise is the only tool the Bible speaks of that can silence our adversary, even when he wants revenge. And now and then he does. We will see this in the following Psalm if we connect it with the Lord's quotation from Matthew 21:16. For praise is our strength:

„Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.“

Psalm 8:2

Moreover, praise and worship is not about music and a multitude of instruments. For instruments are always just *instruments*. Praise and worship comes from within us. We worship God for *who He is*. Therefore, we need to *know Him* in order to worship Him truthfully. Even in worship, we cannot just stay in *self consciousness*, we need to stay in *God consciousness*:

„Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.“

John 4:23-24

Humble the Body

Another interesting aspect of spiritual warfare is fasting. Again, we will highlight a few points about it. Fasting is not meant to get something from God. God has given us everything with Christ, so there is nothing He has not given us. After all, even in the Old Testament, God reproached the Israelites for fasting *for self* and not *for Him*:

„Ask all the people of the land and the priests, »When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months for the past seventy years, was it really for me that you fasted? And when you were eating and drinking, were you not just feasting for yourselves?«“

Zechariah 7:5-6

So when God leads us into fasting, and even if we do not know why, let us rejoice. When we fast, God is not concerned that we should not eat or that we should not see food. He wants us to get our lives in order and be there for others:

„Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter – when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear;“

Isaiah 58:6-8

The rest of the chapter then talks about the wonderful promises that come with fasting. Isaiah writes about being receptive to God's leading, delighting in the Lord, refreshing and building community. Nowhere does he talk about being given more power or authority. Rather, our unbelief will go by the wayside, we will focus on spiritual things instead of fleshly things, and God will have more room to work in and through us (Matthew 17:20-21).

Not eating has something to it. It is directed against our physicality. When we do not eat, we humble our flesh, and we feed only on the true substance of life, the Word of God. That is why it is important to fast:

„He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.“

Deuteronomy 8:3

Hand out the Kingdom

The final tool we will discuss here that God has given us to spread His kingdom is finance. Notice that God already tells Moses that He has given him the ability to *create wealth* in order to *perform, fulfill His covenant* here on the Earth:

„But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today.“

Deuteronomy 8:18

In the same way, in the New Covenant, God encourages us not to serve money, but rather to make friends of it. And that is good. We cannot serve money and God at the same time. Money, on the other hand, is a great tool to help us more easily and quickly spread the things of God here on earth. Let us look at how the apostle Paul taught about money in his second letter to Corinth:

„There is no need for me to write to you about this service to the Lord's people. For I know your eagerness to help, and I have been boasting about it to the Macedonians, telling them that since last year you in Achaia were ready to give; and your enthusiasm has stirred most of them to action. But I am sending the brothers in order that our boasting about you in this matter should not prove hollow, but that you may be ready, as I said you would be. For if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we—not to say anything about you – would be ashamed of having been so confident. So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given.

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written: „They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever.‘ Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord’s people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!“

2. Corinthians 9:1-15

Several facts are evident here. For example, being generous *encourages* other people to be generous as well. Our giving is meant to be a blessing, not a stinginess. At the same time, we are to give as we choose – but it is not God who tells us how much to give. God tells us to give according to how much we want to reap – if we want to reap generously, we are to give generously. Moreover, God *is able* „to abound with us in every gift of grace, so that we may always have a full supply in all things, and have abundance for every good work“. This is a solemn promise. Just think of it, „to have always a full sufficiency in all things“ and „to have abundance for *every* good work“. It is God who gives us seed to sow, bread to eat, and at the same time provides and multiplies our sowing and makes the fruits of our righteousness grow. What a bold trust we can have in God! He makes sure that we *always* have something to give (sow, Greek *sporos*), He multiplies it (Greek *plēthynō*), and at the same time He takes care of it, that our needs are met, that the sowing grows (Greek *auxanō*) and that our sowing bears fruit (literally to have *offsprings*, that it has *food*, Greek *gennēma*). At the same time, God cares so much about our generosity, He wants to *always and in every way enrich us to all generosity*. For generosity works through us gratitude to God.

We see, then, that money is a *tool* which God uses for his glory and causes men to be generous towards him. At the same time, we need to *prove ourselves* (prove ourselves, Greek *dokimē*) in our handling of money. Our generosity will cause people to long for us and pray for us. So if anyone is looking for prayer warriors, here is a way to get them without words.

2.4 The Basics of War

As Christians, we have entered into a spiritual conflict that the Lord Jesus has already won. However, there is the enemy who is still resisting. Thus, we must continually confront and defeat it in piecemeal battles. The fight is primarily for the hearts of men and the eternity of men. Each person here can be classified into one of the following categories. *Civilist*: The so-called unbelievers. They are territory occupied by the Devil. *Soldier*: Christian, believer. Actively involved in the fight against the enemy. *Prisoner*: A man taken captive by error or sin. This renders him ineffective. He needs to be set free

by right teaching (John 8:34-36). He has professed allegiance to Christ, but is living willfully in sin. Though he experiences sorrow, it never leads to a change of mind. *Deserter*: A Christian trying to live a normal life. They usually experience great sorrow because they do not live in the world or with God. *Revolutionary, warrior*: A soldier faithful to Christ and actively engaged in the fight against the enemy. He lives by the Bible, refuses to live in compromise, and thinks of innovative strategies to move the gospel forward.

Military Terms in the Bible

Let us look at a few biblical terms indicating that the church is indeed in a state of war:

The Lord is a Warrior (Exodus 15:3) – Hebrew *milhamah*. This term means that our God is the God of *fight, war*. That is why He fights our battles and gives us victory.

The Lord of Hosts (Jeremiah 29:4) – Hebrew *saba*. This word literally refers to a *group of people organized to fight, army, soldiers*. God sees us not only as His children, but as His army here on the Earth.

Encounter (Matthew 8:28) – Greek *hypantaō*. It is a military term for *hostile encounter*. Used when the Lord Jesus met a man with a legion of demons.

Disorderly (2. Thessalonians 3:6) – Greek *atáktōs*. A term used for *undisciplined soldiers*. We are to rebuke the brethren who live undisciplined; they do not follow the words of the apostle Paul.

Bishop (Philippians 1:1) – Greek *episkopos*. Originally a military term for an *administrator* of an area. Now it's a person who oversees the church.

The Church (Matthew 16:18) – Greek *ekklēsia*. A term originally denoting the *office* of a city or *office* of a king. Today it is used for church meetings, but we must not forget that by virtue of *ekklēsia* the church has *rulership* in the spiritual world. The Bible reveals to us that any deliberative place of the Devil (the gate of hell – the elders of the city used to sit in the gate and decide) cannot stand against the church.

Thus it is evident that the Bible abounds in military terms. Elsewhere, the Apostle Paul refers to us as the *ambassadors* of heaven on earth. And so we are. The Church is clearly here to advance the interests of Heaven on the Earth by the Spirit of God, the Word of God, and the authority it has from the Lord Jesus. Our goal is to make it both in heaven and on earth. Whatever will not be in heaven – such as sickness, poverty, and broken relationships – the church is to destroy or fix here on earth. No one else will do it for us. We need to live in the consciousness that we as a whole and as individuals are in a position of authority in the spiritual world. Through work in the spiritual world, through prayer, and through the preaching of the Word, we advance God's interests here on earth.

The Course of the Fight

Apart from the fact that we are at war and that we play a decisive role in it, we must not forget *how* this war is being fought. This war has been going on in the minds of men since Eden. It is the words and thoughts *spread* into the minds of men that move this world. That is why we need to get a really good grasp of the parable of the sower, which says that the *sowed* word falls into differently set human hearts, into different kinds of soil:

„While a large crowd was gathering and people were coming to Jesus from town after town, he told this parable: „A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it

was trampled on, and the birds ate it up. Some fell on rocky ground, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up with it and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown.’ When he said this, he called out, ‘Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.’ This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God. Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. Those on the rocky ground are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away. The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life’s worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature. But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.’“

Luke 8:4-8.11-15

We really need to get a good grip on the parable of the sower. For it speaks of every aspect of bringing Heaven to earth. It speaks of the Words of Life being sown into us by our Father, working in us and bearing fruit, the fruit of the Kingdom of God in this world. This parable also speaks of how our enemy, the Devil, *immediately* comes and takes the Word of Life so that we „disbelieve“ and „are not saved“. This happens fundamentally when we do not accept or understand God’s Word (Matthew 13:19).

Further, this parable says that we need to have a root in us – a determination to never give up (Mark 4:17). We also need to nourish God’s word in us. We do this fundamentally by praying, studying God’s Word, preaching it, doing it, and proclaiming it. At the same time, we must not let God’s word be stifled by other lusts or distracted. As a gardener once said to me: „I pulled the weeds, turned around and it was there again.“ So we really need to be very honest and consistent. For we bear lasting fruit for God only when we understand God’s word, accept it, and keep it with perseverance in a noble and good heart.

We need to grasp this parable not only for our own lives but also for the service of other people. At first, this parable may seem like a principle for salvation. But it applies to all other areas of our lives. It applies to healing, provision, and the visions and plans the Lord puts on our hearts. The devil tries to steal these words from us, and sometimes in a rather indiscriminate way – sometimes our loved ones knock down what the Lord wants to do in us, other times we know we are healed and healers, or our circumstances say otherwise. This too is a form of the Devil’s theft. The devil is always stealing, killing and destroying. On the other hand, the decision to persevere, to continue to pursue the things of God intensely, and to put other things aside are fundamentally ours alone. If we do not truly understand this parable, we will not understand the Lord’s other parables or the very nature of *spiritual warfare* (Mark 4:13).

God’s Plans And the Devil’s Plans

Surely you sometimes wonder if God’s plans and purposes always come to pass. They do not. For just as God has plans and purposes, so does the enemy, the Devil. Let us remember that the Devil has mankind loaded up over hundreds of generations. He has retrieved revivals – where he has made mistakes, how to stop them; he also has strategies to destroy marriages, to ruin the education of children,

and to lead entire generations into his delusions. The Biblical Greek word for this is *methodeia*, which means *to follow a prepared plan*. And we see that the Devil does indeed work according to patterned scripts.

We do not want to scare you, the One who is in us is greater, but let us realize that we really need wisdom from above, the wisdom of the Spirit who lives in us, to be dependent on Him, whether we want to do a small work for the Lord or a big one. Let us be people of faith and let us speak. For God is limited by the extent to which Christians are *spiritually minded*. God does not, and cannot, use any other way of thinking. The devil, on the other hand, uses carnal thinking, which is how most people think. He thinks in the *normal* human way.

Fight Intensively

God has plans and purposes on this earth and no doubt *wants* them to be realized. Our prayer and sharing of God's purposes with others is needed to bring them to fruition. God's word even speaks of the *intensity* with which God's plans and purposes are to be shared. The more intensely we spread God's Word, the faster it spreads:

„What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs.“

Matthew 10:27

This is absolutely crucial. We see that the Devil is trying to steal God's Word. When he fails, he tries to cripple and stop God's plans. That is why we are to immediately shout them from the rooftops. We are to share and spread them as much as we can. If we see that God wants to act in the church, to lead it into discipleship, prayer, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit, we must *arrange* and strain our strength to make it all happen before the Devil sets his people or religious people with similar but carnal ideas to stop the whole work of God. In the time of surprise, when we are in action and the Devil has not yet had time to mobilize his own, we can gain a decisive advantage. If we fail to do so, it is possible that God's plans will not be realized after all.

We can see this in the example of World War I and World War II. Before World War I, God was restoring the baptism of the Holy Spirit around the world, but in the European center of the Reformation, Germany, this work of the Spirit was rejected. Instead of a great pan-European revival, World War I followed. Then God, through men like John G. Lake and E. W. Kenyon, began to restore knowledge of the truth of the new creation. And because the church was slow to accept these truths, the Devil had time to modify the idea, transport it to Adolf Hitler, and he made it into the „Übermensch“ and the Third Reich. And instead of a worldwide awakening, there was another worldwide war. Today we can see God returning with the truth of the Holy Spirit, discipleship and the new creation. showing the church that *every* believer is a citizen of heaven and *can* walk in the supernatural (from a human perspective) every day. In the church, it only catches on sporadically, but Hollywood and Marvel movies are full of it.

Every Step You Take Counts

The role of each of us in the spiritual battle is absolutely crucial. We are part of God's army, and if each of us takes the slightest step, the whole army will move forward. If each one of a million people

makes one small step, it means that together the whole army will make a huge advance. So let us not underestimate our role in God's work!

Even the Apostle Paul knew that the body is strong according to the strength of each one of its parts. Let us face this knowledge, realize our importance in the whole, not underestimate our preparations for battle, and know that with every step forward, we push the enemy backwards:

„If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.“

1. Corinthians 12:26

In the Minority – So What?

God's people have often been a minority throughout history. Moses, for example, knew this. He once found himself in a situation where all of Israel was against him, and in *unbelief*. At the same time, the Egyptian army was threatening them. Despite all this, he was able to enforce God's will:

„As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the Lord. They said to Moses, ‚Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? Didn't we say to you in Egypt, ‚Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians?‘ It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!‘ Moses answered the people, ‚Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still‘“

Exodus 14:10-14

Being in the minority has its advantages. For example, in small numbers we are less lazy because it is harder to hide. When we are in a minority, we feel pressured, we are often more cautious, and we can push ourselves to perform better. And after all, if we are in the minority and major advances are made, it is obvious that it is not of man, but our God will be glorified in it. Let us notice this with Gideon, for example:

„The Lord said to Gideon, ‚You have too many men. I cannot deliver Midian into their hands, or Israel would boast against me, ‚My own strength has saved me.‘“ But the Lord said to Gideon, ‚There are still too many men. Take them down to the water, and I will thin them out for you there. If I say, ‚This one shall go with you,‘ he shall go; but if I say, ‚This one shall not go with you,‘ he shall not go.‘ The Lord said to Gideon, ‚With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the others go home.‘“

Judges 7:2.4.7

May these examples help us to see God even *greater* than before. Let us learn to live and win in the minority. God himself fights our battles.

Do not Wait, but Take Action

Not only do we often act in the minority, in oppression, but it is God's people who bring conflict with the enemy. The devil did not need to change anything about the established status quo, but God's people were aware of the urgency of the situation. At the same time, they knew that the powers they were up against were much weaker than the God who stood behind them. Take Elijah, for example, who was a *man like us*. He challenged 850 false prophets to a spiritual battle during Israel's oppression by Baal – and came out victorious:

„When he saw Elijah, he said to him, ‚Is that you, you troubler of Israel?‘ ‚I have not made trouble for Israel,‘ Elijah replied. ‚But you and your father's family have. You have abandoned the Lord's commands and have followed the Baals. Now summon the people from all over Israel to meet me on Mount Carmel. And bring the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table.‘ So Ahab sent word throughout all Israel and assembled the prophets on Mount Carmel. Then the fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench. When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, ‚The Lord—he is God! The Lord—he is God!‘ Then Elijah commanded them, ‚Seize the prophets of Baal. Don't let anyone get away!‘ They seized them, and Elijah had them brought down to the Kishon Valley and slaughtered there.“

1. Kings 18:17-20.38-40

This aggressive way of acting, which is caused by faith in God and His Word, can be seen, for example, in the New Testament in the Lord Jesus or in the apostle Paul. Therefore, we too must take a clear stand that we will never give up, and even if we have to defend the truths of the gospel alone, we will not give up. We must learn to grow strong in our God, not back down, and let *Him* fight for us. He is the God of war.

Which Front Are You on?

Another observation is that every war has different fronts. For example, the needs of the Eastern Front in World War II were different than the needs for the Normandy landings. Even though the soldiers had the same basic training and weapons. Different tactics were needed to win.

This is beautifully illustrated today when many of us listen online to various foreign preachers. They can preach brilliantly and be right. Some of their words are like a background training for us. But the other part of what they say may have more to do with the conditions and needs on their *front*. So we cannot copy *all* of what they say. This could lead to the rest of the church feeling like we are running around in a winter coat on a summer beach. It will then lead us to separate from the rest of them and not benefit the body of God where we are. So we need to pray and realize what front and where we are actually on and what is beneficial and relevant to the church in our region or in the places where our ministry is impacting. We need to separate the gospel from its local application.

We also need to master *Research and Development*. Let us learn to look for gaps in society that we can fill. Let us think about how to reach out to our generation. There have been some major changes in the last two centuries. Charles Wesley composed hymns that supported the message of Methodism, Charles Finney came up with calls to salvation, William Booth introduced worship at every meeting.

People like A. A. Allen and F. F. Bosworth were pioneers in Christian radio, Oral Roberts in television. These are all methods the church still uses today. However, let's not stop there and reach people online, using podcasts, TikTok, Instagram, and similar media.

What is the Terrain Like in Your Area?

Every military operation in the army begins with an analysis of the situation. It is abbreviated as METT-TC, from English *mission, enemy, terrain, troops available, time, and civilian considerations*. So, before planning a military action, we need to think about *what is our objective, who is the enemy* and how it works, *what* is the environment we are in, how many troops, equipment and ammunition we have, *how much time* we have and what impact it will have on our surroundings.

We can set as a goal *any* need of humanity. It may be religion or legalism in the church, ministering to the sick, addressing the problem of prostitution, child trafficking, or helping single mothers in our city or nation. As far as the city is concerned, the dominant power is fundamentally the one that resides in the center. In Washington, it may be *power*, in New York *business*, in Los Angeles *fame*, in Prague, for example, *religion, business, or prostitution*.

Then we have to analyze what the problem is and how it penetrates society. Is it bad teaching in the church? Is it the breakdown of marriage? Is it some special interest group that is running and funding illegal activities under our hands? Once we figure that out, we can move on to analyzing the terrain – what the laws are, figuring out where the money is coming from, who is benefiting, who we can get on our side. To do this, we need to take into account how many people and resources we realistically have to fight our fight and how much time we have to fight it. It is also important to be clear about *what* we actually want to bring to society – *what impact* it will have on society.

Know Your Commander's Plans

Another subject that is taught in the military is about *knowing our commander's plans*. When we undertake military operations, we need to know what our commander's intentions *are* with each action. First, then, we need to know what the Lord Jesus is up to. Is he after new disciples, healed people, or pretty pictures and a nice rug? This is nothing against people being creative, but we should not confuse goals and methods. We need to accomplish our leader's goals while it is Biblically permissible. Second, we need to know what our plans and intentions, or the plans and intentions of our pastor or leader, are.

Have we ever wondered where our pastor or other leader wants to take the church or ministry? Have we wondered what is the goal of which congregation? Do we really think of our leader as the leader we work for, or do we want to follow our own ambitions? If we think of an army, it is obvious that each unit achieves its goals better when it cooperates and obeys the commander's orders than when everyone on the front line is trying to fulfill his or her own ambitions. War is war and there is no room for naivety.

For this reason, it is very crucial to *stay* in God's Word. People often pray for specific *leadership*, but let us remember that when we are at war – in the trenches, for example – it is more than likely that we will have great difficulty hearing our commanding officer. It is much safer to *know* your orders already *from base* and then stick to them in tense situations. That means knowing God's word and then subconsciously responding to it. Our orders are our guidance.

Think one step ahead

When we talk about war, it also includes strategic planning. I do not just mean doing what the Holy Spirit tells us to do at the moment. I mean that He will also show us strategic steps forward. It is like chess. We need to learn to anticipate. The best chess players have a few moves in mind beforehand. The famous hockey player Wayne Gretzky described his game in the same way, saying, „I skate to where the puck is going to be, not where it is.“

In the same way, the Holy Spirit shows us things that are to come (John 16:13b). So, if we are in fellowship with Him, we are not running to where things are happening, but we are thinking about what the next steps our Lord is planning. We need to live constantly in the midst of God's will, and what is current today may not be current in a year or two.

As we walk with God, the Lord deals with us in this way not only in our personal lives but also in ministry. So we let ourselves be led by him. We trust that He knows what is best for us and for His work. So let us think strategically. The Spirit's leading is not just about today, but about plans for whole generations.

Types of Missions

We also need to think strategically when it comes to our city. We need to see the spiritual context in our work in the city and in the spread of the gospel. Whenever we come to a place, let us be aware of two truths. First, if the people in a place do not belong to the Lord Jesus, they belong to the enemy. Second, whatever spiritual atmosphere we perceive in the place, the fields are already turning white for harvest and it is up to us to reap them. We must act in faith and not in unbelief!

When we arrive at a place we can see our actions as a mission. There are several kinds of missions. For example, we can send a *patrol* to scout the terrain, or with the intention of locating and destroying an enemy base. Other times, we can use *ambush* and feign weakness to draw the enemy into a position to attack him. Another classic practice is *strike*, where we strike with a clear objective and follow through with a specific attack. These three types of missions can basically be used in our daily life, in a one-off action or when visiting any city.

If we want to make a fundamental shift in a given place, city or country and really make a difference, we need to prepare for a fourth type of mission. And that is *siege*. In a siege, you are dealing with discipline, troop morale, fatigue, or supply problems. But if we want to make a difference, we must be patient. When we read about the awakenings, it often seems that they *just* happened right away. And usually, when you break into a city (and it does not exactly have multiple levels of internal fortifications), it *falls right away*. However, before that, it was usually *sieged* for days, months, or years. We, as believers today, do this not with catapults or cannons, but with prayer, constant action, and the distribution of Bibles and Christian materials. We do not want to tear down the walls of cities, but the walls in the minds of people.

Siege of the City

Even when it comes to the activities of the church in the city, we need to see them from the perspective of spiritual warfare. Spreading the kingdom of God is not about getting together once or twice a week to talk and sing a few songs. Every city has needs that the church can and should meet. So

our goal is to reach those areas, show what God's kingdom has to offer, make disciples, build them up, have relationships with them, and then release them for further ministry. There are phases that must constantly repeat themselves in the church or in its various parts – reaching out to the community, making disciples, stabilizing, building relationships, building disciples, and releasing them for further ministry. All of this, of course, must be in response to the Holy Spirit and to the needs of the city and the church. So we need to move from just meeting to thinking strategically and occupying the city.

At the same time, let us not forget that we are not to just pray, just preach, or just do Christian actions. We must never fall into a Christian routine, but we need to be constantly aware of why we are doing what we are doing, why it has meaning and significance. We need to know that we are abiding in the truth and what we believe is right.

Every action we take needs to be born in prayer or in the Word, shaped in prayer, and implemented in the power of God's Spirit. Prayer is *our work* in the spiritual world. Any change we want to bring about in the physical world must first be *created* in the spiritual world. Consistent and focused prayer is the key to *change* in society. Its absence results in the stoppage of God's work and the departure of society from the Gospel.

Your Strategies

The success or failure of our mission is often determined by strategy and the decision of where and in what direction we direct our weapons (meaning word and prayer) and subsequently our troops and resources. But God does not let us down in this, and if we are discerning, He shows us tactics and places to attack. Repeatedly, we experience that through prayer in tongues and their interpretation (often in the form of pictures) the Lord reveals to us where the weak spots of the enemy are in a given city, i.e. what are the greatest needs of the people in that particular occupied territory and how we can meet them. However, we leave the *siege* and therefore the permanent shifts and breaks to the locals, we are only able to realize this in our home city, in Prague.

Other times the Lord shows us how to encourage the church in a given place. In the context of spiritual warfare, this means that we are revealed how we can boost the morale of the troops or supply them with supplies and support them in the siege of the cities in question. In addition to finances, conversion (delivering prisoners of war and enslaved people) and missionaries (increasing the number of troops), this can be done through prayer and teaching. If the church is taught well, its morale grows and its troops have better and better weapons to fight with (e.g. prayer in tongues, interpretation of tongues, discernment of spirits, or healing).

In addition to persistent prayer, the art of preaching serves to move cities and boost morale in congregations. Let us learn to preach in faith and to preach the faith. We preach differently to people who are new converts and differently to people who have gone through struggles. New people are enthusiastic and therefore it is important to build faith in them by pure preaching from God's Word, where nothing is impossible, all God's promises are for everyone, and things like healings and miracles happen always. Giving these people room for doubt is like discouraging soldiers who are enthusiastic about fighting from going to war. On the other hand, we need to motivate the troops who have already been through combat and experienced successes and failures by showing them that while there are failures, we encourage them to put the failures (e.g., no healings) aside and choose to see success instead. It is always up to us what we allow space for in our minds, in our Eden..

Paralyze the Enemy

Often we Christians are pure humanists. But have we ever considered that in spiritual warfare we can be a little more like the mischief makers? The apostle Paul blinded Barjesus and the angel of the Lord killed Herod. Why just let it all go when we are supposed to be fighting? I do not mean that we should pray against people out of selfish motives, but that we should pray for God's will to be done in our cities. Why not, for example, to destroy an ezo-typist just before his „preaching“ or other performance? Why not pray strategically for the foiling of the plans of the enemy? But let us always remember that our struggle is not against men, but against powers.

God wants good for people, the Devil wants evil. He is the enemy of men since Eden. Let us really think about what and who is ruling over our city, where the unwanted influences are coming from and where the funding is coming from. For Christianity can be strengthened either by increasing its support – more funding, more prayer, more evangelism – but also by weakening the opposition, by making the enemy less active, by weakening its resources and finances, or by breaking its information network. Ideally, a combination of both.

Take Seven Steps to Conquer the City

In addition to finding needs that we can fill in the city, praying, and developing strategic thinking; we want to highlight seven important steps that lead to success in spreading God's kingdom. If we want to win, we must put these seven points into action in our lives and make them work:

1. Let us always have „white-hot faith“ at least in the form of expectation of God's action. Expectation is one form of faith, and therefore we need to be constantly ready for our action and for God's action.
2. Let us be committed to the mission. Live as missionaries of Heaven on the Earth. Be a revival. Find out what God wants to do or is doing, join in and do it.
3. Let us discover and develop key relationships. Surround ourselves with people who think about the things of God as we do. This will help us run forward. At the same time, have relationships with people who love to talk or have the opportunity to spread the gospel in other ways. This benefits the spread of the gospel.
4. Let us learn to mobilize people and mobilize them. Say what we are going to do and where we are going to do it.
5. Let us keep the message simple. Love God. Love people. Do what is right. Heal the sick. Cast out demons. Without distinction. Make disciples. Put aside the unimportant things.
6. Let us not get too full of ourselves. We have the Holy Spirit and the harvest is already waiting. The Holy Spirit will teach us everything in due time as it is needed.
7. Adapt. When we cannot raise our hands, use a command or a prayer shawl. When we cannot speak, let us send a message or a letter.

Overpower the enemy. When Churchill declared war on Germany he said, among other things: „We must fight on the beaches, we must fight on the landing places, we must fight in the fields and in the

streets, we must fight on the hills; the only thing we cannot do is retreat.’ Let us take an example from this. Write books, pamphlets, leaflets, make videos, share testimonies, have websites. Let us do everything we can to overwhelm the enemy.

Hold the Conquered Territory

If we really want to create lasting work, we also need to think about whether what we are doing is sustainable in the long term. How many resources do I have that I want and can invest (time, finances, etc.)? How will these resources be replenished? What strategic partnerships do I need to maintain? How do I want to reach the city? How do I want to lead the disciples? How can I ensure the continuity of God’s kingdom development in this place after I leave? What is my role in all of this?

The strategy to reach and hold new territory with the gospel was also described by missionary William Carey, who worked in India. He spoke of needing three things to reach an area effectively. He preached the gospel for the sake of spreading it, he translated the Bible or Bible tracts so that the people would have some Christian materials, and he had a Bible school to train other disciples for the sustainable advancement of the gospel. We see similar three elements (preaching, materials – Old Testament, discipleship) in the life of the Lord Jesus. Today, most of us will not translate the Bible. However, we can preach the gospel, produce Christian materials and tracts as well, and have at least one discipleship group as well.

It is definitely not up to us to do everything from start to finish. We need to know *what* is our role (and I do not mean „none“). In the example of the apostle Paul, we can see that he usually did not stay in the cities all the way from the beginning of the church until the entire city was reached. Paul was well aware of his task: he was to „lay the foundation as a wise builder“ (1. Corinthians 3:10). He knew that he „sowed“, then, for example, Apollos „waters“ and „growth is given by God“ (1. Corinthians 3:6). Therefore, we see in Paul’s life that wherever he went, he sought to make disciples, trained them, equipped them, and when he judged that this *unit* was capable of independently spreading the gospel in that city, *he left*. He was not concerned with being present at the transformation of the whole city. His goal was to make sure that there were enough followers of Christ in the city to make that change possible. So let us each be a man of the Spirit and know when and where we need to be to be most effective for the Kingdom of God.

Never Stop

Now that we have discussed a few basic concepts about war, the question arises—how far can we see? Do we only see as far as the boundaries of our family? Or the boundaries of our congregation? Do we notice the needs of people around us, or are we unaware that other people live around us? I believe that as a church, we need to move from thinking about ourselves (selfishness) to reflecting on the needs of the world around us. The early church thought this way:

„During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.) The disciples, as each one was able, decided to provide help for the brothers and sisters living in Judea. This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul. “

And so we find that the *church* is God's answer to the needs of this world. We are His body. Through us, God acts here on earth. If we want to experience God's actions in our lives, we must have needs that God can fulfill through us. This is how He wants to make Himself known to this world.

3 Win every battle

It is clear that wars are not only fought on a personal level. In war, although soldiers fight man to man on the fronts, wars are fought at the national or international level. We have already laid the groundwork for us as a church to wage spiritual warfare on a global scale. We began with the times we are in and the role of the church as a whole. We picked up with the topic of leadership, because it is clear that if the church wants to move forward and not be overtaken by this world, it needs quality leaders everywhere and at all levels. We have progressed in the study of teamwork, of the need to grasp the church as a body. For war is not won by generals, though their brilliant plans are needed, nor by individually brilliant warriors, though they often tip the scales and are key to victory. Wars are won by *armies*, and their soldiers *must* know how to work together and know, how to rely on each other. That is why we also talked about training our troops. It is much easier to rely on a person who knows what spiritual warfare is all about than to work with someone who does not understand us at all. It is important that we each know where we are, what we are doing, and why. We can do things inefficiently and evaluate situations poorly, or conversely we can do everything well and with quality.

Now we come to the principles of combat, which every soldier *needs* to know. These principles are proven by centuries of warfare and work the same everywhere, in business dealings as in the spiritual world. They are principles that work in our favor or *against us*. God knows these principles very well, but so does the Devil. It is therefore very important to learn them. When we do, we will more *understand* God, because He is the Lord of hosts – the God of troops organized for battle. Moreover, by mastering them, we will more easily see through the Devil's tactics, because he is also a warrior, and our battle is against *him*. Even the Chinese warlord Sun Tzu said that if we know our enemy and know ourselves, we need not fear the outcome of a hundred battles. If we know ourselves and not the enemy, every victory gained will cost us a loss. If we know neither ourselves nor our enemy, we will succumb in every battle.

It may be argued that the Lord Jesus never explicitly mentioned these methods of *never*, but in a closer study we find that *naturally* flowed in them. For God Himself is a *warrior* and obviously thinks like a *warrior*. If we also allow ourselves to be taught by the Spirit of God, He Himself will guide us into the principles of war and make us more than conquerors. This section of the book contains ten principles of warfare. For each of the principles, what it means and where it occurs in the Bible is listed. Then it is explained how each principle can be applied by each of us on a personal level and on a congregational level. There is also a personal testimony and explanation of how the principles are used by our enemy. All the principles of warfare are interrelated. The more of these principles we use correctly at the same time, the better results we will have in battle.

3.1 The Principle of Security:

Definition : „Never allow the enemy to gain an unexpected advantage.“

As Christians, when we throw ourselves into spiritual warfare, we are often excited. But enthusiasm does not win the battle. In fact, enthusiastic people often get lured by a more experienced enemy into a position that is extremely disadvantageous or even devastating to them. This is what the principle of safety is all about. The inhabitants of Ai, for example, were convinced of its operation when they clashed with the Joshua and the Israelites:

„The entire force that was with him marched up and approached the city and arrived in front of it. They set up camp north of Ai, with the valley between them and the city. Joshua had taken about five thousand men and set them in ambush between Bethel and Ai, to the west of the city. So the soldiers took up their positions—with the main camp to the north of the city and the ambush to the west of it. That night Joshua went into the valley. When the king of Ai saw this, he and all the men of the city hurried out early in the morning to meet Israel in battle at a certain place overlooking the Arabah. But he did not know that an ambush had been set against him behind the city. Joshua and all Israel let themselves be driven back before them, and they fled toward the wilderness. All the men of Ai were called to pursue them, and they pursued Joshua and were lured away from the city. Not a man remained in Ai or Bethel who did not go after Israel. They left the city open and went in pursuit of Israel. Then the Lord said to Joshua, ‚Hold out toward Ai the javelin that is in your hand, for into your hand I will deliver the city.‘ So Joshua held out toward the city the javelin that was in his hand. As soon as he did this, the men in the ambush rose quickly from their position and rushed forward. They entered the city and captured it and quickly set it on fire. The men of Ai looked back and saw the smoke of the city rising up into the sky, but they had no chance to escape in any direction; the Israelites who had been fleeing toward the wilderness had turned back against their pursuers. For when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had taken the city and that smoke was going up from it, they turned around and attacked the men of Ai. “

Joshua 8:11-21

In addition to security of our base, we need to apply the principle of security by evaluating how much we are willing to give to the fight. We should never put more into a fight than we are willing to lose. The Lord Jesus taught His disciples about this as follows:

„Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: ‚If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.‘ ‚Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won’t you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, saying, »This person began to build and wasn’t able to finish.« ‚Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won’t he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples. ““

Luke 14:25-33

This approach applies to our whole life, but also to the individual sub-projects that we do for the Lord during our lifetime. In short, we need to learn to approach things in such a way that when they do not work out, we do not get upset. We may regret something, but we must not start wallowing in regret, and ruminating about lost finances, time and energy.

Personal level:

The easiest application of the principle of security is through the law of sowing and reaping. Let us be generous, serve others, heal the sick, and pray for one another. Each of these acts is proactive and in itself contains an element of giving. Giving, both spiritual and physical, should be a natural way of life for the Christian. In this way, we ensure that all that is needed reaches us as well.

Next, we apply this principle by *awareness* of who God is. The Apostle Paul exhorts us to „strengthen ourselves in the Lord and in the preeminence of His strength“ (Ephesians 6:10). The Psalmist writes similarly in the eighth Psalm. Here he speaks of how by praising God we can silence the enemy and even the one who takes *revenge*. We also need to pray for *all*. Prayer is how we prepare our smooth progression forward and how we *counteract* the Devil's attacks.

We need to learn to *trust* our God, or His Word. This means to *stand* firmly on God's Word at all times, both as to the promises and our identity, and to have unwavering confidence in it. We must not let His Word be stolen from us. We need God to become our *unconquerable castle*, and we need to be able to be victorious in it in the midst of the battle or the storm.

Church level:

At the congregational level, we can apply the principle of security in several ways. In our community, we need to know each other. It is important to know our comrades in arms and know that we can count on them. Let us pray together, let us fast together, let us share about our lives together. Let us be assured by the people around us that they will not abandon us in time of need. If we are in a larger congregation, in addition to gathering together, let us meet with a smaller group of people where we know each other. This will prevent possible division and infiltration of the enemy's spies into our midst.

In addition, we need to teach our family and our community about *spiritual warfare*. If the Devil cannot attack us, he will attack them, and if they do not know *their identity*, the Devil's actions and the principles of warfare, they will take it very hard and it will have possibly devastating effects.

The enemy:

Personal level:

Alongside our rash enthusiasm, the enemy instead uses our indifference and overconfidence. Indifference consists, for example, in a lack of prayer, where we do not project our problems, worries and impressions. Overconfidence is in not identifying the places where the Devil is going to attack and not preparing the way forward with prayers. The enemy then takes advantage of this by attacking us *unexpectedly*.

In addition, the Devil exploits the principle of safety through the complacency of Christians in our *Christian bubble*. Most of us stay only in our closest safe circle – the church. We do not win anyone else to Christ, nor do we serve anyone outside the church. This is very safe for the Devil.

Other avenues the Devil always uses is laziness and fear. Often as Christians we will do nothing that our leadership does not directly call us to do because we take our leader as a greater authority than the Word of God which clearly calls us to do the work of the Kingdom, or we are afraid of being discredited or excluded from fellowship. This may be due to an unhealthy environment where the Holy Spirit does not rule, but the spirit of religion does, or when control and manipulation rule instead of freedom.

Church level:

At the church level, the Devil also has the principle of security underpinned. He usually paralyzes the whole church with bad teaching that completely disarms it. None of their members are then dangerous to the Devil. Among the teachings that render the church toothless is the theology of our continual sinfulness. Even though we are holy, because of it, people do not come boldly to God and see themselves as righteous in His sight. As a result, they do not pray in faith. Further, the Devil disarms us by teaching that miracles and manifestations of the Holy Spirit ended with the first apostles. Because of this, the Church is not growing or reaching the world effectively. Last but not least, the church can be paralyzed by the *absences* of the doctrine of holiness. People then more easily succumb to the pressures of the world and are guaranteed not to shine as a light.

The Devil has his own methods and procedures to introduce these teachings or the lack of them. For example, when a leader frequently falls into sin, it is hard for him to preach victory over sin, so he starts talking about how we are still sinful. Or, in every fellowship there is at least one person who is seriously ill and unhealed; and at the same time another who has a problem with the baptism of the Holy Spirit and praying in tongues. Thus, the Devil usually gets to the point where neither healing nor the baptism of the Spirit and praying in tongues are mentioned. Ultimately, this disarms the church because the gifts of the Spirit are our tools for warfare. We need to understand this and talk about these topics, even though it is often not easy.

Testimony:

We were taught the principle discussed by practice. We often felt from our surroundings that the pastorally oriented church was trying to *keep* people and not move forward so quickly, we had it on our hearts to do it *differently*. But this required a different *way of thinking*. We wanted to move forward and advance the work of God. However, the Devil noticed this right away and put us under pressure through misunderstandings and other relational problems, for example.

Unfortunately, at that time we did not know the principles of warfare, how to use them or how they were used against us. The result was that the siblings who went all in changed their way of thinking and did not give up despite the losses. Moreover, they became more close-knit, their relationships with each other grew stronger, and they began to experience God like never before. On the other hand, the people who did not grasp the pace and trend set, they withdrew and stopped coming. They may have stopped coming for other reasons, of course. However, if we knew the principles of warfare and taught

them, we would have saved ourselves a lot of misunderstanding and lost fewer people.

What to do:

Let us know our God and let us know our the enemy. Let us not be afraid to move forward, let us be aware of God's presence, let us teach those around us God's word and trust in Him. Let us know each other, pray together, and expose the enemy's plans. Let us not give the enemy a sense of security, but ourselves, when we are on the front lines, let us know that we and our family are safe. The key is to be conscious in matters of spiritual warfare, know our position, and act soberly.

3.2 The Principle of Focus

Definition : „Define a convincing and achievable goal for each action. Then pursue that one goal with strength and determination.“

As leaders, we must clearly define our goals. We need to explain what we are about and where we are going. We cannot be vague. Again we can take an example from the Lord Jesus, who *is* a leader. We find that He expresses himself very clearly. Let us look at these two passages:

„Then Jesus came to them and said, ‚All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.‘“

Matthew 28:18-20

„Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.“

Matthew 10:8

The Lord Jesus expresses Himself *completely* specifically. Nowhere does He say: „Try,“ „See how you do,“ „It would be nice.“ The Lord Jesus does not give us *suggestions*, but *commands*. He expects us to be *focused* on his mission, to take it as our own. He does not expect Christianity to be a *complement* to our life, but to be *our life*. Moreover, the commands of the Lord Jesus mentioned above meet five criteria that proper commands should meet. His commands are:

1. **Specific:** After reading the commands, everyone *knows* what to do. Lord Jesus tells us *what* to do. Since each time and environment require different approaches, the Lord does not mention *how* exactly we are to fulfill His commands. Approaches may change as long as they do not alter the mission's goal. People often *lack* an explanation of *how* to the command. But those who *want* to do God's will always find biblical ways. If the Lord *told each one of us specifically how* we should fulfill His commands, the number of pages in the Bible would cover the entire planet. Yet, Lord Jesus, as a proper leader, issued clear orders that are applicable anytime, anywhere, by anyone. And if something is not clear to us, do not be afraid to ask Him.
2. **Measurable:** Goals need to be specific and measurable. If goals are clearly defined and measurable by a third party, they are more likely to be achieved. But how are goals and success measured? Is it the number of people we gain? Or the number of people we send out? The Lord Jesus was very specific: „Teach them to observe *all things* that I have commanded you“ and „Heal the sick, raise the dead, *cleanse* the lepers, *cast out* demons.“ After reading the commands of the Lord Jesus, every independent observer knows whether the desired result has been achieved or not.
3. **Achievable:** The Lord Jesus does not have unrealistic expectations. On the contrary, both the passages in question begin with the fact that we have *everything necessary* to accomplish the given mission: „I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth“, respectively, He „gave them

authority over unclean spirits to cast them out and to heal every disease and every weakness“. Our Lord has given us the position and the power to accomplish what He asks of us. This includes giving us His name, His Word, and His Spirit. In short, with Christ, God has *given* us everything (Romans 8:32).

4. **Relevant:** The goals set must be generally important and meaningful. People who want to join the vision must see that it is worth their effort, work, and diligence. People who join the vision need to be enthusiastic about it. Let us note that the vision of the Lord Jesus is exactly like that. He wants us to bring *Heaven to the Earth*. Moreover, the Lord's vision is made even more convincing by the fact that He Himself set an *example* for us. Everything He wants us to do, He did Himself. First, He did things, and only then did He teach.
5. **Time-bound:** Targets must be time-bounded. If they are not, the implementation becomes long-winded. The Lord says what we are to do until the „end of the age“. That is also a time limit. However, it is clear that the Lord Jesus used shorter time boundaries. The Lord gave the disciples three years and no more. After the resurrection, He told them about the kingdom of God again for 40 days and then left. We also need to start thinking in time periods and not just by coming to church „*every Sunday*“.

The principle of focus can also be traced in the Devil's temptation of the Lord Jesus. He applied four of the five points mentioned. His goal was clear – he *wanted to seduce* the Lord Jesus; measurable – he wanted our Lord to *serve* him; achievable – he was offering him *all the kingdoms of the world*; time-bound – after the third temptation he *withdrew*. Unfortunately for the Devil, his goal was not relevant and was not seduced. This is a hope for us, because we too can now defeat the Devil *once and for all*.

Personal level:

We also need to have such defined goals at all levels. When we meet a sick person – to heal him. When we talk to an unbeliever – to win him for the Lord. If we have a church or some disciples – to invest in them and build them up to be able to carry the gospel forward. In addition, we should exert all our strength, will, determination, and energy to accomplish these goals. This includes studying God's Word, meditating on it, prayer, finances, and time. If we do not stay focused, we cease to bear fruit for God. This happens especially the moment we lose our initial love, passion, and zeal.

If we want to accomplish great and amazing things, it is important to break them down into smaller parts. For example, the command „Go [therefore] and make disciples of all nations,“ is truly magnificent and there is nothing more to it. However, it becomes much more graspable when we take a smaller piece of it. For example, the first step might be making disciples in our neighborhood, the second step might be reaching our city with Christianity, the third step might be spreading discipleship in our nation, and the fourth step might be worldwide mission. In this way, the task of the Lord Jesus becomes much more real, tangible and personal for us, and it is clear where where to begin.

Church level:

The Christian demonstrates his focus on purpose at the level of the church community by activity that is consistent with the Great Commission. This includes, but is not limited to, participation in regular prayer, strategy meetings, and in actual events for the spread of the gospel.

By prayers, we do not mean a communal „*chat*“, but prayers that establish in authority and in unity the context of *Heaven on the Earth*. Prayers and intercessions should not be an excuse to participate in the event itself. If someone is *truly* called to prayer and intercession, we can usually recognize them easily. Strategic meetings should also not be just meetings for the sake of meetings, but should have a clear *direction* and *goal*, and after two or three meetings the actual action, or the first part of it, should follow.

The action is then mainly winning people to Christ. We do not just mean evangelism, when we reach people on the street. Our intentions and tactics can be more elaborated. We may aim to push esotericism and witchcraft out of our society, stop prostitution in the city, pass pro-Christian laws, or stop corruption. We can also seek to make our city the healthiest place in the world through the ministry of healing. Training and sending others to spread the same ideas in other cities and states can also be a goal.

Either way, we must not slip into prioritizing straightened chairs on Sunday, enough people for the tithing, perfect sound, and a great worship team. All of the above are good, but if there is more emphasis on these than what the Lord Jesus emphasized in the Gospels, it is something to think about. We need to see beyond the Sunday gathering.

The enemy:

Personal level:

Besides us, the church, in this world the enemy, the Devil, is also carrying out his plans. We are aware of this because we are here precisely „to resist his works“ (1. John 3:8). We need to know the Devil’s intentions. On a personal level, for example, we may find ourselves arguing just before we go to minister to the sick or preach. Other times, we may be given a lot of extra work just before an important prayer meeting. However, we need to learn not to give up, but to stay the course like the apostle Paul. Even after his argument with Barnabas, he *immediately* continued preaching the gospel and spreading the kingdom of God.

The decision *to never give up* can help us stay the course. We can draw inspiration from the Apostle Paul, who, when listing all the trials he went through (2. Corinthians 11:23-33), considers these trials to be light (2. Corinthians 4:17) and certainly not as something that should stop us.

Church level:

Once we are born again, it is the Devil’s interest to make us ineffective for the Kingdom of God. The devil is not primarily concerned with *us personally*, but if he succeeds in making thousands of Christians ineffective, the effectiveness of the church here on earth will be greatly diminished. That is why we, on the other hand, need to mobilize thousands of Christians.

The Devil’s effectiveness in this battle is that if we fall, there is no one to help us „get back up“ quickly. So we should each be careful to make sure we are going in the right direction and also be there

for others when they need us. Each of us should be determined to keep going even if we are the last one out of the team or out of the church.

The devil also wants Christians to be divided by pettiness and then not cooperate on key tasks. To do this, he often uses emotions and feelings triggered by *unreal* speculation about the motives of the other side. Let us remember not to be immature and clearly distinguish what is important (God's plans) and what is not (our ego). Let us not give space to the Devil!

Moreover, the Devil does not only act on a personal level or on a congregational level. The Devil even plans for *entire generations* ahead. Especially here we can notice that the Devil works *in secret* and reveals his true intention only when he is sure of victory. Often it seems that he is after something other than what meets the eye. So we as a church should start to *watch* and also think *globally*, not just react to what is happening around us. As we have written before, „God proclaims the end from the beginning“ (Isaiah 46:10). So let us think about how we can reach our generation, and how we can prepare our children to be able to reach their peers.

Testimony:

Sooner or later we must learn to master the principle of focus, otherwise we are in danger of diluting our strengths and getting nowhere in life and service. It was the same with me as a Connect leader. Thanks to the Lord, we had my co-author Honza on the team, who constantly pushed me to define goals, make them concrete, and give them a time frame. It was uncomfortable at first, but in the end, all this made the work clearer, more measurable, more achievable, and more verifiable by independent observers.

I have learned to establish which goal is the main one and to put emphasis on it. I also started to delegate tasks that are important but not my main goal. In doing so, I began to work with siblings who showed the most interest and heart in the area. That is how things got going, with more people getting involved – for example, in organizing Tuesday Connect meetings or Connect Training Camps, graphics, the website, or preparing books. People are more involved, I am not as exhausted, and we all enjoy the work.

What to do:

As Christians, then, we need to be focused on the same goal as our commander, the Lord Jesus. Goals must be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound. Changes and adjustments to our goals may occur due to changes in conditions, resources, and team. However, any change must still be *in line* with the command of the Lord Jesus. The goals defined by the Lord Jesus are *unchangeable*. On the other hand: dividing a task into smaller pieces is something we can change more easily. If it is a big goal, it is important to break it down into sub steps.

We, as leaders, need to clearly define a vision that we will not change. The changes in the vision would lead to instability and loss of credibility. Conversely, we can adjust the sub-steps more easily in order to achieve the vision given the resources, information and results obtained. The goal is to win the war, but in the sub-battles, the response to the enemy must be timely. Let us stop putting everything

in God's hands alone, but understand that on the contrary, even God puts things in *our* hands.

3.3 The Principle of Quantity

Definition : „Use sufficient force to reach the target. “

If we want to achieve any goal, we need to have enough time, people, energy and materials to achieve it. By using enough resources, we overwhelm, crush, and defeat the enemy. This is true for any project as for spiritual warfare. For example, when we are at work, we must consider whether we have enough resources, time, knowledge, or available capacity for the task at hand. For spiritual warfare and reaching out to society with the gospel, the same is true. If we want to reach the whole of Europe, we need to work with dozens of people across European countries. If we want to reach our settlements, we will need fewer people, less time and money.

The advantage of spiritual warfare over purely material projects is that we are working in a team with the best and most capable Teacher, Leader and God in the whole universe. This in many ways makes our work easier, even though we may be alone. We can take inspiration from the prophet Elisha, for example. Although he was almost alone from a human perspective, he was able to take advantage of God's superiority in battle. If more of us grasp what Elisha saw, how much more impact will our knowledge of God have on society? What about when we join forces?

„He summoned his officers and demanded of them, ‚Tell me! Which of us is on the side of the king of Israel?‘ ‚None of us, my lord the king,‘ said one of his officers, ‚but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the very words you speak in your bedroom.‘ ‚Go, find out where he is,‘ the king ordered, ‚so I can send men and capture him.‘ The report came back: ‚He is in Dothan.‘ Then he sent horses and chariots and a strong force there. They went by night and surrounded the city. When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. ‚Oh no, my lord! What shall we do?‘ the servant asked. ‚Don't be afraid,‘ the prophet answered. ‚Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.‘ And Elisha prayed, ‚Open his eyes, Lord, so that he may see.‘ Then the Lord opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. As the enemy came down toward him, Elisha prayed to the Lord, ‚Strike this army with blindness.‘ So he struck them with blindness, as Elisha had asked. Elisha told them, ‚This is not the road and this is not the city. Follow me, and I will lead you to the man you are looking for. ‘“

2. Kings 6:11b-19a

Elisha was not the only one in history who was aware of God's supremacy. The Lord Jesus was aware of the same superiority. However, unlike Elisha, He did not use His superiority at a crucial moment:

„With that, one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. ‚Put your sword back in its place,‘ Jesus said to him, ‚for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?‘“

Matthew 26:51-53

So the death of the Lord Jesus was a conscious decision, the Lord Jesus was the victor even at this moment. Therefore, we also are to „strengthen ourselves in the Lord and in the prevalence of

His power“. We do this especially by regular study of God’s word, prayer, praise in tongues, by their interpretation, or prophecy.

However, this does not mean that we are to despise or waste our fleshly resources. For example, people will greatly appreciate our *time*. Many will also appreciate the *food* we can give them. And last but not least, for example, finances will help to organize evangelistic campaigns or the printing of various Christian materials.

Personal level:

The goal of the principle of quantity is to overwhelm and crush the enemy. From a human perspective, this is difficult to do alone. However, we use this principle in prayer when we command words in authority. This changes our situation or the situation of people around us or around the world. Through prayer, we also move from defense to offense. We can see this, for example, when we pray, depressive and hopeless thoughts leave us, we begin to experience joy, and people around us become more open to Christianity. Persistent prayer also opens seemingly closed doors.

At other times, the principle of quantity can be applied through combined forces. For example, when we witness to someone, it sometimes seems that we do not immediately see the results we would like to see. However, if this person happens to meet more Christians in this way, God will break down their thinking and they will begin to be open to Him.

Church level:

With more people, the principle of quantity applies more directly. This also applies to prayer. When we form prayer teams and prayer campaigns focused on specific projects and goals, the effect of prayer is multiplied. We can take an example from the Moravian Brethren, who kept a 24/7 prayer watch – for an admirable 100 years. During the first 50 years of prayer, they sent 226 missionaries around the world, and their prayers led to the birth of evangelists such as Charles Finney and Dwight L. Moody.

Through prayer, we enable the Holy Spirit and God’s angels to respond to the word of God that we pray (Psalm 103:20). Moreover, there are twice as many angels of God as there are angels of the Devil. That is why we are to pray constantly. By doing so, we clearly cause serious problems for the enemy, who is forced onto the defensive and cannot act effectively.

We do not have to apply the principle of quantity only to prayer. We can set a goal to train hundreds of new Christian leaders in God’s word, in the power of the Spirit, and in spiritual warfare. If these people become active in spiritual warfare, the Devil will have serious problems. He will not know where to turn first. To stop one person is easy, to stop hundreds of people is more difficult. John Wesley, for example, achieved this. The movement he started continued long after his death, even on continents where he did not live.

The enemy:

Personal level:

Unfortunately, even the enemy uses the principle of quantity. On a personal level, he usually involves us in a series of attacks on different fronts. For example, he can attack our health, relationships and finances in a short period of time. This can induce states of helplessness, hopelessness, depression and fear. After a long period in such a battle, we may become irritated and consider giving up, which is his goal. Therefore, let us not give up, let us consistently give our worries to the Lord and stay focused on Him, and not on the circumstances.

If we love to serve others, it is possible that we see opportunities where we can help all over the place. Sometimes we even experience condemnation when we do not serve others. Of course, we are to help people, but at such a moment we must recognize what is at stake – we are overwhelmed in our thoughts by the principle of quantity. Let us realize that our service does not define our identity.

Church level:

At the congregational level, the Devil often uses the principle of quantity before key actions by causing problems in several places at once. This manifests itself, for example, in people from different households falling ill just before a conference. At other times, problems with technology that have never occurred before or since begin to appear. And last but not least, people are suddenly overwhelmed with work or other concerns and their minds are not focused on teaching God's Word.

In addition, the devil tries to overwhelm us with problems and worries even during prayer. Our minds are then filled with various thoughts. This is true on a personal and congregational level. Once our attention is fragmented, prayers are not as powerful, and effective. That is why it is important to learn to entrust our worries to the Lord, to go to prayer with a clear head, to be aware of our position before God, and to pray with concentration and zealously.

Testimony:

The principle of quantity is one of our favourite principles. We have found that when we pray regularly, we keep the Devil busy and he then presses us far less in our thoughts. In addition, we also apply this principle in other ways – for example, during our Connect Training Camps, we pray for each city in advance, and in addition to the Lord showing us what is *happening* where, we also see ahead in time the various places and events.

Besides, the very idea of events like Connect Training Camps is based on the principle of plurality. We don't do a couple of big conferences a year, but dozens of small events that keep us and the church constantly moving, keep the Devil busy, and keep people engaged. While it is more time and energy consuming, we have more personal connections with people and spend more time together. Our relationships are stronger because of it. Beyond that, we have more shared experiences together. All of this ultimately makes for easier multiplication and a faster spread of the gospel.

What to do:

It is obvious that the basis of spiritual warfare is the struggle for the *mind* of the people. What people think about, they fundamentally talk about and do. Therefore, according to the principle of

quantity, the Devil tries to get us to the point where we become small-minded and despairing through various unpleasant situations. It is important, therefore, to know whose side we are on, who we are and who He is. We need to learn to keep a steady mind, pray and praise the Lord. With our prayers we are *pushing* the devil away and thanks to this action in the spiritual world people are beginning to perceive the ideas coming from God and are more open to Christianity. We also need to know what resources we have and how we can best use them. So, let us not be afraid to start prayer campaigns, training, sending people out, and other projects that will cripple the Devil's work and elevate God's work.

3.4 The Principle of Surprise

Definition : „Attack the enemy at a time when he does not expect it, in a place where he does not expect it, and in a way for which he is not prepared. Reach your target before the enemy is able to react effectively.“

The principle of surprise is one of the most effective methods of attack when we need to gain time and attention or when we want to turn a situation to our advantage. By surprising the other party, we throw them off balance and we are able to take the next steps that are crucial to us without any resistance. Moreover, we often save a lot of effort and energy that we would otherwise have to expend.

The principle of surprise is one of the methods of struggle that God Himself is very fond of. The proof of this is the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus on the cross. At the very moment when the Devil thought he had already won and started celebrating the death of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus, the only hope of mankind, an absolutely shocking event happened to him which completely reversed the situation: The Lord Jesus defeated him on his own turf and ,destroyed him who has the power of death, namely the Devil, through death‘ (Hebrews 2:14). After this drawing of the Devil into a situation from which there was no escape, God did not stop, but decided to make the best of the situation by another attack:

„Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, ,What does this mean?‘“

Acts 2:2-5.12

After the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and His ascension, the Devil just watched the group of praying people and waited to see what would happen next. Then came the next surprise blow: the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It happened suddenly (Greek *aphnō*), unexpectedly, without warning. Suddenly, instead of one Lord Jesus baptized with the Holy Spirit, the Devil had a problem with 120 people who were baptized with the Holy Spirit.

We can also clearly see in the text that the uninvolved people were amazed (Greek *eksistēmi*) and confused (Greek *diaporeō*). These people had no idea what was going on. The Apostle Peter took advantage of the confusion and through his preaching, 3000 people were converted to the Lord that day. We may also note that God’s series of surprises did not end there. As the church prayed, miracle after miracle was performed, and the opponents of the faith, the Pharisees, were more than once paralyzed by it.

But the principle of surprise was often used in battles in the Old Testament, for example by Gideon, and again by the Lord Jesus. Sometimes he was just *walking* through Galilee and the opposition *could not know* where he was going to appear, sometimes he was healing on the Sabbath, or talking to a lonely Samaritan woman.

Personal level:

We can take examples for ourselves from the actions of the Lord Jesus. When we are in the city, we can randomly preach to people. Other times we may preach in unexpected places, in front of an Erotic shop or an abortion clinic. Or, in casual conversation, we may change the subject to spiritual things out of the blue. Other times, in church, when we preach, we may start with a word of knowledge instead of an introduction. If they are not used to this, it is guaranteed to catch them off guard and their attention is on us or on what God wants to say or do right now through us.

Church level:

At the congregational level, it is necessary to attack in places where the Devil does not expect it. Following the example of the cross, we can use tools that the Devil has used extensively against the things of God – such as Facebook and Instagram. Evangelist Oral Roberts similarly entered television 70 years ago. He was criticized by the church for his move, but he said: „We have to follow people where they are, because they don't come where we are.“ And so he got into people's living rooms on 125 of the 504 American TV channels of the time. Let us not forget that our message is immutable, but the methods by which we get it to people can (and should) evolve.

The enemy:

Personal level:

The enemy often knows our plans. After thousands of years of experience with humanity, he can guess them. To keep him from gaining an advantage over us, we need to know his. Let us look at a few model situations in which the Devil usually uses the principle of surprise. For example, we plan to talk to someone at work about our Heavenly Father and arrange to have lunch together. We sit down together in the cafeteria and suddenly another co-worker appears out of nowhere and wants to join us. We do not turn him down, but because the situation throws us off, the other person takes the initiative in the conversation and turns it in a different direction.

Other times, when we have already talked to someone about salvation, before our second meeting together, they suddenly „have something enter into it“ or the Devil puts anti-Christian ideas into their mind. Another similar situation may arise when we are to go minister healing to someone. Just before we leave work, our boss delays us with another assignment or there is a lot of work that day and we are stressed or pressured to cancel the service. Usually such a situation „resolves itself“ if we stick to the set direction.

Church level:

The devil also uses moments of surprise and distraction at church meetings. For example, when talking about healing, a person who has been ill for a long time will attract attention. At other times, attention may be drawn to a prominent person arriving late, or the gathering may be disrupted by loud noises, demonic manifestations, a flying fly, and so on. Unfortunately, it takes a while to get people's attention back to where it was before the disturbance.

There is a simple solution to all these disruptive factors. We need to teach people the principles of spiritual warfare and *concentration*. We need everyone to understand that God's word is the most important thing and that everything else is secondary to it. We need to establish the same morality in the congregation at prayer meetings. Everyday worries must be left at the door.

When planning church events, the Devil tries to derail us for example by having someone schedule a family celebration on the date of our key meeting. Other times, another Christian community will schedule their event on the same date as ours. This reduces attendance at our key meeting and, with it, the effectiveness of our work.

Testimony:

We have a whole lot of testimonies about this principle. Mostly these are situations that God led us into, and in *retrospect* we saw that it was exactly according to the principle of surprise. For example, God led us to work on a series of events for the coming summer during the lockdowns in the fall of 2020 and spring of 2021. We prepared them and took the initiative as *soon* as possible. The religious spirit did not expect this.

We also have negative experiences with this principle. In several of our young marriages, facts came to light *shortly* after the wedding that made one of the spouses disgusted with the relationship—the timing was masterfully planned by the Devil. These were major inconveniences right from the start. Another time, we were invited to preach about healing through God's power, but we underestimated the event and did not pray for it. A week before it was to begin, the event was canceled because many people in the congregation had fallen ill.

What to do:

We can see that the principle of surprise is mainly about throwing the opponent off balance, seizing the initiative, and setting the direction. We need to learn to be truly dead to ourselves and become unshakable and firmly focused. On the other hand, let's learn to think like warriors and not be afraid to *deliberately* use the principle of surprise. Although Jesus never said, „Now I am using this principle,“ he *naturally* flowed with it. He turned water into wine and cleansed God's temple with a whip. We too need to be taught by the Holy Spirit—for God is a Warrior—and begin to think this way *naturally*. Let us not forget that everyone uses this rule—people in love by giving gifts, soldiers by launching surprise attacks, business people in negotiations, and even various cults. Let us use this principle to liberate people and for God's glory.

3.5 The Principle of Attack

Definition : „Take the initiative, maintain it, and use it to the fullest.“

As we have already discussed in the principle of surprise, God and the early church consistently attacked the enemy and the spirit of traditional religion. However, we can see from their actions that it was not just a matter of *surprising* or overwhelming the Devil. Their actions were *deliberate, well thought out, and strategic*. Let us look at the life of the apostle Peter. His example shows us that Peter did not just surprise or overwhelm people. We will see that Peter *seized* opportunities, *held on to them*, and *used them to the fullest*. Moreover, he was *consistent* in his efforts:

„Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: ‚Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say.‘ When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, ‚Brothers, what shall we do?‘ Peter replied, ‚Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.‘“

Acts 2:14.37-38

But the Apostle Peter was not satisfied; he continued his initiative together with the others in the following days:

„Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles.“

Acts 2:43

A few moments later, we see that the apostle Peter continued in the same vein. Again, following the pattern of *taking* the initiative (he responded to the lame man), *maintaining* it (he steered the conversation away from money and toward healing), and *using* it (he healed the man and then preached to the crowd):

„Then Peter said, ‚Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.‘ Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. While the man held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon’s Colonnade. When Peter saw this, he said to them: ‚Fellow Israelites, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go.‘“

Acts 3:6-8.11-13

The apostle Peter was phenomenal in applying the principle of attack. He did not allow himself to be stopped and testified about the Lord with conviction wherever he went. Later, we see that Peter was not stopped even by persecution from the Pharisees, imprisonment, and other adversities:

„Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out. ‚Go, stand in the temple courts,‘ he said, ‚and tell the people all about this new life.‘ At daybreak they entered the temple courts, as they had been told, and began to teach the people... They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.“

Acts 5:17-21a.40-42

It is not without reason that the Acts of the Apostles are called *Acts*. Faith is about *acts*. In faith, we need to act when we are on the offensive, as we saw in the example of the Apostle Peter, even when we are on the defensive. We can see this, for example, in the Apostle Paul in chapters 27 and 28 of the book of Acts. Paul first warned the others from his position as a prisoner that the voyage was dangerous, but no one paid attention to him. Then, when a great storm broke out during the voyage, Paul stood up in the middle of all the men after a few weeks and began to encourage them. He then prevented the crew from escaping. Although everyone on the ship owed him their lives, the soldiers wanted to kill him along with the other prisoners. However, in the end, everyone arrived safely in Malta, where he was bitten by a viper on the very first night. Paul shook it off into the fire and acted as if nothing had happened. He did not even pray aloud, but remained focused on the Lord. In the end, he took advantage of the opportunity to heal the father of the island's governor, thus bringing revival to Malta.

Personal level:

On a personal level, we apply constant attack, for example, by healing the sick or preaching the gospel. At other times, when we know that the enemy likes to attack relationships between us, we can get ahead of him and strengthen our relationships with others consistently. In all this, we need to adopt an aggressive approach toward the enemy, the Devil, and his helpers. It is important to attack immediately as soon as we detect him. We must not miss a single opportunity. We need to be constantly one step ahead and take the initiative. This contrasts with the common teaching on being led by the Holy Spirit, which speaks of de facto random action based on God's impulse.

Other key aspects are: courage, boldness, and audacity. For a sustained attack, the key sequence is: attack (the action we take), distraction (we let our people catch their breath), regrouping (we come up with another action and prepare for it), and repeated attack (we move on to the next action). Once war has been declared, it must be waged aggressively until the end. We must not merely provoke or repel the enemy. We must strike them down and destroy them. All this requires discipline, willpower, and determination.

Church level:

The principle of attack is also important for us as leaders. Through systematic attack or a combination of offensive stimuli, we boost the morale of our units and at the same time increase the credibility

of our leadership. This gives us the opportunity to move forward. Our passivity, on the other hand, lowers morale and causes internal unrest. Decisiveness and courage in matters of morale are important for us.

It is also necessary to be active in both offensive and defensive actions. Defense alone limits our ability to move. However, we can help ourselves greatly by being offensive in defense. This will throw the enemy off balance, limit them, and increase our safety, as we will not be such an easy target. We can also take advantage of unexpected opportunities, as we will already be in motion.

The Enemy:

Personal level:

Since we are always either on the defensive or on the offensive, the enemy's main goal is to make us think defensively rather than offensively. This keeps us retreating, cowardly, and ineffective. This can apply to both our marriage and our service in the church. Another goal of the enemy is to make us pray mainly for ourselves and think only about ourselves. We need to expose this tactic and pray for others, serve them, and think outwardly. When we are under constant attack from the enemy, his activities may seem like wave after wave, which is closely related to the principle of quantity.

When problems come our way, when we are sick, when we receive bill after bill, and when our key relationships are disrupted, we must stand firm on God's word and speak life into all these situations. We must remain grateful, praise the Lord, and also actively seek opportunities to see God at work. In this way, we will always have fresh testimonies of God's goodness.

Church level:

Even at the church level, the devil uses the principle of attack. These attacks can be internal or external. Internal attacks include divisions, quarrels, sects, disagreements about doctrine or programs, and finances. External attacks can be city ordinances against church meetings or against preaching the gospel. People often do not realize that these restrictions disrupt human relationships, go directly against the Bible, which says that we should not neglect meeting together, and limit the spread of Christianity as such.

Further attacks may come in the form of witchcraft, or from other (physical) „Christians“ or „Christian“ groups. However, we must not forget that our struggle is not against people, but against powers. It is right to constantly *love* people and live in the *awareness* that we are here on Earth to spread God's kingdom. Let us constantly occupy territory in people's minds and hearts. Let us not be led astray from preaching the gospel by verbal skirmishes.

Testimony:

The Lord also taught us this principle when preparing for the Connect Training Camps. In the fall of 2020, when He told us to organize them, Covid and lockdowns were the factors that pushed us into a defensive position. However, we did not stop and continued with the preparations. First, in November 2020, we sent books about God's healing to 2,689 churches and parishes in the Czech Republic. Then,

in the summer of 2021, we held a series of 11 events throughout the Czech Republic. We involved 15 young people in preaching at these events. Shortly after the end of our summer series, we met again and, after reorganizing, began planning another powerful wave for the winter of 2022.

What to Do:

As Smith Wigglesworth said, „Fear looks, but faith leaps.“ Faith is action. People of faith are people of action. It is obvious that those who energetically pursue their goals will achieve greater progress than those who just wait for chance, like in the lottery. Let us not forget that it is much easier to keep attacking than to be up one moment and down the next. Movement is also our defense against the enemy.

3.6 The Principle of Economy of Force

Definition : „Focus the proper amount of power on the key objective without wasting resources on secondary objectives.“

The Lord Jesus clearly tells us that we are to be „as wise as serpents and as innocent as doves“ (Matthew 10:16). And that, in other words, is what the principle of economy of force is all about. This principle is about not wasting resources and using the opportunities of the environment and the plans of the enemy to benefit the kingdom of God. So let us be clear about what our resources and opportunities are and what environment we are in. We need to conserve strength where it is not needed and allocate our resources to key areas.

A beautiful example of the Apostle Paul’s use of this principle is seen in Acts 23. Paul was judged by the Sanhedrin, but he was aware of the *narrative difference* between the Pharisees and the Sadducees of which the sanhedrin consisted, and he was able to take advantage of it:

„Then Paul, knowing that some of them were Sadducees and the others Pharisees, called out in the Sanhedrin, ‚My brothers, I am a Pharisee, descended from Pharisees. I stand on trial because of the hope of the resurrection of the dead.‘ When he said this, a dispute broke out between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. (The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, and that there are neither angels nor spirits, but the Pharisees believe all these things.) There was a great uproar, and some of the teachers of the law who were Pharisees stood up and argued vigorously. ‚We find nothing wrong with this man,‘ they said. ‚What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?‘“

Acts 23:6-9

We see that the apostle Paul was able to divide the Pharisees and Sadducees with a single sentence. He diverted attention from his case and even won the Pharisees over to his side. Paul was thus able to use his enemy’s energy to his advantage while saving time and energy.

In order to *live economically*, know how to talk to people, and value our resources, Paul himself repeatedly calls on us, for example in his letter to the Colossians:

„Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.“

Colossians 4:5-6

And it is precisely time that is the main resource that each of us must learn to manage. Time is limited, precious, and cannot be turned back. Our other resources include:

- **Energy:** This resource is renewable. However, through discipline and goal setting, we are able to release more of it into our lives.
- **Prayers:** Prayers serve to reveal both God’s plans and the enemy’s plans. Thanks to this, we can set about accomplishing the tasks that God shows us, and we don’t have to waste time waiting. At the same time, we can see what the enemy is planning, and thus prepare for or avoid his attacks.

- **Confession:** By confessing God's word, we strengthen ourselves. It is therefore good to profess the word regularly. *Discipline* saves energy. As we know, a car consumes the most energy when *starting* to move, while *keeping* it moving requires less energy.
- **Preaching the word:** By preaching the word, we *keep the enemy* busy, and he has no time to attack us. At the same time, by professing God's word, preaching the word, and praying, we set angels in motion who respond to God's word. So let us not forget this source either!
- **Finances:** Money is a good servant but a bad master. Our hearts follow where we put our money. So if we want to live for the Lord, it will be much easier if we don't squander our resources but invest them in His work.
- **Trusting God:** Trusting God and expecting Him to do what He promises saves us time, stress, and energy. Let us focus on our role and trust God in His role.

This list is, of course, not exhaustive. Our resources can also include anything else that we can use in the fight for God's kingdom.

Personal level:

On a personal level, we can regularly use any of the above. In addition, we can also include regular fasting or group prayers to develop good habits.

Church level:

If we are in a leadership position, we need to think more broadly about resources and the principle of economy. In addition to our own resources and means, we also have other *people* at our disposal, with their time and resources. We need *to draw* them into our vision and utilize the potential they bring.

Another aspect is the art of *delegation*. If we do not have to do something ourselves, it is good to pass it on to someone else and take advantage of others' willingness to help while they are willing. As leaders, we also need to look more to the future. For example, when we organize various events, it's good to stay in touch with the audience after they are over so that our impact does not fade away but brings about *lasting* change.

If we have several options to choose from for our next action, we need to focus on the one that will make the biggest difference in the current period of struggle. When it comes to our resources, it is always better to lose money than people. Money has always been, is, and will always be there, but finding the right people and building strong relationships with them is more time-consuming.

The Enemy:

Personal level:

As for the enemy, he also likes to conserve energy and resources. Unlike God, he has limited resources, does not know everything, and is not omnipresent. On a personal level, he often uses our sin. Sin costs us time and money, which are resources of God's kingdom. In addition, after sinning, we experience

guilt and condemnation and become ineffective for God's kingdom, at least for a while. Thus, the Devil manages to „take us out of the game“ for a time at our own expense.

Therefore, we need to constantly act in faith in God's word and hate sin. Then the Devil has nothing to grab onto. He will save his energy and find someone else on whom his tactics will work. As soon as the Devil finds any weakness in us, he will begin to exploit it regularly, especially when it suits us least. He knows that if he has us within his reach, we cannot prevent his attack. But if we keep our distance from him, when he approaches to strike, we *are able* to respond and use both our energy and his to cause him harm. Of course, he does not like that, so he would rather stop.

The devil also applies economy of force in our relationship with God. Many people spend their whole lives *fighting God* instead of fighting the devil. Again, this *confusion* among Christians saves the Devil time, energy, and other resources. We therefore need to live as people of the New Covenant who know that they are not fighting against God like Jacob, but on the contrary, know that God is on their side and, in harmony with Him, they fight against the Devil, as the Apostle Paul writes.

Church level:

The enemy also uses the principle of economy of forces at the congregational and inter-congregational levels. Again, through division. Division is an *deed of the flesh*. However, if we live in the Spirit, the Devil has no chance. So it is up to us and our discipline not to give the Devil any room. If he doesn't get it, he doesn't have it. At other times, Christians, who are supposed to bless the government and thus bring about change in society, curse the government. This is another way in which the Devil uses our indiscipline and ignorance to achieve his interests.

Testimony:

While writing this book, I was still working on translating another one. However, I only had time for one of these activities. During this time, the Lord clearly told me to work on *writing* this book and leave the translation to someone else. As a leader, I *have to* write this book, while someone else from the team can translate something else. I obeyed the Lord, and it paid off.

At other times, the Lord teaches me through discussions with several people. I have found that as a leader, *I can let others speak*, especially when someone *shares the same position* as I do. This saves me the energy of explaining, I find that I have someone who agrees with me, and others don't feel like they are against the leader. This way, I can enter the discussion at the end and just moderate or conclude it.

During Covid, I also noticed that the Devil likes to use preachers of the „gospel“ for his own purposes. These people have a certain *influence* and are supposed *to preach the gospel of God's kingdom*. Unfortunately, during Covid, many of them preferred to preach about vaccination or against vaccination, and thus the Devil succeeded in dividing the church at its own expense, and on top of that, the true gospel was preached very little.

What to do:

It is important to use our resources wisely. We need to focus on our goal. We must not waste our energy on secondary goals. We need to save our most valuable resources for our most valuable goals. On a personal level, this could mean, for example, staying in shape every day, not taking offense, conserving energy in discussions, acting with purpose, or using time and finances wisely. As leaders, we can then better and more effectively present priorities, make decisions, delegate tasks, and think strategically. At the same time, let us remember that when we move forward in one area, we cannot afford to lose ground in another, more important area. We must not allow ourselves to lose another, more important area. And let us never forget to proclaim God's deeds at the expense of those of the Devil.

3.7 The Principle of Maneuvering

Definition: „Put the enemy at a disadvantage by flexible use of combat forces.“

Another principle of combat is the principle of maneuvering. The success or failure of an action often depends on our ability to adapt to circumstances in order to achieve an objective, depending on the environment we are in. We cannot expect circumstances to go our way. Rather, we need to know what our goal is and then, depending on the circumstances, react to achieve our goal. This is what the Devil did when he came to tempt the Lord Jesus:

„The tempter came to him and said, ‚If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.‘ Jesus answered, ‚It is written: »Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.«‘ Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. ‚If you are the Son of God,‘ he said, ‚throw yourself down. For it is written: »He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.«‘ Jesus answered him, ‚It is also written: »Do not put the Lord your God to the test.«‘ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ‚All this I will give you,‘ he said, ‚if you will bow down and worship me.‘ Jesus said to him, ‚Away from me, Satan! For it is written: »Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.«‘ Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.“

Matthew 4:3-11

We see that when one method of tempting the Lord Jesus failed, the Devil immediately moved on to another, and then to a third. The Devil knew what he wanted, and *he did not care* which temptation he used to achieve it. Fortunately, the Lord Jesus did not act in the flesh, but in the Spirit, and he repelled all the Devil’s temptations, so that his plan did not succeed despite the use of the principle of maneuvering. After the Devil saw that he would not succeed, he withdrew.

Personal level:

We as believers can also use the principle of maneuvering. For example, when evangelizing, if we want God to touch people with His love and power, we can start by asking if the person is suffering from any pain. If not, we can ask if they would like us to pray for them. If they refuse that as well, we can ask if we can at least bless them. Our only concern is to show the person that God is real, that He wants to heal them, or that He knows them. So we stick to our direction (the principle of focus) and adapt the method. When God begins to act, it becomes easier for us to lead that person to accept the Lord Jesus.

Sometimes the principle of maneuvering can be used in prayer, for example. If we are accustomed to praying at a specific time, the enemy may try to distract or tire us out just before that time. Therefore, it is good to be flexible and pray at a time when the enemy does not expect it—he is not prepared for it and will be taken by surprise. Alternatively, if we have a prayer list, it is good to change it from time to time, or to pray for individual areas in a different order. Routine is good for discipline, but if it leads to mechanical action (praying) instead of action (praying) *in faith*, it is dangerous.

Church level:

As far as the church itself is concerned, the principle of maneuvering is applied sporadically today. By this we mean that if our gatherings look *still* the same as they did *fifty* years ago or in the Middle Ages, it is clear that the enemy has already adapted to this. It is important for the church *to be able to address* the current generation in today's language. At the same time, we need to realize that tactics (such as how to get people to attend meetings) change, but strategies (such as getting people to attend meetings and preaching to them) do not. Let us not be carried away by the comfort of the times; human nature is still the same, even if people today appear more cultured.

A shining example of adaptability is Oral Roberts. He was first a pastor, then he started evangelistic campaigns—first eight-day, then six-day, and finally three-day—depending on the level of interest. Meanwhile, he began broadcasting his sermons on television. And finally, he founded ORU University. Similarly, during the economic crisis in the United States in the 1930s, F. F. Bosworth began broadcasting his programs on the radio instead of running expensive campaigns—he saved resources but reached people constantly. It is clear that many men and women of God understood *the principle of maneuvering*. They did not change their message, but they did change their methods. The church should follow their example, not criticize them.

The Enemy:

Personal level:

We have already briefly mentioned how the enemy uses the principle of maneuvering. The enemy looks for tactics that work on us personally. He searches for these tactics until he finds them. The only way to prevent him from finding them is to be dead to ourselves, dead to sin, and dead to this world. Let us realize that the Devil has no room unless we give it to him. This is how the Lord Jesus responded.

In practical terms, this means, for example, that we cannot afford to take offense – otherwise, the enemy will destroy our relationships; to be offended – the enemy will easily knock us out of what we are supposed to do; to sin – the enemy will use it against us when it is not convenient for us; to desire the things of this world – the enemy can lead us away from our true God-given mission through the seduction of wealth and other worldly temptations. It is not a matter of distancing ourselves from this world, but let us not allow it to grow dear to our hearts.

If the enemy finds out what works on us, he will *exploit it to the fullest*. If we are active in God's kingdom, the enemy will work against us more quickly than against unbelievers because we are dangerous to him. If he finds no weakness in us, he will retreat and wait for a more opportune moment. In the meantime, however, he will begin to attack those closest to us, such as our family and co-workers. If he cannot get to us, he wants to harm those around us as much as possible and stop us through them. It is therefore essential to teach our brothers and sisters around us *about spiritual warfare*. Only then will we be prepared together for the attacks of the Devil.

Church level:

In addition to wanting to discredit us, the Devil wants to damage the ministry we are involved in as much as possible. For example, if there is weak leadership among the men, he will work to ensure that it stays that way and that the men leave us. The same applies to women. If there are weak relationships in the community, the Devil will set up situations to further disrupt those relationships or at least prevent them from strengthening. For example, if sin and fornication are not preached against, they will begin to appear in the community. It is therefore important for us as leaders to know the enemy's tactics, not to remain in sin (if we are in sin ourselves, we do not preach against it), and to teach others in all things of God. When we know what the enemy is doing, he cannot attack us effectively.

Testimony:

Personally, I was someone who did not like change and did everything „right“ – meaning that I tended to do everything the way *it had always been done*. That is why this principle was something I really had to learn to think differently about. The Lord clearly began to show me that we *must* reach this generation. And so we started working with Facebook, YouTube, and other social platforms that I had been avoiding. In addition, we try to reach people through a combination of methods, such as magazine articles, websites, various books, videos of varying lengths, and all kinds of events. We see that each of these methods *appeals* to some people more than others. However, the broader our reach, the greater the chance that we will reach someone.

As for leadership, the Lord is also teaching me a lot and pushing me forward in this area. It is obvious to me that the vision must be *clear* so that people know what they can rely on. This is, of course, *contrary* to the principle of maneuvering. However, I try to have a free hand in fundamental decisions or changes to sub-points of the vision. It helps me to think about everything more in terms of projects. We have time-bound projects with clear goals – for example, lasting six or nine months. Then we evaluate the work and plan for the next period. This allows me to maintain the necessary flexibility within the vision to shift resources without losing credibility.

What to Do:

Do not be carnal. Let us not be bound to something, even if it no longer has much significance. At other times, we tend toward *legalism*, when we emphasize method (which should be flexible) over message (which does not change) because of a false sense of security. The devil also uses our pride and vanity to our inflexibility. Let us not be afraid to back down when we are clearly wrong.

Let us focus on our mission. Let us look for ways to achieve it. Let us learn effective practices and methods that can help us, even from people with whom we otherwise disagree. Let us be quick and flexible in our actions. Let us reach this generation, which has a 30-second attention span, differently than generations that listened to the radio for hours. However, let us continue with the pure gospel.

3.8 The Principle of Unity of Command

Definition: „*There must be a unified effort and one person in charge of each objective.*“

One of the areas that the Lord wants to elevate in the church is strong leadership. Leaders are people to whom God gives a vision, and these leaders are responsible for passing it on to others. It is important to note that God does not give everyone a grand vision, because even though He speaks to each of us, He honors the rules of warfare, one of which is the *principle of unity of command*. If the Lord showed his larger vision to everyone at once, we believe that the work would fail because we would not agree on *who* would make decisions and set the direction.

Even after His resurrection, the Lord Jesus did not share His vision with everyone, but only with the twelve apostles whom He had *chosen*:

„In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. “

Acts 1:1-2

The fact that God does not immediately share His ideas and plans with everyone can also be seen in the example of the apostle Peter. Going to preach the gospel to the Gentiles was originally a vision that *Peter* had from God. Only then did *Peter* share it with other people:

„He said to them: ,You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean. So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?‘“

Acts 10:28-29

Let us also note that even though the apostle Peter initially took action without consulting anyone, the others ultimately supported him *unanimously* in a vision from God:

„,So if God gave them the same gift he gave us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could stand in God’s way?‘ When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, ,So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life.‘“

Acts 11:17-18

In addition, the vision must be clear with simple instructions. At the same time, it is important that one person makes the final strategic decisions, or rather, that they are responsible for them after consulting with others. The leader thus combines responsibility for decisions with the ability to implement them. It is impossible to be responsible for areas over which one has no decision-making power. At the same time, it is wrong for someone to make key decisions and ultimately not bear responsibility for them.

When our vision is large and must be divided into smaller tasks, the principle of unity of command also applies here. Each task is assigned to one responsible person who also has the authority to make decisions in that area, or has a defined area of decision-making. This prevents the „tragedy of the commons“, where everything belongs to everyone, but no one is responsible.

Personal level:

It is clear that for us as believers, this leader should be the Lord Jesus. We should therefore accept what He taught, do what He did, and listen to what He tells us. His priorities will thus become our priorities, and we will love preaching the gospel, healing the sick, and helping others. This will make our lives much easier, and we will *always* know *how* to act.

So, if we know that the Lord Jesus is our master and leader in everyday life, it is time to join someone who has sound teaching and the right way of life. That means someone who is closest to Christ's ideal. Once we clarify who *our leader* is, we should *follow* that person, accept their vision and teachings, and help them achieve the goals they have from God. If we join someone's vision, let us take it as our own, even if we do not always agree with it 100%. On the other hand, this principle does not refer to dictatorship. People choose their leader; they cannot be forced to follow by violence. Therefore, we need to do everything *consciously and voluntarily*. It is likely that we will not agree with our leader on everything theologically. Perhaps sometimes we will not even agree with their actions. That is, of course, okay, and we need to express our disagreement. If the discrepancies are significant and long-term, it is better to leave. Leaving the church is not leaving the Church.

Church level:

To achieve a vision, *unity* is necessary. Jesus himself said that „where two or three of us agree on anything, it will be done for them by our Father in heaven“ (Matthew 18:18-20). We see that in the spiritual world, *unity is key, not the number of people involved*. People also start businesses together when they are united, not when there are many of them. If we want to work together effectively, we need *everyone* involved to embrace the vision as their own. We need it to be *our shared vision*, not just the vision of our leader. If we do not have a team with this attitude, it is possible that when pressures arise, division will occur instead of unity. That is why it is important to involve everyone in the process so that they take ownership of the vision and do not feel that someone is forcing them to do something.

We can also apply the principle of unity of command in prayer. For example, we can put the person who is most enthusiastic about a particular area in charge of every event, prayer meeting, or campaign. This will ensure that the prayers and events are carried out well. A person who has a heart for a given area will always make sure that the results are worthwhile.

The Enemy:

Personal level:

When it comes to the principle of unity of command, many people wonder how to defend themselves against control and manipulation. These are quite sensitive issues, and it is important to keep them in mind. Mutual trust and openness are the best prevention against control. Prevention against manipulation is a clearly formulated vision, clear delegation of tasks, and sufficient communication. It is crucial that everyone who is part of our vision and our plans trusts each other, is sufficiently informed, and is involved in the work.

Conversely, if we are people who follow someone else's vision, we have the right to demand mutual trust, a clearly communicated vision, and a clear division of tasks. No one should be distrusted without reason, and everyone has the right to know what they are part of and why, and to know why they are doing what they are doing. If we have lost trust in leadership, we feel that we are not trusted, it wears us down – sooner or later we leave. However, if someone leaves the team, they should be allowed to do so without any problems and without feeling guilty. In addition to the person leaving, their departure can also be difficult for the leader, because they are losing someone's helping hand.

Church level:

The enemy uses the rules of unity of command in the church by placing uncertain and fearful people in leadership positions. These people usually try to keep everything under control. Uncertain leaders fear competition or have their own personal ambitions – they are not dead to themselves. However, healthy competition that leads people to seek the Lord more and know Him better is beneficial. In the end, everyone benefits from it – individual churches, believers, and non-believers alike.

In addition, uncertain leaders maintain an atmosphere of fear and possibly even manipulation through their unpredictability. Under such leadership, people feel inadequate, insecure, and listen to insinuations that they are not mature enough and still need to grow up. This causes them to fear failure, not to act on the word, and not to lead others. An insecure leader can cause lifelong scars if they are not exposed and confronted.

Testimony:

One of the things that helped me years ago, in 2017, was that I had a team of people around me who were more experienced than me. They saw me as their leader, but when I tended to lead the team without sufficient communication, they immediately protested. They certainly did not plan to follow me blindly.

Thanks to them, and later to other people I worked with, I am gradually learning what healthy leadership should look like. I have learned to clearly communicate my vision, delegate responsibilities, trust people, and not be afraid of negative feedback. In addition, we have implemented a system of checks and balances that gives me the freedom to act, make decisions, and move the work forward, while at the same time letting others know that certain fundamental agreements will not change and that they can stop me in time if necessary.

What to do:

We believe that the time is coming when it will be necessary to move the rigid church forward again. That is why the Lord is raising up a new generation – a generation of leaders who will do this. So let us not be afraid to take a step forward, let us not be afraid to join one of the leaders. However, let us all make our work together easier by understanding who a leader is, what leadership looks like, what a leader expects, and what it means to follow someone's vision and work together as a team.

3.9 The Principle of Simplicity

Definition : „Prepare clear, uncomplicated plans and clear, concise orders.“

American General George S. Patton said that success in all forms of conflict depends on the golden rule of war, which is „Speed, simplicity, boldness.“ Jesus Christ was also aware of this and gave us very simple commands. We can see this in the example mentioned several times already:

„Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. As you go, proclaim this message: ‚The kingdom of heaven has come near.‘ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give. Whatever town or village you enter, search there for some worthy person and stay at their house until you leave.“

Matthew 10:1.7-8.11

The Lord Jesus gave us these commands not only in accordance with the principle of focus, but also in accordance with the principle of simplicity. He never says, „If you are on vacation, this does not apply to you,“ or „Preach the gospel everywhere except at your job.“ No, his commands are clear, simple, and unambiguous, always and everywhere. The Lord Jesus sees us as ambassadors of Heaven on the Earth, who proclaim His kingdom wherever they go.

In addition to this example, it is clear that the entire Bible is based on the principle of simplicity. This can be seen from the frequent use of words such as *all, everything, everyone, never, nothing*. God wants to save everyone. He also wants to heal everyone. You can believe in the healing of anyone. God wants to and communicates with everyone. God provides for *all* our needs. Everyone can prophesy, speak in tongues, and interpret them. Baptism in the Spirit is *always* accompanied by prayer in tongues – it happened to 120 people at Pentecost, to *everyone* in Cornelius’s house, and also to 12 of the 12 men in Ephesus. The Apostle Paul further says that they present themselves as God’s servants in *everything* or that they *never give anyone* cause for offense. When we read the Bible and look beyond our experiences, everything is clear and simple.

If someone deviates from the principle of simplicity in their teaching, their teaching becomes complicated and raises more questions than it answers. For example: *Is salvation for everyone? Who does God actually want to heal?* or *Do I have the Holy Spirit or not?* People who listen to these teachings are often passive because they are unclear, do not build faith, but cause confusion, uncertainty, and ultimately inaction. They see themselves as those who do not have the gift, or they think that *God has His chosen ones*, among whom, unfortunately, they do not belong. In this way, they deprive themselves of many promises that God promises them *personally*.

Personal level:

We can also apply the principle of simplicity. In addition to the aforementioned healing and preaching of the gospel, we can also apply it to giving – if we make a habit of giving regularly, we will not be surprised when God tells us to give someone a larger amount of money. Or we can cultivate the habit of preaching and healing in every city we visit. Another way to apply the principle of simplicity is to live

a simple, uncomplicated life. The more parts and pieces our life has (work, school, possessions, hobbies, various relationships and interests...), the more fragmented our time, mind, and attention become, and the more easily we are drawn into the cares of this world. God's word is stifled in us, and we do not bear fruit.

Let us cultivate other simple, good habits. For example, we can pray regularly in the morning and evening along with studying God's word. Another habit could be listening to quality Bible teaching instead of watching television. Last but not least, we can also say that we always want to have a disciple whom we will help grow in their relationship with God.

Church level:

Jesus also used the principle of simplicity when organizing his disciples. He had 12 of them. This brought stability, and even though one of them betrayed him, the group did not fall apart. The disciples often worked in pairs. This brought speed, flexibility, and efficiency. It is obvious that two people can agree more quickly and more easily than a large group or congregation. Large organizations are slower (but stable), small ones are faster (but often unstable). It is important to be able to balance all this. Plans must be clear and uncomplicated, as must orders. A leader must be able to create such plans and orders and also ensure that nothing has been misunderstood and that there is no chance for misunderstanding. The goal is not to burden people with every possible detail, but at the same time, it is necessary to say everything that is important. Details can be clarified in the future if necessary. Joshua, for example, adhered to this principle when conquering Jericho. He had clear plans from God for the entire operation, but he gave his people simple information as needed.

The Enemy:

Personal level:

The enemy also uses the rules of simplicity in battle. He often makes small and inconspicuous attacks that we do not pay much attention to. One area that the Devil attacks inconspicuously is finances. For example, several extra expenses may appear that we do not even consider attacks on our finances, but in the end, we will need money for something essential and we will not have it.

At other times, the Devil may give us impure thoughts. Even though we know they are not ours, we have to fight them off. That takes energy. However, if we do not work on this consistently, we will begin to condemn ourselves for what we think about. Then it is difficult to pray the prayer of faith because we do not see ourselves as righteous before God. This will not stop the Devil, but it will at least make us ineffective for a time. Moreover, if we do not judge our thoughts and take them *captive to Christ*, we will build a stronghold in our minds against God's word. In the worst case, these thoughts and subsequent actions will dull our conscience.

Other times, we do things we are ashamed of—some watch pornography, others play computer games, and still others drink alcohol. We are ashamed and feel incompetent to lead others and make disciples because we *do not want to* pass on our way of life to them. Once again, the Devil achieves his goal—our uselessness for God's work. It is therefore good to follow the Apostle Paul and not do what

we do not want to pass on to others.

Church level:

At the church level, the enemy uses the rule of simplicity by letting us see a lot of little things that will bother us until we eventually leave. That is why it is important to pray so that we know where the Lord wants us to be and to stay there for as long as He wants us to. Even a slight deviation from the right direction will lead us to a completely different place in the long run.

In the church, the enemy causes information noise between the church leadership and its members. It happens that for various reasons they do not know *where they are going*, *what* is expected of them, and what is the *purpose* of what they are doing. This may be due to poor communication on the part of the church leadership or the absence of members at strategic meetings. Because of this, the entire church is paralyzed and unable to move forward.

Testimony:

Personally, I apply the principle of simplicity very regularly. I realize that it is precisely the *simple* things that win. I live a disciplined life and pray and study the Bible regularly every morning and evening. I also often profess God's word over my life and my family. In addition, even though I lead others, I regularly approach strangers on the street, witness to them about the Lord, or pray for them. This keeps me ready *to serve* when needed. I also keep my mind constantly on God's word and do not feed on the words of this world, which do not bring more life than is necessary. I do not watch television, and I only follow the news that is essential. But I certainly do not feed on fear, gossip, and unwanted videos.

As for the message we preach, we also follow the rule of simplicity. We preach that salvation is for everyone, healing is for everyone, baptism in the Spirit is for everyone, and the gifts of the Spirit are for everyone. We may not see the results 100% as we would like, but we do see great changes. Sermons built on this foundation are 100% biblical and lift up and build faith in people. Many of them allow the Holy Spirit to manifest through them, are healed, boldly preach the Word of God, and have their own testimonies. Everyone can then regularly share their testimony of how the Holy Spirit is working in their lives with their friends, colleagues, and classmates. People often respond better to personal testimonies than to Bible verses.

What to do:

There is power in simplicity. The more steps and maneuvers are needed to achieve a goal, the greater the likelihood that the enemy will be able to disrupt the action. Simplicity keeps the number of steps to a minimum. Even the apostle Peter tells the people at Pentecost to 1) repent and accept the Lord Jesus, 2) be baptized in water, and 3) receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. These are three necessary steps that some people oversimplify or, conversely, complicate.

After analyzing all the details and plans, it is essential to choose one or two actions on which we will focus as a team. It is not possible to achieve all goals at once. It is important to choose those that will

guarantee victory in the future or make the biggest difference. Let us also keep in mind that simpler is cheaper and more easily replaceable. In addition, small teams or service groups are more efficient, faster, more flexible, and key to providing urgent help.

3.10 The Principle of Maximum Utilization

Definition : „Pursue and follow through vigorously on an advantage or breakthrough once it is achieved.“

The principle of maximizing gains teaches us to follow opportunities through to the end. When we strike a blow against the enemy, it is not enough to knock them down. The enemy *must be completely destroyed*. Throughout history, many wars have been lost because, after victory was achieved, the enemy was not completely subjugated or destroyed and rose up to launch a deadly counterattack.

Throughout the Old Testament, we can see that the Israelites were *directly instructed to completely exterminate* their enemies. One example can be found in Joshua, Moses' successor:

„The seventh time around, when the priests sounded the trumpet blast, Joshua commanded the army, ,Shout! For the Lord has given you the city! The city and all that is in it are to be devoted to the Lord. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall be spared, because she hid the spies we sent. But keep away from the devoted things, so that you will not bring about your own destruction by taking any of them. Otherwise you will make the camp of Israel liable to destruction and bring trouble on it.‘ At that time Joshua pronounced this solemn oath: ,Cursed before the Lord is the one who undertakes to rebuild this city, Jericho: At the cost of his firstborn son he will lay its foundations; at the cost of his youngest he will set up its gates.‘“

Joshua 5:16-18.26

The same customs can be recorded, for example, among the ancient Romans. When they conquered new territories, they found that conquered peoples tended to *rebel*. Therefore, they began to send a unit *apostellō* to the conquered territories, which was to make *the barbarians into Romans*. This unit ensured that the emperor, when visiting the place, felt that he had not left Rome. They brought Roman culture, customs and attitudes to the conquered place. They took the people's identity and gave them a new one. The peoples thus subjugated never rebelled again.

This is not to say, of course, that we as Christians today should kill people or force anything on them. We are concerned with the *spiritual* side of things. The Apostle Paul teaches that we are to lay down our *old identity* and embrace the *new identity*. We do this completely willingly because it is for our own good. We are now God's children, and it does not matter *who we were by human standards*. We need to eradicate from our lives every weak spot, every thing that might pull us back to the old life. So we need to be absolutely uncompromising against sin, and we need to beware of letting ourselves be drawn back into the ways from which we were saved. We are now free Celestials, not slaves to sin.

Personal level:

In addition to the identity change already mentioned, we as Christians can apply the principle of maximizing in other areas as well. For the sick, let us not be satisfied with just an improvement in their condition, but only with a *complete* healing. When we talk to people about God, let us not just stop with *witnessing*, let us want to bring them to salvation. If someone is not baptized in the Spirit – even a believer we meet in town – let us not just talk to them about the baptism of the Spirit, but let us pray with them for the baptism of the Spirit right away.

It may sound too forced to you, but as I say, we are not fighting against the flesh, but against the powers. If we do not follow through on opportunities, we do not make the most of the situation, we do not mount a victory and the enemy has a chance to counterattack. This manifests itself fundamentally in the way that accusatory thoughts, condemnations and anxieties begin to attack us. We end up feeling that we would have done better if we had done nothing. When we do nothing, we do not provoke the enemy, but when we attack, we have to establish victory or we *catch* a counter-attack, which, although it does not usually destroy us, is unpleasant. Moreover, the people we serve by partial healing may see their condition worsen, and the people we merely witness to may experience circumstances that prevent them from seeing the truth. We do not want to discourage anyone from being active, but let us be alert and act soberly.

We can perceive the same thing with evangelism or prayer. Often we pray and perceive resistance, and when that resistance subsides, we quit. However, this is not a moment to celebrate, but rather to engage. We have reached a „breakthrough“ and we need to take advantage of it.

Church level:

As for the struggle on the ecclesiastical level, even here we must not be satisfied with a partial victory. We need to ensure that future generations can live in the freedom of God's children. We need people to be *converted* from a futile way of life. We need to make sure that they are established in Christ, that they will not be turned back. We should not underestimate situations because if we do not follow through, we can lose these people, for example, which is very painful, especially when we have invested a lot of time and energy in them.

Moreover, we must not settle for little. For example, let us not be content with the fact that we can preach freely, but let us take advantage of it. When the door is opened for us to preach the Gospel, let us not withdraw, but rather let us occupy ourselves. In the long run, let us not be excited about the conversion of one prostitute. Let us want a life change for others.

Moreover, let us not stop too soon. Let us not be satisfied that our efforts are bearing fruit. Let us want to bring about a *lasting* change in society. Let us get the truth into the law. We need to establish laws that privilege Christianity. Otherwise, people will have a stronger tendency to drift away from God.

So it is clear that our struggle is not short-term. As the apostle John writes, we need to *conquer* and keep God's Acts *to the end*. Napoleon said the same thing: „Victory belongs to the most tenacious“.

the enemy:

Personal level:

It may seem harsh, but our enemy is a fighter. He is the one applying this principle to us. He has no compassion. He wrestles to the death (Ephesians 6:12). As soon as he finds our weakness, he will begin to exploit it *at every opportunity* and will want to destroy us utterly, like Judas with money or Solomon with women. The ideal is not only to be done with sin, but to do everything we can to expose ourselves to temptation in these weak areas as little as possible. For example, if we have had problems with fornication, it is good to avoid all situations where we might fall. If we have had problems with

debts, it is good to get advice from someone who can help us manage our money and be accountable to them in this area.

Another aspect that the Devil uses is fear. For example, based on God's word, we believe that God is protecting us and someone steals our car. Other times we are convinced that God is our doctor and we get sick. In these moments, we have to decide whether to put aside a bad experience or God's word. If we cannot put *away* the bad experience, we *automatically* put aside God's Word and we begin to live in fear and unbelief instead of faith. That is where the Devil wants us. So we always need to elevate God's Word above even our negative experience and *not to retreat*.

Church level:

At the congregational level, the Devil extensively uses gossip. This primarily concerns the pastor or church leadership. It often happens even if the people involved repent. Therefore, it is important to *talk* about the issues – at least within the leadership – and take a unified stance on them. Problems and their solutions do not necessarily have to divide us; on the contrary, they can deepen mutual relationships.

The Devil also uses the rule of maximizing in other ways – for example, when someone who is immoderate changes one girl from the church after another, it can lead to the disintegration of the church or the youth. Or at the very least „the dumped girls will stop attending“. The devil likes to use the weak parts of our ministry. When there is poor youth work in a church, the youth will not stick around. If there is no room for moms with kids, young families will leave. Our success in this area depends on how quickly we can *detect* the weaknesses and the way the Devil works against us. The next step against him is communication – both personal and public (preaching), where we identify the problem, bring a solution and get people on our side. At the same time, we make the problem and the solution a common cause.

As far as society is concerned, the Devil tries to *smooth out* any memory of Christianity. He wants to ban Christian literature and he doesn't want anything Christian to be advertised anywhere. In addition, he pushes secular literature and literature of Eastern religions and other agendas, for example, into society and promotes them. Moreover, he tries to push every effort of his into the law. It is not enough for the devil that we are not offended by these acts and teachings. He wants to have everything in the laws for the next generation.

Testimony:

We have found that when one enters into spiritual warfare, it is like kicking a wasp's nest. By that we mean that if he stays away, the wasps are there, but mostly they do not notice him. But if he does go after them, he must do it quickly, efficiently, and consistently, or the wasps will descend upon him. This happened to me when I was witnessing to people about God and I perceived that I should tell them about the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but I backed off. I was much more remorseful afterwards than if I had not had the conversation at all.

Of course, when it comes to change in society as a whole, not everything goes just *fast*. What is important is *perseverance*, *toughness* and *courage*. For society-wide change you need to get the support of more than one person. For example, we start by being in contact with people who are interested in the gospel and with congregations when they have a positive response to our books or events, we

maintain and develop the collaboration. This lays the foundation for further cooperation in the future.

What to Do:

We need to keep in mind the rule of maximum utilization in any situation. When it is our turn, we *must not* rest on our laurels and slack off too soon. On the contrary, we need to see things through to the end. When the enemy attacks us, we must not be lulled into complacency and underestimate the situation. God is merciful, the Devil is not. We are at war, not walking in a rose garden.

4 Conclusion

We, Christians, need to see our strong *why*. Why we should give ourselves fully for the kingdom of God, why we should dedicate our whole life to it. In addition to the love of God that binds us to the things of God, the *principle of moral obligation* obliges us to do so. He is talking about „we have to consecrate ourselves and achieve what God has consecrated himself to“. By that we mean that we have to actually *want* to achieve what God wants.

Let us think about it. The most powerful being in the universe is God. If something (someone) were more powerful than Him, then He is God instead. Thus, there is a God. And if He exists, humans must love and obey Him because He embodies the most magnificent thing the universe has to offer. For He embodies the highest possible qualities available in our universe. Therefore, man must become like him because there is nothing *higher* that he can reflect in his existence. Man should therefore want to achieve what this being, God, wants to achieve. Otherwise, God would not embody for man the highest attainable and most magnificent thing the universe has to offer. And he would embody something else, and that would be God to him. Man should then follow this god and want to achieve what he has achieved.

So to fulfill the *principle of moral duty*, it is not enough to *know God's will* and *desire to fulfill it*. It is necessary to really *do God's will*. And that is why we are here as Christians. Because God loves people and is concerned for their good, we are to love them and seek their good. We are to reveal God to this world in every situation. That is why we are here representing Christ. At the same time, we are to lead others to do the same and make disciples. If God's will is best for me as a *man*, it is also good for the other *man*. *Principle of moral duty* therefore requires dissemination, reproduction.

Moreover, even the unsaved, the sinners, are not exempt from the principle of moral obligation. Being sinners does not excuse them from doing the right thing. Morality is already the basis of the Mosaic Law, which is to bring us to Christ and to the true *God's essence*.

So wherever you are on your journey, we want to encourage you to begin to fulfill your moral duty to God and to other people. Stop just fulfilling your selfish ambitions, but start living for the highest good of the whole universe. If you have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, do not take His sacrifice lightly and give yourself to Him as fully as He has given Himself to you.

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