

# *The Keys Of The Kingdom*

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Jerry Brewer was born in Childress, Texas in 1941 and was baptized into Christ by O. M. Curry in 1954. He attended the Elk City, Okla. School of Preaching, directed by W. R. Craig, in 1969-70 and has done local work in Oklahoma and Texas. He has made three trips to Kenya to preach and teach in the Kalamindi School of Preaching. He currently preaches for the Northeast church of Christ in Elk City, Okla., where he has been for 19 years. He has authored a commentary on Galatians, and formerly published "The Gospel Preceptor," a monthly paper. He is married to the former Sherlene Holley of Carter, Okla. They have six children, and 17 grandchildren.

**If you would like to be a guest writer for TKOK you may contact me at [jfmiller61@gmail.com](mailto:jfmiller61@gmail.com).**

**To announce up coming events like Gospel Meetings, Lectures, Singing events etc... Just use the email link above to contact me. Please feel free to tell others and have them pick up their copy today. Use this link to direct them to our page. [http://jfmiller.com/keys-of-the-kingdom/?page\\_id=1316](http://jfmiller.com/keys-of-the-kingdom/?page_id=1316) .**

**May God Bless You. Jim and the Staff**

## Editor's Notes

Don't forget you can pick up copies of the Journey and the Journey Continues below. These make great teaching tools and best of all are affordable. Follow Larry on his journey and help others to find Christ at the same time.

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## *Just That Simple*

*Jim Miller*  
*Gray, Maine*

The scriptures teach that for one to become a Christian and be added to the Lord's church that a man must hear (Matt. 17:5), believe (Jn. 8:24), repent (Acts 17:30), confess (Rom. 10:9-10) and then be baptized (Mk. 16:16). This is the simple plan that God put in place for our salvation. We must then begin to live obedient lives and remain faithful unto death (1 Cor. 15:58).

That doesn't sound too hard does it?

God also through the Holy Spirit gave the apostles instructions on how and when we are to worship. No better example of scriptural worship can be given than that of the Scriptures themselves. The New Testament church was led by the apostles under the headship of Christ (Eph. 1:22, 23; Col. 1:18) as the

Scriptures were being written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. We can be assured that we are on safe ground when we imitate approved apostolic examples (Phil. 4:9). The true and faithful disciple of Christ will attempt to follow these scriptural patterns and not invent unscriptural ideas or follow traditional practices which are not rooted in God's word.

So what do the scriptures teach?

**Prayer:** Worshiping people are praying people, as were the early disciples. ". . . prayer was made earnestly of the church unto God. . ." (Acts 12:5). "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). Please read also: Romans 15:30; Eph. 6:18; Phil. 4:6; 1 Thess. 5:17.

**Singing:** Worshiping people are people who sing. New Testament Christians sang as they worshiped. If the apostles and early Christians were guided by the Holy Spirit in their worship, it should strike us as significant that the Holy Spirit did not authorize anything but vocal music. Note carefully these passages: Matt. 26:30 (Mk. 14:26); Acts 16:25; Rom. 15:9; 1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 2:12 and As. 5:13). We can know that our worship is scriptural when we sing praises to God.

**Lord's Supper:** Before ascending back to heaven, Jesus gave the apostles instruction about a memorial feast to be observed "in the kingdom" (Matt. 26:29). He shared this first supper with them and, through the apostles, set it in the church for regular observance (Acts 2:42). From scripture we learn that the early disciples, with apostles present, ate the supper regularly on the first day of the week. No other day is authorized. Every week has a "first day." Scriptural worship includes eating the Lord's supper upon the first day of the week, every week.

**Giving:** Worshiping people are people who give to the Lord. New Testament Christians were liberal in their giving. The New Testament does not state any given amount. Rather, the principle is given that we are under a better covenant with better promises (Heb. 8:6), having a better sacrifice (Heb. 9:23). We are to give accordingly, with abounding liberality (2 Cor. 8:2), with a ready mind (8:12), not sparingly (9:6) but cheerfully (9:7). Such giving is to take place on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:1, 2), as is the Lord's supper.

Teaching or Preaching: New Testament worship, it is not only "to make obeisance, do reverence," but also "to serve, to render religious service or homage." Preaching God's word can be correctly understood as an act of worship in the light of this definition. While teaching and preaching are directed toward men, it is an act of service to God. Paul felt an obligation toward God to preach to lost men and said, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:16). He considered preaching the gospel to be a stewardship entrusted to him from God (v. 17). Other passages that stress the importance of this act are: Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 5:42; 8:4; Acts 15:35; 1 Cor. 15:1ff; Gal. 1:6-9; Eph. 2:17; 3:8; Col. 1:23; 2 Tim. 2:2.

God requires nothing more than this when we come together on the first day of the week. It is that simple. I will be the first to say I do not believe we spend enough time in these acts of worship but, that is my opinion.

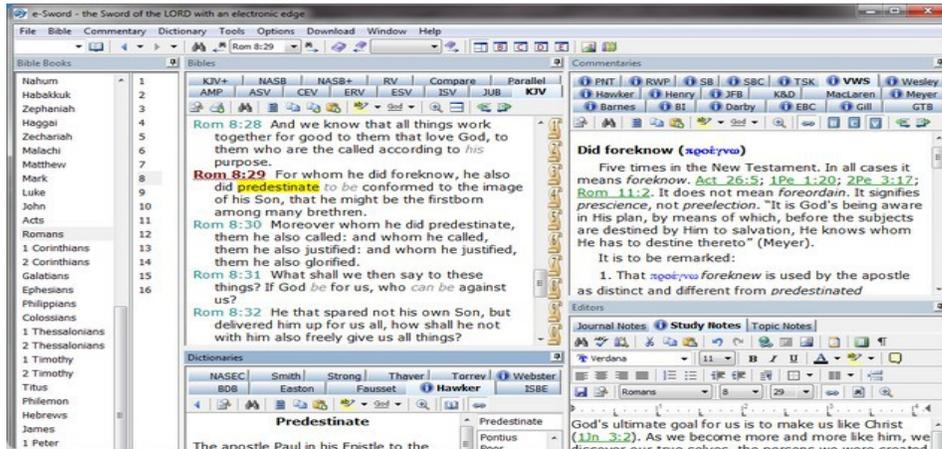
We also see that the first century Christians met from house to house during the week. I believe this was to strengthen one another and help one another remain obedient. We now choose to meet midweek and Sunday evenings. These simple instructions, blueprint, examples, patterns whatever you want to call them are what is required, nothing more and nothing less.

As simple as this is to understand still some will not accept it. Some will not be happy unless they add their human beliefs and practices. Some will take away key commands in order to please themselves.

I ask you today will you follow God's teaching? Will you come back to the simple truth? I pray you will.

Till Next We Meet  
God Bless

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**This is a new website created to expose the Compromised/liberal teaching institutions that claim affiliation with the church. The following is from our home page and you will find a link to the site at the end.**

### **The Shipwreck of Colleges and Schools of Preaching**

***For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears (2 Tim. 4:3).***

Why and how did compromise and/or liberalism come to dominate the preaching schools and colleges of today? This Site is dedicated to trying to answer these questions while showing that (1) compromise and liberalism have already destroyed the “Big Gun” Colleges and (2) the way that compromise is having a devastating effect on our smaller schools of preaching. These smaller schools, begun by congregations to replace the colleges that went off headlong into error, are now teetering on the edge because of their compromises.

There was a time when men who were sound in the faith taught younger men in the church how to preach and teach. We believe this should still be the norm. However, as sadly seen in these institutions today, this is no longer the case. Most people in the congregations have been dumbed down to the point that they believe that unless a preacher has a piece of paper stating he has been trained formally, he is unable or unfit to preach.

Long ago, several of the colleges came on the scene, followed a few decades ago by the rise of the preacher training schools. At their beginnings, the colleges did a good work in teaching sound doctrine to men who aspired to go out and preach

the Word. They were led by faithful men who would not allow anything other than the Truth to be taught. The shame in all this is that compromise and liberal doctrine slowly crept in and made spiritual shipwreck of the colleges. Thus the preacher training schools were born. But, compromise has become the bane of these smaller schools in recent years. Today it is impossible to find a school untainted by compromise wherein men can be trained and taught.

There are many reasons for the downfall of our preacher training schools. Like many good ideas with good intentions, the lust for “more” gets in the way, leading the institution to stray from its original purpose. The desire to be “big,” which creates the need for large amounts of money, seems inevitably to lead to fellowship concessions. Small compromises begin to be made to satisfy this “need”—and error begins to creep in.

Money, power, and politics have become big factors in some cases. It takes large sums of money to operate a school, especially one with a large faculty and a building program. The desire to expand— and the prestige that comes with growth—can easily replace emphasis on sound doctrine.

The fact is that some schools are like many preachers. Much/most of what they **teach** is correct, but they may omit certain things that are unpopular with or disagreeable to their supporters, thus failing to teach “the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). Likewise, while their **practices** may be right for the most part, they have failed to be true to God’s Word in some crucial matters. Principal among these is the practice of embracing in their fellowship those who are not in fellowship with God and His Son, which the New Testament forbids (Ephesians 5:11; 2 John 9–11; et al.). Although some of the schools have an appearance of soundness, a closer examination reveals that they are not ( (Mat. 7:15–20; 2 Tim. 3:5).

***Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers (Tit. 1:9).***

Had our institutions remained faithful and content to teach the Truth to men seeking to be preachers of the Word, congregations of the Lord’s people would not be facing the great crisis we are facing today.

As earlier indicated, the twin blights of liberalism and compromise now permeate to one degree or another every teaching institution brethren operate. This is shameful, but not really surprising since churches long ago gave away the responsibility and control of training sound men. What we have today are

institutions, especially at the college level, that churn out liberal-minded preachers who are willing to compromise, thus spreading error wherever they go.

This site has been established to expose these schools for who and what they are. We will endeavor to provide the proof necessary for you to make sound judgments for yourself. We have no doubt that many, out of blind loyalty, will defend these schools as being sound teaching institutions. We will simply put forth the facts and let you judge their soundness or lack thereof.

***Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine (1 Tim 1:5–10).***

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# ***Strong and Fully Armed***

*Dub McClish*  
*Denton, Texas*

A recurring metaphor in the New Testament likens the church to a spiritual army and its members to soldiers (Phi. 2:25; 1 The. 5:8; 1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 2:3–4; 4:7; et al.). God's people are engaged in spiritual combat (2 Cor. 10:4; 1 Tim. 1:18). Paul gives us the most concentrated description of the *soldier-army-battle figure* in Ephesians 6:10–18. His opening exhortation is so powerful that it takes on the character of a command: "Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might" (v. 10). This context is so familiar to so many that some may have overlooked and neglected the great practical force of it. It is surely worth revisiting.

## **The Responsibility to Arm Ourselves**

Because Satan is such a formidable foe, the battles are so fierce at times, and as fleshly creatures we are so weak, we must be well armed. The armament which the Lord supplies is sufficient, both for protection and for attack. Twice in Ephesians 6, Christian soldiers are urged to utilize the "whole armor of God" (vv. 11, 13). *Whole armor* is from *panoplian* (the source of our word *panoply*)—"the complete equipment used by heavily armed infantry" (*Vine's*). Soldiers with no (or even defective) armor or weaponry will certainly become casualties. No wonder our foe is able to overcome so many in the Lord's army, either by slaying them or causing them to surrender—they are only poorly equipped, at best, for combat.

All who enter God's service do so by voluntary enlistment, not by being drafted. Hence, these volunteers are to "**put on**" and "**take up**" the whole armor that God provides. We do so only through our own diligent effort, and we must never rest from this activity. Only as we continue to equip ourselves as fully as possible will Paul's promise prove operative:

There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape that ye may be able to endure it (1 Cor. 10:13).

## The Armor Provided

The armor we are to take up and put on is specified in Ephesians 6:14–17a:

Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation... (Eph. 6:14–17a).

### *The girdle of truth*

This equipment emphasizes the necessity of knowing the Truth so fully that it surrounds us like a protective belt. The Holy Spirit will no more directly infuse us with righteousness (i.e., moral rectitude) than He will directly fill us with spiritual knowledge. The more we “buckle on” the Truth, the greater the strength we will have for the daily fray: “Thy word have **I laid up in my heart**, that I might not sin against thee” (Psa. 119:11, emph. DM).

The Holy Spirit has not directly supplied men with additional Truth for almost 2,000 years (1 Cor. 13:8–11). The doctrine that He still does so, even if only to the extent of an “illumination” of the Word already revealed, is not from Jesus Christ, but from John Calvin and his variegated spiritual progeny. The only ones who have ever received knowledge of God’s will without diligent effort on their part are those few persons whom He has inspired down through the ages. All of the rest of have had to **put forth the effort** necessary to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 3:18a). Knowledge of God’s Word is something that **we must supply for ourselves** in order to be fruitful, able to see, and avoid falling (2 Pet. 1:5–10).

The following simple exercises will help gird one with the Truth: (1) Read the Bible every day (follow a daily Bible reading schedule). (2) Attend every Bible class and worship assembly (Sundays, Wednesday nights, Gospel meetings, lectureships, etc.). (3) Buy—and read—good books to help you study and understand the Bible. (4) Subscribe to—and read—at least one reliable Gospel magazine (such as *Contending for the Faith, Defender*).

### *The breastplate of righteousness*

This piece of armament concerns the practical application of being girded with the Truth. As with each piece of armor, Paul enjoins us to “**put on**” this breastplate. The Holy Spirit will no more directly infuse us with righteousness (i.e., moral rectitude) than He will directly fill us with spiritual knowledge. The Roman soldier’s breastplate in the first century was comparable to the body armor of modern soldiers and law enforcement officers. As it protected and protects their vital organs, so the spiritual “breastplate” protects the Christian

soldier's vitals. The standard and source of righteousness for God's soldiers is the Word of God: "Let my tongue sing of thy word; For all thy commandments are righteousness" (Psa. 119:172).

We must not only **know** the Truth—we must **live** it. One who knows the Word of God but who does not live by it is a hypocrite. The pretender will eventually be found out and will fail in the daily conflict with Satan. In fact, the hypocrite has already failed. There are few things uglier and more harmful to our righteous cause than a person who claims to belong to the Lord's Army, but who in reality betrays that cause by immorality and/or false doctrine. Contrariwise, a life of righteousness that flows from a heart filled with God's Word is both beautiful to behold and exceedingly powerful. If we "hunger and thirst after righteousness," we will be filled (Mat. 5:6). We must "follow after righteousness" (1 Tim. 6:11) even if we are "persecuted for righteousness' sake" (Mat. 5:10). Without this essential breastplate, Satan's arrows will slay us.

### ***The "shoes" of the preparation of the Gospel of peace***

This spiritual "footwear" enables us to march and to stand and fight. Roman soldiers were not expected to march or fight barefooted, for such would have greatly handicapped them. These "Gospel boots" complement the girdle of Truth discussed earlier. **We must "shod" our own "feet"** with this Gospel preparation, rather than expecting the Holy Spirit to do it for us directly or immediately. Paul emphasizes the necessity of God's Word for spiritual survival and victory. Many Christian soldiers are facing the foe "barefooted" because they have made little or no Gospel preparation.

*Preparation* implies purpose, forethought, planning, effort, and readiness. To be prepared in the Gospel demands earnest, constant, and diligent study. When we contemplate how few soldier-saints have any serious hunger and thirst for Biblical knowledge, we should not be surprised that so many fall, retreat, or surrender under fire.

### **The shield of faith**

This spiritual gear is necessary to fend off the constant attacks of temptation (i.e., "fiery darts") Satan aims at us. We must have a thorough trust and a firm faith in our Commander-in-Chief to win the spiritual battles we face: "Ye that fear Jehovah, trust in Jehovah: He is their help and their shield" (Psa. 115:11). "This is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4b).

Faith brings us right back to God's Word—the fundamental source of our faith: "So belief ["faith," KJV] cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). The connection between strong faith and the Word of God is undeniable. We would not know what or who to believe in spiritual matters had the Holy Spirit not revealed "all the truth" (John 16:13; 1 Cor. 2:6–10). Note,

however, that the faith that shields us from the devil's thrusts is not a mere mental acceptance of some facts, but a living, active, obedient principle. The Christian soldier cannot withstand Satan by sitting idly and merely mouthing, "I believe in Jesus." Such is a dead and barren "faith" (Jam. 2:17, 20, 26). Just as Jesus withstood Satan's temptations with *It is written*, so can we when we immerse ourselves in the Bible, which has the answer to every error and temptation the devil may invent.

### ***The helmet of salvation***

*Salvation* is the great blessing that we must ever bear in mind. The subject of *salvation* relates both to the present and the future. One who believes and is baptized is "saved" in the sense that the guilt of his past sins has been erased (Mark. 16:16). However, all such yet await the coming of the Christ Who "shall appear a second time...unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28). We have great confidence in our present salvation, which is as certain as the Son of God who promised it to those who "trust and obey" Him. However, in this element of our spiritual equipment, Paul may have had in mind our eternal salvation, our great ultimate hope. In a closely parallel statement he specifies this very thing: "But let us, since we are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation" (1 The. 5:8). As the Word of God is the source of our **faith**, so it is of our **salvation**: "And that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:15).

Each one must **take** this "helmet" and **place** it on **himself**. Again, it is John Calvin, rather than Jesus Christ, who teaches that unregenerate men are so depraved by Adam's sin that they cannot understand, believe, and obey the saving Gospel without the Holy Spirit's direct intervention. God has made His grace available through the Christ (Tit. 2:11), and we are responsible for the salvation of our own souls (Acts 2:40-41).

### **The sword of the Spirit**

We have but one spiritual weapon—the "**sword of the Spirit**," which Paul identifies as the Word of God. We observed earlier that every piece of our defensive armor relates to the Word of God, either directly or indirectly. We should therefore not be surprised that one all-sufficient weapon—the Bible—serves our offensive needs in spiritual combat. God's Word is a living and active agent that is sharper than any literal double-edged sword (Heb. 4:12).

Ignorance of the Truth among many of the rank and file "troops" and not a few of the "officers" may be the principal cause of so many spiritual casualties on the daily battlefield. How can one withstand Satan's assaults that end in sin and spiritual death (Jam. 1:12-15) when his armor is paper-thin and his sword is

gapped or dull? The strength of the Lord's soldier exists in direct proportion to his or her knowledge and correct application of His Word.

Furthermore, the conquest of hundreds of congregations by liberals could never have occurred without a woeful lack of Biblical knowledge among elderships and those in the pews. This sad condition reminds me of Paul's description of his fellow-Jews:

For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God (Rom. 10:2–3).

People who do not know the Truth cannot detect, much less refute, error. Not knowing God's Word (and through it the means of distinguishing between things authorized and unauthorized) has made "sitting ducks" of tens of thousands of the rank and file of the Lord's people. They were (and are) thereby ripe for any innovation religious traitors can dream up or mimic from the enemy.

The same can be said for the apostasy seen on the campuses of most of the schools begun by dedicated disciples of past generations. Naïve, overly trusting, Biblically ignorant parents have sent (and continue to send) their even more ignorant offspring to sit for four years at the feet of men and women who in many cases despise the church of the New Testament and the ideal of its restoration and conservation. Hence, ironically, the very institutions founded to educate and strengthen, thus better preparing spiritual soldiers to face and defeat the enemy, have now been prostituted to equip and train fighters in Satan's ranks.

### Conclusion

Earlier in the Ephesian letter Paul told them of his prayer that God would grant, "according to the riches of his glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man" (3:16). Paul used the same root word for *strengthened* in this verse that he did for *strength* in 6:10. In 3:16, He spoke of our need to allow the Holy Spirit to strengthen us, without telling us the means He would use. In 6:10 Paul orders us to attain this strength and then tells us how to do so in verses 11–17.

Note two salient points: (1) The Word of God is the source of our spiritual strength and it is **fully sufficient** to this end, both for defensive and offensive purposes. (2) The Holy Spirit does the strengthening, but **He does so through His Word**, through agency rather than not. We must "take up" and "put on" each piece of spiritual armor and the spiritual sword.

Notwithstanding the teaching of some brethren, those wait in vain who suppose

that the Holy Spirit will directly invest them with the armor or weaponry needed to meet the foe. God has made all of the armament readily available and attainable, but it is our responsibility to acquire it. We do this by our constant growth in the knowledge and application of the Word of God.

**[Note:** I wrote this MS, and it originally appeared as an “Editorial Perspective” in the December 2004 issue of *The Gospel Journal*, a 36-page monthly of which I was editor at the time.]

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# ***“Affiliated With Churches Of Christ”***

*Jerry C. Brewer  
Elk City, OK*

So-called “Christian” colleges are neither the church, works of the church, parts of the church, nor adjuncts of the church. Neither does the New Testament church have any “affiliated” organizations. Yet, the lie that “our colleges” are “affiliated” or related to the church has been chanted for so many decades that ill informed and ignorant members of churches of Christ have accepted it as fact. Here are statements from three current institutions of higher learning, claiming to be “a resource for” or “affiliated with the church:

Oklahoma Christian University of Science and Arts (OCUSA) says on its website that, “At the very heart of this university is a desire to be a friend, ally and resource for churches of Christ” ([www.ocu.edu/churchrelations/default.asp](http://www.ocu.edu/churchrelations/default.asp)).

Abilene Christian University was established in 1906 by members of Churches of Christ and has been closely affiliated with this body for nearly a century. The university is committed to biblical principles. Historically we believe these principles were reaffirmed through the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement begun in early 19th-century America and expressed today through Churches of Christ. Defining ourselves as a ‘movement,’ we are constantly in the process of articulating the basic elements of our biblically-based faith for our times—all without the involvement of denominational hierarchy. As an institution of Christian higher education within the movement, we are called to examine how our theological perspectives shape our educational philosophy. We also recognize that the church-related colleges in the Restoration Movement (and ACU in particular in the 20th century) have played a major role in forging our identity as Churches of Christ. ([www.acu.edu/faith.html](http://www.acu.edu/faith.html))

Pepperdine University is religiously affiliated with the Churches of Christ, of which Mr. Pepperdine, university founder, was a lifelong member. Faculty, administrators and members of the Board of Regents represent many religious backgrounds, and students of all races and faiths are welcomed [www.pepperdine.edu](http://www.pepperdine.edu).

What do these institutions mean when they say they are “affiliated with Churches of Christ?” *The Cambridge Dictionary* says “affiliated” means, “connected with, or controlled, by a group or organization.” *Merriam-Webster*

says, “closely associated with another typically in a dependent or subordinate position.” *Collins Dictionary* says, “If an organization is affiliated with another larger organization, it is officially connected with the larger organization or is a member of it.”

Jesus promised to build His church (Matt. 16:18), purchased it with His blood (Acts 20:28), is its foundation (1 Cor. 3:11), is the Head over it (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18), adds the saved to it (Acts 2:47), and is the Savior of it (Eph. 5:23). Christ’s church has no external “resources,” “allies,” or “affiliates.” The church is the fullness of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23). He is the Alpha and Omega of the church, and neither Christ nor the church need anything outside of Him. Are colleges, “connected with, or controlled, by a group or organization”—the church? Are they, “typically in a dependent or subordinate position” to the church? Are colleges, “connected with, or controlled, by a group or organization”—the church? The New Testament knows nothing of such an arrangement. The church has no “dependent” or “subordinate” organizations and it is certainly *not* dependent on, or subordinate to colleges.

There was a time when colleges understood that they are adjuncts of the home without “association” or “affiliation” with the church. That was expressed by David Lipscomb College in the introduction to its 1947 Lectureship Book:

The Christian college is intended to help mothers and fathers bring up their children ‘in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.’ This includes opposition to digression, to modernism, to premillennialism, to any form of personal ungodliness or impiety, and to any other unscriptural doctrine or practice that may arise in the years to come. No teacher, or other person connected with the institution, has a right to teach, or behave, in such a manner as to undermine the foundation principles upon which the college stands. Lipscomb purposes to continue in the classroom the daily Bible teaching which every child should receive in the home. In no sense does the school propose to supplant the church or to do the work of the church. There is no substitute for the church of our Lord. The relation of the Christian college to the church is the same as the relation of the Christian home to the church. The college strives to be Christian in exactly the same sense that a home or a personal life may be Christian (*The Lipscomb Lectures, A Series of Lectures Delivered at David Lipscomb College, January 27-31, 1947*, Gospel Advocate Co., Nashville, 1948).

Even the name “Christian” is misused by these institutions. The Bible says nothing of “Christian colleges.” Nor does it mention a “Christian restaurant,” a “Christian lumber yard,” a “Christian grocery store,” or any other private or public entity. In fact, there is no such thing as a “Christian” *anything* except a human being. The word, “Christian” is found only three times in the New

Testament (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16), and in none of those instances does it refer to anything but a follower of Christ. Human institutions are not “Christian,” and colleges are human institutions. It may be reasoned that a college should be called a “Christian college” because its board, administration, and faculty are all Christians. That being the case, then it could be also argued that Smith’s Department store may be Scripturally called, “Smith’s Christian Department Store,” and advertised as, “affiliated with churches of Christ” if the Smiths and their employees are all Christians.

For decades, colleges operated by members of the church have portrayed themselves as “associated with” or “affiliated with” the church and ignorant, ill-informed Christians have swallowed that lie. Jesus did not die for a college. He died for the church (Eph. 5:25). The college is neither associated with, affiliated with, owned by, operated by, an adjunct of, nor a part of the blood bought church of Christ. Colleges have a right to exist, but they do *not* have a right to insinuate themselves into the work of the church, usurp its function, or supplant it in any fashion.

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# ***Watch Ye, Stand Fast In The Faith, Quit You Like Men, Be Strong 2***

(1 Cor. 16:13; Eph. 6:10)

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Many place this command with the preceding one because they are so closely related. No one can be truly courageous without the accompanying strength. Barclay wrote that we are to be “Like a well-equipped and well-trained soldier, be strong to fight for your King” (166). Our king is, of course, the King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 17:14; 19:16). He is going into battle and He will be victorious (Rev. 17:14), along with those who enter the battle with Him.

Our strength comes from God. Paul writes: “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might” (Eph. 6:10). He then tells us to “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (6:11). Paul says, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Phi. 4:13). It is Christ who gave Paul strength, just as He will give to us.

Some falsely teach the Spirit directly strengthens the Christian (Wesleyanism) based upon Paul’s statement in Ephesians 3:16: “That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.” If He did so, then man is absolved of any action and any need to strengthen himself; the Spirit does it for him and does it apart from the exercise of his own free will. However, as one studies the context of this passage, he learns that the Spirit strengthens by means of the Word of God. Paul received His message by revelation of God (3:1-3, 5). The Spirit is the one who revealed that message (1 Cor. 2:10-13). Paul wrote that message down (Eph. 3:4-5) so we could read and understand that mystery of Christ (that the Gentiles would be fellow heirs by the Gospel) and, thus, be strengthened in the inner man (3:16). Later in the book, Paul tells Christians to put on the whole armor of God.

It becomes obvious that such a person would be made stronger by doing what the Spirit through Paul admonishes him to do, wouldn’t he? Now, does this differ in effect from the prayer he prays in Ephesians 3:16? Surely not! The inner man is strengthened by the Spirit as he learns from the Spirit’s teaching how to be stronger. His convictions are made stronger leading to stronger determination (Col. 1:10-11) (Clark 74).

In speaking to the elders of the church at Ephesus, Paul tells them how they will be strengthened: “And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:32). Their (and our) inner man would be strengthened by the Word of God, not by a direct operation of the Spirit upon their (and our) hearts.

Other means by which we will become strong is when we abound in prayer. After listing the armor of God, Paul states, “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints” (Eph. 6:18). Jesus instructed Peter to “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation” (Mat. 26:41). Thus, watching and prayer go together in being strong.

To be strong, we must work. When a person wants to gain strength physically, he lifts weights, straining and taxing his muscles. If we wish to grow spiritually, we must get to work. Lack of work makes our muscles atrophy, spiritually, we waste away. The Christian is to be “stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58).

We must also avoid evil influences if we are to be strong. We are constantly warned to be separate from the world (Rom. 12:2). In Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians, he tells both them and us, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers... Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor. 6:14, 17-18). To the Ephesians, Paul says, “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*” (Eph. 5:11). Even Paul had to exercise and work to have a conscience void of offense before God (Acts 24:16). When we properly exercise ourselves we will be prepared for strong meat: “But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Heb. 5:14). So as we strive against sin, we become stronger so we are able to face greater temptations.

### CONCLUSION

After these four imperatives given under a military background, Paul gives another imperative: “Let all your things be done with charity” (1 Cor. 16:14). *Charity* is the noun *agape*. *Agape* has little to do with the emotions; instead, it is

a decision of the mind to do what is in the best interest of another, regardless of what they desire. Jesus taught that the entire Law is summed up with love: love for God and then loving our neighbor as ourselves (Mat. 22:37-40).

We must love God first and foremost and with our entire being (heart, soul, mind). Loving God means we are going to love His Word. “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous” (1 John 5:3). When we love God and His Word, we will not allow that Word to be altered or attacked by others. When Satan and his wicked forces attack God’s Word, then as we are watching will stand fast, be manly, and strong. That is letting all our things be done with love.

When we love our neighbor as ourselves, we will enter the fight against evil. Satan and the forces of evil are leading souls to an eternal torment in hell. If we have love for those souls, how can we not enter the battle to do whatever we can that is inherently right to keep them out of torments? To give in to the enemy is to not love one’s neighbor as one’s self.

Paul previously had shown the great necessity of love when he wrote:

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become *as* sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing” (1 Cor. 13:1-3).

These militaristic imperatives could make one hardhearted, cold, and judgmental without the injunction to love. Thus, there is this great need for love as we watch, stand fast in the faith, be manly, and be strong.

Paul has also previously given us the characteristics of love so we will know how to battle in our dealings with others:

Charity suffereth long, *and* is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth. (1 Cor. 13:4-8a).

Sadly, some use the guise of love to avoid battle. They will also discourage those who will fight the good fight of the faith and end up battling those who are willing to battle. We must not allow such cowardly *brethren* to succeed in preventing us from the battle of evil. Let us always heed Paul's advice: "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity."

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints (Eph. 6:10-18).

### ENDNOTES

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