

AUGUST 2008 Week 4 TEACHING

Moving On Up to the Penthouse

Anyone watching the Olympics can't help but glean a whole new level of respect for its challenges and for those who have walked away with medals. One of the things that make the contests stand out is the fact that there are rather strict standards and regulations in place. We appreciate the victors so much because we realize that not only did they abide by the regulations and often exceed standards of excellence, they also dedicated themselves to a tremendous work ethic. They made sacrifices for something that was really important to them. Those who stood on the podiums while the anthems of their countries played in the background received their medals with dignity and with a joy that was almost inexpressible.

They withstood the everyday rigors of becoming a disciplined and accomplished athlete, and at the point of ultimate victory—I grant you that not one of those Olympic medalists feared that someone would run up to them and snatch that medal from their necks. They stood triumphantly and confidently on the grounds that they had done what was necessary to be a winner. They had followed the rules, put in the time and labor, stayed the course, and won!

Now in some folk's mind, an Olympic victory may not be the greatest analogy of the glory that God has in store for the faithful, but it is an earthly conquest that is unmatched by most. It symbolizes the ultimate, and for those of us who have been waiting on a blessing of epic proportion—we can rest assured that basking in that blessing will be just as rewarding as winning an Olympic medal.

In the August 2008 Week #2 Teaching we talked about a very foundational scripture that is profoundly integral to our stand in Christ. It is the Gospel of John, Chapter 10, verse 10. In it Jesus Christ tells us that he came to this earth to make available a more than abundant life. Diametrically opposed to the mission of Christ, we see in this pivotal verse that the thief's mission is to heap destruction, death, and devastation upon our lives.

1 Peter 5:8 KJV

8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

In the August 2008 Week #3 Teaching we examined 1 Peter 5:8 KJV, which admonishes us to take care and be extremely watchful because our adversary, the devil, combs this earth looking for an opening to get into someone's life and start all manner of mayhem. The key words in this verse of which you and I

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must be especially attentive is *“seeking whom he may devour”*. To seek is to go in search of something. It is to attempt to attain a tangible or intangible object by expending some level of energy looking for it.

An experienced thief is a cunning criminal. He wants to take everything of value that you have, but he is much too skilled to walk into a situation of which he is ill-prepared. He first cases the joint. He studies the neighborhood where you live—familiarizes himself with your comings and goings. And after careful scrutiny to discover your most prized possessions, he makes his move. If you can expect this from an experienced thief, imagine the craftiness of a master one.

As children of the Most High who are destined for the extraordinary, seated in heavenly places (Eph 2:6), and transferred to a place of highest privilege (Rom 5:2), we need to ask ourselves two very fundamental questions regarding the thief and his shenanigans: #1 *“If I have to constantly stand guard against the thief, how do I focus on standing for Christ?”* We answered this question in the August 2008 Week #3 Teaching. Question #2 is the one of which we will address our attention now: *“If the thief is relentless in his pursuit to reap havoc in this world and on my life, why haven’t they both been destroyed by him?”*

The thief is indeed relentless in his pursuit to reap havoc in this world and on our lives, and it is incumbent upon each and every one of us to know how to protect our stuff.

If the devil could destroy anyone at any time that he chooses, none of us would still be alive. I will venture to say that he would have so turned the world on its ear that those of us living today would not have had any probability of ever being born. And so, in order for the thief to get in and steal, kill, and destroy, first he must look for an opening. You and I must be extremely careful—sober—vigilant, as it says in 1 Peter 5:8 KJV, that we don’t provide one. But the sheer fact of the matter is that all of us have holes in our armor, and we ought to make it our life’s work to close them up.

Proverbs 4:23 NLT

23 Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.

The holes—the opening exists within our own hearts and minds, that is why God admonishes us in Proverbs 4:23 to guard our hearts above ALL else, because whatever is in our hearts will determine the outcomes of our lives. Jesus Christ said in Matthew 15:11 that **“You are not defiled by what you eat; you are**

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defiled by what you say and do." We are corrupted by the toxic negative thinking that corrodes our hearts. It spews from our mouths and becomes the impetus of our actions. It minimizes our blood-bought guaranteed victory through our Lord and Savior, and replaces it with the toxicity of a victim, defeated mentality.

Imagine for one moment that your mind and heart represent a 15 story apartment building. A thief is not going to waste time and energy trying to get to the top floor because he figures that those who live in the penthouse have extra protection. He's going for the easiest target, the easiest access, which are those who have left themselves exposed on the ground floor.

Our adversary is a cunning devil, a master thief who must investigate and see if there's an opening for him to get in. Now if you're on the ground floor in your thinking, if you haven't elevated your mind to accommodate high level, kingdom thoughts that are sculpted from the standard of God's Word, then you will be easy prey.

Ephesians 1:3 KJV

3 Blessed [be] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly [places] in Christ:

Ephesians 2:6 KJV

6 And hath raised [us] up together, and made [us] sit together in heavenly [places] in Christ Jesus:

You and I have a heavenly view, because that's where we are positioned. We have a key to the swankiest pad in the building, the penthouse, but it is up to us whether or not we will actually live there. If we do, the Word will inhabit the deep recesses of our hearts and positive affirmations will roll from our lips on every occasion.

Matthew 6:19-21 NLT

19 "Don't store up treasures here on earth, where they can be eaten by moths and get rusty, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 Store your treasures in heaven, where they will never become moth-eaten or rusty and where they will be safe from thieves. 21 Wherever your treasure is, there your heart and thoughts will also be.

The Christian should never fear that the thief will get in and steal their most valued possessions, because our most valued possessions ought to be stored in heaven. According to the Words spoken by our blessed savior here in Matthew 6:19-21 (NLT), the thief has no access there. The only way that you can protect your stuff is to lay it up for yourself in a place where he can't get to

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it. Not only must you live in the penthouse, where your treasures are well protected, but you've got to have "penthouse" thoughts, "penthouse" conversation, and "penthouse" deeds.

Now don't get it twisted and make my usage of the word "penthouse" synonymous with the worldliness of arrogant attitudes or salacious lifestyles. I'm talking about elevating our thoughts and speech to reflect who and whose we are; that is how we keep our armor nice, shiny, and without holes.

Jude 1:24 NLT

24 And now, all glory to God, who is able to keep you from stumbling, and who will bring you into his glorious presence innocent of sin and with great joy.

You don't have to worry that the bottom will fall out from beneath you. You don't have to tiptoe about as if something can be snatched from you at any moment. That isn't the way of the Christian. Our way is to fully comprehend that God's love can take us wherever we need to be. His love has the power to elevate us, to inspire us, to promote us, to energize us, and to keep us in that place where we are made complete in Jesus Christ.

John 14:2 KJV

2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if [it were] not [so], I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

God is rich. He is rich in mercy. He is rich in grace...rich in everything that can be acquired in the universe. Jesus Christ came to make the vastness of God's wealth available for all those who want to partake. John 10:10 declares that! The thief wants us to think that there is a limited supply of God's blessings of which you and I can have access. Why, because that is what he believes. He believes that his access to God's supply is so limited that he has to take what doesn't belong to him.

Exodus 20:15 KJV

20 Thou shalt not steal.

God has told us that stealing goes against the very nature of love. It is not God's way. He would not have commanded us NOT to steal...and then set us up to be stolen from. My family's dire need of food is not license to take it from another family. My responsibility is to trust and believe God to provide a way out of no way. He holds me accountable to walk by faith. He has provided a way for us to be fully covered, fully protected, by clothing us in righteousness and making it available for us to walk therein.

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Philippians 4:19 NLT

19 And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.

We shouldn't steal because our faith must not be in things, nor the acquisition of them. Our faith must be in the great truth that God will supply all our needs according to His unlimited supply of ALL things. That is where our hearts and minds must be.

You see sometimes we slip into that thief mentality. It's one of the adversary's greatest tricks—to get us to believe as he believes; that there is a limited supply of blessings and we will not have enough to be more than sufficient. That is a lie from the very depths of hell. This is not the thinking of an ambassador. This is not the thinking of someone who is more than a conqueror, justified and made righteous by faith, and who knows that greater is he that is within them than he that is in the world. This is the thinking of someone who is determined to leave their treasures on the ground floor, unprotected and unguarded.

THE QUESTION

So why hasn't your life and everyone else's life been utterly wiped out? Because of God's law, that is why. A clever thief will wait until your guard is down—until he spots a point of easy access—before entering. Oh, a thief is a rogue, there's no doubt about that. In his mind, he is able to get away with breaking the law. Although it may seem as though he has no boundaries, the truth of the matter is that he is bound by law. He may get away with breaking man's law, but he will never get away with breaking God's law. Every time the thief steals his life upon this earth is shortened. No one escapes the consequences of their actions.

The difference between an experienced robber in the earth and the master thief, our spiritual adversary, the devil, is that the adversary knows that he is bound by God's law. He knows that he can't get in your world to kill, steal, and destroy unless there's a kink in your armor...unless you have an opening. So when things seem to be at their worse and you feel as though you can't catch a break, it's time for you to call the "*Holy Spirit Moving Company*". Look at what is going on in your heart and in your mind. Let the Holy Spirit help you to tidy up and throw some old things away, so you can move on up to the Penthouse.

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AUGUST 2008 WEEK 4 Scriptures:

**Scriptures link to
[New Living Translation.com](http://NewLivingTranslation.com)**

Day 1: Jude 1:24

Day 2: Matthew 15:8-11

Day 3: Proverbs 4:23

Day 4: Philippians 4:19

Day 5: 1 Peter 5:8,9

Day 6: Matthew 6:19-21

Day 7: Ephesians 4:22

Spiritual Focus for the Month of AUGUST 2008:

The Choices of an Overcomer

WEEK4Prayer FOCUS:

Spiritual Elevation and Promotion

(Remember to pray for those on the SMS Prayer List.)

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