

## The World's System Exposed

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Many within the Body of Christ have experienced failure upon failure in many aspects of life. The trials of Christians have been most severe – failing businesses, ministries, churches, Christian schools, relational difficulties, lost jobs, lost opportunities; the list goes on and on, yet never before have we heard so much from both the local church and TV pulpit about how “blessed” we are to be. I do not disagree with this message as such, providing the message place proper emphasis upon the “Lord of the blessing” rather than “the blessing.” However, it is fair to point out that a major contradiction exists between what is being preached and reality within the Body, especially in the United States. Few Christian leaders have come forward to acknowledge the horrendous problems the Body faces. To constantly be told that we are to be “blessed,” yet not acknowledge the difficulties we face or provide solutions to the problem has been frustrating. Many within the Body feel this frustration, and as myself, are crying out to God for answers. Perhaps God’s word provides us with a clue – “We must go through many hardships to enter the Kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22).

The word of God clearly provides that God desires to favor His people, yet we as a Body seem, at times, more cursed than blessed. Though I do not begin to speak for the Body of Christ in the US or elsewhere, it is, however, evident that much of the extreme difficulty seems to center in and around financial matters. Years of prayer, and what I believe to be a powerful move of God, seem to be pointing us to recognizing and gaining an understanding of the two systems that constantly compete for the allegiance of human kind – the World’s System and the Kingdom of God. It would also appear that the World’s System is not effective for those “called” to walk in the Kingdom. Many, like myself, have touched the World’s System with catastrophic results. Could it be that the powerless state of the Church is a result of touching the wrong system? We will delve into this possibility in a deeper way as we seek truth from the Holy Spirit. While we would all like to think that we walk in and engage the kingdom of God in all aspects of our Christian lives, recognize that most of us engage the World’s System more often than we realize. The purpose of this writing is to focus us on potential areas through which we are subtly drawn into the World’s System and, consequently, separate ourselves from the Kingdom’s Method or Kingdom’s Way. It is important to note that it is entirely possible to walk in the Kingdom in various aspects of our lives and the World’s System in others – in fact, this is probably the rule rather than the exception. Could it be that this corrupt system stymies the flow of God’s power, favor, and direction in our lives? I mention “direction” because of its vast importance to our obedience – it is hard to be obedient if we do not have proper direction. Some may be surprised to learn that “blessing” in Malachi 3:10 literally means ‘benediction’ or, ‘a good flow of words’ – direction from heaven. When we touch the Kingdom in our giving we cannot expect dollars to rain down from heaven, but can expect God’s direction which will produce His abundant flow. Why is this not happening to any real extent within the Body? Perhaps we are not touching the Kingdom in our giving. Perhaps we are somehow invoking a curse in our finances.

Some significant historical, spiritual, and scriptural aspects of the World’s System are worthy of mention to set the tone of this writing. In the garden, Adam opened the door for evil to enter God’s creation upon the earth, thus setting up or introducing a new system, a new order called the World’s System. This system is characterized by its extreme hatred and disdain for God. The world “knew not God” (I Corinthians 1:21), “hated” Christ (John 15:18) and “cannot receive” the spirit of truth (John 14:17). “Its works are evil” (John 7:7), and “friendship of the world is enmity with God” (James 4:4). Contrastingly, Jesus said, “My Kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36). He has “overcome the world” (John 16:33) and “the victory that hath overcome the world” is “our faith” in Him (I John 5:4). When Adam fell, he went from walking in the cool of the garden where every need was met, to having to toil and strain for his every need. What distinguished Adam after the fall from his pre fall state (walk) with God? Adam could no longer here God for his direction – he was now dependent upon himself. Here we need to examine Jesus’ words in John 17: 14-17, “I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.” Two major points surface from these scriptures: God’s ‘called’ men and women cannot function in the World’s System any more that a man of the world can hear “truth,” and of greater importance, when Christians touch the World’s System, ‘truth’ is hard to hear; when Christians touch the Kingdom of God, truth is all they can hear. Those who truly walk in the Kingdom know ‘the freedom giving truth.’

### To Touch The World's System Is To Touch Toil And Strain

We transition from the Kingdom of God to the World’s System when we replace God and His resources with man (often self) and his resources. When circumstances cause us to replace God on the throne of our hearts with self, we switch kingdoms (Genesis 3:6). The World’s System is characterized by toil and strain (Genesis 3:17) - the grace of God is not on the World’s System. Adam was in the same garden doing the same type of agricultural endeavors yet went from a God-appointed ease in these endeavors to a constant and continuous toil and strain, characterized by drudgery and disappointment. Gardening, though a worldly endeavor was not wrong, just as business, ministry, science, and other elements of life on earth are not wrong, yet when we engage the World’s System in these things, we lose the ease of a God-appointed, destiny filled activity. While I will not argue that all God-appointed activities are easy, they are endowed with His grace, which is sufficient. Grace removes drudgery and strain no matter the level of difficulty, and a deep abiding peace flows in our hearts before, during, and after our assignment. “For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit...” (Romans 14:17). In simple terms, the kingdom is a condition of the heart.

In the kingdom, far more is accomplished with less effort. All toil brings weariness, but the labor in Christ, regardless of whether is it a secular or spiritual endeavor, will bring rest and refreshment. “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and

humble in heart; and you shall find rest in your souls” (Matthew 11:29). If a work is producing toil, we have either entered into an ungodly work or simply allowed ourselves to leave the rest of God. When rest becomes restlessness, again we have switched kingdoms. If we consciously know that there are two systems competing for our involvement, one that PRODUCES life and one that PRODUCES death, will we not choose the one that produces life? Of course we will, but we must know the systems we engage in order to differentiate. Many, like myself, have been unable to distinguish the city of Jerusalem from the city of Babylon. The subtlety of the Babylonian World’s System is both engaging and intoxicating; its traditions are hard to give up yet deadly to a Godly man or woman of destiny. Babylon offers prestige, power, recognition, security and material blessing from man. The Kingdom of God offers prestige, power, recognition, security and material blessing from God. Upon which source do you depend? Your honest evaluation of the question may reveal which system to which you are attached in specific endeavors. This question should apply equally to Pastors and Christian businessmen. We will discuss more about this as it relates to the tithing and the Church later in this writing.

Thus far we have established two points; the World’s System is hostile to God and simultaneously creates hardships for Christian believers, but what exactly is the World’s System? How do we identify it and recognize it when it comes into our lives? The World’s System is a spiritual force or body of beliefs and values that embody or make up a value system created by the god of this world – Satan. It is the system that replaced the kingdom of God, which Adam lost in the great fall. The World’s System will produce for those who adhere to it, but at what price? To gain the values of this system there are certain cost involved, primarily our close walk in the Spirit with our Lord: You cannot engage the World’s System and the kingdom of God at the same time in the same area; you will always be engaging one or the other. It is entirely possible for Church and Christian business leaders alike to flow in the Kingdom in certain matters and ignorantly subscribe the World’s System in others. Today, there are many who are in a flow with God in certain areas and not so blessed in others. Could it be that in the areas of our lives that we look inward to self for answers and solutions, that in doing so, we cut ourselves off from God’s flow?

The World’s System freely offers a mindset of values as well as a definite methodology in obtaining those values. I Corinthians 2:12 refers to “the spirit of the world;” 3:19, “the wisdom of the world;” 7:31, “the fashion of the world;” Titus 2:12, “worldly lust.” In short, the World’s System is a lure, which calls every human on earth into its lair, its web an intricate system of entrapment and containment, yet the word admonishes us to “keep ourselves unspotted from the world,” (James 1:27). Any who think they can and do totally escape the lure of the World are deceived (Hosea 4:6). It is the Father’s desire that we become aware of the lure and its extraordinary subtlety. Ignorance often comes disguised as tradition and our traditions, as it relates to the world’s system, do not come with pointed ears and a pitchfork, but are no less deadly and demonic. As stated, the World’s System traditions are hard to separate from human beings – man’s traditions make the word of God to no affect. We often become comfortable with these destiny-killing aspects of our Christian walk, preferring the security of what we know to true trust for God in areas we don’t know. In short, our own traditions are often the greatest walls of containment in our lives. For those who have ears to hear, heed this wakeup call! Our past presumptive lifestyle will soon bring eruptive consequences.

While we readily admit sin is Satanic, we are slow to acknowledge the World’s System as Satanic. Sins of the flesh are obvious to most, but the entrapments of the World’s System are so subtle that they easily ensnare many saints, especially in business and finance and often in ministry. We are not to gratify the desires of the sinful nature; we are told they are contrary to the Spirit of God (Galatians 5:16-26).

In our society, or perhaps better said, in the eyes of the World’s System, ambition has always been considered virtuous, even selfish ambition is not viewed as a bad thing but rather an aggressive desire to get ahead. We have applauded those with such characteristics and scorned those without it. This mindset has easily become a part of the Church – bigger buildings; more TV time; larger and faster planes, and larger staffs and offices have become the quest of many, if not most ministries. It is of major importance to recognize that what is being challenged here is not God appointed growth and increase, but rather man appointed growth and increase under the banner of God. Let us never confuse ‘good works’ with ‘God works.’

Some may be surprised, as I was, that one of the acts of the sinful nature mentioned with sexual immorality, drunkenness, idolatry, discord and hatred is SELFISH AMBITION (Galatians 5:20). How many Christian businessmen, Christian television executives, church leaders, missionaries, pastors, or evangelist would ever think that their ambitions might be outside of what the Holy Spirit has ordered? Ambition, outside of God’s appointed boundaries, is a blatant yet blind characteristic of the World’s System. When this ambition is allowed to run unchecked, it will replace the kingdom and God’s best in any situation – classically, man’s best has once again replaced God’s best.

Good works produced from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil is also a blatant yet blind characteristic of the World’s System. The World’s System is full of ‘do gooders’ who do ‘good works’ to soften their own conscience for not having or wanting God in their life, yet our righteousness is as filthy rags in God’s site. The ‘do gooder’ World’s System spirit has definitely invaded the Church. Our ‘good works’ are often a substitute for our lack of real relationship with the Father. Most who lack a deep intimate relationship will seek to create or build something, an outward evidence of their great love of God. This is a normal and natural phenomenon and was introduced to us by Peter in Matthew 17: 1-8. Peter, like many of us, presumptuously saw and stated, “I will put up three shelters...” (Matthew 17:4). Without even knowing the meaning of the vision Peter presumptuously had already figured out his role. Several years ago, the Lord spoke to me and said, “The sin of presumption often hides itself in noble purposes.” Traditionally, we have been susceptible to anyone wrapping anything in religious cloth and noble purpose and selling it as being from God. God desires a deep relationship with His people, deep enough that no purpose but His will ever be able to invade our hearts.

Before we leave this subject, let us further examine the smack of truth that exudes from Matthew 17: 1-8. Let me begin by saying that presumptive acts under the auspices of “God said” usually possess a definite connect to the most selfish word in the English language – I. After seeing Jesus’ transfiguration, Peter spoke up. No one was even addressing Peter and look what came out of his mouth! “It is good for us to be here...I will...” The King James Version says, “Come let us build...” How familiar are the words

“Come let us build” within the Body of Christ? True, it was good for them to be there, but not for the reasons Peter stated, Peter didn’t have a clue yet spoke and acted with the same presumption we often do. It was good for them to glimpse the glory of the Lord. It was also good for them to hear the Father’s rebuke when He said, “Listen to Him.” They were not there to hear Moses (a type of the law) or Elijah (a type of the Church) but to hear and witness Jesus. It was for this reason alone that they were brought to the mountain; their focus was to be on him and him alone. WE MUST BEGIN TO HEAR WITH CLARITY AND UNDERSTANDING THE VOICE THAT EXHORTS US TO FORGET ABOUT WHAT WE CAN BUILD AND BEGIN “LISTENING TO HIM.” It has been the “I will” of man that has kept him at enmity with the purposes of God. We will never possess His promises until the “I will” is replaced by “He will” because “human hands cannot serve him” (Acts 17:25). The Church must get an understanding that the best of human intentions and strivings to build for Him will not serve His purposes.

Many ministries and Christian businesses today are besieged by ambition that has little to do with God. Paul warns us of the gap we put between God and us when we invoke the appetites of our own ambitions outside of God’s Spirit – “I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God” (Galatians 5:21). It is important to note here that we are not talking about salvation as in going to heaven; we are speaking of the kingdom God has privileged us to walk in on the earth – a place of anointing and grace, adorned with His peace, where every need is met. Ambition and effort outside of God, especially if done in God’s name, will produce chaos. Why you may ask? The World’s System will not work for a God-appointed man or woman of destiny. - Have you ever wondered why certain activities work so well for some and not so well for others? The World’s System works for people of the world. The World’s System will never really serve a kingdom man or woman. “If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you” (John 15:19). Not only does the World’s System hate a “called” man, but also God has “called” us, through His own choosing, out of the World’s System. The World’s System hates us and God has ordained us to be removed from it – two excellent reasons to avoid it. It is like mixing oil and water; one cannot serve the other. The World’s System CANNOT serve a “called” man any more than a “called” man can serve the World’s System. Ambition, greed, a desire for things ahead of God, the love of money, lust, pride, impatience, and vainglory have no part of the Kingdom of God.

It is of great importance to note that Satan is a subtle beast and it is naïve on our part to believe that he ONLY opposes Saints through sin and their carnal nature. Recognize that his most subtle attack, in opposition to God, is his ability to invoke the World’s System upon and into the lives of Christians. Recognize how the World’s System has invoked its appetites in the Church. The World’s System produces death to whatever it touches, denying the Kingdom life God intended us to have. Even magnificently produced works or miracles of God left to their own devices turn to the World’s System, often without realizing it. Many ministries who once trusted God for their finances have now turned to mailing list, TV advertising and pressure sermons, using hype and emotional manipulation to ‘skin the sheep’ financially to meet huge budgets. The bible cites many examples of men who started a God-appointed task that gave way to pride and trust in self instead of God. I believe I am safe in saying this does not please God.

David learned a mighty lesson as to how God views man’s self-reliance in I Chronicles 21: 1-3; “Satan rose up against Israel and incited David to take a census of Israel. So David said to Joab and the commanders of the troops, Go and count the Israelites from Beersheba to Dan. Then report back to me so that I may know how many there are. But Joab replied, may the Lord multiply his troops a hundred time over. My lord the king, are they not all my lord’s subjects? Why does my lord want to do this?” Joab was grieved to see David’s heart go from one of trust to one of self-sustaining power. Our hearts can deceive us and the lure of the World’s System daily invites self-sustaining strategy and thinking. If a man of David’s character can be deceived by this intrusive system, so can the very elect. This lack of trust on David’s part cost 70,000 people their lives. We must never look inward to self for answers – we must never “take a census” or “number the troops” to see if we are capable or able to accomplish anything God has called us to do. To do so is to look inward for answers and deny God’s power. “Count the cost” really means do we have a proceeding word from God to accomplish the task at hand. If we have God’s word, God’s timing, and God’s how to, we cannot fail. Sadly, I have been guilty of getting God’s word short of His ‘timing’ and ‘how to’ and failed miserably (see II Samuel 6:1-13), my consolation being that (biblically) others have done the same thing.

Perhaps this paragraph will be the most important and profound aspect of this commentary. I pray it bring revelation to your spirit and heighten your understanding. Satan directly controls any element of any system, organization, or entity where the power of natural man dominates. Natural man heeds and flows with the spirit of the world, often inconspicuously within Christian organizations. It is through this seemingly innocuous flow that the power of God is denied. When self comes to the helm of our existence, we are suddenly operating in our power and not God’s. It is here that danger lurks for a ‘called’ man. We must stay dead to self and self’s ways if we indeed expect to see God’s power operate. The keys to this Godly existence are trust and patience: Trust that God will answer and the patience to wait upon Him to show us our part.

Interestingly, fear and compulsion drive those who operate within the sphere of the World’s System: Trust and patience are polar opposites, yet are the true character of those who walk in God’s Kingdom upon this earth. Again, an honest evaluation of decisions made from fear or compulsion reveals the ‘where’ in our lives the World’s System has free reign.

In April of 1988, while jogging, the Lord spoke these life-changing words to me – “Forego the World’s System for your reward and gain the Kingdom’s Method of receiving. If you engage the World’s System, you will be dependent upon it for your reward.” Though I have spent the last dozen plus years developing an understanding of these words, almost immediately I recognized that by changing my methods in obtaining things, I would perhaps begin to engage the Kingdom’s Method. My old methods of control, extraordinary effort, coercion, manipulation, and other elements that make up a Type A personality would have to go, but honestly, to this very day I have to stand guard against my highly motivated, enthusiastic, energy filled approach to doing things. My own testimony speaks of millions of dollars in failure as a Christian businessman. My inability to separate my own ambitions from the Lord’s remains a thorn in my side, yet now, even I have come to recognize certain features that are quick to reveal what system I am

touching. Since the two systems of our discussions are not seen with the naked eye and are not easily identifiable, they must be discerned. A sense of knowing has begun to evolve in me revealing which of the two systems I am operating in. As stated, one is characterized by the rest of God, the other produces restlessness. Often our very thoughts are opportunities to engage one or the other of the two systems. Anything that produces stress and turmoil is likely a result of touching the wrong system. Businesses, ministries, jobs, houses, boats, planes, money, or possessions of any kind, in and of themselves are not evil – the spirit behind them determines their influence in our lives. When I sense the wrong spirit beginning to operate, I have learned to retreat and pray. To continue is folly. Here we discover another clue to which system we operate in. Watchman Nee writes in his book, Love Not The World, “When material things are under spiritual control they fulfill their proper subordinate role. Released from that restraint they manifest very quickly the power that lies behind them. The law of their nature asserts itself, and their worldly character is proved by the course they take.” Nee alludes to many examples of Christian schools, when built and instituted were God-appointed and resulted in many conversions to Christianity, yet now are nothing more than school buildings that scarcely mention Christ. The World’s System promotes the idea that ‘things,’ ‘power,’ and ‘pride’ are what we work for, hence ‘things,’ ‘power,’ and ‘pride’ own us. In the Kingdom’s Way, “things” play a totally subordinate role in our lives – they are used to serve God and hold no real value to us when compared to Kingdom matters (Matthew 6:33). When “things” start marching toward owning me, which they will do if not kept in check, my first inclination is to pray and offer it to God. When “things,” including ministry become too important to us, they not God, own us.

For me, the following scripture definitively explains the key to Kingdom life; “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, IT ABIDETH ALONE, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit” (John 12:24). Once while praying over this scripture I asked the Holy Spirit what “abideth alone” meant. He answered by telling me that “abideth alone means without Me.” Death is the key to life; (Our) death is the key to (His) life. When all that has been placed in our hands to steward, beginning with our own life, is truly submitted to the Father and His will, the Kingdom life will come alive – our death will have occurred and His life will have begun. While this may sound easy, be aware that you must have God’s grace to accomplish the task and it must be done daily.

The World’s System will constantly be enforcing its laws upon any human who draws breath upon this earth, and if our lives are not constantly kept in check, we will find ourselves right back in the middle of the World’s System wondering how it happened so quick. How does it happen? Diversions and situations that appear “as a roaring lion,” fear being the key component. If Satan can pluck us from our Kingdom dwelling spot and place us back into his World’s System in our actions, he can successfully delay or subvert God’s plan for our lives. Satan has authority in his system and none in God’s, thus his constant and often hidden efforts to draw us back into his world. “Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith...” (I Peter 5:8).

Several years ago, I raced Formula Fords on road courses (race tracks) in the eastern US. From that experience I draw an interesting analogy as to knowing ‘what’ system I am operating in. Road courses are made up of a series of twist and turns, often undulating and dictate some level of driving skill to successfully navigate at high speeds. Parts of the ever-developing driver skills are proper braking, maintaining engine RPM, and clutch engagement. This must be done at various levels throughout various parts of the track. If all of these facets are working to maximum skill level, there is a flow and rhythm that transcends physical senses – it is an inner feeling of timing and strangely, an inner peace. As you can imagine, there are many potential distractions to keeping this flow; other competitors, changing weather, changing tract conditions, and numerous other elements. Staying in a Kingdom flow similarly offers the challenge of many distractions. Circumstances and pressure can quickly change resting in the Lord to restlessness. Desperate situations often produce desperate people who do desperate things, thus removing us from flowing with and trusting God to looking inward to self for answers, or better said, re-entering the World’s System.

A key characteristic of a true Kingdom dweller is his or her ability to not turn to anything but God regardless of the challenge or diversion. As race drivers we are taught to race the track and to singularly focus and concentrate upon staying in a flow, no matter the distractions around you – easier said than done, but with practice and discipline attainable. Men and women of the World’s System depend upon self; the idea of depending upon anyone other than self is foreign and repulsive. Our challenge is to stay focused and trust God at all times, not just in times of trouble and adversity. King David let his guard down at a time all was going well, leaving us the Bath Sheba lesson that dependency upon God after the battle is more important than before. I once crashed my racecar on the cool down lap after the race simply because I wasn’t paying attention.

#### Seeking A Deeper Understanding

Stirred by the Holy Spirit, my efforts have been to become aware of where and how we unknowingly allow the World’s System to infringe upon our lives individually and collectively. During the last fourteen years, I have become painfully aware that this system will no longer work for me. I was trained in it, educated by it, yet now it no longer works.

In discovering this, as previously noted, it seemed that everything I endeavored to do failed. It had all worked before, yet now, for unexplainable reasons it no longer worked. In my failure I would cry out to God, “Why?” His only answer to me was “My mercy.” Why the system no longer worked and how to tap into the Kingdom’s Way has become the cry of my heart. The more I have sought Him on this issue, the more He has shown me. In many ways I was touching the World’s System in sheer ignorance. As earlier stated, it is my solid belief that much of the powerless state of the Church today is based upon (the Church) touching the wrong order. In review, when Adam fell a new created order entered the earth, created and authored by Satan. This system has controlled the world since the fall. It is and will always be the mission of Satan to enforce the World’s System, a system that opposes God and the order of God.

With Jesus came our redemption, not only from sin and death, but also from Satan’s created order. God never takes us *from* something without taking us *to something* better. As we dive headlong into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, new emerging truth and revelation

continue to differentiate between the two opposing forces, the light of God's Spirit is now revealing and pointing us to a greater understanding. The World belongs to Satan; the Kingdom belongs to God. IT IS TIME TO RECOGNIZE THE SYSTEMS!

### The Tithe and The Church

Perhaps no subject will engender opposition from Church leaders, especially pastors, like what will be discussed in this section. I offer it for your judgment and discernment. At the beginning of this writing I mentioned that the subtly of the Babylonian World's System is both engaging and intoxicating; its traditions are hard to give up yet deadly to a Godly man or woman of destiny. Babylon offers prestige, power, recognition, security and material blessing from man. The Kingdom of God offers prestige, power, recognition, security and material blessing from God. Upon which source do you depend? Your honest evaluation of the question may reveal to which system you are attached in specific endeavors. This question should apply equally to Pastors and Christian businessmen, but for the sake of this commentary, let us focus the question to pastors and church leaders.

I will begin by saying that during my years of great financial blessing I did not tithe – I simply prayed, God spoke, and I gave. In later years I began to capitulate to the message that I constantly heard and dutifully wrote my check for 10% of my net earnings. It was not done in faith, nor did I sense any real spiritual obedience or joy (II Corinthians 9:7) – I simply obeyed the law of the scriptures because everybody else did: a tradition was birthed in me and I ignorantly obeyed it without question. It was not until we completely ran out of money, even for basics, that I began to question the real essence of tithing. It is of the greatest importance here for me to say that I believe in giving; I believe in sacrificial giving, BUT I ONLY BELIEVE IN GIVING AS THE LORD LEADS. I do not believe God owns 10%, I believe he owns 100% (Psalm 24:1) and I am to do with His money as he tells me.

By continuing to obey the law, I systematically removed myself from Kingdom economics and my finances went from bad to worse. As I cried to God and asked "Why" He only replied, "My mercy!" Through this extraordinarily difficult time, I began to see some powerful truths (Acts 14:22).

Most of the current prosperity and tithe enforcement messages are built around and upon fear; specifically the fear of robbing God (Malachi 3:8). By sowing blame and shame, a strong World's System manipulative maneuver, leaders have been able to extort large sums of money from God's people, not only taking the actual money (through this process), but also the joy and faith that comes from giving as God leads, a true Kingdom Way. The Body, as with myself, has continuously been told that our financial problems are a result of not giving. We are quoted Malachi 3:10, "Test me in this, says the LORD Almighty, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it." The message is to test God with our giving and He will bless us. This not only does not promote love for God, but also, and more importantly promotes selfishness. It implies that we can attain a form of righteousness in and through our giving (Isaiah 64:6). It very religiously promotes a reward for work mentality – this is the Babylonian World's System at it's finest and completely contradicts the New Testament teachings in Ephesians 2:8,9, not withstanding Matthew 4:7 which warns us to not put God to a test. Another observation was made during this critical time in my life. I noticed that many times we were beckoned to give to large ministries, larger buildings and other non-necessities, while many within the Church needed food. I never had a real peace about doing this, yet even participated in the teaching that 'the blessed' should be blessed even more. Of course, 'the blessed' in this case were our Christian leaders, those who separate themselves from the Body by calling themselves clergy and us laity. I report here that I have had an extraordinarily difficult time finding anything relative to this separation in the New Testament, but for that matter I can find nothing of tithing either. As for bypassing the poor to give to larger planes, bigger buildings, larger staffs, I quote from an excellent article by Jack Helser entitled To Tithe Or Not To Tithe which can be found on our website at [www.lighthouseprophecy.com](http://www.lighthouseprophecy.com). Jack writes, "In Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus reiterated His desire to help the poor in the parable of separating the sheep from goats, wherein at judgment Jesus will reward those who feed the hungry and clothe the poor. Since Jesus judges us for our care of the poor and hungry, and since He commands us to preach the gospel throughout the world, why is most of our giving used for church buildings and salaries with only a small percentage devoted to the poor, missions and evangelism?"

"Is the church *making goats out of us* by not feeding the hungry and clothing the poor with our offerings? Let's not wait until the Judgment of Christ to find out!" "The early church had a much better understanding of Christ's intent to care for the needs of the Body of Christ than we do today. The proof of their caring for each other can be seen in [Acts 2:44-47](#) and [Acts 4:32-37](#) where the Body of Christ shared everything, and through their giving, they eliminated poverty and indebtedness. In fact, [Acts 4:34](#) says, "there were no needy persons among them!" Taking up offerings to feed the Body of Christ was common in the early church. In [Acts 11:27-30](#), the Gentile church at Antioch took up an offering for the believers in Judea who were experiencing a time of famine. Can you imagine a church today taking up an offering for a cross-town rival?" Jack's article deals in a great deal of depth about the subject of tithing and I encourage all who will to read it. I earlier stated that fear and compulsion, polar opposites of faith and patience, are key motivations of those who operate in the World's System. It is interesting to note that Old and New Testament motivations are also linked to these polar opposites. I again quote from Jack's article, "Though the tithe is not a requirement for the Body of Christ, we are still instructed to give. What changed from the Old Testament to the New is our motivation for giving. In the Old Testament, giving was compulsory – a tenth (tithe). In the New Testament we are to give with joy as we are led to give ([2 Corinthians 9:7](#)), not by compulsion."

Jack also gives us this insight with the following paragraph. "On the topic of giving, [John 8:36](#) might seem like a strange scripture to cite: "So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed". While it is true that Jesus set us free from the curse of the law ([Galatians 3:10-13](#)), sin and death ([Romans 8:2](#)), **our failure to give as Jesus taught us has kept the Church in financial bondage**, and has prevented the Church from completing the work of Christ on earth. How many children of God fail to reach their full potential as ministers of the Gospel because they lack provision? It is through our giving and sharing that we equip the Church for service, eliminate hunger and poverty, and realize the fullness of our freedom in Christ." "We can no longer afford to misuse our offerings for church buildings, parsonages, conference centers, multi-purpose buildings, air conditioning, padded pews, pipe organs, and the like,

all of which will soon be forgotten, while God's children go hungry, poor and ill equipped to minister the Gospel. Instead, like Abel, **we should give our best gifts to the true Church – the people – because we love God and want to see God's work accomplished on the earth.**" Adding to the efforts of this writing, I think Jack Helser best explains the deplorable financial condition of the Church in his final contributions to this great article.

### **The Tithe is a Curse!**

"I often asked myself a tough question about the floodgates in Malachi 3:10, but I have refused to answer it because it seemingly made God out to be a liar! Finally one of my close friends asked me the same question - and I knew God wanted me to give an honest answer. She asked, **"Why after tithing, tithing, and tithing, don't we ever see the flood gates open?"** Immediately I heard the Holy Spirit say **"sowing into a lie does not produce a blessing"**. The Holy Spirit impressed me that Malachi 3:10 was not a lie in and of itself, but rather it was being turned into a lie by ministers who use it to extort the tithe from their congregations. During a time of meditation later that evening, the Holy Spirit impressed me to read Galatians, and I heard the Spirit say **"Jesus paid the tithe for you."** The next morning I read and re-read Galatians." "In a nutshell, Galatians 3:10 says, "All who rely on observing the law are under a curse..." and Galatians 3:25 says, "we are no longer under the supervision of the law". Galatians 5:3 says if we follow even one part of the law, we are obligated to obey the whole law! The Bible goes on to say in Galatians 4:24-26 and Galatians 4:28-31 that following the law makes us slaves, following the spirit makes us sons of God. And so **the net effect of tithing since it comes from the law is that it makes slaves of us and brings us back under the curse of the law.** No wonder we aren't blessed when we tithe out of compliance to the law! The tithe is a curse because the tithe is a law! By preaching the tithe, ministers have cursed the church, and they have proven themselves to be false brothers (Galatians 2:4, Galatians 5:8) where they stand in danger of condemnation and destruction (Galatians 1:8-9, Galatians 5:10, Galatians 6:7-8)."

"Is it any wonder then that after tithing for years we haven't seen Heaven's floodgates open? Galatians 5:18 says **"If you are led by the spirit, you are not under the law"**. And so one must ask: **"Are we led by the Spirit, except for giving which is directed by the law?"** **NO!** *Jesus paid the tithe for us because we have died to the law through Christ* (Romans 7:4, Romans 8:2, Romans 10:4, Galatians 3:13). THE moment we try to make ourselves righteous by resuming the practice of any portion of the law, WE INSULT CHRIST just as if we were to say, "Jesus sacrifice was not sufficient to pay it all!" THE moment we look upon Christ as less than the perfect and complete sacrifice for our debts - our sin - we deny His complete Lordship and come under the curse of the law." **"Let me paint the picture for you that the Father painted for me regarding the tithe,** or for that matter, any other law of the Old Testament. **IF** after Jesus died to pay the price for sin we were still required to obey any portion of the law, then Jesus did NOT in fact pay the price for ALL sin. If there were a sin that the blood of Jesus did not cover, judgment would look something like this: **"Jesus forgives all of your covered sins - BUT WAIT - you are condemned to HELL because Jesus death doesn't cover your failure to obey certain applicable laws..."** Preaching Jesus AND the law means either we need a 2nd sin offering to pay for what Jesus did not cover, OR, we will be condemned to HELL for failing to obey the laws not covered by Jesus blood. Suddenly our "coverage" sounds very much like an insurance policy with numerous exclusions in the fine print at the bottom! Brothers and sisters there are **NO LOOPHOLES** in the blood of Christ! Jesus has paid the tithe for us."

Jack concludes by writing, "On concluding my study, the Lord asked one final question: ***What building ever won a person to Christ?***" "Ask the Lord to show you what to give and to whom, and remember that His words "Feed my sheep" (John 21:17) go much deeper than a pastor's sermon on a Sunday morning. His words are spiritual, and they are literal."

As a result of the above understanding, I believe that I put myself under the curse of the law by obeying one element of an Old Testament law. I believe much of the Church today is also under that curse. I further believe many pastors are sustained financially by the tithe and consequently trust in men (the World's System) for the vast kingdoms they have built unto themselves. To tell their congregations to pray and hear God for what they are to give and where to give it would require trusting God (the Kingdom's Way), yet the tradition of the tithe and the comfort of knowing men and women of the congregation will continue to pay their Club Dues of 10% is far easier and doesn't require any faith. If the dues go down for any reason, a little pulpit manipulation will surely restore them to higher levels – all of these are facets of the World's System.

### **The True Remnant Will Walk In The Kingdom**

The Babylonian World's System is man depending upon man, man depending upon wealth, man depending upon systems, doctrines and formulas. The Kingdom's Way is man depending upon and totally trusting God – "Seek first the Kingdom of God..." Prophetic revelation speaks of a time when God will call out a remnant that not only recognizes, but also steadfastly refuse to continue engaging the World's System. Tired of the defeat and powerless state that this system has rendered the Church, this remnant seed will begin to operate solely in the Kingdom's Way. Only those with the greatest courage and trust for God will walk in this rich Kingdom principle.

*"In that day the remnant of Israel, the survivors of the house of Jacob, will no longer rely on him (the World's System) who struck them down but will truly rely on the Lord, the Holy One of Israel. A remnant will return, a remnant of Jacob will return to the Mighty God"* (Isaiah 10:20,21).

Those who truly rely on God will no longer rely on the World's System. The true remnant of God will not borrow money for their needs, but will rely on God; they will walk in love and remain unaffected by the attacks of men. This remnant will put God ahead of everything, and as such, will always have the resources to do what God says do...The remnant walk a narrow path – the way few choose to walk. One of the greatest dichotomies of these two systems is that one is filled with doubt, fear, and insecurity, while the other is filled with peace. One thing that the World cannot imitate is God's peace. As stated throughout this article, we are engaging one of the two systems at all times in our life, but of far greater importance is the fact that we must learn to engage the proper system, for as we have discussed, serious spiritual issues are at stake when we touch the world. The world deals in presumption, depends upon science, salient facts and research to ultimately decide upon a particular path. A kingdom man may use science, salient facts and

research but will never depend upon these, nor presume in his decision making – he will move based upon what “God said.” God has often allowed our experience in life to reveal a marvelous revelation. As such, I began to see an emerging pattern of God in my real estate business. Having suffered terrible financial swings, the need for money often became great – the very nature of the real estate business is feast or famine. What I noticed over the years was that every time I put my hope in some deal or transaction, it would virtually get to the closing table and fall apart. Deal upon deal upon deal followed the same pattern, - God often speaks through patterns and designs. It finally dawned upon my lightning quick mind that God was trying His best to say something to me, but my Charismatic theology was screaming “devil devil! devil!” or “you have not given enough,” or “you don’t have enough faith.”

Hear this saint of God, if a pattern persist, be open to changing your focus or direction – perhaps God is challenging your traditional mindset. God once said to me, “Ignorance often comes disguised as tradition.” My traditional teaching had me focused entirely on wrong issues, thus perpetuating the problem. Wrong focus perpetuates problems. This is both a natural and a physical phenomenon. Spiritually, I was focused on the Devil, when all along God was trying to show me something of far greater importance, “Build your trust in me, not in some real estate closing.” We must get turned right inside in order that things get turned right outside. Internal things must come in order, in order for external things to come in order.

What I was unsuspectingly doing was allowing my need for money and subsequent trust to flow away from God as my provider, to looking to the deal as provider – deals provide in the World’s System and God provides in Kingdom order. I transitioned from looking to and trusting God for everything in my life (the Kingdom’s Way), to trusting man or money (mammon), the World’s System for my needs. It was a heart condition that God was ever so gently dealing with me about. He still uses real estate to provide for my financial needs, however, God is my source now, not my own efforts. The gut-check has become, *Am I dead to it (the deal)?* An important lesson emerged as the Lord used scripture to allow my understanding to expand.

I again use one of my favorite scriptures to illustrate the point; “*Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit*” (John 12:24). I must stay dead to the deals I do in order for them to produce. As earlier written, “abideth alone” means without God. If I am not dead to the deals, God cannot participate. Our death produces His life. As long we continue to sit on the throne of our hearts, we leave little room for God. It is guaranteed that this condition will produce anxiety and stress. To the opposite extreme, the peace of no longer having to be my provider cannot be measured in words. As long as my focus is on God as my provider, God is free to bless me as He sees fit. His rest will always produce His direction. When I am busy pursuing things away from God’s direction, even though I may need things, I have left the peace of God, the direction of God, and subsequently, the provision of God.

#### **Resting In God Produces The Direction Of God (This is impossible for those touching the World’s System)**

In shedding the World’s System and learning to engage the Kingdom’s Method, it all begins in entering the rest of the Lord. We must learn how to work while resting in the Lord (Hebrews 4:10,11). The scriptures say, “*The servant of the Lord shall not strive*” (1 Timothy 2:24). How much strife (striving) is in us? Striving is a product of the World’s System. When we leave being led of the Spirit, we automatically arrive at doing our own thing, a form of striving. When I sense that I am striving to make something happen, I back off - “*Except the Lord build a house, its builders build in vain...In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat...*” (Psalm 127:1,2). When we cease our communication with the Holy Spirit and escape into what we are doing, not listening to Him, strife (striving – the World’s System) is upon us. Staying in the Spirit keeps us aware of God’s direction and far from striving. Adam went from a flow with God to “toil in the soil” after the fall (Genesis 3:17). As earlier discussed, this gave Satan the authority to author and create the World’s System. What once came easy for Adam now comes with a great price. God wishes us to return to the pre fall state, where there is a flow in our lives – Kingdom order. Jesus became the second Adam and was put to death, and with His death, legal authority denied the World’s System a continued right of passage in the earth. His redeeming power has established our legal right to a new system and it is called the Kingdom of God. Churches that teach church activity begets righteousness have not only engaged the World’s System, but also erroneously released the same spirit into the saints of God. Church activity will never produce life unless one is called and appointed of God to engage such activities. Business activities may produce but never provide life unless they are called and appointed of God.

Striving (engaging the World’s System) causes difficult circumstances in both relationships and efficiencies in accomplishing our task. We easily escape into toil and presumption and soon begin creating Ishmaels. The ramifications of this generally affect others, because we will always produce fruit that looks like us. When we touch the World’s System in this way, it releases the same spirit, the Spirit of the World, in those around us.

Our ultimate rest, which is the antidote to strife, is in finding out what God is doing in us, through us, with someone or some situation, and joining in that work (Jeremiah 6:16, Matthew 11:28, John 5:17)! This is the Kingdom’s Way. Jeremiah 6:16 is essentially saying, find out where God is walking and follow in His footsteps. Jesus said in John 5:17, “I do nothing out of my own initiative.” Whatever Jesus did He did in the rest of God. He did not initiate the process Himself. He found out what God was doing in the situation and joined Him. If you want to create works of the flesh (Ishmaels), initiate things God isn’t doing. Rest is found in doing what God is doing. Jesus said, “I only do what I see the Father doing.” For sometime I was puzzled over this statement, knowing that I had been extremely short on seeing the Father in my prayer time. As I sought the Holy Spirit for a greater understanding of this, I was shown that as we pray we often see ourselves directionally involved in doing something or sensing a particular direction for our lives in various endeavors. While I often saw myself being directed in activity, I seldom saw God doing it. As I approached the Father about this, He said, “You have seen correctly,” but God! I replied, “I only see me.” He said, “No, what you are seeing is Me in you doing what I have ordered.” This has helped me immensely in understanding my role in His kingdom, revealing to me the strategy required in combination with my faith. A sure way to know where God is in any situation is to understand that God pays for what He orders. First and foremost, if He orders us to do something, He will provide us with the grace to do it, the people to do it, and ultimately, the finances to do it. Ask yourself the question, what is He providing in the way of relational resources, or those individuals

that are assigned to work on God appointed projects? What is He providing in terms of financial resources, the monetary means through which to accomplish the task? If the above provisional resources are not in place, spiritually first and physically second, chances are God isn't in it, though He often requires great faith for even the resources. Often God may be saying that step one to accomplishing anything for Him is in appropriating the faith and getting the strategy for the resources. My experience has been that the people will always precede money in any project I have done, though that is only my experience. Those that come as result of direction from the Holy Spirit are spiritual sons; those that come as a result of the money are hirelings – know the difference!

The World's System is moved by self's desire and always looks to self or man for direction. Often these movements are generated by greed, ambition, and quest for power or position. Self is always at the root of the direction and will always answer to itself – one man shows answerable to nobody. Many ministries large and small suffer from this spirit, which is categorically the World's System and looks more like Corporate America than God's house.

Those that live by the Kingdom's method move by the Spirit. They are totally subservient to the Spirit and are answerable to God. His highest purposes are their motives. They understand that when the cloud is moving, they must move with it. Self does not control. For those who live by this, an important lesson to learn is to never nail your tent pegs so deep in the ground that you are busy trying to get them up when the cloud and the crowd have left. The World System attaches permanence to many issues and possessions in life. We are to stay open to the flow of the Spirit with little or no attachment to things. Kingdom dwellers are givers and freely move with the Spirit. To live in the Kingdom's Method, we must be sensitive at all times to the cloud's movement (Exodus 13: 21,22). We cannot stay where the cloud was yesterday – we must go where it is for us today. The cloud is always out in front and never behind. Another major contrast in the two systems, as previously discussed, is found in 'good ideas' versus 'God ideas.' Many ministries and churches are operated on the foundation of 'good ideas' – things that look and sound good, but yet lack any God ordered inspiration. God's churches will possess God's power. Man's churches will possess man's power. It is fairly easy to determine which of the two we sit in. Those that are founded in partaking of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil eat the fruit of the World's System. Those that operate in the Kingdom of God, partake of the Tree of Life. It is only from this tree that the life of God can be found. If you eat from the Tree of Life, you are led of God's Spirit in your endeavors. The Spirit of God leads the true sons and daughters of God.

#### Faith and Strategy

The World's System is a perverted imitation of the Kingdom's Method. 'Good ideas' are a substitute for 'God ideas.' All 'God ideas' are faith combined with a specific God appointed strategy. 'Good ideas' have a strategy for completion, as do 'God ideas.' 'Good ideas' are just that – the ideas of man with a man contrived method of performing the idea. Employing a God appointed strategy completes 'God ideas.' Strategy is an integral part of faith working. Strategy is God's direction and "ordered steps" for us to know our part in His plan. Without strategy, faith is dead. Said differently, "Faith without works is dead." Works in this scripture means God-appointed strategy. "With wisdom, get understanding" – Wisdom is the 'direction' of God, understanding is the 'how to.' The book of Nehemiah is one of the greatest exposes' on strategy in the bible. As Nehemiah knew, the great difference between systems is that man in using the Kingdom's Way is relieved of producing his own strategy or direction. Nehemiah had God's strategy and successfully completed his work.

#### Problems Guard Power

In conclusion, it is interesting to note that, in the Kingdom, the things that burden us are often the things God is calling us to do something about (See Nehemiah 1:1-4). Grasp this concept; in the Kingdom, problems guard power – the problems or burdens we face are often designed to give us power in that specific area once we have overcome the problem. How is this so? Look at what Nehemiah did (Nehemiah 1:4-11). He prayed and got the strategy of God to overcome the burden/problem. The burden/problem Nehemiah faced was the Jewish remnant and their protection – He knew that rebuilding the wall around the city was vital for their protection. As he prayed he became empowered to accomplish the task by getting the specific strategy to overcome the problem. Similarly, as we face problems, and since God orders our steps, we may view problems as potential areas of empowerment. Who better to minister to a marriage than those who God has empowered through marital restoration? Who better to minister on finances than those who God has financially restored?

Several years ago I felt a tremendous burden or yearning to develop a piece of software for my real estate organization. Though I knew little of how to accomplish this, I was ultimately successful by getting God's strategy for the victory. If ever I am led to do another software project, I have now become empowered in that area as a result of my experience. The lion and the bear prepared David for Goliath. Interestingly, God will use our past to prepare us for our future. Kingdom people ask through any situation, "Lord, what are you saying to me through this?" This is not a characteristic of those who walk in the World's System. When we find ourselves griping, groping and complaining when adversity comes, we are touching the spirit of the world, a place of decay and death. When we have been given the strategy or wisdom to solve a problem, it is unlikely that the problem can have power over us again. The word tells us "we are not ignorant of Satan's devices used to gain advantage over humans." Christians are often guilty of praying for faith when, in fact, they should be praying for strategy, or their specific part in solving the problem. The gift of discernment will clearly tell when it is time to simply wait upon God or begin to pray for and enact a strategy. Kingdom people will patiently await God's strategy. Changes are coming to the Body of Christ – the remnant seed will flow in the Kingdom's Way as the World's System will continue being exposed and rooted out of the Church and God's people. Tolerance for hype, programs and formulas, entertainment, spiritual pride, arrogance and "bless me" messages will diminish as the Body begins to live the Kingdom life. Self-righteous religious theology, which says, "If I do this, God will do that," will be replaced by a true and trusting relationship with God. True obedience is based upon true relationship, not religious teachings on self-righteousness. "The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:17). The kingdom of God is not based upon externalities, it is based upon the internalities of the heart.