

**7/6-12#4 The Measure of God's Rule and Ministry on Spiritual Warfare:** I. "We will not boast beyond our measure but according to the measure of the rule which the God of measure has apportioned to us" (2 Cor. 10:13): **A** The apostle Paul was bold, but he was not bold without limit; this shows that he was under the restriction of the Lord: **1** Paul's boasting was according to the measure of the rule which the God of measure, the ruling God, had apportioned to him. **2** His ministry to the Gentile world, including Corinth, was according to the measure of God; hence, his boast was within this limit. **Eph. 3:1** For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you, the Gentiles—**2** if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of the grace of God which was given to me for you. **Gal. 2:8** (For He who operated in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcision operated also in me for the Gentiles). **B** The word rule in 2 Corinthians 10:13 literally means "a measuring rod," like the rule of a carpenter: **1** The word measure in verse 13 indicates being ruled by God; God has allotted us just so much for our work and experience. **2** There is One who is ruling and measuring—the God of measure, the God who rules; therefore, we must stay within the limits of God's ruling, of God's measuring. **C** From 2 Corinthians 10:13-15, we can see that although we expect the Lord's work to spread, we must learn how to be under God's restriction: **10:15** We are not boasting beyond our measure in others' labors, but have the hope, as your faith is increasing, to be magnified in you according to our rule unto abundance. **1** We should not expect a spread that is without measure; that kind of spread would certainly not be within the limit of a walk according to the Spirit. **2** From experience we can testify that if we spread the work according to the Spirit, there will always be a limit: **a** Inwardly, we do not have the peace to spread the work beyond a certain point. **b** Outwardly, the environment does not allow us to go beyond a particular boundary line. **D** Paul had to learn to take the Lord's restriction: **1** Paul wanted to go to Rome, but he did not expect to go there in bonds. **2** Paul told the believers in Rome that he expected to go to Spain by way of them, but he never went to Spain. **3** Paul was willing to be subject to God's measuring; his bonds and imprisonment were God's sovereign restriction. **E** Based on the principle of God's measuring, Paul told the Corinthians that whatever he did and spoke was not beyond his measure; Paul always acted and behaved within his measure. **F** The apostles always moved according to God's ruling; whatever God measured out to them became their

jurisdiction. **G** In the church service we need to realize that God has measured out only a certain amount to us, and we should not extend ourselves beyond our measure; we need to know our limitations. **H** Like Paul, we should move and act according to how much God has measured to us. **II. As we live with Christ in His ascension as a new creation in resurrection, we engage in spiritual warfare for the kingdom of God:** **A** In ascension we look with Christ "from the lions' dens, From the leopards' mountains": **1** The lions' dens and the leopards' mountains signify the heavenlies, where Satan and his subordinates are. **2** The victory has been gained, but Satan and his evil forces are still in the heavenlies; we must have our living in ascension, far above the evil powers. **3** Here we fight with Satan and his power of darkness by being empowered in the Lord and in the might of His strength, and by putting on the whole armor of God; this is the reality of living in the ascension of Christ. **B** Spiritual warfare is necessary because Satan's will is set against God's will; our fighting is to subdue the satanic will and defeat God's enemy: **1** We need to understand what the will of the Lord is. **2** God's will is what He wants and what He intends to accomplish: **a** God has an eternal will, which is the source of His eternal purpose. **b** Since God is eternal, without beginning or ending, His will is also eternal; it lies at the heart of the origin of the universe. **c** God created all things for His will so that He might accomplish and fulfill His purpose. **d** The will of God is concentrated in Christ and is for Christ to have the first place in all things; Christ is everything in God's eternal will. **e** God wants to have Christ with the church; the will of God is to obtain the church as the Body of Christ. **C** In order to engage in spiritual warfare, we must maintain the position of ascension: **1** The spiritual warfare mentioned in Ephesians 6:10-12 is based upon the position of ascension in 2:6. **2:6** And raised *us* up together with *Him* and seated *us* together with *Him* in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. **2** The position of ascension causes us to be victorious in battle because only in the position of ascension can we have heavenly authority and pray with authority to deal with God's enemy. **D** Spiritual warfare is based on the victory of Christ; through death the Lord Jesus destroyed the devil, bringing him to nothing. **E** We engage in spiritual warfare to conquer the satanic chaos and triumph in the divine economy: **Eph.1:10** Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him; **1** The history of the universe is a history of God's economy and Satan's chaos:

**a** Satan is the source of chaos, and God Himself is the divine economy. **b** Both in the Bible and in our experience, the satanic chaos always goes along with the divine economy. **2** Instead of delivering us from chaos, God wants us to be one with Him to conquer the destructive satanic chaos in the old creation and to carry out the constructive divine economy for the new creation. **3** As we are suffering the chaos, we need to stand for and live out the divine economy. **4** We need to engage in spiritual warfare for the divine building, the church as the Body of Christ; the building up of the church is a service of warfare. **1Tim.6:12** Fight the good fight of the faith; lay hold on the eternal life, ... **5** The purpose of spiritual warfare is to bring in the kingdom of God: **1** Spiritual warfare is the warfare between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. **2** The kingdom of God is the exercise of the divine will and the overthrowing of the power of Satan by the power of God. **3** The work of the church is to bring in the kingdom of God, and through prayer the church must release the power of the kingdom of God upon the earth. **III. On the day of His wedding, Christ will marry those who have been fighting the battle against God's enemy for years; that is, Christ will marry the overcomers, who have already overcome the evil one:** **A** When Christ comes to fight against Antichrist and his army, He will come as the Son of Man, and as the Son of Man, He will need a counterpart to match Him and complete Him; this counterpart will be His bride. **B** The overcomers who constitute the bride of Christ fight the battle against all the enemies of God and defeat them: **1** The overcomers engage in the warfare of life against death and reign in life over death. **2** The overcomers conquer the destructive chaos and triumph in the constructive divine economy; instead of being delivered out of the present chaos, they conquer the chaos by the processed and consummated Triune God as the all-sufficient grace. **Testimony** I would like to testify that, in order to carry out the ministry of spiritual warfare, we need to remain within the measure of God's rule. Under the administration of God's measured sphere are all the circumstances of my life, including my marriage, my children, my church life and service in the local church, and my work. First, regarding my relationship with my wife, I have always been thankful that she was given to me, and we have built up a partnership in the sense of being co-workers together. About two years after we moved to Kobe, my older sister visited our home and stayed overnight. She noticed that my wife did not iron my dress shirts. Thinking that I would be looked down upon at work if things continued this

way, my sister advised my wife to iron my shirts. When my wife told me about this, I immediately called my sister and said, "Even if I cannot be promoted at work because I wear shirts that have not been ironed, that is not a problem for me." (By this I meant that my wife is more important than my company.) I also said, "Please do not make unnecessary suggestions." I said this because I recognized that my wife is my partner and I respected her. At that time, while talking with other mothers in her neighborhood, my wife found that many of them were dissatisfied because, when their husband's family complained about them, their husbands did not stand on their side. My wife shared my response with them. When they heard it, they were greatly surprised and praised me.

My wife is the eldest daughter in her family. Since she had been accustomed to speaking to her two younger brothers in a commanding manner, she also spoke to me that way unconsciously. I was confused and troubled by this. However, this became a benefit to me. Although I held a high position in a large company, when I returned home, my wife dealt with me without regard to my position at work. As a result, I was preserved from becoming proud. According to the Bible, I have always regarded my wife not merely as someone who does the housework, but as my partner. This realization has always helped me. Whenever conflicts arose between us, I would fellowship with the Lord based on this realization, touch Him, experience Him, enjoy Him, and adjust myself. Sometimes this adjustment took time, but because of this realization based on the revelation in the Scriptures, I received mercy. In the world, the greatest reason for divorce is said to be incompatibility of personality. However, as a member of Christ, I treasure marriage. Without my wife's help, and if we were not one spirit and one mind, I believe that the effectiveness of my service would have been reduced to one-tenth. Likewise, by helping me, I believe that my wife is able to maximize her own capacity. Praise the Lord! Only by recognizing and submitting to the Lord's governmental hand was I able to engage in spiritual warfare for the building up. The proper relationships for serving according to God's measure are: **1** The Lord Jesus and the ministry of the word, **2** Husband and wife, **3** The saints serving together in a particular locality, **4** All the saints, and only after these comes **5** spiritual warfare and the building up.