

#14 The Growth and Maturity Required for the Formation of the Army to Protect God's Testimony

(Crystallization-Study of Numbers 2) 2019/8/19-25

I. The emphasis of Numbers is how the Israelites, who had been redeemed, received revelation, and been trained by God, were formed into an army to protect God's testimony and fight for His move on earth:

A. Since the earth created by God was ruined by Satan, God needs to gain a group of people to be formed into an army for His move on earth. Num. 1:3 From twenty years old and upward, all who are able to go forth for military service in Israel, you and Aaron shall number them by their companies.

B. Numbers shows how God formed His redeemed people into an army to surround and protect His testimony:

1. In Numbers, particularly in the first four chapters, the Israelites were formed into an army according to God's arrangement. **2.** In order for the children of Israel to be formed into an army, they needed to be numbered; only after being numbered could the Israelites be formed into an army.

II. In order "to go forth for military service," an Israelite male needed to be at least twenty years old; this is related to growth and maturity:

A. There were approximately two million Israelites, but only 603,550 were twenty years old and upward and were able to go forth for military service.

B. Even though there are a great many believers on earth, only a small number among them are mature in life to the extent that they are able to fight for God's testimony.

Eph. 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ.

C. Numbers mentions the age for those enlisting in the army, which was twenty years old and upward, yet this book does not mention the age for retirement: **1.** God's army was strong, just as Caleb was able to fight and was as strong before God in his eighties as he was in his forties.

2. This signifies that we must have both life and maturity in life in order to be numbered by God.

D. According to Numbers, neither children nor women were numbered:

1. Children signify immaturity, and women signify weakness. **2.** That only males who were twenty years old and upward were able to engage in warfare signifies that among the believers, only those who are mature in life and strong are able to fight in spiritual warfare.

E. Those who were numbered needed to be confirmed by Moses, Aaron, and the leaders of the twelve tribes:

1. Moses signifies Christ as the Head of the Body who executes His authority, Aaron signifies Christ as the High Priest who exercises His priesthood, and the leaders of the twelve tribes signify the elders and leading ones in the church: **a.** This indicates that the numbering of God's people is based on life and maturity in life and is confirmed by spiritual authority. **b.** Life, maturity, and the confirmation of spiritual authority are required for the formation of God's army.

2. In order to be numbered, the children of Israel were required to be in the fellowship of the life of their fathers' households and had to grow in life unto maturity, which is signified by the age of twenty. **Mon**

III. In the Lord's recovery today, there is an urgent need for the growth and maturity required for the formation of God's army; we need to grow in life unto maturity:

A. Spiritually, males who are twenty years old and over

signify those among God's people who, regardless of their natural status, are strong in spirit and mature in the divine life; only these are qualified to be formed into an army to fight for God's interest and move on earth.

B. The growth of life is the increase of the element of God, the increase of the stature of Christ, the expanding of the ground of the Holy Spirit, the decrease of the human element, the breaking of the natural life, and the subduing of every part of our soul.

Col. 2:19 ...Holding the head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.

Eph. 3:17 ...Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith...

C. To be transformed is to be metabolically changed in our natural life, whereas to be matured is to be filled with the divine life that changes us; the last stage of transformation is maturity, the fullness of life.

D. In the New Testament the word mature refers to the believers' being full-grown and perfected in the life of God:

1. As believers, we need to go on, to be brought on, to maturity by forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before, pursuing the fullest enjoyment and gaining of Christ for the uttermost enjoyment of Christ in the millennial kingdom.

2. The prerequisite for maturity in the spiritual life is to grow continually in the divine life.

3. The ultimate issue of the believers' growth and maturity in the life of Christ is a full-grown man—the church as the Body of Christ growing into a mature man.

E. To be mature is to have Christ fully formed in us; it also means that we have been fully transformed into His image:

1. Since the time of our regeneration, the Lord has been working in us so that we may have His image.

2. When the Lord has fully worked His image into us and is fully expressed through us, we will be mature in life. **Tue**

F. Chapter 3 of Song of Songs shows us the maturity of the seeking one, and chapter 4 explains that maturity is reached by the subduing of the will:

1. The secret of the maturity of the seeking one is that her will has been completely subdued and resurrected.

S. S. 4:4 Your neck is like the tower of David, built for an armory: a thousand bucklers hang on it, all the shields of the mighty men.

2. The neck signifies the human will under God; the Lord considers the submission of our will a most beautiful thing.

3. First, our will must be subdued; then it will be strong in resurrection and be like the tower of David, the armory for the spiritual warfare. Eph. 6:10 Finally, be empowered in the Lord and in the might of His strength.

4. If we have a submissive will, our will becomes like the tower of David that holds all kinds of weapons for warfare. **Wed**

IV. In order for the children of God to reach the spiritual age of twenty, they need to pass through the first three stages of the experience of life and enter into the fourth stage:

A. The first stage of the experience of life is being in Christ, the second stage is abiding in Christ, and the third stage is Christ living in us, which is also the stage of the cross.

B. In the third stage the seeking believers deal with the flesh, the self, and the natural constitution with the natural strength and ability:

1. The flesh denotes the totality of the fallen old man, our entire fallen being: **a.** The flesh is the living out and the expression of the old man. **b.** The flesh cannot be changed

or improved; thus, we need to be mindful of the fact that the flesh is always with us. **C.** The flesh is the camp of God's enemy and the largest base for his work: **1** The flesh is the first among our enemies, taking the lead over sin, the world and Satan to fight against us. **2** God hates the flesh in the same manner that He hates Satan, and He wants to destroy the flesh in the same manner that He wants to destroy Satan. **2.** The self is the soul-life with the emphasis on human thoughts and opinions: **a.** In Matthew 16:23-25 three terms are related to one another: mind, himself, and soul-life: **1** Our mind is the expression of our soul, and our self is the embodiment of our soul-life. **2** Our soul-life is embodied in and lived out by our self, and our self is expressed through our mind, idea, thought, concept, and opinion. **b.** The self is the embodiment of Satan; the self is the essence of Satan in the soul, making the soul independent from God to express its self-opinion and self-will. **c.** The self is the soul declaring its independence from God.

3. The natural constitution is the aggregate of our physical and mental abilities: **Phil. 3:3** For we are the circumcision, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh. **10** To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.

a. The natural strength and ability do not have the divine element. **b.** The natural strength and ability act on their own, not according to God's will. **c.** When we work with our natural ability, we seek our own glory and satisfy our own desire. **c.** When our natural strength and ability are dealt with by the cross, they become useful in resurrection.

C. The fourth stage of our spiritual experience and spiritual life is the highest stage—Christ's full growth in us—the stage of spiritual warfare, where Christ is fully grown and matured in us:

Eph. 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love. **6:13** Therefore, take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

1. At the end of the third stage, we express God with His image, and in the fourth stage, we represent Him with His authority.

2. The experience of life in the fourth stage includes knowing the Body, knowing ascension, reigning with Christ, engaging in spiritual warfare, and being full of the stature of Christ.

3. In order to know the Body and live in the Body, we must first deal with the flesh, the self, and the natural constitution:

a. If we still live according to the flesh, in ourselves, and serve the Lord in our natural ability, there is no way for us to know the Body. **b.** Only when our flesh has been dealt with, the self-opinion has been broken, and the natural life has been smashed will the divine life within us enable us to know the Body and realize that we are simply members of the Body and that the life within us cannot be independent.

4. If we want to fight the spiritual warfare and deal with God's enemy, we must first deal with our flesh, self, and soul-life: **a.** Engaging in spiritual warfare to deal with Satan and recover the earth for God requires that we be wholly and absolutely for God and obey Him completely:

1 We cannot preserve ourselves or leave one bit for

ourselves. **2** When we are dealing with Satan, self must be utterly abandoned. **c.** The church must engage in spiritual warfare, fighting to bring in the kingdom of God. **Fr**

V. The prayer at the incense altar issued in the numbering of the children of Israel for the formation of an army to fight for God's interest on the earth:

A. As a result of the prayer at the incense altar, the Lord conducts a "military census" of the saints in the churches; those who are numbered are qualified to go to war for God's move on the earth.

2 Tim. 2:3 Suffer evil with me as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

B. The intercession offered at the incense altar is for the growth and maturity of the believers so that an army can be formed:

Eph. 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

6:11 Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the stratagems of the devil.

1. The more we pray at the incense altar, the more we will realize that the need for maturity is desperate, and the greater will be the urgency to pray for the growth in life unto maturity.

2. Only when such an army is formed will God be able to move on earth for His purpose; apart from an army formed of mature ones, there is no way for God to move. **Sat**

Crucial Points(1): Christ making home in our hearts

OL1: In the Lord's recovery today, there is an urgent need for the growth and maturity required for the formation of God's army; we need to grow in life unto maturity:

Eph. 3:17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love, **4:15** But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,

If a Christian has the proper growth in life, when you touch his thoughts, you will sense the taste of the Lord in it; when you touch his likes or even his dislikes, you will sense the taste of the Lord; and if you watch the way he decides and chooses, you will also sense the taste of the Lord....[This] is because he allows the Lord's Spirit and the Lord's life to permeate from his spirit into his mind, emotion, and will.

Our heart is often closed toward the Lord, and the Lord is detained in our spirit to the extent that He cannot come out. Although the Lord is within us, it is as if He is surrounded by signs that say, No Thoroughfare. Thus, the Lord is not able to move within us even a little bit, and He does not have an opportunity to come out of us.

How do we open our heart to the Lord? Whenever we have to make a determination or decision, we should first say to the Lord, "O Lord, I love You. I am willing to please You." This kind of prayer opens our will to the Lord, and once our will is opened, the Lord will enter into it. In addition, whenever we love or desire something, we should stop for a moment and say to the Lord, "O Lord, I love You. I want to please You." This opens our emotion to the Lord. When we do this, the Lord will surely enter into our emotion. Similarly, whenever we begin to think about something, we should stop our thinking for a moment and say to the Lord, "O Lord, I love You. I want to please You." This kind of statement opens our mind to the Lord, and through this opening, the Lord will be able to enter into our mind.

Application to the new ones

God's economy is first to dispense Christ into your spirit and regenerate your spirit. Then, Christ in your spirit will spread into each part of your soul, mind, emotion and will. Eventually Christ will spread even into your body. For this you need to be those who exercise your spirit, who opens your mind, emotion and will to the Lord. To allow the Lord to come into your mind, emotion and will, please train the simple and short prayer like this in your daily living;

Mind: "Oh Lord Jesus, Come into my thinking. I open my mind to you. Please spread from my spirit into my mind. Save me from thinking by myself. Lord, I love You and open to Your dispensing. Amen! ! "

Emotion: "Oh Lord Jesus, I love You. May Your presence be in my loving others. I open my emotion to You and welcome You. I should love what You love and I should hate what You hate. Please come into my love."

Will: "Oh Lord Jesus, deal with my stubborn will and make it pliable. The stubborn will is not open to You and easily surrender to Satan. For me to choose God's will and practice it, I will open my will to You."

Crucial Points(2): Learn obedience and grow

S.S. 4:4 Your neck is like the tower of David, built for an armory: a thousand bucklers hang on it, all the shields of the mighty men. Eph. 6:10 Finally, be empowered in the Lord and in the might of His strength.

OL1: The secret of the maturity of the seeking one is that her will has been completely subdued and resurrected.

OL2: The neck signifies the human will under God; the Lord considers the submission of our will a most beautiful thing.

OL3: First, our will must be subdued; then it will be strong in resurrection and be like the tower of David, the armory for the spiritual warfare.

OL4: If we have a submissive will, our will becomes like the tower of David that holds all kinds of weapons for warfare.

First, our will must be subdued; then it will be resurrected like the tower of David, the armory for the spiritual warfare. All the weapons for spiritual warfare are kept in our subdued and resurrected will. If our will has never been subdued by the Lord, it can never be a strong armory to keep all the weapons for spiritual warfare. All the weapons are mostly defensive, not offensive. It is not so much a matter of going out to fight as it is a matter of standing to resist. Bucklers and shields are all for protection in order to stand. In spiritual warfare, we are not so much on the offensive as we are on the defensive, standing against all the devilish, subtle attacks of the enemy. Most of the items of the armor mentioned in Ephesians 6 are also defensive. There is really no need for us to fight; the Lord has won the battle already.

We simply need to stand and resist all the enemy's attacks. The bucklers and the shields that protect us against the arrows of the enemy are kept in this tower, which is the subdued and resurrected will of the Lord's seeking one. This is the real maturity in life.

An unsubdued will is, on the one hand, stubborn, and on the other hand, weak. When the enemy comes, the stubborn, unsubdued will always makes an unconditional surrender. We all know this by our own experience....The sisters who are stubborn in the matter of submission are

the first to surrender when the enemy attacks. But if we have a submissive will, a will that has been subdued like a flock of goats on a mountainside, our will is expressed like a tower of David. When the enemy comes, our will is like the tower of David that holds all kinds of weapons against his attacks.

Application to the young people and college students

Young people, please learn for your will to be submissive for you to grow and mature. Every environment you face is arranged by God for your good. And God is also arranging the deputy authority like parents and teachers. For you to learn properly and blessed, please learn to be submissive to any deputy authority or Lord's leading in your environment.

Adolescence is the process of growth and thus also the period of being unstable. So you may become emotional and rebellious sometimes. Negatively, please recognize that the source of rebellion is the sin in the flesh, Satan from your youth. Positively, please recognize that God's discipline, education, breaking under the discipline of the Holy Spirit are all for your benefit. Once you obey, then you can grow. Because Satan knows that, he is trying to work on you to be rebellious. Let us trust in the Lord's grace and mercy to learn to be obedient from our youth.

Heb. 12:9 Furthermore we have had the fathers of our flesh as discipliners and we respected them; shall we not much more be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they disciplined for a few days as it seemed good to them; but He, for what is profitable that we might partake of His holiness.

11 Now no discipline at the present time seems to be a matter of joy, but of grief; but afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been exercised by it.

Rom. 8:27 But He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to God.

28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

Prayer: "Oh Lord Jesus, I came to know that my rebellious thought and emotion are from Satan. The deputy authority like my parents and teachers were arranged by God for my benefit. Thank God. Without learning to be obedient, I can not go on and grow. For me to be useful to God and people, let me learn to be obedient. Take away the things which are rebellious and not submitting in my will. With the submissive will, I will fight against Satan for God. I pray in the name of the Lord. Amen!"

Crucial Points(3): By dealing with natural life, practice the life of the Body of Christ with vital partners

Eph. 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

6:13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

OL1: The fourth stage of our spiritual experience and spiritual life is the highest stage—Christ’s full growth in us—the stage of spiritual warfare, where Christ is fully grown and matured in us.

OL2: Only when our flesh has been dealt with, the self-opinion has been broken, and the natural life has been smashed will the divine life within us enable us to know the Body and realize that we are simply members of the Body and that the life within us cannot be independent.

OL3: If we want to fight the spiritual warfare and deal with God’s enemy, we must first deal with our flesh, self, and soul-life.

OL4: Engaging in spiritual warfare to deal with Satan and recover the earth for God requires that we be wholly and absolutely for God and obey Him completely.

The Bible and our experience prove that though each one of us is a member of Christ, the life in each one of us is not a “member” life but a “Body” life....Each member [of our body] shares in common the same life together with all the other members, that is, the life of the entire body....Similarly, in the Body of Christ, when one member is joined to the Body or having fellowship with the Body, his life is the life of the Body, and the life of the Body is his life. It would not do for him to be separated from the other members...; it can neither be distinguished nor separated. It is this life that joins us together to become the Body of Christ.

We cannot, however, experience this before the difficulties of the self have been entirely dealt with. If we are still living according to the flesh, in ourselves, and serving the Lord in our natural ability, the life of the Body, which is Christ Himself in us, has no way of being manifested, and there is no way for us to know the Body. The more we live by the flesh, the less we feel the need for the support of the Body. If we live by our self-opinion, we find no need for the sustaining of the church. If we serve with our natural ability, we sense no need for the coordination of the members. Only when our flesh has been dealt with, the self-opinion has been broken, and the natural life has been smashed, will the life within cause us to realize that we are simply members of the Body and that the life in us cannot be independent. Hence, this life requires us to have fellowship with all other members and be joined to them, and it also brings us into that fellowship and the experience of being joined together. It is at this time that we begin to know a little concerning the Body and become qualified to engage in spiritual warfare.

Application to the young working saints and graduate students

As a businessperson or a graduate student, your natural ability, confidence, and individualism need to be dealt with and to be broken, so that God’s blessings can be brought in through you. While your natural ability and confidence are remaining, you rely on yourself but not on Christ and the church. If so, surely you cannot bring God’s blessings to your business life.

Because only when our natural life has been dealt with, we can realize the Body and know we are simply members of the Body who will die unless relying on the Body. Furthermore, this Body engages in the spiritual warfare. No

one can fight against Satan individually. Therefore, we can say the following in this order.:

(1) Enjoy the Lord and serve the Lord in the church life every day. **(2)** Your natural life are to be broken. **(3)** Realize that your inner life is the Body life and you are simply a member of the Body. **(4)** Fight against Satan for God in the Body. **(5)** Recover the earth for God and prepare for Christ’s second coming.

In your business life, you need to rely on your vital partners and be open to have fellowship with them so that they can pray for you. They may not understand the full detail of your business but still you need to explain outlines and crucial points of your problems roughly to your partners and allow them to pray for those. Such fellowship should not be held during a general meeting, but it should be done in a family meeting or one-on-one fellowship.

But if your natural strength has not been dealt with, you cannot open to your vital partners. Then you are practically a member apart from the Body, so it become impossible for you to partake the rich blessings of God through the Body. May you be able to see the vision of the Body, deal with your natural life, and live the Body life so that you can bring God’s blessings in your business life or research life through you!

As an example, your boss and colleagues in your office are arranged by God for your spiritual benefit. But because your natural life has not been dealt with, you don’t obey God, but you even resent God. You cannot realize what is the best for yourself, but God knows. If you give yourself up to God, be submissive to God, rely on your vital partners to practice the Body of Christ, and deal with your natural life by bearing the cross, then you will see the great blessings of God.

Prayer: “O Lord Jesus, I love you. To avoid the Body of Christ to be a superficial slogan, my natural strength, ability and confidence must be completely dealt with. As saying that without the cross there are no resurrection, without denying my natural life, I cannot receive the blessings from the Body. Moreover, once the Body can be expressed out practically, there will be the spiritual warfare where Satan will be pushed to the edge and be put to shame, and then the earth can be recovered for God. Hallelujah!”