

SLB-028

11-19-06

The Spiritual Life Tactics (SLT):
Phase I Tactics Continued -
Reliance
Regeneration

SLT: Phase I: Salvation

- Reliance:
- *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*
Romans 10:1-3
- We are saved by 'coming to a knowledge of the truth about God's Righteousness', not our righteousness; so that if we do not have that knowledge, we cannot be saved.
- Note well, as we close, Paul does not pray that they would give up their personal sins to be saved, as is commonly presented today!

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- Reliance:
- But the Jews had the Scriptures.
- They were godly, they were righteous; and they were very proud of their own righteousness.
- But the trouble was that they fondly imagined that by working up this righteousness and amassing it, they were pleasing God and were satisfying God's holy and righteous demands.
- That was their tragedy.
- They really were very pleased with themselves, and they were resting in their self-righteousness and their self-satisfaction.

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- Reliance:
- In Romans 3: 19-20, Paul says, *'Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.'*
- As Paul puts it again in Philippians 3:7-8, *'What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.'*

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- Reliance:
- *'Blessed are the poor in spirit'* [Matt. 5:3]. But, you see, people who believe that they can put themselves right in the sight of God by their works are not poor in spirit.
- They are proud of spirit, as the Apostle was before his conversion, as our Lord depicted the Pharisees.
- *'What you need,'* they hear, just as those who think they must repent of their sins, is not poverty of spirit but self-confidence, a belief in yourself, a belief that you can help God save you.
- Set out to be saved by “Faith Plus Anything”, and this is the opposite of being 'poor in spirit'.

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- Reliance:
- And then, of course, our Lord put it like this in a terrible phrase in Luke 16:15: *'Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.'*
- If you have any doubt that the failure to be saved comes from a lack of cleaning up your life, look at this great mound of righteousness that the Pharisees had built up: *'That is what I have done. Look at my deeds, look at my good life, look what I have sacrificed, look what I am giving away of righteousness.'*

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- Reliance:
- And our Lord's comment upon it is that it is nothing but *'abomination in the sight of God'*.
- *'All our righteousnesses,'* says Isaiah, *'are as filthy rags'* [Isaiah. 64:6].
- The Old Testament had already said it - our Lord repeats it.
- It is useless; it is valueless.
- Our best deeds are impure, polluted, unworthy.
- Anyone who relies on his goodness and his righteousness has completely misunderstood the whole of the biblical teaching.

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- Reliance:
- His words are abomination in the sight of God, who does not see as man sees nor judge as man judges.
- So then the end of all that is that these tragic Jews were ignorant of the fact that having gone about and expended so much energy and labor, they had succeeded only in pleasing themselves; they had not pleased God at all.
- They had established their own righteousness and nothing more.
- They were like a man entering an athletic competition.
- He has worked hard and he is tremendously pleased with it.

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- Reliance:
- Then the day comes for the competition and the man goes forward with great confidence, only to find that he has been disqualified.
- Why ?
- Well, the foolish man had not read the rulebook carefully.
- He had certainly eaten healthily, taken his supplements, spent hours in the gym and practicing, but because he added a banned substance, he is disqualified.

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- Reliance:
- He has pleased nobody but himself.
- And that is the whole tragedy in the world today.
- That is precisely what is being believed, in the church as well as outside it: that Christianity is an encouragement to people to add their own righteousness.
- And at the end it will all be utterly useless, our Lord will disown it.
- Though many will say, 'Lord, Lord,' it is of no value.
- It is not the righteousness that He demands; it is not the righteousness that can satisfy Him; it is useless.

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- Reliance:
- So that brings us to the third way in which they were ignorant: they were ignorant of God's way of righteousness and of salvation.
- 'They being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.'
- Now this is the final tragedy.
- It is the result of the two previous forms of ignorance.
- If they had known what God really demands they would never have been foolish enough to go about to try to establish their own righteousness.

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- Reliance:
- They would have realized from the beginning that it could not be done.
- And then, because they thought they were satisfying God, they did not listen to the demands of God's righteousness.
- They were prejudiced against it and rejected it, even as the Pharisees rejected our Lord, His teaching and all that He had to offer.
- The last people to believe the gospel, and to be saved, are always those who think that they can save themselves.

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- Reliance:
- Our Lord looked at the Pharisees, who were good, moral, godly, religious people, and said this terrible thing,
- *'The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you'* [Matt. 21:31].
- It is true now as it has always been true.
- There is no greater sin than the sin of the Pharisee, the sin of self-righteousness.
- It is, of everything, the thing that most blinds a man to the glory of the gospel.

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- Reliance
- The majority of Christians witness as if the gospel puts a premium on sin, but it does not.
- What the gospel does is to show the horrible, terrible danger of self-reliance, self-justification, self-righteousness.
- 'The publicans and the harlots' - the complete outsiders, the most hopeless in society- actually did go into the kingdom before the others.
- Why?
- Because they were more ready to admit their need; they were more ready to acknowledge their own utter helplessness and hopelessness.

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- Reliance
- Now the Apostle says that this ignorance of God's righteousness was utterly inexcusable because it is taught in the Bible from beginning to end.
- Look how Paul puts it in Romans 3:21: 'But now,' he says, 'the righteousness of God without the law'- apart from the law -'is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.'
- That, he says, is what makes the Jew and the misinformed seeker of God so utterly inexcusable.

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- Reliance
- The Jew boasts about his knowledge of the Old Testament, and yet his very Old Testament is the thing that tells him about this way of God's righteousness.
- The Jew had not understood that.
- He had completely misunderstood the whole of the Old Testament; he had misunderstood the meaning of the law.
- The Jew thought that when God gave the law He said, 'Now keep this law and you will be right in my sight.'
- When, in fact, God had given them the law to show them that they could not do it!

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- Reliance
- God's method of salvation is always of grace.
- In chapter 9 the Apostle has proved that to the hilt by his many quotations from the Old Testament. 'For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth' [v. 11].
- It had always been so in the Old Testament, of which the Jews were so proud, and yet they had not seen it.
- They were entirely without any excuse.

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- Reliance
- The Old Testament condemns them; the coming of Christ, His teaching, His death upon the cross and His resurrection condemns them still more.
- Then on top of it all there was the preaching of the Apostle.
- And yet in spite of everything, the Jews persisted in their rejection of the gospel and its way of salvation: there was no excuse for them.

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- Reliance
- And there is, likewise, no excuse for anybody in any country whatsoever who has ever read the Bible.
- The Old Testament alone is enough to condemn those who think they can make themselves Christians or who think they can satisfy God.
- The Old Testament tells them that it is wrong, that it is impossible.
- The New Testament - why, it tells them nothing else! The gospel - the good news - in itself tells them that it is useless to attempt anything else.

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- Reliance
- They talk about being Christians, and yet the whole time they mean by that, living a good life in order to be right with God.
- It is amazing!
- There is only one explanation - it is the devil, himself!
- *'If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them'* [2 Cor. 4 :3-4].
- To continue to spread this lie of Faith plus Repentance from sin is inexcusable!

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- Reliance
- But not only is it inexcusable, it is utterly ridiculous.
- Let us analyze:
- What were these Jews ignorant of?
- And all these modern people who still believe that they make themselves right with God and make themselves Christians, what are they ignorant of ?
- Obviously, the first thing is that they are ignorant of the fact that God Himself has provided the very righteousness that He demands.

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- Reliance
- Is it not the whole message of salvation?
- *'For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.'*
- Why?
- *'For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith'* [Rom. 1:16-17].

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- Reliance
- This is the good news that God Himself has provided for us the very righteousness that we need.
- What good news it is!
- It is especially good for those who have been trying to work up a righteousness that is adequate.
- God provides the righteousness; God provides the way of salvation.

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- Reliance
- As many today, the Jews were ignorant of the fact that God offers us this righteousness as a free gift, and we shall go on to consider how He has done this.
- But here I am simply emphasizing that there is a righteousness from God - 'They being ignorant' of the righteousness that God has made, that He has provided, that He is offering as a free gift.

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- Reliance
- And, they were ignorant of the fact that you do not need to 'go about' in order to get righteousness; you just submit to it.
- Going about to establish your own righteousness is condemned completely and utterly by the gospel.
- Paul says: *'But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ . . . For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast'* [Ephesians. 2:4-9].

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- Reliance
- 'Not of works'!
- Do not try any longer.
- Do not tell the the unbeliever to give up this or that.
- It is of no use to them. Stop!
- 'By grace are ye saved!'
- 'They going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves' - the opposite of 'going about' is 'submission'-'to the righteousness of God.'
- This is a military term.

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- Reliance
- A man who joins the army has to submit himself to the rules and regulations.
- He must obey orders.
- He is no longer his own master; he has handed himself over.
- And that is precisely how we are saved.
- We submit ourselves 'unto the righteousness of God'.
- The Jews would not do that because they thought they had attained their own.

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- Reliance
- But you cannot be saved, says Paul, until you submit yourself unto the righteousness which is provided by God.
- It means to give in, to surrender.
- It means that you stop saying, 'I am going to do this and that, then I shall be a Christian, then I will satisfy God.'
- No, you do nothing.
- You stop arguing and trying to justify yourself - 'But I don't see . . .' You stop all that.

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- Reliance
- You say, 'God is absolutely right. I thought I was good, but I find I am not.' You stand before God and His holiness, and you admit your insufficiency.
- You admit that you are in a state of utter condemnation; you admit that all your *'righteousnesses are as filthy rags'* [Isaiah. 64 :6].
- 'What!' 'But I have always lived a good life.'
- But if you say that, you have not submitted, you are still standing up, and defending yourself.

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- Reliance
- Until you have seen your insufficiency and have admitted it, you have not submitted.
- You must admit the condemnation; you must go further and confess that you are completely incapable, completely helpless.
- That is submission!
- No defenses, no arguments, no attempts at self-justification.
- You see that God's way is this that He has provided.

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- Regeneration
- You see that there is no other, and you gladly and willingly yield yourself to it and thank God for it.
- That is Reliance, coming from the Recognition of your own insufficiency, and Repentance, the change of mind regarding your life and eternal life.
- When you Rely, God Regenerates!
- 1 Cor. 15:45—“The first man Adam became a living soul. The last man Adam became a life-giving spirit.”
- 2 Corinthians 5:17: “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

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- Regeneration
- The only explicit mention of the new birth is found in Jesus dialogue with Nicodemus (3:121).
- In reply to Nicodemus questions, Jesus told him, I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again (v. 3).
- Nicodemus reply, How can a man be born when he is old? Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mothers womb to be born! (v. 4), indicates that he understood Jesus comment on a human, physical level.
- Nicodemus misunderstanding gave Jesus opportunity to clarify what He meant.
- He was speaking of the need for a new spiritual birth rather than a second physical birth (vv. 68).

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- Regeneration
- The misunderstanding and its resulting clarification are reflected in a wordplay in verse 3 (repeated in v. 7).
- The Greek word translated “again” in the niv, may mean either “again” or from “above”.
- Although Nicodemus understood it to mean again, leading him to conclude that Jesus was speaking of a second physical birth, Jesus reply in verses 68 shows that He referred to the need for a spiritual birth, a birth from above.
- This new birth was not to be the result of any human action (cf. v. 6), but is the work of the Holy Spirit (v. 8).

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- Regeneration
- Supernatural activity by the Spirit of God is required to bring about this new spiritual birth within an individual.
- It did not consist in merely greater insight or understanding but in a complete transformation of the individual (cf. 2 Cor.
- It is of the utmost importance that we have a clear understanding of this vital doctrine.
- By regeneration we are admitted into the kingdom of God.
- There is no other way of becoming a Christian but by being born from above.
- The doctrine, then, is the door of entrance into Christian discipleship.
- He who does not enter here, does not enter at all.

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- Regeneration
- Regeneration is the impartation of a new and divine life; a new creation; the production of a new thing.
- It is Gen. 1:26 over again.
- It is not the old nature altered, reformed, or reinvigorated, but a new birth from above.
- This is the teaching of such passages as John 3:37;5:21;Eph.2:1, 10; 2Cor.5:17, which we have seen previously.

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- Regeneration
- Thus regeneration is a crisis with a view to a process.
- A new governing power comes into the regenerate man's life by which he is enabled to become holy in experience: Old things are passed away; behold all things are become new (2 Cor. 5:17).
- See also Acts 16:14, and Ezek. 36:25-27; 1 John 3:6-9.

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- Regeneration
- The need is as far-reaching as sin and the human race: *Except a man [lit. anybody] be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God* (John 3:3, cf. v.5). Not age, sex, position, or condition exempts anyone from this necessity.
- Not to be born again is to be lost.
- There is no substitute for the new birth: *Neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature* (Gal. 6:15).

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- Regeneration
- The absolute necessity is clearly stated by our Lord: whatever is born of the flesh, must be born again of the Spirit (John 3:37).
- By nature man is born dead in sin (Eph. 2:1); the new birth imparts to him new life - the life of God, so that henceforth he is as those that are alive from the dead; he has passed out of death into life (John 5:24).

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- Regeneration
- In regeneration we are made partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4).
- We have put on the new man, which after God is created in holiness and righteousness (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10).
- Christ now lives in the believer (Gal. 2:20).
- God's seed now abides in him (1 John 3:9).
- So that henceforth the believer is possessed of two natures (Gal. 5:17).

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- Regeneration
- *We are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1:13).*
- *It was of His own will he begat us (Jas. 1:18):*
- Our regeneration is a creative act on the part of God, not a reforming process on the part of man.
- It is not brought about by natural descent, for all we get from that is the Inherited Human Nature of Adam (IHNA).
- It is not by natural choice, for the human will is impotent.
- Nor is it by self-effort, or any human generative principle.
- Nor is it by the blood of any ceremonial sacrifices.
- It is not by pedigree or natural generation.

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- Regeneration
- It is altogether and absolutely the work of God.
- Practically speaking, we have no more to do with our second birth, than we had to do with our first birth.
- The Holy Spirit is the Divine Agent in our regeneration.
- For this reason it is called the renewing of the Holy Spirit (Tit. 3:5).
- We are born of the Spirit (John 3:5).
- We receive the Divine Nature (God's Genetics!!!!!!)

Deaths

