

Life Group Notes 8/24/2025

Stand Firm Week 7

No doctrine is a given unless it has been found in the Word given by the Holy Spirit and received by you. If you have observations or questions, feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at tbeachhead@comcast.net. Thank you for taking the time.

– Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.

Remember: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our heart and guide our discussions.

Please pre-read these notes and choose the direction that is appropriate for your group.

Be cognizant of your group's time and be sensitive. *Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study.*

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions that Pastor Mark has raised this week, 6/7. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. ***The purpose is to minister to one another.*** I include each of the passages mentioned in full, to facilitate the enjoyment of these notes. Footnotes are not meant to distract. This week's footnote speaks:

1. [On Jannes and Jambres and the Book of Jasher.](#)
2. [On predators in the last days body of Christ.](#)
3. On the biblical concept of godliness.

Important: At [the very end of these notes](#), I've included passages that were mentioned in this week's message for deeper study using SOAP journaling to help further your study during the week.

Pastor began today by introducing students in the who are taking advantage of the on campus "micro site" of Life Pacific University. You can find more on the GCC website. <https://www.gccnh.com/university> .

He also spoke of the Holy Spirit's teaching methodology. He said, "I am excited about what God is stirring in and through us, especially with what God is doing with our young people." He remarked how good it is to look back at the next generation and say, "God is doing something great in their lives," but he warned the older generation not to forget that wants to do something great in *OUR* lives as well. He spoke of how he and Audra introduced a new upbeat worship song to a hymns only church.

1. What do you see?
2. Have you ever felt "left out" of the move of God, as if He passed over your own generation?
3. Have you ever felt uncomfortable when a new style of worship was introduced? Do you have a testimony?

"God is doing a new thing. He always takes something old, and he takes something new. He says, 'Look at me.' It's a new thing because He is moving and shaping us, and transforming us. If we are always looking back, even with our hand to the plow, we're not going to get where we want to go."

4. Explain.
5. Does God do "new things?" Explain.
6. What can you expect?
7. Look up Matthew 13:51 Have you understood all these things?" "Yes," they answered. 52 Then He told them, "For this reason, every scribe who has been disciplined in the kingdom of heaven is like a homeowner who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old." What can you expect? What new do you expect?
8. What old do you need, to stay in tune and to continue to grow?
9. Paul, the teacher instructed in the kingdom, puts it this way: 1 Corinthians 4:1 So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. What does a steward do that is different from a teacher?
10. Do you expect to hear something new each Sunday? Do you have a testimony?
11. What is your response when you hear in church something that you have never heard before?

This week's message:

1. What do you think of when you hear of "the end times?"
2. What do you expect to see? List the signs.
3. Pastor Mark says, "The end times are upon us, but not the way you think." Explain.
4. What specific signs of the end times do you remember, and watch for?
5. How do you know you are living in the last days...for you? Are your days finite or infinite?
6. Look at James 4:13 *Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business, and make a profit."* 14 You do not even know what will happen tomorrow! What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. 15 *Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord is willing, we will live and do this or that."* What do you see? Does this passage make you feel uncomfortable?
7. Knowing these are your last days, what changes? What do you want to change?
8. How do you prepare?

Now, look up 2 Timothy 3: 1 *But understand this: In the last days terrible times will come.* 2 *For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy,* 3 *unloving, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, without love of good,* 4 *traitorous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,* 5 *having a form of godliness but denying its power. Turn away from such as these!* 6 *They are the kind who worm their way into households and captivate vulnerable women who are weighed down with sins and led astray by various passions,* 7 *who are always learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth.* 8 *Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these men oppose the truth. They are depraved in mind and disqualified from the faith.* 9 *But they will not advance much further. For just like Jannes and Jambres, their folly will be plain to everyone.*

1. What do you see? Now list the signs?
2. Which of the attributes that Paul listed in verses 2–5 do you see most clearly in the world around you?
3. Which ones do you see creeping into your own life? Why? Explain.
4. Where do these attributes come from? Fruit of the Spirit or deeds of the flesh?
5. Look up Ezekiel 16: [48](#) “As I live,” says the Lord God, “neither your sister Sodom nor her daughters have done as you and your daughters have done. [49](#) Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. [50](#) And they were haughty and committed abomination before Me; therefore I took them away as I saw fit. Compare this indictment of Sodom’s and Israel’s failure with Paul’s list. How is pride displayed today? What does idleness seek?

Mark exhorts us, “This could actually become ‘us’, and Paul is saying, ‘Don’t let it become “you.” Instead, separate yourselves from those people, because in many ways, this is what will distract you from this new thing that God has in store for you.’ If you’re focused on self, you are not focused on Jesus, and if you’re not focused on Jesus you cannot perceive those things God has in store for you.”

1. What do you see?
2. How is Paul’s list above a focus on self?
3. Why is “having a form of godliness” merely a form of self-satisfaction?
4. What does a “form of godliness” look like?
5. What does a “form of godliness” demand? Who makes the list?
6. Who makes the rules?
7. What power did Jesus display?
8. Look up 1 Corinthians 2: [1](#) And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. [2](#) For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. [3](#) I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. [4](#) And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, [5](#) that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. What power did Paul display?
9. What do you look for first, man’s wisdom? Or God’s power on display?
10. Mark says, “I believe it’s harder to allow the Holy Spirit to transform our lives, to produce the fruit of the spirit: kindness, goodness, love, joy, peace, patience, thankfulness, faithfulness and self-control (Gal 5:22-23) ...looking at that list it is harder to live out full surrender to God and develop our character.” How did Paul display this to the Corinthians?
11. What power are we expected to display?
12. Review and examine 1 Corinthians 13: [1](#) Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. [2](#) And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. [3](#) And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. Looking at each verse, which verse refers to a miraculous manifestation? Which refers to our character and the fruit of the Spirit?

13. Can you divorce miracles from character or character from miracles? How is the fruit, like each gift, supernatural? Where does each come from?
14. Is either, the power gifts or the power fruit, *more* necessary than the other?
15. What can believers expect to see in terms of growth?
16. What does it mean to “deny the power of God?”
17. Go back and look again at 2 Timothy 3: 5*having a form of godliness but denying its power. Turn away from such as these!* Why would you actually turn away from people who display these attributes and fake godliness?
18. Look at the next verse: 6*They are the kind who worm their way into households and captivate vulnerable women who are weighed down with sins and led astray by various passions, 7who are always learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth.* What do these people do? Are they any help to anyone?
19. How do predators cloak themselves as “spiritual leaders” to mislead the vulnerable?
20. What characteristics of the counterfeit Paul describes here gives them away as counterfeit every time?
21. Who are the prey? How are the vulnerable identified?
22. How can anyone be “ever learning” yet never come to know the truth? (See [footnote 2, below.](#))
23. Pastor says, “If you tell me, ‘That was a good message,’ I’m always going to ask, ‘How is it changing you? How are you applying the message to your own life?’” Explain in terms of Paul’s warning here.
24. Can you explain how people can come to church each week, and never know change in their walk or in their lives?
25. Does head knowledge have value? What is the evidence in a life transformed?
26. How does a life transformed into Jesus’ image display power?

✠ **Key point number one: Do my beliefs match my actions?**

Moving on to the next verses in 2 Tim 3: 8*Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these men oppose the truth. They are depraved in mind and disqualified from the faith. 9But they will not advance much further. For just like Jannes and Jambres, their folly will be plain to everyone.*

1. What do you see?
2. What characteristics do predator leaders display today?
3. What do you know of Jannes and Jambres? (See [footnote 1, below.](#))
4. What miraculous works of Aaron and Moses were they able to counterfeit successfully?
5. Is it possible to be an unbeliever, and still do miracles? How do you know?
6. Did Jannes and Jambres have “the form” of godliness?
7. Look at what Paul said of godliness in 1 Timothy 4: 7*But reject irreverent, silly myths. Instead, train yourself for godliness. 8*For physical exercise is of limited value, but godliness is valuable in every way, holding promise for the present life and for the one to come. Now look at 1 Timothy 6: 5*These men regard godliness as a means of gain.* (They sell “godliness” as a commodity for profit.) 6*Of course, godliness with contentment is great gain.* What are characteristics of godliness? How do you gain from godliness?
8. What profit is there in godliness?

9. Using Jannes and Jambres as a reference, how do predators seek to profit from godliness?
10. How do you distinguish the predator counterfeit from the true teacher leader?
11. Is it by miracles, signs and wonders put on display? Or is it by the fruit on display? Explain.

✠ **Am I walking in the fruit of the Spirit, or putting on a show?**

Mark says, "If we could remember that Jesus came to give us life to the fullest...this full life is not the counterfeit life. It is allowing the Holy Spirit to transform us. If we could just concentrate less on the doing and more on the transforming, we'd be in a much better place, because we're saying, "Holy Spirit, I give my life to you. I give you permission to transform my wicked heart, my wicked ways into your image."

1. Look at [footnote 3 on godliness below](#). What do you expect to see change?
2. With this prayer above, where should you see power on display daily?
3. Mark spoke of Pastor Bill Pelletier's road rage story from last week. Do you remember? Have you ever dealt with anger on the road? What does that say of your heart?
4. Pastor says, "There are days we're ok...Then, I realize that we have to *keep* surrendering our life under the authority and lordship of Jesus Christ." Explain. Why isn't it immediate and permanent?
5. Examine what the new covenant looks like in Ezekiel's prophecy: 36:[25](#)*I will also sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. I will cleanse you from all your impurities and all your idols. [26](#)I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. [27](#)And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes and to carefully observe My ordinances.* State the promise of the new covenant in your own words.
6. List the benefits in order. How clean is clean? How new is a new heart?
7. Take a minute to pray this prophecy into your group, your circle, your family and yourself.
8. List what changes you can expect when this prophecy gets fulfilled.

Mark says, "We have to put our flesh at bay, we have to continuously surrender these things in our lives, because if we feed them they will turn into an ugly beast that we'll have to mask like putting lipstick on a pig, pretending that everything is good, while on the inside it's a disaster."

1. Compare this to how Jesus describes the scribes and the Pharisees in Matthew 23:[25](#)*Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. [26](#)Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, so that the outside may become clean as well. [27](#)Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and every kind of impurity. [28](#)In the same way, on the outside you appear to be righteous, but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.* What happens to us when we do not put our flesh at bay and take on a form of godliness?
2. How do you make the inside and the outside match, where the spiritual charade is over? Do you have a testimony?

3. Look again at verse 27 from Ezekiel above: *27And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes and to carefully observe My ordinances.* If He causes *us* to do something, who is the willing master and who the willing servant?
4. What is preventing this from happening?
5. Who is not surrendering to the promise? Why not?

✠ **Am I letting the Word of God transform me, or am I just collecting knowledge?**

Pastor say, "Yes, the Word of God is alive and active. Yes, read the Bible daily. Don't read it for knowledge, read it for transformation. As you begin to read, ask, 'What is Your word saying to me? How do I apply it to my life? I give you permission to cause me to walk in the way You have highlighted. To speak and to transform me. We are the clay. You are the potter. Mold me. I will not tell you how to shape my life, I will be that vessel you have called me to be.'"

1. What do you see?
2. Are you satisfied with the time you spend in the word each day? Let the group share testimonies?

Mark shared the example of tithing. He spoke of the fruit grower who grew for the pleasure, and gave most of the fruit away. All he asked was to be given something of the fruit he had gifted, jam or a pie. The one who received said, "Oh! Like tithing..."

1. What is the ultimate source of your income?
2. If God is your ultimate source, and you trust Him for that, what does a return in the form of jam, or a tithe do for you?
3. Who else benefits when a healthy church tithes? Who loses most when a dysfunctional church withholds?
4. Is/was it difficult for you to start the tithing journey?

Pastor went from the giving dimension of our journey to progressing in all the fruit. Look again closely at the progressive growth outlined in Peter's instruction, 2 Peter 1: *3His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. 4Through these He has given us His precious and magnificent promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, now that you have escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. 5For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; 6and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; 7and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. 8For if you possess these qualities and continue to grow in them, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9But whoever lacks these traits is nearsighted to the point of blindness, having forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins.*

1. What do you see this time? What does the power provide?
2. What happens when you deny that kind of power?
3. Where does this godliness come from according to verse 3?
4. How do you get to know Him Who called us?
5. Look at Ezekiel again, and describe the nature of the promises. How do you become a "partaker of the divine nature" through those promises in Ezekiel?
6. Describe the progression...from what to what to what next?
7. What is the last quality in the list? Why does love come last?

8. Look at verse 8...what matters: the attainment of perfection in these qualities or the growth toward each?
9. What prevents you from ever being ineffective and unproductive?
10. What happens if we ignore Mark's encouragement, and we do not do as Mark is exhorting us to do?
11. Why is it important to pray as Mark says, "God keep me soft and pliable."

✠ **Pastor Mark's conclusion: We are in the last days.**

He said whether or not Jesus is coming back soon is relative. A ten-year-old, looking ahead sees a chasm between him and the age of eighty. An eighty-year-old looking back sees his tenth year yesterday. In that sense, we only have "soon" left before we have no more choices we can make. These are definitely our very last days. Someday soon, in the blinking of an eye, we will see Jesus face to face. Fall in love with Jesus. He ended with an altar call.

1. Did you respond?
 2. Do you have a testimony? What is your biggest takeaway from this message?
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Follow up application:

1. Use the [Soap study below](#) to pursue your own understanding.
2. Compare your beliefs and your actions side by side. List where they line up and list where they do not line up. Now pray, giving the Holy Spirit permission to transform you.
3. Answer this: Am I walking in the fruit of the Spirit, or putting on a show? To what degree has God manifested in you a clean heart, and a new walk? List what you expect and pray again.
4. Answer this: Am I letting the Word of God transform me, or am I just collecting knowledge? Make a note each day of new ideas and new challenges. Journal all progress.

Take the time to pray.

Scribe's Footnotes:

1. **On Jannes and Jambres**—The names of Pharaoh's wise men, Jannes and Jambres do not appear in scripture, yet these two Egyptians, with typically Egyptian names akin to "Moses" and "Rameses," were well known from Jewish literature. The book of Jasher, a book mentioned three times in the Old Testament, was as widely read in Paul's day as the book of Enoch. It speaks of these men who withstood Moses in chapter 79:²⁶ *And when Pharaoh heard their words he was greatly terrified before them, and he said to them, Go today and come back to me tomorrow, and they did according to the word of the king.* ²⁷ *And when they had gone Pharaoh sent for Balaam the magician and to Jannes and Jambres his sons, and to all the magicians and conjurors and counsellors which belonged to the king, and they all came and sat before the king.* ²⁸ *And the king told them all the words which Moses and his brother Aaron had spoken to him, and the magicians said to the king, But how came the men to thee, on account of the lions which were confined at the gate?* ²⁹ *And the king said, Because they lifted up their rod against the lions and loosed them, and came to me, and the lions also rejoiced at them as a dog rejoices to meet his master.* ³⁰ *And*

Balaam the son of Beor the magician answered the king, saying, These are none else than magicians like ourselves. <https://biblequizpro.com/apocrypha/jasher/79/>

2. **On Predators in the last days body of Christ**—The passage from 2 Timothy 3 that was our focus today was, for me as a high school freshman in Christianity, one of the most damning passages, and the most significant proofs that the word was alive. I saw myself in the hypocrisy at that age. It has always been remarkable that a pastor from the first century could speak so directly to ours. And I learned also from this the nature of predators that were already among Paul's disciples in the early church. Looking closely, you have two types of people here: the ones doing the worming, and the ones getting wormed. Predators and victims. Each is easy to recognize. Predators are characterized as *"lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3unloving, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, without love of good, 4traitorous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5having a form of godliness but denying its power."* These are, as Paul says, *"6...the kind who worm their way into households and captivate vulnerable women..."* They seek the weak-willed to seduce them. The victims are those who are easily misled... *"weighed down with sins and led astray by various passions, 7who are always learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth."* Note that each of these adjectives is feminine in Greek, referring only to the victims. Those who need some other "master" to explain truth, and who have stopped seeking the Master for their love of the Truth, are exposed and at risk. Those who lead astray and those who follow willingly only testify to the lateness of the hour, and the approaching final days.
3. **On the biblical concept of godliness**—The Greek word translated to "godliness," εὐσέβεια (*eusebeia*), (from [2095](#) /εὖ "well" and [4576](#) /σέβομαι, "venerate, pay homage" hence "pay homage well," or "venerate well") means properly, "someone's inner response to the things of God which shows itself in godly *piety* (reverence). [2150](#) /εὐσέβεια ("godly heart-response") naturally expresses itself in reverence for God, i.e. what He calls sacred (worthy of veneration)." It is a matter of the heart that manifests itself outwardly in attitude and focus.

For further study:

Take a moment each day this week to apply the **SOAP method** (**S**cripture—Copy the scripture. / **O**bservation—Write what you see. / **A**pplication—Write what God is saying. / **P**ray—Write what your response is.) to some of the scripture we looked at this week:

Monday: Matthew 13:51-52
Tuesday: 1 Timothy 4:7-8; 6:3-6
Wednesday: James 4:13-15
Thursday: 2 Timothy 3:1-5
Friday: 2 Timothy 3:6-9
Saturday: Ezekiel 16:48-50
Sunday: 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

Once again, some passages suggested here have more than the usual number of verses. This is not to increase the burden but to provide clarity of context. Pick those verses that speak to you most clearly, and run only these through the SOAP steps.