

DEMONSTRATING AN ASCENDED LIFESTYLE

PART 2

Note: This teaching on *Establishing a Kingdom Culture: Demonstrating an Ascended Lifestyle* is taken from the teaching that Graham Cooke presented during International Council in 2011, Session 1. You should take time to allow your group to view the DVD or listen to the CDs from this session to strengthen this teaching. Before teaching, your team, personally, should review the DVD.

Ascend means *to rise to a higher level*. Living a lifestyle from a higher level than a normal earthly lifestyle will look like Heaven and sound like Heaven. It will look like Jesus and sound like Jesus. You have no capacity to entertain anxiety, fear, worry, or panic. You walk in peace.

Despite external realities that may seem adverse and chaotic, those living an ascended lifestyle live in a state of untroubled calm and rest. You view troublesome, annoying circumstances as opportunities to either defeat the enemy or to practice your own inner peace before God. (Paraphrased, Graham Cooke, *Qualities of a Spiritual Warrior*, page 59)

Living an ascended lifestyle means you think with the mind of Christ.

Philippians 2:5 *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.*

Romans 12:2 *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

I Corinthians 2:16 *For who has known the mind of the Lord that he many instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.*

Ephesians 4:22-24 *That you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God in true righteousness and holiness.*

You cannot think like Christ and have a spare room in your heart where anxiety lives or fear, or worry. You cannot be *in Christ* and continue to walk with those same emotional reactions that you had before you were *in Christ* and before Christ came to live in you.

Aglow is here to demonstrate what it means to live an ascended life style on the earth. We are here to show others what it means to think from Heaven's point of view and how to see others as Heaven sees them. We think like Jesus thinks. We see ourselves as Heaven sees us. Loved. Fully resourced. Overcomers. Victorious in every situation. Favored. Covered with grace. Reflecting the kindness of God to a lost world. Mirroring His image. Releasing relentless kindness. Full of wisdom. Sinless. Powerful. Warriors. The Bride. Totally resourced for all our assignments.

Each day, God is establishing us in righteousness and we are proving the power of the resurrection. Worry, anxiety, fear and panic have no place in us. Low self-esteem has no place in us. When we see those things trying to work in our lives, we need to allow the opposite to arise in us. For worry, let trust arise. For anxiety, let

calmness arise. For fear, let peace arise. Negatives prove that there is an opposite Godly characteristic available. We are to be a reflection of all God is to everyone in our realm of influence. We live under grace. We war from a place of rest. We died and we are hidden in Christ with God. When the enemy comes to find us, we cannot be found because we are so hidden in Christ. No matter which way the enemy looks, all he sees is Christ.

Romans 6:1-5 *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that **just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection.***

Romans 6:6-8 *Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. **Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him.***

Romans 6:8-17 *Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once and for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise, you also, **reckon yourselves** to be dead indeed to sin, but **alive to God in Christ Jesus our lord.** Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? But God be thanked that through you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart of that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.*

We are here to demonstrate what an ascended life style really looks like to all around us. We walk like Jesus walked. We say to the lame, "Rise up, take up your bed and walk." It is not out of our own strength, it is out of Him living through us that we can say such things. We are proving the resurrection every day, which is how we abide in Christ. We are dead to sin, habits, attitudes, lack, powerlessness, failure, and anything that is contrary to life in Heaven. And we are alive to God and the fullness of Heaven.

Every day, in every situation, we are discovering who we really are in Christ and who Christ really is in us. We are not living on Barely Get By Street. Each situation we face provides a promise that brings provision that ensures us a glorious encounter with God. Victory is ours. Always. We are the head and not the tail! All of our assignments are resourced by Heaven.

There is not one single situation or circumstance that can come to us to defeat us unless we take our eyes off of Heaven. God is always for us. He turns every crisis for our good just like He did for Joseph. (Genesis 50:20)

The world waits to see a people group living from Heaven to earth and demonstrating an ascended lifestyle. The world waits to see a people group that laughs in the face of danger because they KNOW they are backed by Heaven. The world waits to see a people group who thinks like Jesus thinks. The world waits to see a people group who never has to battle because the enemy has learned that he always loses when they are on the scene.

When a problem arrives on our doorstep, the best way to view the problem is through a principle demonstrated in Acts 2. When the Holy Spirit came from Heaven sounding like a might rushing wind and visibly viewed as a tongue of fire, the people experiencing His arrival asked two questions. Verse 12 says, “So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, ‘Whatever could this mean?’” In verse 37 after listening to Peter telling about the Holy Spirit’s coming, the people asked, “What must we do?”

Always asking, “What does this mean?” and “What am I to do?” when faced with a problem will strip the situation of any ‘power’ against you. It will not be able to intimidate or torment you. You will not become a victim by asking the ‘Why me?’ question. Living in Christ and allowing Him to live through you enables you to see from a higher perspective and address the situation from Heaven’s view point because you know in *every* situation, Heaven is for you and not against you.

So you can ask Heaven, “What does this mean for me? What promise do You have to assure me of victory? What do you want me to do? What do you want to be for me today that You could not be for me yesterday? How am I to stand until I see my promise cause my provision to manifest which will bring a new experience for me with God? How do I view this through Your majesty?” When we ask these types of questions when faced with the difficulties of life, we are living an ascended lifestyle.

Asking the right questions enables us to grow properly and look and sound more like Jesus than our old self that died and was buried. Asking the right questions leads us on into victory.

Problem = Promise from God = Provision = Upgrade and Encounter

A LEADER DEMONSTRATING AN ASCENDED LIFESTYLE

As leaders we must live our lives in a way that causes us to see people as Heaven sees them. We are to consistently call people to a higher way of life by speaking to them as God sees them, not according to their behavior. If all we do is attack the behavior of people, we will enable them to stay in old ways with old behaviors and not become who Heaven intends for them to become. Our ‘business’ as a leader is seeing people the way the Father sees them and instructing them in ways that cause them to come to a higher way of life so that they, in return, can lead others to a higher place.

Being accountable is not calling someone out on their behavior; it is calling them up in their identity. It is our ‘business’ to help people see themselves as the Father sees them. God is not angry with them. He loves them. He is not judging them. He has given them a rich inheritance and wants them to discover it and walk in the fullness of it. We have the joyful responsibility to help people to live as the beloved of God. Every one of us needs someone to point out to us the beauty of who we really are in Jesus.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Father, I thank You for what You have provided for us in Jesus. Thank You that You have given us a place to stand in this life that is on the right side of the cross. You have given us an identity in Christ that we can choose to live from every day in every situation. It is a place we can live in and find Your glory in. It is a place full of joy and thanksgiving, and gratefulness. Thank You for calling us up in our rightful place in the Lord Jesus. You have given each of us grace that means we can call others up to the same high place of an ascended lifestyle. Holy Spirit help us to ask the right questions. What does this mean to us and what must we do?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Describe your understanding of what it means to live an ascended lifestyle.

2. Gaining a new perspective or seeing from a different point of view can be enlightening. When people bring their problems into your meetings, does your group leadership seek to draw people into a deeper experience of God by moving the focus off the problem and viewing their situation like Heaven views it? If yes, how? And if no, how could this be changed?

3. When faced with a problem or stressful situation, what is your first thought?

4. As leaders, we are building on the right foundation which is the new man, not the old man who died with Christ on the cross. We are to call people up to a higher level of living. We are to call ourselves up to a higher level of living. In the following comments that you might overhear someone making, decide if they are speaking out of the new man or the old man. Make a check mark for your choice after each statement.

STATEMENT	OLD	NEW
I hate myself.		
I cannot think of anything good about myself.		
I love this life I have in Jesus!		
Problems stress me.		
I count everything as joy.		
Look how she is acting!		
Why, I cannot believe she said that!		
This shaky economy makes me nervous.		
I'm afraid my son will be hooked on drugs forever.		
No matter what comes my way, Heaven is always for me.		
I am beginning to understand the fullness of who I am in Christ.		
Oh no! How could this happen to my family?		
To every problem, God has attached a promise which will lead to my provision.		

5. I Corinthians 2:16 says that we have the mind of Christ. What does that mean to you?

6. You have just received the news that you will lose your job next month? What is your first question?

7. Your teenager is staying out late, not completing homework assignments, and has a few questionable friends. How can you call him/her to a higher level without pointing out the obvious?

8. In your monthly meetings, those who attend come for prayer with the same requests month after month. How can you move them from a place of focusing on problems to focusing on the promise of God?

9. When you are challenged by a difficult situation, who do you think is challenging you? God or the devil?