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THE WALKING WITH GOD SERIES

The **Walking with God series** of studies encourages disciples to dig deeper in building their personal relationship with God whilst, at the same time, challenging them to nurture a missionary mindset which is to see people as Jesus sees them with a heart to demonstrate His love through various means of service.

The studies in this booklet are the third of the series. The aim is to build on the foundation already laid in previous studies by considering how to overcome the battle waging in our mind and emotions in order that we might walk meekly every day in submission and obedience to God.

It is hoped that as disciples enjoy gathering and growing together regularly they will want to carry on in their journey of discipleship by completing other Bible studies in the Walking with God series or other studies within New Beginnings Discipleship. The end-goal is that some will become effective disciple-makers themselves.

GROUP LEADER'S PREPARATION

THIS WILL LARGELY BE THE SAME EVERY WEEK.

1. Make sure group members have a copy of the Walking with God in Relationship: Soul & Strength Workbook. This is available from the Shop section of the web-site (www.newbeginningsdiscipleship.wordpress.com).
2. It is advisable to share the group leadership with someone else, ideally a person who has been a member of a previous group. This is an opportunity to apprentice a potential new group leader so ensure you delegate some responsibilities.
3. Contact each group member to confirm the venue, location, date and time of your first meeting. Subsequent meetings should also be confirmed if necessary.
4. Make sure you prepare each week's study prior to the meeting.
5. A list of specific items of preparation required for each week's study is given at the top of the relevant teaching notes.
6. You will either need to prepare to lead worship yourself (with an instrument, CDs or I-Pod) or brief someone else to do it for you.
7. People relax, chat and build relationship over the meal table. If you decide to serve a meal of some sort prior to each meeting then think through and plan the logistics of this.
 - a. Will it be a breakfast, main meal or pudding?

- b. Will you do it yourself, ask someone else or will it be bring & share?
 - c. Be prepared to sit around the table afterwards to share and teach or move to a more comfortable setting.
8. Do not expect brand new or immature believers to have mature concepts about God. Allow them to talk freely but make a mental note of any misconceptions you pick up and ensure you correct lovingly and gently using scripture wherever possible. Be mindful of 2Timothy 2:23-25!
9. Always have a small supply of Bibles on hand for those who will forget theirs.
10. Take your diary to arrange the next meeting.
11. Pray for the group members and your planned time together ideally with your apprentice group leader. Consider the following points when you pray:
- a. Ask the Holy Spirit to come and sit with you as you talk and share together.
 - b. Invite Him to be Lord of all the conversation and ask for His help to cement your small group relationship with genuine loving care, compassion and lasting friendship.
 - c. Make a declaration out loud to bind the enemy, making him ineffective in interfering, causing confusion or stealing what Father God intends to be achieved through the group meeting.
 - d. Ask the Holy Spirit to apply the protection of the blood of Jesus over the travel arrangements to and from the meeting, the meeting itself and everyone involved.

- e. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you any hidden needs each disciple may have.
- f. Ask God to give you all a deeper hunger for Him and acknowledge your own desire to grow spiritually through exercising this ministry of discipleship.
- g. Think: Are you willing to open up and share your own weaknesses, struggles and victories even if that means you become vulnerable?
- h. Acknowledge your willingness to be used by God.

Week 1: ENEMY ACTION

DISCIPLER'S PREPARATION:

1. Prepare to serve a meal yourself this week unless you have a volunteer.
2. Be prepared to sit around the table afterwards to share and teach or move to a more comfortable setting.
3. For section 6 prepare a short praise and worship time focused on giving thanks for the power in the blood of Jesus. The key scripture is **Luke 10: 17-20**.

DURING THE SESSION:

1. Start timing the meeting once the meal is over and packed away. Allow a full two hours.
2. Welcome: make sure everyone is comfortable. Begin by welcoming the Holy Spirit in prayer [2 minutes].
3. If this is your first gathering as a group then give a short time for people to chat and talk together. Consider giving opportunity for people to briefly share highlights from their faith journey so far.
 - a. Whole section 20 minutes maximum.
4. If this is the continuation of an existing group with a different Bible study series then:

a. Allow opportunity for people to share what they have learned and how they are developing in their relationship with God since the last time you met together.

i. Has anyone a testimony to share?

b. Whole section 20 minutes.

5. **Walking with God in Relationship: Soul & Strength.** Today's study is **Enemy Action.**

a. Get the group to look at the following flow chart in their workbooks p.4.

***THOUGHTS** influenced by **EMOTIONS**
lead to **CHOICES** that result in **ACTIONS***

b. Ask: At what part of the chain do actions come? The very end.

c. Teach: All our actions begin as thoughts.

i. Ask: Why might it be important for us to understand the process of how our thoughts become actions? In order to break free from old ways of sinful actions and negative patterns of behaviour we need to understand this process.

d. Teach: Whenever we resolve to take steps forward in the Kingdom of God the enemy, Satan, uses every trick in the book to try to thwart Father's plan from being put into action.

i. Get the group to identify the different ways in which the enemy manipulates our thoughts. For example, such things as confusion, anxiety, fear or our own worldly and negative thoughts or emotions are used against us so that consciously or unconsciously we

place a limitation upon what God may want to do in or through us.

- ii. Ask: If we inwardly believe something is not going to work or is a waste of time, what are the chances that we will not do it? They are pretty strong. Actions always follow thought processes.
 - iii. Teach: This is not demonic possession but it *is* demonic manipulation; our spiritual enemy using our own human weaknesses to influence our thoughts, choices and feelings which then affect our actions.
- e. Ask: Where are things like confusion, anxieties, fears, thoughts, choices and feelings to be found? They are inside our head.
- i. Teach: The brain, including the mind, emotions and will, forms the parts of our inner being known collectively as the soul.
 - ii. Ask: What are other ways of describing our soul? We might use words like our spirit, individuality, personality and character. Our soul is the bit that makes me who I am and you who you are. It is also where we consider, analyse, reason, feel and decide.
- f. **Read Deuteronomy 6:5.** Ask: With what parts of our person are we to worship God? With ALL of our **HEART, SOUL AND STRENGTH**.
- i. Explain: In the book of Bible studies *Redeeming the Heart*, we considered the parts of our heart that may not have not been fully surrendered to God. The exercises it contains help us to resolve these matters.

- ii. Explain: This series of Bible studies looks at the remaining parts: our **SOUL AND STRENGTH**. This includes how our thoughts, feelings and choices also need to be submitted and surrendered to Jesus, our King.
- g. **Read 1Corinthians 2:14.**
- i. Ask: What can we not understand before we are spiritually reborn? We cannot understand the things of God because we need the Holy Spirit to teach us and help us understand what they mean.
 - ii. Ask: What impact does this have on who the main focus of our life is? Before we are spiritually reborn the main thrust of our thought life, desires, choices and aspirations is all about satisfying 'ME' and my 'needs'.
- h. State: When we are born again we open our hearts to receive the Holy Spirit and His impetus and leading.
- i. Discuss together what impact this might have on our thought-life, emotions and choices. These are now open to being influenced for God's Kingdom. We can now relate to Father God and have the ability to understand the things of the Spirit.
 - ii. Ask: Are we all perfect now? Not at all! Why not?...
 - iii. Explain: Every day the Holy Spirit prompts us to obey His leading but...because we have not learned properly how to fully surrender to Father God and have not yet come to understand the tactics of the enemy we very rarely live victoriously.

- iv. Ask: What does this mean for us in reality? Give opportunity for the group to respond before teaching the following:
 - 1. We are still heavily swayed by the 'voices' and pull of the world around us and our own fleshly desires and instincts.
 - 2. The choices we make still tend primarily towards what pleases us rather than Father God.
 - 3. We rely on our own strength rather than God's.
 - 4. Our mind is still occupied by wrong thoughts, i.e. inferiority, insecurity, inadequacy, guilt, worry and doubt and we still display lots of negative emotions, i.e. anger, jealousy, quarrelling, unforgiveness, etc.
 - 5. We have a spiritual 'enemy' who will throw everything at us in an attempt to get us to fail and turn back from following Jesus.
- v. Teach: The spiritual reality for most of us is we are spiritually reborn but because we have not yet learned to overcome the world, the flesh and the devil our spiritual life is still quite confused and our life a bit of a mess!
- vi. **Read or quote 1Corinthians 3:1-3.** Ask: How does Paul describe believers like this? We are worldly believers rather than spiritual.
- vii. Discuss together what the result of this spiritual tension is on our way of life? A lot of good intentions, changes in lifestyle and Kingdom initiatives get lost or

aborted before being completed or even brought to birth.

- i. **Read Romans 12:1-2.** Ask: Where is the real battle ground? In our mind i.e. in what we choose to think and believe.
 - i. Referring back to the flow chart on the top of p.4 of the disciple's workbook [p.9 5.a] in this guide] see if the group can identify where the process of change needs to begin. Make the point that the things we think and then feel affect the choices and actions we make.
- j. **Read 1Peter 5:8; 1John 2:13-16.**
 - i. Ask: Who is intentionally trying to prevent us being all Father God created us to be? Satan, our enemy.
 - ii. State: We need to understand how the enemy works in order to have a hope of overcoming in the spiritual battle.
- k. Ask: Are God and Satan two co-existing but equal spiritual forces? Not at all although many people think it is so. This teaching called 'dualism' stemmed from the teachings of the Greek philosopher Plato.
 - i. Ask for group members to honestly share if they have ever thought Satan was much bigger and more powerful than he really is?
 - ii. Ask then to share what consequences of this was in their lives at that time?
 - iii. Discuss together why this view is heretical. Consider such things as the following:
 - 1. God is Creator, Satan is a created being.

2. God is all-knowing, all-seeing and all-powerful. Satan has to grasp and deceive in order to gain knowledge and power.

- i. **Read the following Scriptures Exodus 15:11-13; Deuteronomy 33:26-27; 1Kings 8:23-24; Isaiah 40:25-26; 45:5-8; Psalm 86:10; 89:6-8; Zechariah 14:9.** Instruct the group to use the box on p.9 of the disciple's workbook to write down each truth that is revealed about Father God. He is:

Majestic	Holy	Awesome
Glorious	Wonder-working; He does marvellous deeds	Great power drives out & overcomes our enemies
Never fails us	Loves continually	Our Redeemer
Leads & guides us	Strength is mighty	Our Helper
Our Refuge	Everlasting arms are underneath to catch us when we fall	He has no equal
Keeps His covenant	Strengthens us	Creator of the light & dark; the heavens & the earth
Righteous & Just	Faithful	King of the whole earth

- i. Encourage the group to name any other attributes of God, His character or nature they can bring to mind. For example: His sovereignty, eternal-ness, transcendence, uniqueness, omniscience, omnipresence, all-seeing-ness, self-sustainability, majesty, perfection, power, fatherhood, compassion, patience, glory, greatness, holiness, justice, righteousness, faithfulness, goodness, grace, mercy,

truth, un-changeability, wisdom, unity, sacrifice and suffering!!

- ii. State: Our Father God is truly a GREAT BIG GOD! Holding all this in our thoughts, let us now put Satan in right perspective.
- m. **THE BAD NEWS: Read Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:13-18; Luke 10:18; 2Corinthians 11:14; Revelation 12:9.**
 - i. Ask: Who or what is Satan a.k.a. the devil? He was a beautiful angel, a guardian cherub in the Garden of Eden. Now he is no longer beautiful; a fallen angel.
 - ii. **Read Hebrews 1:7.** Ask: Who made the angels and who were they created to serve?
 - iii. Teach: For all his bravado and boasting big mouth Satan is only a created being like you and me. He was an angel created to serve Father God in the worship group in heaven.
 - iv. Ask: Why was Satan evicted from heaven? His rebellious desire to be worshipped for himself resulted in his eviction. At least a third of the angelic host rebelled with him and these were also ejected.
 - v. **Read John 10:10; 1Peter 5:8.** Teach: Satan's hatred of God runs so deep that he spends all his time occupied with trying to thwart God's Kingdom plans and destroy the pinnacle of His creation, humanity.
 - vi. Ask: Is Satan's power limitless? No. Satan has limited power to work in the world but he exploits and fights to hold on to every last bit.

- vii. Discuss together whether we are ever likely to come up against Satan face to face? Because he is only a created being there is only ONE Satan who cannot be in more than one place at any time. Therefore most of us are very unlikely to be confronted by Satan himself. We are far more likely to come across one of the fallen angels, usually called demons or evil spirits, who are devoted to serving his kingdom plans and purposes on the earth.
- viii. State: The word 'Satan', 'devil', 'enemy' or 'evil one' is collective terminology to refer to all the forces of darkness, so when we say 'the enemy did this' we actually mean it was an evil or demonic spirit that did it, not usually the devil himself.
- n. **THE GOOD NEWS:** Teach: This is NOT a battle of equals. Neither are we a helpless ball being batted around from one side to the other at someone else's whim in some kind of a spiritual tennis game.
 - i. **Read John 12:31-32; Colossians 2:15; 1John 3:8; Revelation 3:21.** Ask: What did Jesus come to do? He came to destroy the work of the devil.
 - ii. **Read Mark 3:14-15; Ephesians 6:10-18; James 4:7; 1John 2:12-16; Revelation 12:11.** Ask: As a child of God what have you been given the spiritual authority to do? We have power and authority in the name of Jesus to resist the devil, take a stand against his schemes so that we might overcome. In Jesus' name we can also drive out and take authority over demons.
 - iii. Ask: Should we be afraid of Satan or evil spirits? No.

- iv. Teach: The only thing big about a demon is its boastful mouth – and even then its teeth were taken out at the Cross! But neither should we be gung-ho, arrogant and stupidly irresponsible. It always plays right into Satan's hand when people who have confronted the forces of darkness in this manner become needless casualties of the spiritual war.
 - o. **Read James 4:7.** Ask: What should we do *before* we try resisting the devil? We should always submit to God first.
 - i. Ask the group to try and identify what might happen if we try to resist the devil without first having submitted ourselves properly to God? We will be in for a bit of a struggle because the devil (or his demons) will do all they can to hold on to what power and/or control they have. We would be doing it in our strength.
 - 1. Can you give a testimony of where you have witnessed this at work?
 - 2. What were the results?
 - 3. What would you do differently [if anything] today?
 - p. Encourage group members to work through the After the Session exercise in their disciple's workbook pp.13-14.
 - q. Whole section 60-70 minutes.
6. Move seamlessly into the praise and worship session you have prepared using the key scripture **Luke 10:17-20**.
- a. Obey Jesus' instruction in **verse 20** and have a really good praise and worship session.

- b. Give thanks for the wonder of all that was accomplished through His shed blood.
 - c. Whole section 20-30 minutes.
7. Confirm the date, time and venue (if likely to change) for next week's meeting.

AFTER THE SESSION:

- 1. Telephone anyone you have identified as needing particular encouragement.
- 2. Be aware that until people have dealt with their unresolved spiritual issues there may be a real spiritual battle for them to turn up each week and some may experience difficulty in entering into times of worship. Pray for each one every day this week and visit individuals as necessary. Discuss individual prayer appointments as appropriate.
- 3. Prepare for next week.

NOTES:

Week 2: BE PREPARED

DISCIPLER'S PREPARATION:

1. Prepare to serve a meal yourself this week unless you have a volunteer.
2. Be prepared to sit around the table afterwards to share and teach or move to a more comfortable setting.
3. For section 4.d. prepare to relate one experience from your spiritual journey where you have faced a spiritual attack of the enemy. Consider the answers to the following questions:
 - a. Cast your mind back over the Scriptures we examined in session 1 that teach about Satan's existence. Write below one example from your own life that proves to you that the spiritual battle is real
 - b. What was the outcome?
 - c. If you cannot think of anything to share then please share the author's own testimony outlined in appendix 1 p.127 in the disciple's workbook.
4. For section 4.i.x. complete the chart on the spiritual usage for each part of the whole armour of God.
5. For section 5 prepare to lead the group through the exercise *Putting on the whole armour of God* found in appendix 4.

DURING THE SESSION:

1. Start timing the meeting once the meal is over and packed away. Allow a full two hours.
2. Welcome: make sure everyone is comfortable. Begin by welcoming the Holy Spirit in prayer (2 minutes).
3. Briefly recap on last week's session in which we looked at the reality of Satan and the spiritual battle.
 - a. Allow opportunity for people to share what they have learned and how they have built on that during the past week.
 - b. Did anyone work through the After the Session exercise?
 - i. Has anyone a testimony to share?
 - c. Whole section 10-15 minutes.
4. **Walking with God in Relationship: Soul & Strength.** Today's study is **Be Prepared.**
 - a. Ask the group whether the spiritual battle we talked about in our last session is actually real. Emphasise that it IS real and Satan is out to prevent each one of us from being the person Father God created us to be.
 - b. Ask: If we were to ask any soldier in the regular army *how* they were hoping to win a particular war what might they answer? There may be many answers to this but these three would be amongst them:
 - i. Believe the enemy is real and out to destroy you;
 - ii. Understand how your enemy operates;
 - iii. Develop a winning strategy.

- c. Ask: In what ways are these statements also true of the spiritual battle we fight against the forces of darkness in the heavenly realms? We will always live a defeated Christian life if we do not:
- i. Believe in Satan and the spiritual battle;
 - ii. Understand how he operates and
 - iii. Have no understanding or strategy for how to fight back.
- d. *Discipler's note: If you become aware that anyone in the group might have delved into areas we might call psychic, paranormal, occult, New Age, false religions or cults then I strongly recommend that, in order to gain the maximum benefit from the rest of this course, you talk about having an Individual Prayer Appointment. This would involve working through certain exercises in the Baggage Checklist [available from www.newbeginningsdiscipleship.wordpress.com] with you their discipler or a trusted friend, small group leader or pastor.*
- e. Share the testimony you have prepared where you faced an enemy attack. Give the outcome and how that came about. If you have not prepared something then read together the author's testimony outlined in appendix 1 in the disciple's workbook p.127.
- f. **Read 2Corinthians 2:10-11.**
- i. Ask: What do these verses imply concerning unforgiveness? It is one of the schemes Satan uses against God's people.
 - ii. Ask: Is this the only scheme the enemy uses? Not at all, there are others.

- iii. Ask: So what do we need to do in order to stand a chance of overcoming these schemes? We need to be aware of the different ploys the enemy has up his sleeve.
 - iv. Teach: Satan's strategies for each of us will be different. They will usually revolve around those areas of our lives where we either struggle for freedom or where we struggle to reclaim those areas where freedom has been gained
- g. **Read Proverbs 26:26; Jeremiah 23:26; Hosea 10:13; Matthew 4:1; 6:13; Luke 4:2; 22:3; John 8:44; Acts 5:1-9; 2Corinthians 4:4; 1Thessalonians 3:5; 2Thessalonians 2:9-10; 1Timothy 6:9-10; James 1:13-16; Revelation 12:10.** Give one or two specific examples of ways in which you have seen the enemy operate in one or more of these ways from your own experience.
- i. Discuss together how Satan's schemes always use lies in one form or another. For example discouragement, disappointment with God, hurt, depressive thoughts, prayerlessness, questioning God's Word, the misuse of Scripture, self-protection, false prophets, false hope, counterfeit miracles and power.
 - ii. Can the group identify what happens to our communication with God and our ability to see things as they really are when we give in to one or more of these things? Disobedience to God brings a form of spiritual blindness resulting in our being even more receptive to deceptive, destructive, tempting and accusing thoughts. It can become a downward spiral until we turn to God and repent.

- h. **Read Luke 4: 1-13.** What was it Jesus used to overcome the enemy? It was the Word of God.
 - i. Ask: Did Jesus ask Satan to hold on a minute whilst He used His concordance to find an appropriate verse? No. He brought previously memorized scriptures to mind and used them.
 - ii. Ask: Why is it important to memorize Scripture? God's Word is our primary weapon against the enemy.
- i. **Read Psalm 119:30 & 43; John 17:17.** Ask: What do these scriptures say God's Word is? It is truth.
 - i. Teach: Satan uses lies and deception as his primary weapons whereas God's weapons are the opposite; truth, honesty and transparency.
 - ii. Ask: Does anyone in the group memorize scripture verses? Allow opportunity for sharing and discussion. Give your own testimony about this.
- j. Suggest everyone reads through appendix 2: *Memorizing Scripture Verses* as part of the After the Session exercise. Encourage everyone to use this process to memorize **John 17: 17.**
- k. Summarize: We are in a very real, sometimes nasty, spiritual war. The battle often seems to be being fought in our own head! BUT as children of our loving heavenly Father we are not left undefended.
- l. **Read Ephesians 6:10-18.**

- i. Teach: When Paul wrote this passage of Scripture he was under house arrest, possibly in the company of a Roman soldier. Because the known world at the time was under Roman occupation the Ephesians would have been familiar with a Roman soldier's uniform.
- ii. Break the group up into pairs. Give each group 15 minutes to reflect together on the passage. In the chart on pp.19-20 of the disciple's workbook suggest they fill in the names of the various pieces of spiritual armour and write down any insights the Holy Spirit gives them about the meaning of each one.
- iii. Write your own insights in the table below.

Belt of...	Truth	
Breastplate...	Righteousness	
Helmet...	Salvation	
Shield...	Faith	
Shoes...	The gospel (or good news) of peace	
...Spirit	Prayer	
Sword...	Word of God	

- iv. State: These are not very conventional weapons are they? But this is not a conventional war!

- v. Teach: Often the people and circumstances we face can be very stressful, difficult and testing at times. We see the reality of people or a situation happening all around us and because of the manipulations taking place in our thoughts and emotions we *believe* our battle to be primarily against human beings; it seems as if we are actually fighting *them*.
- vi. **Re-read verse 12.** Ask: Who are we really fighting? Most of us cannot see the evil spirits or the manipulations going on in the spiritual background all around us; nevertheless, Scripture is clear as to who our enemy really is. This is why the weapons of conventional warfare are not necessary or appropriate. ***It is not that kind of war because it is not that kind of enemy.***
- vii. Teach: The real battle is being fought against the forces of darkness ***in heavenly places, i.e. on a spiritual plain.*** It is ***in the spiritual realm*** that we need to learn to overcome and for that we need to use ***spiritual weapons.***
- viii. Using the chart found on p.21 of the disciple's workbook discuss together whether the pieces of armour are defensive, offensive or both. Place a tick in the appropriate box.

	DEFENSIVE	OFFENSIVE
Belt:		
Breastplate:		
Helmet:		

Shield:		
Shoes:		
Spirit:		
Sword:		

- ix. In pairs again use the chart found on pp.21-22 of the disciple's workbook to consider *why* that particular virtue or godly tool might be perfectly designed as a vital part of our spiritual armour? Please complete the chart below as part of your personal preparation.

Belt [TRUTH]:	
Breastplate [RIGHTEOUSNESS]:	
Helmet [SALVATION]:	
Shield [FAITH]:	

Shoes [PEACE]:	
Spirit [PRAYER]:	
Sword [GOD'S WORD]:	

- x. Teach: Each part of the uniform also reflects something of the three-fold aspects of the Godhead as well as something of the blessings that flow to us as children of God.
- xi. Read together the following paragraph about truth in the workbook p23. Let us take truth as an example:

TRUTH:

The belt was the piece of uniform that held the breastplate in place. Unlike Satan, who is a complete liar, everything about **Father God** is true and truthful (**Psalm 31:5**). **Jesus** declared “*I am... the truth*” (**John 14:6**). The **Holy Spirit** only speaks truth to us (**John 16:13**). **God's Word** is truth (**John 17:17**). Because we are children of God in Messiah being truthful or not allowing Satan to have any deceptive hold in us is part of our defensive armour (**Leviticus 19:11**); we cannot be truly righteous unless we are being wholly truthful. Learning to use or speak out the truth of God's Word to expose the enemy's lies is also

part of our defensive armour (**Ephesians 6:14**). Amazing! Father God has every angle covered.

- a. Show the group the After the Session exercise based on the whole armour of God p24. Encourage them that it will be an hour very well spent if they take the time to work through it.
 - b. Whole section 70 minutes.
5. Move seamlessly into the devotional exercise outlined in appendix 4 *Putting on the Whole Armour of God* in the disciple's workbook p.135.
- a. Lead the group slowly and deliberately through the exercise.
 - b. Allow plenty of time for members to engage with the putting on of each piece of armour.
 - c. Suggest they may wish to work through this exercise again during the coming week as part of their daily devotional time.
 - d. Follow the Holy Spirit's leading for how you close this session.
 - e. Whole section 30 minutes.
6. Confirm the date, time and venue (if likely to change) for next week's meeting.

AFTER THE SESSION:

1. Telephone anyone you have identified as needing particular encouragement.
2. Be aware that until people have dealt with their unresolved spiritual issues there may be a real spiritual battle for them to turn up each week and some may experience difficulty in entering into times of

