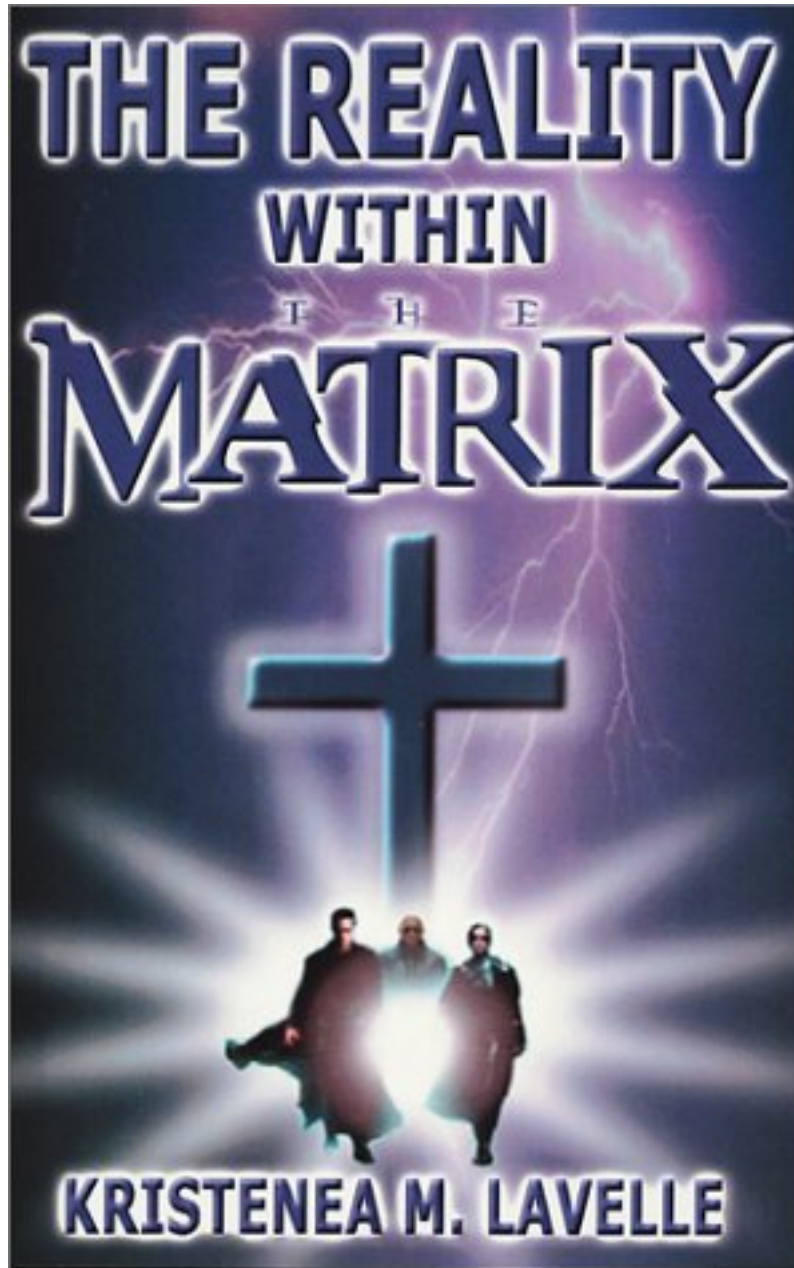


The Reality Within The Matrix

An Interpretation

By Kristenea M. LaVelle



Introduction

***Caution!** If you have not had an opportunity to view *The Matrix*, I strongly encourage you to do so now, **before** you read this book. I have thoroughly explored the entire contents of the movie and do not want my opinions to hinder your first impressions of the film. On the other hand, if you have already seen *The Matrix*, maybe it's time to see it again.*

Though it may seem unusual to evaluate a secular movie with a clearly Christian point of view, I feel that since we live in a secular world every problem we face as Christians must be evaluated in a similar way. Each day, new situations present opportunities to express our beliefs and perceptions to others through our actions. I encourage you to embrace each opportunity and make the most of it, always being prepared to answer questions about the Truth that we Christians live.

More than a Movie

There is a lot more to this fast-paced, action-packed movie than one might expect from a Science fiction thriller. Submerged under layers of futuristic iconography and modern symbolism, *The Matrix* can be perceived as a modern day interpretation of the oldest, and by far, the greatest story ever told, the gospel of Jesus Christ. Hidden beneath the fantastic fight scenes and a computer enhanced “realism”, lie deeper spiritual truths presented in easily understood terms, as they apply to the Christian way of living. For that reason, I believe this film is worthy of recognition and evaluation.

Inspiration- Human or Divine?

While I understand that it was the intention of the writers to include certain religious truths borrowed from several religions of the world, I feel that the entire movie resonates the principle beliefs of Christianity. However, these questions remain: Is it possible that by combining certain Theological, Philosophical and Mathematical ideas that the truth of God would be revealed, even if it was unintentional? Could the reason for that revelation lie in the fact that scripture boldly establishes Christ as,

“...the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.” Colossians 1:15-17?

What about the reason behind the popularity of this movie? Could it be a direct result of spiritually starved individuals hungering after the Truth that brings Light and life?

Would God, in His divine nature, be reaching out to those very individuals and speaking to their spirits in a unique and wonderful way drawing them ever closer to the Truth?

Was this intentional or accidental? I challenge you to seek the answers to these questions as they apply to your life and personal walk with God. He may be trying to get your attention.

God Speaks in Various Ways

Communication plays an important role in our relationship with God, allowing us to continually grow and mature in our Christian walk. Because of this, God uses a variety of ways to get our attention. God spoke to Moses through a burning bush,¹ to Balaam from the mouth of a donkey,² to king Belshazzar with the handwriting on the

¹ Exodus 3:2-6

wall,³ and to Saul with a blinding light.⁴ Wouldn't God use a movie to do the same for us today? Certainly! In fact, such spiritual enlightenment could come through any of our daily experiences including our dreams, our perceptions, the books we read or even the movies we see. For me, *The Matrix* is one of those experiences. As a direct result I have attempted to share various spiritual insights found in the movie in an effort to reach those who may be searching for the answers to life's many perplexing questions.

A Final Note

At first glance, the violence and language contained in this film may be overwhelming to sensitive individuals. Without condoning or supporting these types of behavior, I recognize that there is a time and place for waging warfare against the enemy. When the eternal destiny of an individual is at stake, every measure should be taken to save or "awaken" that individual, and that means it's time to get serious on a spiritual level. Again, this **only** applies to spiritual warfare as it is defined in the Bible.

"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." (Ephesians 6:12).

With this principle in mind, I choose to view the fight scenes as symbolic of "spiritual training" and "spiritual warfare". As Christians, we need to employ the spiritual armor and weapons that God gives us, to wage warfare against the enemy of our souls. We battle the dark forces of sin and wickedness but we do **not** take up arms with intention to hurt or injure the individual human soul. We do not win them by force but by love and through prayer. Truly, this is a battle between eternal life and death.

² Numbers 22:28-31

³ Daniel 5:5-6

⁴ Acts 9: 3-18

Finally, I do not feel that the film's constant references to Jesus Christ were meant to be offensive. Rather, they can serve to guide the viewer from the question that drives them to the real answer, as the Apostle Paul points out, "*The reality, however, is found in Christ.*" *Colossians 2:17b*.

Your Focus

“You have to focus ... You can make it.”

Focus. Our focus shapes the way we look at the world and influences how we respond to the problems in our lives. All of us focus on different things and we all experience success or failure, based on what we choose to focus on. Consistently focusing on the problems in life only cause us to miss their solutions. By centering our focus on the solution we can overcome the problem more efficiently. Fortunately there is a universal answer to every problem mankind faces today. That answer is God.

Trinity, you have to Focus:

There are two, very important concepts presented in the first 10 minutes of this fast-paced, action-packed movie, and focus is one of them. Trinity demonstrates a powerful example of concentrating on the solution instead of the problem. With a little prompting from Morpheus, she is able to refocus her attention on escaping instead of on the Agents, who are trying to catch her. After a deep breath, Trinity darts away, heading for the roof. She is running at full speed with the police in hot pursuit when she pauses, looking for a way out. Her eyes catch a small window illuminated by a golden light in the midst of a dark brick building. Focusing her eyes on the light, she runs straight for it, realizing it is her only hope of escape. She dives through the window and crashes down a stairwell, alive and safe.

I Am the Light

Light has always been symbolic of God. Since the beginning of time, God has revealed Himself and His power through the expression of light. The Bible is filled with wonderful examples of how God uses light to illuminate physically or spiritually dark places. In Genesis, God spoke and light filled the earth overcoming the darkness with a radiant spark of life.⁵ When Moses lead the nation of Israel out of Egypt, the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of fire by night, to give them light for travel.⁶ Even the Apostle Paul attributed his conversion to a bright, flashing light from heaven.⁷ It is no surprise then, to find Jesus describing Himself as light in the gospels, *“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” John 8:12.* Likewise, John describes Him as, *“The true light that gives light to every man...” John 1:9.*

Leap of Faith

Notice that the Agents did not follow Trinity into the light. They couldn't, her focus was correct, and as a result, she was protected from their advances. She made a leap of faith knowing that within the light was her only hope of escaping the enemy. Just like Trinity, we need to focus on Jesus, the Light of life, and run toward Him with all our might. When you run to Jesus for safety and protection, you will find that He is not only willing but *“...able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us...” Ephesians 3:20.* Jesus also reminds us, *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28.*

⁵ Genesis 1:3

⁶ Exodus 13:21

⁷ Acts 9:3

Don't Stop

Notice that Trinity had to get up after she dove into the light. There was action required following her decision to dive into the light. Simply put, you can't just stop once you find the Light of life. You must keep moving steadily toward it continually growing and maturing as a Christian. Finding the Light of life is only the beginning of an entirely new life experience.

Heart of the City

The second concept is presented in a very unique and creative way. The camera pans down a hotel sign and we realize that this scene is taking place in the "*Heart 'O the city Hotel*". A seemingly trivial piece of information that could pass unnoticed, unless you piece it together with the last scene of the movie, which takes place in the same hotel. Now, the fact that the movie begins and ends in the same place is significant because it helps the viewer understand that every relationship with God begins and ends with the condition of the heart, (hence the name, "***Heart 'O the City***"). In fact, the condition of your heart is so important to God, that He sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, to be the ultimate sacrifice for the atonement of sins, thereby reconciling you to the Father through the cleansing blood of His Son. God wants us to come to Him, through Jesus, cleansed and purified from sin so that we may participate in an active relationship with Him and receive back that which was forfeited in the beginning-eternal life.

Once your heart is pointed toward heaven and your focus is on God, you will be amazed at the changes that take place in your life and self. So, run toward the Light in the darkness and take a leap of faith. It makes a world of difference.

An Invitation to Apply the Message:

- ◆ Focus on the Light of life.
- ◆ Run to the Light.
- ◆ Leap out in faith.
- ◆ Accept the protection of the Light.
- ◆ Continue in the Light.

The Wake-Up Call

“Wake-up, Neo. The Matrix has you.”

They come when we least expect them and, generally, we are pleasantly surprised to receive them, but they all share the same goal- to wake us up from our dream world. Many have referred to “them” as mere coincidences. But I like to refer to them as gentle nudges from God. Sometimes we get distracted by the things surrounding us and we lose our focus on God, that’s when we find ourselves on the receiving end of a wake-up call.

The First Nudge

Neo experiences three wake-up calls on his journey for the truth. All of them attempt to enlighten him with new information while saving him from the physical world that seems to suddenly close in around him. The first one comes as a mysterious message across his computer screen encouraging him to “...follow the white rabbit.” While this seemed insignificant at the time, a few moments later he gets a chance to experience his first act of blind faith. Neo boldly accepts the invitation, resulting in a personal meeting with Trinity. This entire scenario mirrors incidents in our own lives where first contact is made, initiated by God, and carried out by the Holy Spirit. These are the urgings within your spirit that encourage you to continue seeking God. It’s the way God begins to awaken you and draw you toward himself. This event results in a new, much improved Neo.

Contact

Right on cue, the second call finds Neo at work, contemplating his future with the company. Arriving by Fed-Ex just minutes ahead of trouble, Neo finds himself answering a cel-phone that rings the moment it touches his hand. Morpheus has finally made contact and is attempting to help Neo escape the authorities by giving him the instructions, “I can guide you, but you must do exactly as I say.” Neo is forced to act in blind faith, putting his trust in someone he has never seen and only heard rumors about. Neo follows Morpheus’ instructions until his fears and doubts begin to interfere, “ No way, no way, this is crazy. This is insane! Why is this happening to me? What did I do? I didn’t do anything.” Subsequently, Neo leaves the building in the custody of the Agents. This is as real to life as it gets.

Just like Neo, we must learn to listen for the voice of God and follow His direction for our lives. We can’t allow fears and insecurities to stop us from completing the Father’s perfect will for our lives. Yet, how many times do you find yourself asking the same questions, Why is this happening to me? What did I do to deserve this? Why do I have to endure such hardships?

The answer to each of those questions is, only God knows why. He is omnipotent, He knows all and sees all, past, present and future. He allows us to endure things that will eventually work for our benefit. He tests His children for obedience and perseverance, all the while, helping us to overcome difficulty by the power of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, we all have free will, a gift that God holds in high regard, because He does not force you or me, to follow Him, even though He is mighty enough to do so. Nonetheless, refusing to follow God’s instructions means you are acting in

rebellion, and just like Neo, it lands you right into the hands of the enemy. “*For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry.*” (1 Samuel 15:23).

Final Call

The final call nearly startles Neo from a deep sleep and presents him with some very important information. Morpheus tells him “...They underestimate how important you are. If they knew what I know, you would probably be dead.” And, “...you may have spent the last two years looking for me, but I’ve spent my entire life looking for you.” This leaves Neo facing a very important decision. Does he accept these things as the truth and continue to pursue a relationship with Morpheus, or does he ignore the calls and return to the life of lies? Neo decides to take a step of faith toward the truth and agrees to meet with Morpheus, a decision that will change his life forever.

Have you ever experienced a wake-up call in your own life? How many mysterious or unexplained circumstances have you encountered lately? How many times has God actually delivered you from your sticky situation, only to find that you, like Neo, are too afraid to follow His instructions, a failure that lands you directly into enemy hands?

God is always trying to make contact with His children, saved or unsaved. Regardless of your circumstances, it’s important to realize that you are very important to God and that He has been trying to reach you all of your life. Even if you are just beginning to seek Him, He has been calling you for a long time and now you are faced with a decision that will change you for the rest of your life. It’s time to answer the call,

step out in faith and take advantage of the opportunity to meet Him. He is waiting for you!

An Invitation to Apply the Message

- ◆ Listen for the wake-up calls.
- ◆ Answer the call of God's Word.
- ◆ Trust God's Word
- ◆ Obey God's Word.

Neo and the Question?

“It’s the question that drives us...”

History boasts of great people achieving great things, simply by entertaining a question and boldly seeking the answer. It might even be the reason the great ones succeed and others don’t. They simply refuse to accept the limits of their visual senses. They contemplate, probe, explore, deduce and theorize to accomplish the challenge of finding a solution. It is our nature to question things we don’t understand, like our existence, immortality, environment and our relationships. It is how we learn, how we cope and how we grow in our understanding of who we are and where we belong. It is also a common thread that we share with all other humans. Each and every one of us has questioned and contemplated, searching deep within for the answers to everyday problems. It is here that we all begin the journey into the unexpected.

Search for Truth

It is here that we are introduced to Neo, a computer genius who spends his free time hacking and pirating computer programs. His solitary lifestyle makes it easy for him to lead a double life, working for a major software company by day and hacking computers by night. Although he looks like the average guy, he is guilty of almost every computer crime on the books and he is desperate to find the answers to the question that drives him.

A glance around his studio apartment reveals a solitary bookcase filled with intriguing titles, such as “Simulacrum and Simulation”, a hollowed out book used to stash pirated computer disks. The definition of the title suggests “ an unreal or vague semblance of something and the assumption of a false appearance.” Leading us to believe that Neo has already begun the questioning phase of his search for the truth. It also allows us to entertain the possibility that Neo does not fully accept the world as he sees it, limited by physical boundaries. It is no coincidence that he opens the book to a page titled “On Nihilism”, a belief that destruction of the existing political or social institutions is necessary for future improvement. This suggests that he does not accept the current form of social or governmental rule as ultimate authority. He is clearly questioning every system governing his life. Knowing this, we begin to understand his willingness to seek the truth and embrace it as reality.

We realize that Neo is beginning a journey that many of us started long ago. He is searching for the truth, and that search begins with probing questions. He obviously feels an unquenchable desire within, a desire for something more than what he can experience with his five senses. He lives out his rebellion to the system behind a computer screen, while defying the only authority figure in his daytime life, the company.

Different and Special

Neo feels he is different from everybody else, special or set aside for something better. The problem is, he can't figure it out on his own. Thus begins his search into the Matrix.

Just like Neo, we find ourselves questioning our dependency upon the system. We drudge through life, thinking we are totally in control of our own future. Then one

day it hits us like a sledgehammer. When the light bulb finally illuminates, we begin to realize we have been living in the darkness that is this world. We are suddenly aware of more than just ourselves and our physical surroundings. We are awakened to vibrant life and a new understanding of reality, based not on what is seen, but on what remains unseen.

Desire for Our Creator Drives Us

Most humans recognize the existence of a divine being, a presence larger than ourselves and more powerful than our human imagination. We look at the earth, and the sky and the seas and realize that the immense beauty of this vast planet didn't just happen by chance. It was created and perfectly designed by the Creator. God, in His infinite wisdom and understanding, also created mankind, complete with an indwelling desire to seek Him. *This built in desire for our Creator is what drives us to begin the questioning process.* A process that begins with the analysis of one's own lifestyle.

Like Neo, many of us began to break out of the need for false fronts and cover-ups, desiring more truth and less fiction. Yet we soon discover that society is not only helpless, but unwilling to change. So we look to a higher, more powerful source for life. That's when the answers began to come. That's when God makes contact with our souls and the journey into life and truth begins. Now the question is...do you take the red pill and discover the truth, or do you take the blue pill and continue living the lie?

An Invitation to Apply the Message

- ◆ Seek the Truth.
- ◆ Desire your Creator.
- ◆ Journey into life.

The Red Pill

“...all I’m offering is the truth. Nothing more.”

The time has come for Neo to make a decision. He has been presented with two options, live the truth or continue living the lie. It’s the exact situation we find ourselves in when faced with the same dilemma, do we choose the red pill or the blue? Weigh the options. First consider the status quo, life is simply existence in the world. Work, taxes, bills, and stress. But you know the rules, you know the boundaries and for the most part you live in comfort, except for that nagging question that remains “...like a splinter in your mind, driving you mad.” Second, toy with the alternative: a new start in life, new freedoms, new understanding and an entirely new realm governed by a completely different set of rules and boundaries. Challenging, intriguing, and a bit scary. Which do you choose? If you are reading this book, you have probably chosen the red pill. If not, I invite you to read on and discover for yourself exactly what you’re missing.

Red is for Truth

Symbolically, the red pill stands for the truth. Hence the color red, also the same color associated with the blood of Jesus, who was sacrificed for the atonement of the world’s sin. By choosing the red pill, Neo chose to be cleansed by “the truth” and washed in the blood of the sacrificial Lamb of God. Immediately following the acceptance of the truth, Neo embarks upon a journey that he could not have imagined, even in his wildest dreams.

He is awakened to find himself submerged in a sticky, jelly type mess, bound with tubes and wires that seem to be sustaining him. After breaking free of the goo, he is suddenly conscious of the millions upon millions of beings that are trapped in the same situation, but still unaware of their condition. Instantly, he is flushed down a tube and plunged into a pool of water where bright lights illuminate the darkness as his body is lifted out of the water. Neo blacks out just as he is greeted by Morpheus, “Welcome to the real world, Neo.”

Neo is for New

By definition the name “Neo” means both new and different. True to his name, Neo wakes up to find that he is being rebuilt, or “made new” by Morpheus and Dozer. They are rebuilding his muscles that have atrophied from lack of use. His eyes hurt, and he finds out that just like his muscles, they have never been used. It takes an undetermined amount of time and a lot of work but the results are promising as Morpheus imparts final words of wisdom, “Rest, Neo. The answers are coming.”

This science fiction, futuristic movie depicts a situation that is not unlike things we experience when we become born-again. Just like Neo, we are awakened to find ourselves confined and restricted by the walls of lies the world has built around us, much like a caterpillar in a chrysalis. The good news is, that God promises to make us a new creation and to give us a new life, regardless of our past history. The Apostle Paul explains this same principle to the church in Corinth by stating, “*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*” 2 Corinthians 5:17. Immediately, after receiving the truth of life, we find ourselves both “new” and

“different” from the rest of the millions who are still confined within a world built on lies. Only God can free us from the chrysalis of life and give us wings to fly.

Neo’s futuristic water slide landed him in a pool of water, very symbolic of a baptism for a new believer. We seek baptism with water, to boldly proclaim our choice to live the truth and walk in freedom. Often, this baptism experience results in a persons’ life being illuminated and enlightened with knowledge and understanding from the Father of Lights. And the journey into true life begins.

New Needs

Neo awakened to find Morpheus and Dozer attending to his weakened condition. In a sense they were ministering to his needs, both physical and spiritual. Sometimes new Christians experience a similar situation as we are awakened to reality. Our spiritual selves are bruised and damaged by the world, atrophied from lack of use. These senses have been dormant for such a long time that they have a tendency to break down, just like muscle tissue. Therefore, we need people to minister to our spiritual needs through church, Bible studies, small group meetings and discipleship. All of these things help edify us as Christians and strengthen us as members of the body of Christ.

New Eyes

It’s important to notice that Neo inquired about his eyes hurting. This is significant because of the reply he received from Morpheus, “You’ve never used them before.” Obviously Neo thought he had been using his eyes. In reality, he had only used his physical eyes for perception, not his spiritual ones. When he became enlightened to the truth, his spiritual eyes were awakened from their slumber, causing a certain amount of discomfort. Now, I’m not necessarily talking about physical discomfort. I’m referring

to a period of time, following conversion, where the spiritual senses come alive and oftentimes will bombard a person if they have never experienced spiritual sensory perception. It takes a while to adjust.

Spiritual Awakening

The awakening of the eyes has great spiritual significance. For example, the eyes are responsible for detecting light sensitivity and responding accordingly. God is light, and truth is light. Therefore, your eyes would hurt because they had never before perceived the Light of life. They need time to adjust to the Light of Truth and goodness.

Jesus describes the eyes as being the spiritual lamp of the body. *“The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness.”* (Mat. 6:22-23a). Jesus means that the eyes function as the organ that transmits light to the soul. As long as one stays focused on Christ the Light of life, then the soul will be fed or enlightened with understanding, making the whole body good. If a person focuses on sin, then they are feeding their soul with darkness, thus making their whole body bad. That’s why it’s so important to screen what goes into our bodies through our eyes, always making sure to focus on the true Light that brings understanding and eternal life to our souls.

The awakening of the spiritual senses is a wonderful experience that need not be feared. The Lord of all creation has graciously given each and every one of us special talents, or “gifts” that we need to learn how to use effectively as we serve Him. Through patience and practice, they can be rebuilt and ready for service in the kingdom as we grow in faith through the faithful ministry of others, gaining the strength and understanding it takes to stand against the world.

An Invitation to Apply the Message

- ◆ Choose the Way of Truth.
- ◆ Truth leads to new life.
- ◆ Spiritual awakening.
- ◆ A new way of seeing.

The New Neo

“I have all these memories...none of them really happened.”

Many great Biblical characters have taken on a name change as a result of their new relationship with God. When Abram was ninety-nine years old, God established a new covenant making him *the father of many nations*. His new name became *Abraham*.⁸ Saul of Tarsus, a notorious persecutor of the church in Acts, became known as the Apostle *Paul* upon his conversion to Christianity.⁹ So it is no surprise to see that Thomas A. Anderson, program writer for the Company, changes his name to Neo as he takes on a new identity as a member of the crew aboard the *Nebuchadnezzar*.

His Broken Life

Notice that Thomas A. Anderson used “Neo” as an alias. He only identified with that name when it was to his advantage. Truly he was still living the lies that made up his reality in the Matrix. All of that changed the instant he accepted the truth and swallowed the red pill.

Two things happen as a result of the red pill. Instantly, Neo notices a change in the air, like a ripple settling on the edge of a pond. The ripple forms a jagged crack that looks like a broken mirror. A shattered reflection of Thomas Anderson stares back at him, the “reality” of the broken life he is leaving behind. Then, a liquid metallic substance begins to flow over his external body creeping toward his open mouth until it consumes him entirely, inside and out.

⁸ Genesis 17:1-5

⁹ Acts 13:9

Metal is symbolic of strength and endurance. It's shiny and clean, sparkling and new. The liquid metallic substance is a wonderful representation of how new Christians are made "new" in Christ Jesus. It flowed over Neo completely covering every inch of his body, inside and out. He was made totally new and 100% complete, top to bottom.

Am I Dead?

For the first time in his life, Neo is awakened to the reality of his existence as he struggles to break free from the pod that has sustained his life thus far. Dripping with a sticky gel-like substance, Neo finds himself face to face with a machine examining his alert condition. In an instant, he is rejected and flushed down a tube into the disposal system where Morpheus and the crew aboard the *Nebuchadnezzar* fish him out. His first question is "Am I dead?" to which Morpheus responds, "Far from it."

The truth of the matter is this: Once you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, then you begin a process of "coming *out* of the world". You become dead to the world and alive in Christ.

"Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world-the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does-comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever." 1 John 2:15-17

This automatically makes you different from mainstream society which often times leads to rejection and persecution. Just like Neo being flushed down the disposal tube, new Christians can experience a sense of loss and rejection from friends and family as a result of their conversion. Jesus addresses this type of rejection in the gospel of John.

“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you...They will treat you like this because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me.” John 15:18-19,21

It’s important to remember that your true identity is hidden in Christ Jesus,¹⁰ not in the world. Though the world would reject you, Christ will embrace you and give you eternal life.

Old Memories

As we come to understand and embrace our new identity in Christ, we are often times reminded of the past, namely our old sinful selves. Neo describes this situation exactly, “I have all these memories...none of them happened.” He’s really saying that even though the memories are still present, the sins associated with those memories of the past, have all been washed away, “...*none of them happened.*”. The Word of God explains it like this: “*As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.*” *Psalms 103:12*. Therefore, no sin from the past remains to condemn us. That’s something to rejoice about.

Living the Truth

Living the truth is not always easy. There will be trials, testing of faith, persecution and rejection from the world, but these things are necessary for the development of perseverance, which leads to maturity.¹¹ The Lord is continually refining His saints for service in the kingdom of God. Be encouraged, you are more alive now than ever before. “*Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him.*” *James 1:12*

¹⁰ Ephesians 2:10, Colossians 3:3

¹¹ James 1:2-4

An Invitation to Apply the Message

- ◆ Recognizing the broken past
- ◆ Rejection from the world
- ◆ Put the past behind
- ◆ Living the new identity
- ◆ Perseverance under trials

The Blue Pill

“You take the blue pill-the story ends.”

The blue pill represents the idea that truth is relative and that it changes with the times. People can believe whatever they want, after all, they have freedoms, right? It's tolerance, a live-and-let-live attitude, accompanied by fears of offending some political group or organization. It's red tape, taxes, corruption, and a society built on lies and governed by deceivers. It breeds rebellion, complacency and apostasy. Its master is sin and the Father of Lies. Likewise, its consequences bring bondage and slavery to the sinful nature. For some it's a reality, but it is not the truth, and it's certainly not the way we humans were meant to exist.

Society's Way

It's obvious that modern society has wandered away from the path established by the founding fathers of our country. Somewhere along the road, God was tossed aside because His standard of living was no longer politically correct. It's a sad state of affairs when the rulers of the nation decide that their standards to live by are better than the ones established by the Creator of the entire Universe. The prideful arrogance of man will always lead to his downfall. The result of this way of thinking is a society full of finger pointers with no one willing to take responsibility for their own actions. The shameful thing is that our society not only condones this type of behavior, it rewards it, making it a continuing problem without end.

Cypher's Miscalculation

In the movie, Cypher had convinced himself that going back into the Matrix was his only solution. He thinks that it can be more “real” than the truth, but his thought are in error, because he is only looking at material things to satisfy the emptiness he feels. In other words, he is concentrating on the things of man, and not God. Jesus rebuked one of his disciple for that very reason, “...*You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.*” (Matthew 16:23). It's very important to concentrate on the things of God, to focus our eyes and attention fully upon our Savior, and look to Him for guidance. Anything else will just create more problems.

The Color of Death

Blue blood is unoxygenated, thus it is without the life-force. Desiring to take the blue pill means that you would not only be embracing the things that it represents, but ingesting them as well, a process that will lead you on the road to spiritual death and put your eternal plans in jeopardy too. Darkness and sin abound unrestrained in this society, making it very difficult for one to wade through the garbage to the path of truth and Light. We, as people, are bombarded from all sides on a daily basis by television, newspapers, magazines, radio and billboards, most loudly and shamelessly displaying a wide variety of sin, dressed-up to look appealing. Modern man thinks nothing of flaunting his shameful lusts and greed while enticing and encouraging others to do the same. As a result, youth is corrupted, innocence is lost and righteousness and integrity are crucified. Is it worth the cost?

Although this way of living is not the truth, there are those who would fight until their last breath to hang on to the very things that are enslaving their thoughts and killing

their souls. The good news is that the truth is out there, just waiting to be discovered by the next individual who is searching through the muck and mire of Godless living, for the answers to the questions society is helpless to answer. The journey is laborious, but well worth the effort it takes to search for the truth of life.

God is the Only Solution

There is no excuse for sin—plain and simple, there is no excuse, just repentance and forgiveness, and those only come from God. Society can not promise unconditional love and understanding. It does not promise forgiveness of sins, no matter what that sin is, nor can it promise eternal life. These promises come only from God, the Father of all Creation, who declares, *“I am the Lord and there is no other; apart from me there is no God... I form the light and create the darkness...I, the Lord, have created it...It is I who made the earth and created mankind upon it. My own hands stretched out the heavens; I marshaled their starry hosts.”* (Isaiah 45:5,7,8,12).

This same Father sent His only Son to die in your place and is even now, drawing you unto himself. Have you considered what part God plays in your life? Right now, today, how does God fit into your world? Make every effort to develop a personal relationship with Jesus. He will become the best friend you ever had. He will never lie, cheat, steal, desert you, or stab you in the back. You can depend on Him to fulfill all His promises, and you should. So, the next time someone offers you a dose of the blue pill, tell them the good news about Jesus Christ.

An Invitation to Apply the Message

- ◆ Recognize the corruption of society.
- ◆ Recognize the danger of spiritual death.
- ◆ No excuse for sin.
- ◆ God is the **only** answer.

Morpheus

“As you no doubt have guessed, I am Morpheus.”

Who exactly is Morpheus? Is he the fictional god of dreams or a modern day rendition of John the Baptist? While he can shoulder both roles, there is a title more fitting to his character, “Disciple of Truth”. Morpheus is a proponent of the truth. It’s the reason for which he exists and it drives him to enlighten others to follow the same path. He is a man of great understanding and insight, who is revered and respected by his crew, a small band of fellow truth seekers. Morpheus has humbly accepted the calling upon his life which drives him to search for the “One” who will save them and bring freedom to the human race. He truly believes Neo is that “One” and he takes it upon himself to convince everyone else. It’s this discovery and proclamation that make his life parallel to that of John the Baptist, the man responsible for identifying the Son of God and bearing witness to his authenticity, “ *He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe.*” (John 1:7).

Morpheus, the Messenger

There are, in fact, several instances throughout the movie where Morpheus’s actions parallel those of John the Baptist in regards to his relationship with Christ. For example, while Neo is still “asleep”, Morpheus is diligently working behind the scenes, preparing “a way in the desert of reality” for Neo to be awakened to the truth of his identity. This is almost identical to the calling of John the Baptist, as recorded in the

Bible, *“It is written in Isaiah the prophet: I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way—a voice of one calling in the desert, “Prepare the way for the Lord, make strait paths for Him.” (Mark 1:2-3).*

Then, when Morpheus and Neo finally meet, face to face, Neo expresses his admiration by stating, “It’s an honor to meet you,” to which Morpheus humbly replies, “No, the honor is mine.” He recognizes the importance of the position that Neo has been called to fill. The same thing happened when John and Jesus first met in the Jordan river. *“Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter Him by saying, I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” (Mat. 3:13-14).* John testifies further that, *“...one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie...” (Luke 3:16).* There is no doubt that Morpheus recognized the importance of Neo’s part in the grand scheme of things, and declared it not only in words, but also with his humble attitude toward Neo.

“I Must Become Less”

The next example is rather subtle and indirect, but the underlying meaning is clear from a combination of dialogue and action exhibited by Morpheus during his encounter with the Agents in the hotel, as they are returning from meeting with the Oracle. Morpheus and his team are discovered, which sends them scurrying for a place to hide until they can find a way out. Unfortunately, their hiding place is revealed and as a result, Morpheus gives up his own freedom as a diversion, so that Neo can escape capture. “You must get Neo out! He is all that matters!”. With this statement, Morpheus expresses the importance of Neo and his calling, just as John did when he declared, *“He must become greater, I must become less.” (John 3:30).* The message is the same, one

sacrifices himself for the preservation of the other, who is more important, a revelation that gives us insight into the relationship between Neo and Morpheus. “*Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.*” (John 15:13).

Father Figure

Morpheus is both teacher and guide to those who know the truth. And in many ways, he is a father figure, making him one of the most important characters in the movie. His role is versatile and multifaceted, causing him to display many exceptional characteristics that are common among the great prophets and teachers of the Bible. True to his name, Morpheus is the one responsible for waking Neo from his dream world, and illuminating the shadows of reality that linger in the recesses of Neo’s mind. Morpheus is patient, self-controlled, kind and peaceful, setting an example for Neo by displaying great faith combined with a quiet inner strength. His instruction is simple but precise as he challenges Neo to “let go” of the thoughts that entangle his mind, causing fears, doubt and disbelief, in an effort to introduce the idea that what is perceived as being impossible, can actually be attainable.

Faith Plus Action Applied

To further understand the position that Morpheus plays in Neo’s life, we must look at the motivating factors behind the decisions he makes. Among all his attributes, one stands out above the rest, a shining testimony of his quiet inner strength. Morpheus is a man of great faith, driven by the truth and boldly applying that truth to his life. He encourages others to do likewise, and easily demonstrates this concept during the jump

program. We see him leap from the roof of one building to the roof of another, a tangible “expression” of his faith and application of his beliefs. He set an example for Neo, showing him that the impossible is attainable, by overcoming the fears, doubts and disbelief that plague his mind. This is the same process we must endure in an effort to strengthen our faith in God. *“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.” (Hebrews 11: 6).* We must exhibit belief in God, belief in His power to deliver His promises, and belief in the unseen workings of His Holy Spirit. Just as it is said about Abraham, *“Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what He had promised. This is why it was credited to him as righteousness.” (Romans 4:20-21).* Then, while hanging on to those beliefs, we must apply them to our lives with action. *“In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.” (James 2:17).* Then, being fully assured in our faith and putting off all hindering thoughts, we will be able to follow Morpheus’s example and leap from one building to another, without fail.

The Attitude Applied

This man of great faith and conviction is quickly put to the test, as Morpheus is delivered into an opportunity to act upon his beliefs, showing that he is willing to give his life for his convictions. By sacrificing himself to the Agents, he demonstrated this biblical truth, *“Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.” (Matthew 10:39),* and here’s how: Morpheus gave himself so that Neo could

be free, because Neo was more important. That self-sacrificing attitude is part of what triggered Neo to devise a plan to save Morpheus from the Agents, a sacrifice that resulted in Morpheus' complete freedom, thus gaining back the life he gave for his beliefs.

Now, there is another lesson to be learned from this segment of the movie. We already know that Morpheus was captured by the Agents, who have restrained him with handcuffs so they can extract information. Morpheus is tired, weak and almost broken when Neo comes to restore his freedom. In the process, he is wounded, causing him to jump short of the helicopter. But Neo recognizes that Morpheus won't make it and jumps to save him from falling. They collide mid-air and dangle from the helicopter, while Trinity finds a place to set them down.

God Meets Us

This is a prime example of how God meets us wherever we are in regards to our life and our walk with Him. He sees us in our bondage, and makes a way for us to come to Him, but often times we are tired, weak and wounded by the world and the enemy of our souls, causing us to "jump short" of the mark. He knows that, because He knows our hearts and thoughts, and as a result, He meets us halfway, embracing us with love and mercy, while gently restoring us to our freedom. *"Submit yourselves, then to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Come near to God and He will come near to you...Humble yourselves before the Lord and He will lift you up."* (James 4: 7-8a,10).

While acting as both teacher and guide, Morpheus gave excellent advice in words and action by becoming a living example to those around him. He is a guardian of truth and defender of faith exhibiting discipline, self-control and a genuine love for others.

This is what we are all called to do: Be living examples of faith and godliness, while our actions serve as testimony of our convictions.

“...Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Timothy 6:11-14).

An Invitation to Apply the Message

- ◆ Become less and let God become more in your life.
- ◆ Exhibit faith and the fruits of the Spirit.
- ◆ Combine your faith with action.
- ◆ Gain life by sacrificing your own life for the greater good.
- ◆ Be a living example by pursuing godliness, righteousness and love.
- ◆ Fight the good fight of faith.

Residual Self-Image

“It’s the mental projection of your digital self.”

The first time the Bible teaches us about our image is in the beginning, where we learn that we were created in the “image” of God. Yet, how many of us actually see God when we look in the mirror each day? Not many, because we are used to seeing ourselves a certain way. The way we perceive ourselves depends on the things we think, feel and respond to in the world around us. These experiences implant a mental picture of who we think we are, and that picture is what we see when we gaze into the mirror. For example: if, throughout your entire life, everyone has commented on your beauty, then you become confident that everyone seems to know what they are talking about, so naturally, you begin to believe it and accept it as the truth. The same holds true if you have always been told or treated as if you were insignificant or undeserving. You see yourself as unworthy and therefore respond as though you were unworthy, even though that’s not the truth. We simply learn to see ourselves as the world does and not as God does.

Self-Image

This is exactly what Neo experiences when he ventures into the construct program with Morpheus. He discovers that the way he looks in the computer program, is in some respects, very different than how he looks in reality. The Matrix sees him one way and reality sees him another. His residual self-image, the mental projection of his digital self,

is showing through, producing a projected image of the way he sees himself in respect to his former reality. It's not always an easy thing to recognize, but we all have a residual self-image or self-impression of who we perceive ourselves to be in relationship to the people and environment that surrounds us. Many times we find that the way we look at ourselves does not line up with the way God sees us. That's when we have to align our sights with God and come to look past the residual self-image, to our new self, being renewed day by day with the help of the Holy Spirit.

New Image

When you finally choose to become born again, you are given a new image. The old self has been destroyed, being cleansed from all unrighteousness by the blood of the Lamb of God. The new self has come, bringing an image of righteousness and holiness. *"You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self...and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness."* (Ephesians 4:22-24). *Yet, how many of us still look at the old self, each time we gaze into the mirror. That's our residual self-image staring back at us. It encompasses everything that we are not ready to give up because we have crammed it way in the back and hidden it down deep inside. In some ways, it has become a strong part of what defines us as individuals, and for that reason, we feel more secure if we can hang onto it, even if it causes us pain and misery. However, the Apostle Paul imparts sound wisdom to the Colossians,*

"But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge, in the image of its Creator." (Col. 3:8-10).

The truth of the matter is, these things will eventually suffocate your spirit and steal the joy of your salvation. After a while, they build up inside and bubble over like a sticky tar, leaving a thick, black residue on everything it touches, making it difficult for the Light of Life to penetrate the heart. Therefore, Paul reminds us *“Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates the body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.” (2 Corinthians 7:1).*

Fighting for the Light

The best way to fight this tendency to focus on our residual self-image, is to begin to see yourself the way God sees you. You are His precious child, a masterpiece created to fulfill a specific purpose, cleansed of all sin and unrighteousness, and marked with the seal of the Holy Spirit, a deposit guaranteeing your inheritance as a child of the King.¹² You are unique, one of a kind, and there will never be anyone exactly like you in every way. Therefore, you know that you are a treasured possession, just like the temple jewels, made to reflect the splendor of the Glory of the Lord to all who happen to gaze upon your inner beauty. Even if it sounds unreal, it is the truth and it will eventually change the way you look at yourself. Once you begin believing the truth of your position in the kingdom of God, then you will begin to see yourself in a better light. The Light of Christ.

An Invitation to Apply the Message

- ◆ Look past your residual self-image.
- ◆ Focus on the Light.
- ◆ See yourself as God sees you.

¹² Ephesians 1:13-14, paraphrased.

Reality vs. The Dream World

“Welcome to the desert of the real.”

An intricate part of our understanding of reality comes from our five senses.

They interpret the environment around us. What would happen if we could no longer rely on those five senses for information? How would your perception of reality change? Well, this very thing happened to Neo as he discovered that he had been living in a dream world. The reality he thought he knew faded into a memory as he was awakened to the truth of life.

What is Real?

“What is real? How do you define “real”? If you are talking about what you can feel, smell, taste and see, then real is simply electrical signals interpreted by your brain.” At this point, Morpheus is baiting Neo, trying to get him to realize that there is more to his existence than what is defined by his physical senses. “This is the world you know, the world as it existed at the end of the 20th century.” He turns on the “Deep Image” TV to show Neo a portrayal of the life of fiction he had been living. “You’ve been living in a dream world, Neo. This is the world as it exists today.” Suddenly we see the real world, no make-up, no gloss over, no hidden secrets. “Welcome to the desert of “the real”. Plain and simple, we see an image of the world as it truly exists- the epitome of decay and desecration. Black with sin and wickedness, the world seethes with corruption and evil. It is rightly described as a desert because it lacks the Living Water needed to

bring truth and life. This is a perfect example of how God sees the world we live in every day.

A Dream World

The world is harsh to those that must endure it day after agonizing day. It can leave a “residue” on the spirit and soul of a person, just like the tarnish that builds up on a copper teapot. If that residue does not get removed each day, it builds up and eventually keeps the Light of Life from reflecting to the world. Sometimes this tarnish hinders our ability to see things, like the sins that are destroying our families, our jobs and the people we love. It interferes with our internal moral compass, and in an effort to justify our sins, we construct a dream world in our own mind. It becomes the ideal place to exist if you are looking to continue in your sin while claiming to follow God.

“ Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction;” (Galatians 6:7-8a). For “Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.” (Hebrews 4:13).

That’s why it becomes so important to seek the face of God on a daily basis. Let His Spirit of Truth refresh your soul and ground your feet in the Rock Eternal. *“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” (Romans 12:2a)*

Who is in Control?

Sometimes our dream world is built by a different set of circumstances. For example, we like to think that we are in complete control of ourselves, our circumstances and even other people. This is impossible, even by the laws that govern our physical

world. Yet, when we find ourselves in a situation that is spinning out of control, we begin to respond with fears, doubts, anger, frustration and unbelief. All of which create a spiritually unhappy place. These are not the responses a child of God should have to any situation. We are called to live by the Spirit, exhibiting the fruits of the Spirit at all times. *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” (Galatians 5:22).* If you are unwilling, or somehow unable, to let go of control, then you are existing in a self-imposed dream world that could be very detrimental to your spiritual wellbeing. Put your trust in God. He is faithful and just, and He knows how to take care of His precious children.

Your Mind Makes it Real

In short, a dream world is the reality we create for ourselves by pretending that everything is great and life is wonderful while we desperately try to fill the empty spaces with material things. Such conditions eventually lead to a cycle of perpetual unhappiness and depression as the soul becomes saturated with darkness. Living in a dream world is the equivalent to existing with a fog covering your brain. Eventually it will sear your conscious, harden your heart and damage your spirit. Only the truth can set you free from these harsh conditions built by human minds. *“Reality, however, is found in Christ.” (Colossians 2:17b).*

An Invitation to Apply the Message

- ◆ Come out of the desert into the Living Water of life.
- ◆ Remove the residue of life, daily.
- ◆ Do not conform to a “dream world” mentality
- ◆ Give control to God.
- ◆ Live by the Spirit.
- ◆ Reality is **only** found in Jesus Christ.

Liquification Of The Dead

“...where the dead are liquified and fed intravenously to the living.”

As Morpheus speaks these words, we are given a shocking image to behold: a baby, contained in a life-pod and sustained by liquid death via intravenous feedings. From this image we understand that the infant is in a state of weakness and fully dependent upon the system which supplies his physical needs. His dismal environment provides no stimulation for his imagination, intellect or his spirit. Therefore, it is perceived that his mental capacity or “maturity” will always remain in the infant stages even while his physical body ages. Because of this “conditioning”, he will remain a helpless infant unable to liberate himself from the system of bondage that he was born into, resulting in a tragic state of existence. Unfortunately this condition is all too common in today’s society.

Born Into Bondage

This helpless human condition has existed since the fall of mankind. It is our inherited weakness toward sin and the desires of the flesh. It has permeated every aspect of our human existence while seeking to destroy our God-given, internal moral compass. It’s iron claws dig deep into the soul of a person influencing their every word, thought and deed. In turn, we eat, sleep and breathe the sinful desires of our flesh while society “conditions” us to say, “It’s O.K., everybody does it.” This indulgence of the sinful

nature leads a soul into spiritual darkness where death and bondage are it's only companions. It is imperative that we endeavor to escape this horrendous spiritual condition; the life of our eternal souls depend on it.

Death as an Existence?

From God's point of view there exists two kinds of people on this earth: those who share in a personal relationship with Him, and those who do not. As a whole, society is overflowing with those who practice sexual immorality, selfish ambition, magic arts, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, jealousy, fits of rage, murder, slander, drunkenness and falsehoods.¹³ These are the walking dead of society. They dredge through life spiritually dead, locked in cages of sin built by human hands and minds. In essence, their existence is slavery to the sinful things that master them.¹⁴

At the most, this kind of existence offers a momentary satisfaction of the flesh while snuffing out the spirit by means of starvation. The eventual outcome of that individual is just like the infant being "physically maintained" in the artificial pod. Physical aging is present but, spiritual insight, maturity and wisdom are greatly lacking. Thus, the soul suffers incredible depravity while the flesh feeds on the "death" generated by a society ruled by the sinful desires of fallen mankind.

Be Alert to Deceptions

It's important to remember that Satan lives among the walking dead of society trying desperately to influence the "living" with subtle lies and deceptions. One of

¹³ See Galatians 5: 19-21 and Revelations 22:12-16.

¹⁴ See 2 Peter 2:19b.

Satan's grandest illusions is the manipulation of the media to promote sin that leads directly to spiritual death and destruction. The media encourages the indulgence of the sinful nature by promoting things like drinking, gambling, sexual immorality, selfish ambition, factions, material greed and idolatry while relentlessly assaulting an individual's self-esteem by pushing false ideas of the perfect self-image.

Unfortunately, this subtle deception is being ingested by millions of Christians worldwide causing it to ooze into our churches little by little. In increasing numbers, the churches of today are reflecting and mimicking the ways of the world and embracing them as their own instead of holding to Biblically sound doctrines based solely on the living Word of God. Churches that function without regard to purity, holiness and respect for God and His living Word are void of His supernatural power and will lead a soul down the road to death and destruction.

The continual ingestion of this "*liquification of the dead*" will greatly hinder any spiritual progress toward freedom from the bondage of sin. If we, as Christians, truly expect to mature in our walk with Jesus, then we must put an end to this continual feeding on the "death" of society. Therefore, do not partake of practices that lead to spiritual death. Wake-up and be alert to the lies and deception the enemy is feeding you with. Embrace life and use it to glorify the Father, the One who makes you pure and blameless in His sight.

"I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God. Remember, therefore what you have received and heard; obey it and repent," Revelation 3:1-3.

“See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.” Colossians 2:8

The Importance of Spiritual Purity

Practicing spiritual purity is an important concept that eludes many worldly Christians in today’s churches. The scriptures are chalked full of teachings regarding the Christian way of living by explaining our commission as ambassadors of Christ. We are continually urged to abstain from the sinful desires of the flesh while teaching, preaching and reflecting the love of Christ to all mankind. It is mandatory to purify your actions so as not to make Christ out as a minister of sin.¹⁵

As dearly loved children of God and ambassadors of His holy Word, we should behave according to these instructions:

- ◆ We are called to deny the sinful desires of the flesh, to take up our cross (or burden) daily, and to keep in step with the Spirit of God.

“Those who belong to Christ have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.” Galatians 5:24-25

- ◆ We are commanded to live by the Spirit and to exhibit the fruit of the Spirit to others.

“ So I say, live by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature...But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” Galatians 5:16, 22

- ◆ We must purify ourselves out of love for others, so that we may not lead any man into sin as a result of our own actions.

“ You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.” Galatians 5:13

¹⁵ See Galatians 2:17 (KJV)

“ We put no stumbling block in anyone’s path, so that our ministry will not be discredited.” 2 Corinthians 6:3

- ◆ We are to be a reflection of Christ, the Light, to the world.

“ For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather, expose them.” Ephesians 5:8-11

“ You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled...But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.” 1 Thessalonians 5:5-6,8

- ◆ As children of God, we have become ministers of His holy Word and ambassadors of His love to the world.

“ We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” 2 Corinthians 5: 20-22

- ◆ As Christians, we are the dwelling place of the living God. We have become the temple of God.

“ For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “ I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God and they will be my people.” 2 Corinthians 6:16

- ◆ Not only are we the temple of the Lord, but as servants of Christ, we are to conduct our actions in consistency with the holy priesthood dedicated to serving God.

“ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light...Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.” 1 Peter 2: 9, 11-12

“ For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.” 1 Thessalonians 4:7-8

- ◆ Finally, we tie all these things together and hold to the promises and the hope we find in Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior.

“ Since we have these promises dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.” 2 Corinthians 7:1

Embrace Life!

Jesus Christ came to earth as a living example to show mankind the way of abundant life. He walked in holiness, righteousness, love, mercy and humility. As His followers we must endeavor to do the same. We must follow in His footsteps by patterning our lives after His. By dying to self and denying the sinful nature, Christ can live through us and we can become the extension of His body to this world. We take on a new identity and begin to reflect that image to the world. This is our living testimony of the transforming power of God at work in our lives.

However impossible it may seem, it is reality. Do not think it is an unattainable illusion. Christ faced every temptation, pain and sorrow common to mankind. He paved the way to truth and a more abundant life by creating the path we are to follow with His own human feet. For these reasons, it is imperative that we, through the power of the Spirit of God, clothe ourselves with compassion, humility, mercy, holiness, righteousness and purity of mind and thought- we must live as holy people of God. This is our calling and our commission if we are to be effective witnesses of our Lord and Savior.

Accept the challenge to grow in your relationship with God. Take your worship

to a higher level. Purge those things from your life that are suffocating your spirit. Yield to the prompting of the Holy Spirit as God begins to mould you into a vessel suitable for service. Empty yourself and fill-up on the Spirit of the living God. Embrace the abundant life of spiritual freedom, supernatural peace and overflowing joy that Christ sacrificed His life to bring you. *“So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”* John 8:36. Live your freedom!

An Invitation to Apply the Message

- ◆ Follow the Way of Life.
- ◆ Avoid contamination by sinful things that lead to death.
- ◆ Be aware of Satan’s deceptions.
- ◆ Obey God and repent of all sin and wickedness.
- ◆ Embrace your freedom in Christ.
- ◆ Live a holy life.

The Door

“I can only show you the door. You’re the one who has to walk through it.”

Time and again Morpheus instructed Neo on the difference between “knowing the path” and “walking the path,” but what was he really saying? What is the meaning behind this phrase, “I can only show you the door. You’re the one who has to walk through it ”? How does a simple concept like this one apply to a Christian’s everyday life?

Symbolically the “door” is Jesus Christ, as indicated by His own words, *“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6)*, and *“I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved.” (John 10:9a)*. Therefore, the only way to God is through Jesus Christ, so it is only fitting that He be referred to as the “gate” or the “door” to God. It should also be noted that the door is narrow, and only those who walk on the narrow path will enter through the narrow gate. *“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow is the road to life, and only a few find it.” (Matthew 7:13-14)*. So, someone can tell you all about Jesus, and show you how to live, but ultimately, you are the only one who can make a heart decision to follow Jesus Christ. You are the only one who can “walk” through that “door” to God. The choice is yours and yours alone.

Jesus the Door

In a glorious display of humanity mixed with divinity, Jesus delivered words of

truth and life to a world blackened by sin while exemplifying full submission to God's will for His life.¹⁶ He challenged all of mankind to rise above tedious religious traditions and to look beyond the confinement of the Law to the freedom of the Spirit.¹⁷ He showed us how to have compassion, love, understanding and forgiveness as we endeavor to honor and serve one another in truth.¹⁸ Through His life and teachings, Jesus showed us how to persevere in the midst of great trials and to suffer persecution for the sake of righteousness.¹⁹ With the sacrifice of His perfect, sinless life, He paved the way for mankind to begin rebuilding its broken relationship with the Creator of the universe.²⁰ Through repentance and faith in God,²¹ by the power of the Holy Spirit,²² man can now live fully restored, following in the footsteps of the Savior, righteous and holy, cleansed by the blood of the sacrificial Lamb of God, Jesus the Christ.²³

Knowing vs. Doing

On the *Nebuchadnezzar*, Morpheus is responsible for teaching and leading this small band of freedom fighters, enlightening them to the truth while instructing them in proper conduct and behavior. He leads by example, showing them how to live by way of his own actions. He would not require anything of his crew that he was not willing to do himself. This is the exact method of training and instruction that Jesus used to teach His disciples how to “talk the talk” and “walk the walk” of true life. Once you have made a

¹⁶ Matthew 26:39

¹⁷ Matthew 13:36, Luke 11:46-52

¹⁸ Mark 8:2-3, 11:43-45, Luke 10:30-37

¹⁹ Luke 12:4-12

²⁰ John 4:21-24, Luke 19:10

²¹ Luke 13:2-5, John 3:16

²² John 14:26

²³ Mark 14:24-25

decision to follow Jesus, then you must back up your decision with action. That's the difference between "knowing the path" and "walking the path". Jesus explains it this way, *"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."* (John 8:12), therefore, *"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."* (Luke 9:23). So, you can see that there is a certain amount of responsibility that comes with making a decision to follow Christ. You are responsible for your actions and you must learn to bring those actions into submission to the Spirit of God. This means that you must endeavor to deny the natural sinful-self by avoiding sin at all costs, while embracing that which comes from intimate contact with God's Holy Spirit.

Preparing to Walk

The first time Morpheus taught Neo about walking through the door, he included things that had to be done in order for Neo to become effective in his walk. He said, "I'm trying to free your mind, Neo. You have to let it all go-fear doubt and disbelief." So part of making a choice to walk through that door, is learning how to trust and have faith in God. How? This means you must decide to make Him Lord over everything in your life, including your actions, your thoughts, your emotions and even your human reasoning and logic. In order to walk in freedom, you must let go of the fears, doubts and disbelief that plague your mind. You will not be effective in furthering the Kingdom of God, until you learn to put your trust in the Lord. The Bible gives us many examples of how fears, doubts and disbelief act as hindrances in the walk of a believer:

- ◆ *"He could not do any miracles there...and He was amazed at their lack of faith."*
Mark 6:5-6

- ◆ *“Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord save me!” Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “Why do you doubt?” Matthew 14:29-31*
- ◆ *“But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.” James 1:6-7*

You can see that fears, doubt, and disbelief will only hinder your growth as a Christian. So when you go to Jesus with your fears and doubts, follow the example given by the father of the deaf and mute boy who said, *“I do believe, help me overcome my unbelief!” (Mark 9:25)*. You will find that Jesus is kind and compassionate to those who seek, and He will help you overcome any hindrances in your life. As you begin to let go, you will experience more freedom, deeper faith and a fuller relationship with your Savior, making it easier to crown Him King over your life.

A Word of Encouragement

If we simply trust God with all of our fears, doubts and disbelief, then He Promises that we will be able to accomplish anything because, *“All things are possible with God.” (Mark 10:27)*. Jesus is faithful as He encourages us:

- ◆ *“Don’t be afraid, just believe.” Mark 5:36*
- ◆ *“Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you...do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” John 14:27*
- ◆ *“Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?” John 11:40*
- ◆ *“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in Me.” John 14:1*
- ◆ *“I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed...nothing will be impossible for you.” Matthew 17:20-21*

Do not fear, do not doubt, walk in belief and faith for this is how God wants you to follow Him. The choice is yours. I can only show you the door, you're the one who has to walk through it.

An Invitation to Apply the Message

- ◆ Jesus is the door.
- ◆ Back up your decision with action.
- ◆ Let go of all fear, doubt and disbelief.
- ◆ Trust God and step out in faith.

The City of Zion

“If the war was over today, Zion is where the party would be.”

The dictionary defines Zion as a place or religious community regarded as sacredly devoted to God. Historically, the city of Zion was located in Jerusalem and served as the center of religious life for the nation of Israel. It was the city of King David, rich in beauty and full of life. In those times, it was the center of the world, as nations were drawn there “to learn its laws, share in its love, and to walk in its light.”,²⁴ as described by the prophet Isaiah, *“The Law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem... Come, O house of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the Lord.”* Isaiah 2:3,5.

The Heavenly Jerusalem

Scripture also reveals Zion as *“the city of the living God”* and *“the heavenly Jerusalem”*, indicating that Zion is a holy place set aside for the holy people of God. In the book of Revelation, the Apostle John gives a detailed description of the new Jerusalem, the inherited, eternal destination of the Saints of God.

“I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband... It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. It had a great high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates... The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. The foundations of the city were decorated with every kind of precious stone... The twelve gates were twelve

²⁴Taken from: Concise Bible Dictionary, 1973, p. 845

pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass...The city does not need the sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it...The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it...Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and His servants will serve Him...They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign forever and ever. Revelation 21:2,11-12,18-19a,21,23-24,26; Revelation 22:1-3,5.

Zion, the Lord's Favorite

Metaphorically speaking, Zion is also considered a center of blessing, a source from where blessings proceed and a favored place of the Lord, as described by King David in the Psalms.

"...The Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are said of you O city of God...Indeed, of Zion it will be said, "This one and that one were born in her, and the Most High himself will establish her." Psalm 87:2-3,5

"The Mighty One, God, the Lord, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to the place where it sets. From Zion, perfect in beauty, God shines forth." Psalm 50:1-2

"Sing praises to the Lord, enthroned in Zion; proclaim among the nations what He has done. Psalm 9:11

"But you, O Lord, sit enthroned forever; your renown endures through all generations. You will arise and have compassion on Zion, for it is time to show favor to her...So the name of the Lord will be declared in Zion and his praise in Jerusalem when the peoples and the kingdoms assemble to worship the Lord. Psalm 102:12-13,21-22.

There are many parallels between this Biblical Zion and the fictional city of Zion in the movie.

The Center of Life

Historically, Biblical Zion served as the “center” of religious life for the nations of the world. In the movie, Zion is the last human city, buried deep underground near the core of the earth, literally in the center of the world. It is dedicated to supporting the resistance and is home to those humans who have been liberated from the bondage of the Matrix, making it a place of such great importance that its destruction would mean the end of the human race.

The Remnant

The Bible indicates that throughout the generations there exists a chosen remnant of God’s holy people who serve him diligently, working to complete his perfect will.²⁵ The prophet Isaiah declares the words of the Lord in regard to this remnant of holy people, “*Once more a remnant of the house of Judah will take root below and bear fruit above. For out of Jerusalem will come a remnant, and out of Mt. Zion a band of survivors.*” *2 Kings 19:30-31*. I know of no better way to describe Morpheus and his crew than as a band of survivors from Zion, a remnant of people seeking the “One” who will liberate the rest of mankind.

How does that fit in where Neo is concerned? Easily. Morpheus believes that Neo is the “One” who will overcome the Matrix and free the people from Agent control. This is a parallel to the life of Jesus who came to free the world from the bondage of sin and death, while overcoming the powers and principalities of darkness. When Neo was awakened to the truth he became an integral part of this remnant of survivors from Zion. As Neo endeavored to live the truth, his true identity was revealed for all to see. Neo was

²⁵ Romans 11:5

the One the Oracle prophesied about. This also parallels a prophecy made about Jesus, *“The deliverer will come from Zion...” Romans 11:26a.*

Simply put, the city of Zion is an established dwelling place of the Most High God. It’s historical roots reach back to the throne of King David, who captured the fortress and named it the City of David.²⁶ Generations later, the Messiah, a direct descendant of the royal bloodlines of King David, would offer His sinless life as sacrifice for the sins of the world. Those who overcome and believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, will inherit an eternal position in the new Jerusalem, and God will once again dwell among His people. Just as it was in the beginning.

An Invitation to Apply the Message

- ◆ Recognize the city of Zion as the Holy City.
- ◆ Recognize that the Holy City is reserved for the children of God.
- ◆ Jesus is the Redeemer from the city of Zion; bloodline from King David.
- ◆ Zion is the dwelling place of the Most High.
- ◆ The new Jerusalem is the promise land for the Saints of God.
- ◆ Endeavor to be there!

²⁶ 2 Samuel 5:6-9, 2 Chronicles 11:4-9

Heavenly Messengers

“...a genuine child of Zion”

Angels are very popular in our society today. It's not hard to find information on their existence. Throughout the generations, angels have been a popular subject of nearly every expression of art including paintings, sculptures, dance and music. They have existed as a source of wonder and awe since the beginning of time.

The Bible teaches us that angels are “*messengers of God*” who operate under God's supreme authority. They are powerful, majestic spiritual beings that delight in worshiping God and executing His will. They have appeared to people in form and visions as warriors,²⁷ winged creatures²⁸, messengers²⁹, keepers of the elements,³⁰ and deliverer's of God's wrath and judgement.³¹ They serve many purposes in accordance with God's will. One of those purposes is ministering to the saints of God. “*Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?*” *Hebrews 1:14*

Angelic Workers

Angels were created to worship and serve God, so it is no surprise to find them actively *working* in the spiritual realm in accordance to God's will. They have been

²⁷ Daniel 10:10-14

²⁸ Ezekiel 1:4-24

²⁹ Luke 2: 9-14

³⁰ Revelation 7:1-3

³¹ Revelation 15:6-7

instrumental in the delivering of God's people from many incredible circumstances throughout time. Angels of the Lord have liberated saints from prison cells,³² delivered messages of joy,³³ administered physical nourishment,³⁴ and supported God's anointed in battle.³⁵ Although there are countless testimonies to the miraculous appearance of angels, many times they operate *behind the scenes* and go virtually unnoticed. One thing is certain. They help support and deliver the saints of God from all kinds of situations.

Angels of the Matrix

The Matrix contains two scenes that portray an important type of *behind the scenes* angelic ministering. The angels of the Matrix are Tank and Dozer. It is only fitting that they have names representing machines that are *workers* by nature. They were not born into the Matrix like Neo, so they could never enter the programmed reality of the Matrix because they lack the "hardware" to do so. Their existence is defined by supporting and ministering to the crew aboard the *Nebuchadnezzar*.

A miraculous Deliverance

The first show of *behind the scenes* angelic support comes from Tank in the form of a miracle. Cypher has already attempted to kill Tank and has successfully eliminated Dozer in the process. Neo is his next target as he explains,

"If Morpheus was right, then there is no way I can pull this plug. If he's the One, then there would have to be some kind of miracle to save him...How can he be the One if he's dead?"

³² Acts 12:5-7

³³ Luke 1:26-33

³⁴ 1 Kings 19:5-7

³⁵ 2 Kings 6:15-17

Seconds later, before Cypher has a chance to pull the plug on Neo, Tank emerges, wounded and armed. With one shot the danger is eliminated and Cypher is dead. Neo's life is spared through Tank's miraculous intervention. As a result, Neo is free to rescue Morpheus and overcome the Matrix.

Support From Above

After the fight in the subway tunnel against Agent Smith, Neo dashes through the city looking for his way out of the Matrix. Fortunately, he acquires a phone and dials the operator, "I need a little help." Tank responds by giving him directions to the nearest exit. Then it's a neck and neck race to the finish.

This jaunt through the city reminds me of Jesus and His prayer in the garden of Gethsemane before He was handed over to the authorities.

"An angel from heaven appeared to Him and strengthened Him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground." Luke 22: 43-44.

In this example, Tank is like the angel that was sent to strengthen and encourage Jesus in His time of need. Neo called with an impending need and Tank responded with "support from above," giving Neo the strength and encouragement he needed to continue. Both of these examples illustrate how God directs His angelic hosts to provide support, encouragement and deliverance to His saints, in times of need.

A Word of Caution

Angels are incredible spiritual beings capable of miraculous things, but they should **never** become the focus of worship. The Bible gives us stern warning against this

kind of distraction.

“Do not let anybody who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions.” Colossians 2:18

Again, an angel of the Lord was sent to deliver a message in Revelation to the Apostle John:

“At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God!” Revelation 19:10

No angel of the Lord would ever accept worship. The **only** one who ever tried to elicit worship for himself was Lucifer and he was cast down from heaven with his followers for trying to steal God’s glory. Take heed of this warning especially in these times when angels are so accessible. Worship God and God alone.

An Invitation to Apply the Message

- ◆ Recognize the position angels play in executing God’s will.
- ◆ Angels are magnificent, powerful spiritual beings.
- ◆ Do not get sidetracked by their splendor.
- ◆ Angels are helpful in spiritual battle.
- ◆ Angels provide strength, support and direction from God.
- ◆ Angels are ministering servants dedicated to worshiping God.

The Training Program

“Jujitsu, I’m going to learn jujitsu?”

Every Christian, new or old, must endure a certain amount of training before, during and sometimes even after engaging the enemy in spiritual warfare. Even though the exact amount may vary from person to person, most Christians are in a continual state of training and learning how to effectively overcome the enemy. Although spiritual in nature, this warfare can have some very real physical implications that will drain your physical and spiritual self. Seeking to weaken your defenses, the enemy will engage you on every level, trying to get you to drop your guard and take your focus off God. That’s why it is very important to thoroughly prepare for battle.

Laws of the New Nature

As a “new-believer”, Neo is unprepared for the challenge of defending himself against the Agents and therefore must undergo rigorous training to learn the rules that govern the new path he is walking. His journey begins with an in -depth program of study in the martial arts where he absorbs all the information as it is “downloaded” into his brain. Ten hours later, he is ready to act out what he has just learned with Morpheus, his instructor.

As they “plug-in”, the scene changes from the deck of the hovercraft to a Japanese-style dojo where Morpheus begins to inform Neo,

“This is a sparring program, similar to the programmed reality of the Matrix. It has the same basic rules. Rules like gravity. What you must learn is that these rules are no different than the rules of a computer system. Some of them can be bent. Others can be broken. Understand? Then hit me, if you can.”

They engage in a spectacular fight sequence that is typical of martial arts training. Neo attempts to hit Morpheus, but each blow is blocked with almost effortless speed and agility. The fight continues until Morpheus knocks Neo into a support post causing him to hit the floor. Pausing for effect, Morpheus asks, “How did I beat you?” Neo responds by indicating that it was his speed that gives him the advantage.

Morpheus answers, “Do you think my being stronger or faster has anything to do with my muscles in this place?” and “Do you really believe that’s air you are breathing now?”

Each question causes Neo to think and then respond as they begin again. Only this time, Neo is much faster and he is able to defeat Morpheus.

The training programs Christians use are slightly different because they don’t take place in a dojo using the fighting techniques of a martial artist. They take place in real life situations, using the Word of God and persistent prayer.

“For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.” 2 Corinthians 10:3-4.

However, sometimes it helps us to visualize the battle with Satan if we can put it in terms of a fight. That’s why the dojo scene is so expressive of this concept, because it helps us to visualize physically fighting the enemy, making it easier to distance yourself from the problem and refocus your attention on the solution, which is God. The Apostle Paul recognized the same thing nearly 2000 years ago,

“ For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realm.” Ephesians 6:12.

Two Sets of Rules

We know that, like us, the world is made of two distinct parts.

- ◆ The physical realm, which includes everything you can see, smell, feel, taste or touch.
- ◆ The spiritual realm, which includes everything else.

The tricky part is learning to balance the two and understanding that there is a separate set of rules that govern each realm of existence. We have to realize the same thing Neo did, that some of these rules can be bent or even broken. For example, the Bible lists countless scriptures of supernatural occurrences that are almost unbelievable to the natural mind. Instances where the physical limitations and laws of the natural world were overcome by the supernatural power of God, such as:

- ◆ Water from a rock. (*Exodus 17:1-7*)
- ◆ Parting of the Red Sea. (*Exodus 14:13-17*)
- ◆ A man living 3 days in the belly of a large fish. (*Jonah 1:12-17*)
- ◆ Walking on water. (*Matthew 14:25-33*)
- ◆ Turning water to wine. (*John 2:1-12*)
- ◆ Raising someone from the dead. (*John 11:1-44*)

These examples and countless others, teach us to look past the physical laws and limitations that govern this world to the Creator of the universe for supernatural answers to our everyday problems.

Our Multidimensional God

In doing this, we have to remember, that while we are three -dimensional creatures

living in a three -dimensional world, we are governed by a multidimensional God, who is omnipotent, all seeing, all -knowing and able to work in all dimensions simultaneously.

But because we are so accustomed to using our five senses to interpret things, we sometimes forget to look beyond the temporal and into the eternal. Ordinarily we think in only two dimensions, limiting our vision to the physical things around us. This way of thinking encourages Christians to rely on the physical world for the solutions to the problems they face on a daily basis. The effects of two-dimensional thinking can have a devastating impact on the spiritual state of a Christian causing a variety of ineffective spiritual conditions such as:

- ◆ Lack of faith in the Almighty God. *“And without faith it is impossible to please God...” Hebrews 11:6a.*
- ◆ Promotes natural thinking and reasoning instead of depending on God for understanding and wisdom. *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding...Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and shun evil.” Proverbs 3:5,7*
- ◆ Promotes focus on physical things and the things of the world instead of God. *“You adulterous people, don’t you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.” James 4:4*
- ◆ Encourages doubts and unbelief in the mind of a Christian. *“But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.” James 1:6-7*
- ◆ Promotes self-reliance instead of dependence upon the Almighty God. *“What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don’t get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you do ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.” James 4:1-3*

In our dealings with God, we always need to remember that He is multi-dimensional and capable of seeing everything that is happening to us and inside us. If we can come to that realization, then we have begun to develop our three-dimensional thinking skills, which allows us to believe God for the unbelievable. If we are to ever come to a fuller understanding of our multidimensional God, then we must endeavor to see past this physical world and look to God, who has faithfully shown us, through example, that He offers amazing answers to the problems that entangle us. We simply have to learn to trust and believe Him for those solutions.

The Spiritual Realm

One of the more obvious differences between the physical and spiritual world is that we all have the same access to the spiritual realm. Just like Neo learning to fight in the programmed reality of the do-jo, we need to realize that the things that distinguish us as individuals, like size, strength, or speed, do not apply in the spiritual realm because they are based on physical attributes that do not effect our spiritual state. Things that do effect our spiritual state include but are not limited to:

- ◆ Our knowledge of God.
- ◆ Application of the knowledge of God.
- ◆ Exercising our spiritual freedom in Christ.
- ◆ Understanding the rules and weaponry of spiritual warfare.
- ◆ Knowledge of the enemy and his tactics.

Of course there are many other things that could potentially effect our current spiritual state, but these are just the basics.

Knowledge of God and His Infallible Word

Knowing what the Bible says and standing firm on those words, is the single most effective weapon you have, second only to prayer. It is extremely important to have a strong foundation in the Word of God. The Bible contains everything you need to learn about the rules of spiritual warfare, including lessons on weaponry, armor and effective fighting tactics. The Word of God even reveals the spiritual tactics the enemy uses to try and defeat Christians. By studying the Bible and applying your heart and mind to God's instruction, you can learn to be an effective Christian in every area of your life.

“My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. He holds victory in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless, for he guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones. Then you will understand what is right and just and fair—every good path. For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul. Discretion will protect you, and understanding will guard you. Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men...It will save you also from the adulteress, from the wayward wife with her seductive words, who has left the partner of her youth and ignored the covenant she made with God...Thus you will walk in the ways of good men and keep to the paths of the righteous.” Proverbs 2:1-12,16-17,20.

The Bible can do all this and more if you are willing to put the time in to learn the Word.

Spiritual Freedom is a Key

Another important advantage you have is your spiritual freedom in Christ Jesus. The amount of success you have walking the Christian path is directly proportional to the

amount of spiritual freedom you exercise. This freedom begins with evaluating the current state of your heart and mind.

“You were taught with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.” Ephesians 4:22-24.

This means you must overcome the mind and the flesh before you can live in true spiritual freedom, putting on the new self, that was created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Imagine an orangutan, a creation of God, just like you and me. Most wild animals know their freedom because it is an inborn feeling. When they are captured and caged, they begin to feel their captivity, it shows in their eyes. They look forlorn and subdued, as if they realize they will never run free again. Picture an orangutan with this defeated look in his eyes, sitting in a cage, holding a key in his hand. This key will unlock the cage that holds him captive, but he does not use it, he just sits and wishes it would all go away. Sometimes, we are just like this caged animal. We are filled with the Holy Spirit of God, our Creator, and yet we allow ourselves to be caged by fears, doubts, disbelief, unforgiveness, hurt, lies, and deceptions. The good news is that God has placed the key to our freedom right in our hands. Jesus is the key to your freedom, He already died to free you from the bondage of sin and the law. Why then, do you still live like a caged animal, unwilling to open the door and walk out? God can show you the way, but you must be willing to walk the path to freedom. *“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.” Galatians 5:1.*

Applying the Training

True to life, and shortly after his training, Neo gets a chance to exercise his new skills as he and Trinity execute a plan to save Morpheus from the Agents. They walk into a government building fully loaded with guns and ammo, intending to shoot their way past the guards and up to the room where Morpheus is being held. Detoured to the roof, they hijack a helicopter and liberate Morpheus with no time to spare. This is a major power play on Neo's part as he goes in loaded with weapons and a mind focused on one thing. Defeat is not an option. This is the same way we must learn to approach our difficulties in life.

The Bible contains many stories of warriors like Neo. In 2 Samuel we find the mighty men of King David. Just like Neo, they each had an opportunity to take a stand for what they believed, and the Lord brought about great victories as a result of their determination.

"These are the names of David's mighty men: Josheb-Basshebeth, a Tahkemonite, was chief of the Three; he raised his spear against eight hundred men, whom he killed in one encounter. Next to him was Eleazer son of Dodai the Ahohite. As one of the mighty men, he was with David when they taunted the Philistines gathered at Pas Dammim for battle. Then the men of Israel retreated, but he stood his ground and struck down the Philistines till his hand grew tired and froze to the sword. The Lord brought about great victory that day. The troops returned to Eleazar, but only to strip the dead. Next to him was Shammah son of Agee the Hararite. When the Philistines banded together at a place where there was a field full of lentils, Israel's troops fled from them. But Shammah took his stand in the middle of the field. He defended it and struck the Philistines down, and the Lord brought about a great victory." 2 Samuel 23:8-12.

None of these men doubted or questioned their situations, they simply made up their minds, planted their feet and didn't stop fighting until they reached the goal. In each case the Lord brought about great victory because of the determination and perseverance driving them.

Lessons from Biblical Neos

We can learn several important lessons from the example these brave men set:

1. They didn't run at the first sign of trouble. In fact, they stood still while everyone else ran away, leaving them virtually alone.
2. They persevered through everything! Even at the risk of losing their own lives in the process, they persevered. Every time they fell down, they got back up and kept fighting. This is one of the most important things to learn in any battle. Do not focus on the fact that you have stumbled or even fallen. Instead focus on getting up, every time. It's the key to perseverance.
3. We do not overcome by our own strength. We must learn to draw strength from God in times of difficulty. We are well aware of our physical limitations as humans, but God can empower us to operate beyond our normal state of existence in times of need. He can strengthen our physical bodies as well as our spiritual selves.

It is clear that God operates in this way since we know that no man, operating under normal human limitations, would have the strength or power to defeat eight hundred men alone. Biblical stories witness to the fact that God is not only capable of doing it, He has done it in the past, and since He is the same yesterday, today and forever,³⁶ it shows us that at any time, God could put us in a similar situation and bring about a great victory in our own lives.

You can now see that the training you receive has a big impact on the battles you will fight. Overcoming a worldly mindset and the flesh are difficult tasks, but can be done in your life with persistent prayer and application of Biblical teachings. God will always prepare you well in advance for any situation you will need to overcome. It's just a matter of applying what you have learned and exercising the skills He has already given you in combination with the weapons and tactical knowledge you possess as a soldier for

³⁶ Hebrews 13:8

Christ. *“I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.” Philippians 4:13*

An Invitation to Apply the Message

- ◆ Stand on the Word of God.
- ◆ Exercise spiritual freedom.
- ◆ Put to death worldly mindset and fleshly tendencies.
- ◆ Apply Biblical knowledge in your Christian walk.
- ◆ Apply knowledge of spiritual warfare.
- ◆ Learn to disarm the enemy through application of the Word.
- ◆ Persevere and overcome.
- ◆ Look to God for strength to endure the battle.
- ◆ Have faith! Believe God for the unbelievable.
- ◆ Live righteously and victoriously.

The Arsenal of Warfare

“Guns. Lot’s of guns.”

Preparing for confrontation with the enemy of your soul requires more than just learning all the right moves. In order to be effective, a good soldier must also equip himself with armor and weaponry while growing in competence and proficiency. Naturally, the next step in building up a suitable defense is learning about the spiritual armor and weapons that are provided for your use. Understand that these articles of warfare are crafted from the finest materials available and, although spiritual in nature, they are highly effective in warding off the enemy. *“Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.” Ephesians 6:11.*

The Armor of God

The “full armor of God” is comprised of six separate but equally important pieces of “spiritual armor” that are designed to protect the more vulnerable parts of the body. We can find a description of this armor in the 6th chapter of Ephesians where Paul gives us a tangible representation by likening it to the battle garments of a Roman soldier.

“Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.” Ephesians 6:14-17.

This armor was given to provide protection from specific tactics the devil employs against us as soldiers in the army of God. Likewise, each piece of armor has an

important spiritual significance that corresponds to the body part it protects.

Armor of Truth

Truth is the first article of armor, and it is compared to a belt buckled around your waist. This comparison is designed to give you a clear picture of the importance of truth and the position of protection that truth occupies. By definition, a belt is a band worn around the waist to support clothing or secure tools and weapons. So, truth is the means by which a soldier can equip himself to do battle. Because it occupies the waist area, it serves to protect the center of your being and at the same time it holds everything together. Therefore, truth becomes the building block for acquiring the rest of the armor.

Righteousness, the Bulletproof Vest

Righteousness is the next piece of armor that every Christian should adorn. It is likened to a breastplate because it is responsible for protecting the torso, a place that houses all the vulnerable organs of your body, including the heart. A wound in this area of your body could prove to be fatal, and that's why righteousness is so important. You must live by the truth and walk in righteousness, as defined by the Word of God,

- ◆ Be righteous in the things you do by obeying God's commands. *"...not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith."*
Philippians 3:9.
- ◆ Avoid sin and offer yourself as a living sacrifice to do the will of God. *"...now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life."*
Romans 6:22.

Adorn yourself with the righteousness that comes from faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to God's Word, and you will obtain protection from wounds that lead to death, inflicted by the enemy. *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."* Romans 6:23.

Holy Footwear

The next article of protection is footwear designed not only to keep you on solid ground, but also to expedite your travels. Even the best soldiers would not make it far if they did not have good footwear to protect their feet as they travel over the uneven ground. Paul encourages us to have our *"feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace"* so that by doing this, we make ourselves alert and ready to do God's will, just like a soldier departing for battle on behalf of the Kingdom he defends. There is a threefold advantage to wearing this special spiritual footwear:

1. The definition of "gospel" is good news. By adorning these spiritual shoes, one would be readying themselves to spread the good news about the saving grace of Jesus Christ.
2. Preaching the gospel of salvation brings peace to the souls of the lost while comforting those who walk in the freedom of the truth.
3. The peace that passes all understanding will abide with you and carry you through the storms of life, bearing witness to the gospel as the solution for the everyday problems of those who are unsaved.

As spoken by the prophet Isaiah, *"How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, 'Your God reigns!'"* Isaiah 52:7

Shield of Faith

“In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.” Ephesians 6:16. A shield is used as protection from small weapons fire, like spears, arrows, rocks and bullets. Our shield in spiritual warfare is faith in Jesus Christ who is able to deliver us from any situation or circumstance. Our faith, just like a shield, acts as a buffer between us and the enemy, safeguarding us against the lies that the evil one uses.

When we correctly use our shield of faith, the enemy becomes frustrated by his inability to penetrate our defenses and then must flee. Many victories have been won by soldiers correctly using their shield as a defense.

Helmet of Salvation

The helmet of salvation is the last piece of armor that we are given to use in our defense against the enemy of our souls. A helmet offers protection of the head, where the mind resides. Of all the strongholds that Satan can have in your life, control of the mind is one of the most powerful. Your helmet of salvation will protect your mind from this kind of attack brought by the enemy.

Salvation is a complex word that carries a variety of definitions and meanings that should be understood by all Christians. In both Hebrew and Greek, the word “salvation” is used to communicate the ideas of deliverance, safety, healing, preservation and soundness while, also encompassing the redemptive acts and processes such as: justification, grace, redemption, atonement, forgiveness, sanctification and glorification.

There are three tenses of the word “salvation” that apply to the Christian life.

First and foremost, the repentant Christian *has been* saved, not only from the guilt, but also from the penalty of sin. Second, as an ongoing process, a Christian is continually *being* saved or delivered from the control of the sinful nature, thus allowing freedom to live by the Spirit of God. Third, a Christian *will be* saved at the second coming of the Lord when he will be raised up incorruptible and transformed into the glorious likeness of the Savior. By employing the helmet of salvation you simultaneously bring into effect each of the meanings listed above as it applies to the past, present and future.

The Sword of the Spirit

The last article that we are given is not a piece of armor, it's a weapon that Paul describes as the "*sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God*". This special spiritual sword is unique because it has a variety of extremely effective uses, only one of which is a weapon. The Bible defines it like this, "*For the Word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*"

Hebrews 4:12

This instrument of warfare is the only weapon you have been given to defend yourself with, so it is extremely important that you become proficient in its use. For example, a soldier practices sword fighting so he can perfect the technique involved in wielding his weapon. The more he practices the more he becomes familiar with the weight and feel of the weapon in his hand. In short, it becomes a part of him, an extension of his own body. Not only does he master the technique but he masters the weapon as well. As Christians we must endeavor to do the same with our sword, the

Word of God. We must make ourselves so comfortable with it's contents that it becomes an intricate part of who we are, an extension of ourselves.

Knowing how to effectively use the sword of the Spirit is just as important as becoming familiar with its contents. The power of the sword is in the *spoken* Word of God. We know that *speaking* the Word is powerful because God *spoke* the world into existence and it happened! His *spoken* Words became Light and life to the planet we live on, an example of the power His mighty Word carries.³⁷ We can put this idea in modern terms by likening the sword of the Spirit (the Bible), to a common weapon of our day, a loaded gun. The gun must be fired in order to be fully effective in defending its user. Think of *speaking* the Word of God in the same way, like bullets from your mouth straight toward Satan, the enemy of your soul.

The Word as a Weapon

Now, take that mental image and apply it to the scene in the movie where Neo and Trinity are preparing themselves to rescue Morpheus and engage in battle with the Agents. They are standing in the construct program ordering what they need, and suddenly, out of nothing, appears endless rows of loaded weapons for their use. Imagine that each of those weapons is symbolic of scripture from the Word of God. Now do you see a clear picture of how much ammunition you have at your disposal, to use against the enemy? A word of caution: always be alert and fully aware that the enemy is carrying weapons too. Satan knows scripture and will try and use it to his advantage against you. It's the same strategy he employed in trying to tempt Jesus when he was at his weakest

³⁷ Genesis 1:3

point.

Nevertheless, hold fast to the truth, clothe yourself with righteousness from above, and be peaceful in action and speech while you walk in faith, protected by the salvation that comes from obedience and belief in Jesus Christ, the Savior. As the Apostle Paul taught the Corinthian church,

“For though we live in the world we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.” 2 Corinthians 10:4.

With this armor of life, you are sure to be victorious!

An Invitation to Apply the Message

- ◆ Adorn the full armor of God.
- ◆ Live the Truth.
- ◆ Be righteous and peaceful, ready to share the gospel.
- ◆ Offer yourself to the will of God.
- ◆ Practice faith in God.
- ◆ Gain proficiency with the sword of the Spirit.

The Jump Program

“Free your mind.”

As a basic part of Neo’s training, he finds himself facing the jump program. The jump program is designed to test one’s ability to overcome fear, doubt and disbelief, in order to leap from the roof of one building to another. Morpheus sets an example by taking the first leap, encouraging Neo to “let go of all fear, doubt and disbelief.” He sails easily from one roof to the other, leaving a difficult task facing Neo. Mustering all the courage and belief he can find, Neo races to the edge and jumps. It isn’t enough. Neo finds himself coming up short, and falling to the pavement far below.

Testing the Faith

The jump program is simply a computer simulation paralleling a very real situation that most of us face daily. It’s a test of faith that requires trainees to do the impossible. It asks them to defy what their senses tell them cannot be done, and do it anyway. Reason tells us to “*look before you leap*”, whereas, faith tells us to “*believe that which you cannot see*”. This is why the jump program is essential training for all Christians.

The Bible gives us many excellent examples of men and women of great faith. Yet, our difficulty lies in the struggle to follow in their footsteps. Just like Morpheus leaping easily to the next building, the great prophets of the Bible made it look so easy. Each and every one trusted God even when they could not see results in the physical

world around them. That is why the Bible defines faith as *“being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.” Hebrews 11:1.*

Be encouraged to trust God for what we do not yet see, because we know that God created the entire universe with one command, therefore, we have faith strong enough to believe in God, and that means we have just enough.³⁸

Defying the Senses

Neo had to face the challenge of “freeing his mind” in order to become competent in the jump program. The same challenge faces us today. Our earthly dependence on the physical senses began with the fall of mankind. The setting is the garden paradise, Eden. The characters are Eve and the crafty serpent. Unfortunately, Eve’s choice to indulge her senses with a taste of forbidden fruit, set a path of continuous struggle for all of her descendants. Instantly, mankind became a slave to his sinful flesh where sight, sound, touch, and taste became tools of deception used to confuse and control the mind. The enemy has utilized these tools to built walls around us in a effort to distort our view of God. As a result, our earthly experience hinders our view of what is possible through faith in the Almighty God.

Earthly wisdom

The human mind is very complex in it’s ability to process and store information. At times it works to our advantage, but when situations arise requiring us to depend on God for solutions, our earthly wisdom can become a hindrance to our faith. Faith requires us to believe in what is unseen. It is imperative that we strive to overcome our

³⁸ Hebrews 11:3, *paraphrased*

basic need to rely only on our five senses as a means of evaluating the situation around us. The Bible continually encourages us to “*live by faith, not by sight.*”³⁹ and to “*...set your mind on things above, not on earthly things.*”⁴⁰ Once you focus on God clearly, the faith comes.

Guidebook for the Jump Program

It is to our advantage that God graciously gave us a guidebook to follow in these difficult situations. Overcoming the hinderance of earthly wisdom is as simple as reading the Word of God and believing what you read. The hard part comes in applying the Word of God to your everyday life. Once you begin acting upon your beliefs, the rest falls into place naturally. It becomes progressively easier to overcome the walls of fear, doubt and disbelief. Old patterns of thought that formerly controlled and entangled your mind gradually disappear as you grow in faith and confidence. With patience, perseverance and practice, you will find yourself willing and fully able to make that great “*leap of faith*” from one rooftop to the next, not only exercising your new freedom but more importantly, actively living your faith.

An Invitation to Apply the Message

- ◆ Persevere in faith.
- ◆ Defy your physical senses.
- ◆ Do not rely on earthly wisdom.
- ◆ Read the guidebook, The Bible.
- ◆ Use faith and knowledge of God to overcome fear, doubt, and disbelief.

³⁹ 2 Corinthians 5:7

⁴⁰ Colossians 3:2

Trinity

“The answer is out there Neo. It’s looking for you and it will find you, if you want it to.”

Trinity is usually a word used to describe the triune nature of the Godhead. It includes, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and with it comes an understanding that they are three in one, where each name signifies a separate but equal part of the Godhead. In this movie, Trinity plays a part that is as complex as the name she bears, and just like every major part in this movie, there are many aspects to consider in identifying the purpose of her role in the grand scheme of things. In fact, we are given a specific verbal clue alluding to her gender in regard to her playing a masculine role. On their first meeting, Neo reveals his surprise as he inquires, “I thought you were a guy,” to which she replies, “Most men do,” showing that more often than not, Trinity exhibits certain characteristics that men assume to be more masculine in nature. Therefore making it easier to associate her with the role of the Holy Spirit of God.

Spiritual Battle Begins in the Heart

Trinity is the first major character that we are introduced to, and we find her at the “Heart O’ the City” hotel, where she is evading the Agents, who are trying desperately to keep her from making contact with Neo. Her active role in reaching Neo brings us to realize two things about our lives and the condition in which we exist, before God makes contact with our souls. One, there are constant spiritual struggles that rage over each and every one of us, even before we are saved. Satan wants to stake a claim in our lives,

while God and His angels are fighting to recover lost ground. In this example, Neo represents someone who has not yet been awakened to the truth, Trinity plays the part of the Holy Spirit and the Agents represent the work of Satan. The hotel is symbolic of Neo's heart, and also the site for this spiritual battle for his soul. Trinity must overcome the Agents, if she is to be successful in reaching Neo and priming him for the truth. Two, the entire process begins and ends with the condition of your heart. The Holy Spirit makes contact, even before you realize it, and begins to prepare you for the transformation from death to life. The presence of Trinity in that hotel, signifies the groundwork put in place by the Holy Spirit as God begins the process of awakening you to the truth.

Do not be afraid of these spiritual things that take place without your awareness, God is in control, the enemy has already been defeated, and nothing can separate you from the love of God.

“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:38-39.

Primer and Leader

Consistent with the role of the Holy Spirit, Trinity plays an important part in guiding Neo toward the truth. In a sense, she is acting as his conscience as she delivers a word of warning mixed with a fair amount of conviction and suspense. Just enough to keep Neo guessing while the rest of the groundwork for his conversion is being completed. She has already primed him to begin the questioning process and continues to lead him in that direction as she delivers enough information to encourage his

movement toward the truth. She begins by telling him, “I know why you are here, why you hardly sleep, what you have been doing, why you live alone and why you sit at your computer, night after night. You’re looking for him.”

This is where Neo realizes that the secret life he had been living, was not so secret after all. This is the same thing we come to realize as the Holy Spirit begins revealing things to our hearts, things we thought were hidden from everyone.

“There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roof.”
Luke 12: 2-3.

The fact is, God sees everything we do, even if we try to conceal it. He knows our comings and goings and even the thoughts we think, every second of every day, and He still loves us, and still wants to make contact with us, while drawing us toward Himself.

Trinity continues with, “The answer is out there Neo. It’s looking for you and it will find you, if you want it to.” To put it simply, Jesus is the answer that is looking for you and He boldly declares:

- ◆ *“Here I am, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him and he with me.”*
Revelation 3:20.
- ◆ *“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.”* *Matthew 7:7-8.*

The Spirit is Always With Us

Meanwhile, Neo finds himself back in the “real” world, late for work and

wondering if the previous night's excursion was just a dream. He is obviously still contemplating this thought when he receives a special delivery that turns his current "reality" upside down. In short, he leaves work in the custody of the Agents, while Trinity watches from the sidelines. A wonderful example of how the Spirit of God remains with us in our times of need. Even when we are experiencing difficulty in our daily routine of life, God is with us, waiting patiently for us to recognize His awesome presence, turn toward Him and draw strength from His Spirit.

Agents "BUG" Us

Neo survives the interrogation process, but not without gaining a "bug" or tracking device implanted in his flesh. Again, he finds himself back in his apartment, feeling like he just experienced a nightmare. Then the telephone rings, rousing him from his dream world. A quick chat with Morpheus sends Neo into the night, looking to make contact with this infamous computer legend. This is where Trinity intercepts Neo, and delivers a few informative lessons preparing him for the meeting with Morpheus.

There are three important concepts Neo must be aware of before he meets Morpheus, and Trinity is the means by which it is accomplished. True to the nature of the Holy Spirit, she guides Neo, making him face the truth of his current situation while convicting his heart of his need to live the truth. After a brief moment of indecision, Neo contemplates backing out on the entire idea, until Trinity sets him straight. He is about to leave the car when she alerts him to the barrenness of the road he is about to take. We see a row of identical buildings lining both sides of the narrow street, there is very little lighting and no end in sight, indicating that the road in question is lonely, dark, and

monotonous with no hope of change. Trinity speaks directly to his heart with, “You’ve been down that road and you know exactly where it leads. And I know that is not where you want to be.” Her truthful words bring conviction to Neo about the direction his life was going. She knows that road leads to death, and she knows that Neo is searching for something better and more fulfilling. Upon consideration, Neo decides to stay, obviously recognizing the hope of a new life that Trinity represents.

Revealing and Extracting the “BUG”

The next step is to remove the “bug” implanted by the Agents. You might look at this as being symbolic of repentance, or, in other words, a removal of the root of sin that invades our flesh. Neo was not even aware that the bug was real. It took Trinity to demonstrate this reality to him. The same process occurs when we fall under conviction of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes we don’t even know there is sin, until it is revealed, then the only course of action is to rid oneself of the problem by submitting to the workings of the Holy Spirit of God. “*Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.*” James 4:7-8.

Be Honest, He Knows

Finally, they leave the symbolic darkness of the city streets, and enter into the light of the hotel where the meeting between Neo and Morpheus is about to take place. One last word of advice from Trinity. Speaking with much wisdom and knowledge, she encourages Neo to “Be honest. He knows more than you can imagine.” With this, she is

speaking to his spirit, just as the Spirit of God speaks to us, each time we enter into His presence. We need to be honest with God, trusting Him with our weaknesses and insecurities because covering them up only hurts us in the process. Besides, “He knows more than you can imagine.”

Support from the Holy Spirit

As Neo comes into the truth and begins to experience his new life aboard the Nebuchadnezzar, Trinity is ever present. She gives support and encouragement, even as she “guides” him into the chair. Here, Neo embarks upon an in-depth discovery of the truth that reveals the hidden lies of the life he once believed to be reality. This “guidance” by the Holy Spirit is another wonderful attribute that Jesus spoke about in the gospels, “...when the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth...”

John 16:13.

As Neo becomes familiar with the truth behind his new life, he acknowledges the need to prepare both mentally and physically for the challenge of facing the Agents. It is during these training programs that Trinity exhibits another wonderful quality of the Holy Spirit. Trinity quietly “supports” Neo, with several utterances under her breath, showing that she is pulling for him and his complete success in every endeavor, even when he is weakened. The Apostle Paul explained it like this,

“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will.” Romans 8:26-27.

Barrier and Protector

This same concept is presented in another way when Neo and Trinity are waiting to escape the Matrix while Cypher unveils his plans of betrayal. In this example, Trinity intercedes on Neo's behalf by supporting him in his weakness, even when he does not know that he needs it. For one, she acts as a barrier of protection between Neo and Cypher, holding the enemy at bay. Then, recognizing Neo's weakness, an inability to change his circumstances, she offers her full support of him by declaring her belief in him to Cypher. The resulting miracle is a direct response to her intercessory "support or prayer," and successfully delivers Neo from harm. In a sense, Trinity was actually testifying to Neo's identity of being the "One," thereby displaying another attribute of the Holy Spirit, as declared by this scripture:

"This is the one who came by water and blood-Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement." 1 John 5:6-8.

As a result, Neo's true identity is established, so he can be free to prepare himself for the task of rescuing Morpheus.

The Beginning of Belief

As Neo and Trinity find themselves safely onboard the Nebuchadnezzar, events begin to unfold exactly the way the Oracle prophesied. This is when Neo finally begins to believe what the Oracle told him. At this point he doesn't think he's the One, but he is beginning to understand the difference between "knowing the path" and "walking the path". Neo knows he can save Morpheus. He knows it so well, it's actually a part of him

that he cannot deny, making it imperative that he act upon this insight. Met with mild resistance, Neo informs Tank and Trinity of his plan to liberate Morpheus. True to her nature, Trinity insists on accompanying Neo on this daredevil adventure. She wouldn't dream of letting him do it without her help. With Tank's assistance, they order the supplies needed to accomplish this great task before them, "Guns, lots of guns." This situation is a wonderful representation of how the Holy Spirit equips and accompanies us as we prepare to engage in our own spiritual battles.

We Do Not Fight Alone

Now let's look at the significance in the battle that Neo and Trinity are about to embark upon. We already know that Neo is going in fully loaded, (scripture and sword in hand) and Trinity is with him, (representing the Holy Spirit). Then he begins to encounter resistance, (the bad guys) and as he stands on the roof of the government building, he comes face to face with an Agent, (one of the Big Bad guys) - but look what happens. Neo fires his weapon until its empty, and he cannot seem to hit the Agent. In other words, Satan is really good at dodging scripture because he has had a lot of practice with humans. But Neo calls for Trinity, who responds by eliminating the Agent with one shot to the head. This is very significant because it clearly shows how the Holy Spirit comes to our aid while we battle the bad guys. There is no match for Jesus because He has already defeated the enemy at the cross of Calvary. So, this is a wonderful display of the protection and assistance provided by the Holy Spirit in times of need. So, *"If God is for us, who can be against us?" Romans 8:31.*

Love Saves

There is one final event, perhaps the most important of the entire film, where Trinity is a living representation of the love God has for His son, Jesus Christ. In the final scene of the movie, Neo has been shot to death by Agent Smith, and those watching are stunned, except Trinity. She calmly begins by explaining to Neo that she loves him and is not going to let him die.

“The Oracle told me that I would fall in love...and that, that man...the one that I loved, would be the One. So you see, you can’t be dead. You can’t be...because I love you. Do you hear me? I love you.”

And with that word, she kisses Neo for the first time, and we see fireworks in the background. Then, with authority, she says, “Now get up!”, and Neo’s heart begins to beat as he takes another breath. He is alive again.

This display of love is a wonderful visual representation of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It was through the love of the Father and by the power of the Holy Spirit that Jesus was raised to life. Even the “kiss of life” is symbolic of the Holy Spirit breathing life back into the body of Jesus; just as it was in the beginning, “...*the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.*” *Genesis 2:7*. Notice the command given after the kiss. It follows the same pattern set down by Jesus each time He raised someone from the dead. For example, after Jesus prayed for Lazarus to be raised, He commanded, “...*Lazarus, come out!*”⁴¹, and Lazarus heard and obeyed.

Again, when Jesus raised the 12 year old girl, “*He took her by the hand and said to her, Talitha Koum! which means, Little girl, I say to you, get up!*” *Mark 5:41*, and she

⁴¹ John 11:43

immediately stood up and walked around. Likewise, Trinity gave Neo a similar command, and he immediately responded with action, demonstrating the importance of obedience and action through faith in God.

The Holy Spirit of God is the same with us. It is through the Spirit that we learn all things and come to be mature Christians, in faith and deeds.⁴² It is by the power of the Holy Spirit that we endure and persevere against many trials and tribulations so that we may follow in the footsteps of our Savior, even unto death. And it is by this same Spirit that we are then raised to life and seated in the heavenly realms with Christ Jesus, our Lord and Savior.⁴³

Trinity was the motivating factor that fed, comforted, supported, encouraged and loved Neo during his time of growth and indecision. She was the one who testified on his behalf, always placing her faith and trust in his ability to be the “One”. So then , “*Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.*” *Galatians 5:25.*

An Invitation to Apply the Message

- ◆ The Holy Spirit primes you for transformation.
- ◆ The Holy Spirit leads you.
- ◆ The Holy Spirit convicts your heart.
- ◆ Let the Holy Spirit guide you into truth.
- ◆ Let the Holy Spirit lead you through life.
- ◆ The Holy Spirit provides support and protection in spiritual battle.

⁴² John 14:26

⁴³ Ephesians 2:6

Mouse and the Woman in Red

“To deny your own impulses is to deny the very thing that makes you human.”

Almost everyone recognizes that we, as humans, are unique from all other living things God created. We are part flesh and part spirit. In contrast, the angels in heaven are fully spirit, and are therefore not bound by the physical laws that govern our planet and our bodies. Some may think that would be an advantage, but think again, God does not offer redemption for fallen angels.⁴⁴ Clearly, it is advantageous to be a human and exist in both the physical and spiritual realm. But being human has challenges as well, and that is what we are going to address in this chapter. For example, we have to fight distractions and things that compete for our attention like, hunger, emotions, sickness, fleshly impulses and other people around us. We have to learn to overcome these things and focus our attention on God. This is always easier said than done.

Our Separation From God

Mouse is one of the crewmembers on Morpheus' ship, the Nebuchadnezzar. We see very little of him, except to learn that he designed the training program that features the woman in the red dress. At the same time, he delivers these words of wisdom to Neo. “To deny your own impulses is to deny the very thing that makes you human.” Such a gigantic statement coming from such a small person, but the truth of it rings clear. The Bible teaches that we must learn to deny our sinful nature, or flesh. It's that part of us

⁴⁴ 2 Peter 2:4

that separates us from God and keeps us from being able to stand in the midst of His radiant glory.

Forfeiting the Privilege

In the beginning, Adam and Eve shared a personal and very spiritual relationship with the Lord, that included long walks with Him through the garden of Eden, in the cool of the day. When Adam and Eve chose to eat forbidden fruit, they compromised their spiritual relationship with the Lord, causing the destruction of the holy union they shared with God. This first sensual indulgence in forbidden fruit led to an immediate separation of mind and spirit, allowing the physical senses to dominate the fading spiritual senses. At this point, mankind became a slave to his flesh where sight, sound, smell, touch and taste became tools of deception used to confuse and control the mind. The resulting spiritual death also included forfeiting the privilege of standing in the radiance of the Lord and meeting with Him face to face. As a direct result of their sin, they were banished from the garden and made to work and live from the land. However, before they left the garden, God made them garments of skin.⁴⁵ Meaning, they “took on” a more fleshly existence than they had before. Instead of living by the spirit of God, they would now have to learn to exist in a world dominated by their physical senses. Since that time, no man, not even Moses, has been allowed to stand face to face with the living God. Therefore, if indulging in the impulses of the sinful nature separate us from God, then they are the very things that make us more human and less spiritual.

⁴⁵ Genesis 3:21

Dressed Up Sin

Overcoming the sinful nature is what we must all struggle with on a daily basis. Part of overcoming the flesh is learning to filter out distractions that draw our attention away from God, our main focus. Neo gives us a perfect example as to what distractions can do to us if we are not paying attention to the right details. He is walking through a training program, trying to listen to Morpheus, when he focuses in on the woman in the red dress. Morpheus freezes the program and Neo looks again to find himself staring down the barrel of an Agent's gun. Notice that the first time Neo looked, there was a woman in a red dress, but when he took the *second* look, it was actually the enemy. This is a prime example, illustrating an important ploy that Satan loves to use to entice people. He will "dress-up" a sin, making it very appealing to the physical senses, but if you turn away and then take a *second* look, then, just like Neo, you may actually see it for what it really is, the enemy trying to distract and entice you away from God.

Distractions

The enemy delights in trying to distract you so that you will lose focus on the important things, especially God and the work He has called you to do. If he can succeed in distracting you, then not only do you become more vulnerable, but you get frustrated and angry at the same time. That's when you need to stop and ask the Lord to help you regain your focus on Him.

Jesus, Our Example

Jesus gives us a brilliant example of maintaining focus on God. He has just

finished a forty-day fast in the desert, when He is approached by Satan who tries to tempt Him with food. Jesus responds, “*It is written: man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.*” *Matthew 4:4*. Again Satan tries to entice Jesus to use His own authority in heaven for His own purpose, and Jesus responds, “*It is written: do not put the Lord your God to the test.*” *Matthew 4:7*. Finally, Satan tries to tempt Jesus to worship him instead of God, and Jesus again responds, “*Away from me Satan! For it is written: Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.*” *Matthew 4: 10*.

Each time Jesus was faced with distraction and temptation, He used the Word of God to focus Satan’s attention back to God. Jesus never lost sight of His focus on God or His purpose on earth, to complete the Father’s will.

God knows that these things are difficult for us to do, for the very reason that we do them out of our own human weakness. He has given us His Word to stand on and His promises to cling to, never forgetting that Jesus faced every kind of temptation, so that He could intercede on our behalf. Also, it is written, “*No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*” *1 Corinthians 10:13*. Therefore, focus on God, do your best to avoid distraction by the enemy, and let your soul find peace.

An Invitation to Apply the Message

- ◆ Learn to deny your fleshly impulses.
- ◆ Recognize “dressed-up” sin.
- ◆ Avoid distractions from the enemy.

- ◆ Follow Jesus' example of avoiding sin.
- ◆ Avoid sin at all costs.

The Oracle

“We’re going in, we’re taking Neo to see her.”

What would be the significance of taking Neo to see the Oracle? Why would the crew of the Nebuchadnezzar be so intrigued at what the Oracle would have to say about Neo and his true identity? Why did everyone wait in anticipation to hear the prophetic word concerning their own lives and futures? Most importantly, why did everyone believe what the Oracle had to say? Isn’t she just speculating about the future based on the facts she already knows? Maybe she’s just guessing? Or maybe...she’s right.

An Oracle, or Prophet, is simply a person considered by most to be of wise counsel or prophetic opinions. What makes them unique is that they have the gift of prophecy, which means they can foretell future events with a certain amount of accuracy. This is also known as prophesying, a common Biblical occurrence that routinely revealed the will or message of God to certain peoples. Imagine, someone being able to foretell future events accurately. In fact, that was the determining factor behind distinguishing between true and false prophets.

“Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” 2 Peter 1:20-21.

In other words, if the prophecy came to pass, then the prophet was from God, if not, then the prophet was false.

“But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord...bringing swift destruction on themselves.” 2 Peter 2:1.

Why Prophecies?

So why even have prophecies? What is the significance behind having a prophet to foretell future events? A prophet was, and still is, a means by which God relays messages to His people, as a way to prepare them for future events. The message could be anything: a word of warning, conviction, a promise or even a confirmation of previously received messages. Prophecies are spoken so that when the event comes to pass, the people will recognize that the prophecy came from God. They will then know that God has spoken to them via the mouth of the prophet.

The Prophet Isaiah

One of the most recognized prophets of the Bible is Isaiah, who is credited for prophesying about the promised Savior, Jesus the Christ. Isaiah delivered prophecy after prophecy about the coming King of Kings so that once the event occurred, the people would know that God had not only spoken, but fulfilled His promise of sending a Savior to redeem the sins of fallen mankind. One only need look to the prophecies to determine if Jesus was truly the “One” they had all been waiting for.

Is Neo The One?

This same parallel is present in the movie. Everyone is anticipating the words of the Oracle because they have been proven to be true in the past. Therefore, if she

prophecies that Neo is the “One” then they will believe her, hands down, no questions asked. Even Neo would have believed her, if she had only said so. Instead, she told him he wasn’t the “One”. Why? Because at that moment Neo was not yet the One. He had to *become* the One, depending on his choices in the coming battle to save Morpheus. He wasn’t fated or predestined to be anything he didn’t want to be. He always had the power of choice. When Neo chose to save Morpheus, he *chose* the path that made him the One.

The same was true of Jesus. When He was tempted by Satan with personal indulgence, personal glory and earthly power, He had the *choice* of taking the wrong road. Jesus always chose to do the Father’s will and because of that, He led the perfect sinless life. He *chose* to be our Savior and Redeemer.

Prophecies Fulfilled In Jesus

Everything Jesus did, throughout His ministry, was to fulfill the prophecies that had been spoken about Him. “*Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.*” Matthew 5:17. He continually quoted scripture and that which was written by the Prophets concerning Him and His destiny. For example,

“*When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word, and healed all the sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: ‘He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases.’*” Matthew 8:16-17.

There were over 360 prophecies spoken about Jesus and His role as Savior and King. Every one of them came to pass. Every one of them was fulfilled in the man Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, the Redeemer, the Light of the world. That in itself is

miraculous and stands alone as a testimony to His identity as the Son of God. Nothing else can compare.

An Invitation to Apply the Message

- ♦ Recognize prophecy from God.
- ♦ Recognize false prophecy.
- ♦ You must **choose** to be the one God called you to be.
- ♦ Follow Jesus' perfect example/ always choosing the Father's will for His life.

Cypher a.k.a. Judas

“Why, Oh why didn’t I take the blue pill?”

We have all kinds of names and phrases reserved for certain individuals who take it upon themselves to sell out the good guy for a price. “Benedict Arnold,” betrayer, traitor, conspirator, “a wolf in sheep’s clothing,” and “snake in the grass” are just a few, but nothing describes Cypher better than the term Judas. For those of you familiar with the events surrounding the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, you will recognize this name as one of the original twelve men chosen to follow the Jewish carpenter throughout His ministry. It was Judas Iscariot who betrayed Jesus to the officials, being fully enlightened as to the identity of Jesus, yet still motivated by his love of money. Judas accepted a bribe in exchange for delivering Jesus into enemy hands. Shortly after, he paid the price of betrayal by taking his own life.

Truth or Lie?

Setting aside the fact that his name is a play on the name Lucifer, Cypher is the same type of individual, cunning and deceitful. He is aware of the truth and has followed the resistance for nine years, yet he is no longer sensitive to the needs of the group or the encoded symbols of the Matrix. This becomes important because part of knowing the truth is being able to see beyond the world around you. Cypher can no longer see the difference between knowing the truth and living the lie. In fact, he thinks that life inside

the Matrix would actually give him more freedom than he has now. Clearly, his heart has been hardened and he has become blinded to what is real and true. The Apostle Paul addresses the same issue in his letter to the Romans,

“The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness...For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God, nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.” Romans 1:18,21.

We can begin to see that Cypher set himself up to fail by refusing to acknowledge the truth he had come to know.

Actions Are Louder Than Words

Cypher's actions speak loud and clear in regard to why he made the choice to betray Morpheus to the Agents. We see him eating a steak dinner and conversing with the enemy. The significance of this is two -fold. One, the fact that he is indulging in a steak dinner shows that he lives to feed his fleshly desires and caters to them for his own satisfaction. An action that is clearly in defiance with sound Biblical teaching as the Apostle Paul stated in his letter to the Galatians. *“You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature...” Galatians 5:13.* Second, the agreement he makes with Agent Smith gives us insight into the condition of Cypher's heart. He is seeking to make himself both wealthy and famous, focusing only on himself and his desires. The bribe includes being reinserted into the Matrix with no knowledge of his dirty deed and as a bonus, he wants to be rich and someone important, like an actor. To which Agent Smith replies, “Whatever you want, Mr. Reagan.” Shortly after meeting with the Agent, Cypher devises a plan to eliminate members of the team and in the process, deliver Morpheus into Agent custody.

Cypher's Rebellion

This futuristic Judas distinguishes himself from the others by indulging his fleshly desires and thinking more highly of himself than he should. His actions prove this to be true as he rebels against the authority of Morpheus because he is tired of following rules. His active rebellion against what he knows to be right, leaves him wide open for temptation from the enemy. The Apostle Paul addresses this divisive attitude,

“For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers...They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach-and that for the sake of dishonest gain.” Titus 1:10,11.

Cypher entertains thoughts of greed and envy for things he doesn't have, one of which is Trinity. To intensify the situation, he lashes out against the others on his team, eliminating Apoc and Switch. Then, fueled by jealousy, he forces Trinity to answer a question that's been hanging since the beginning of the movie. Does she believe Neo is the One? Trinity risks everything and places her faith in Neo and miraculously, Neo's life is spared. This is important because it shows that it only takes the faith of one believer, to save another. Cypher ends up paying the price of deception with his own life.

Cypher's Methods

Cypher's methods of coping with his own reality are in direct contrast with the teachings of the Bible and ultimately lead to his death. Ironically, the statement speaks for itself. Everyone who lives life in direct contrast to the teachings of Jesus, will ultimately pay for it with their own life.

- ◆ *“The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.” Romans 7: 6-8.*
- ◆ *“They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny Him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.” Titus 1:16*
- ◆ *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 6:23.*

It pays to follow God and walk in the Light of His eternal love.

Avoid Becoming a “Cypher”

The Bible is also very clear in teaching us how to avoid becoming like Cypher. As always, it begins with the condition of your heart. What is behind the motivation that drives you and your decisions? As Christians, we are all called to fill a specific position within the body of Christ (the church). This is not an option, but an honor. God created this position for you long before you were even born and you have been given the gifts to fill this position perfectly. This calling requires that we all work together as one, furthering the kingdom of God. Refusing this position only hardens your heart because it is motivated by rebellion against the plans God has for your life. *“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29:11.* Acting in rebellion against God puts you on enemy territory with no weapons, no armor and no clothing.

We are encouraged to:

“... be like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.” Philippians 2:2-3.

Imagine how much better the world would be if, in humility, everyone considered others as better than themselves? The world would not be so full of men like Cypher.

Finally, we are urged to put off the flesh by denying our fleshly tendencies and live by the Spirit of God, *“So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.” Galatians 5:16.* We are called to take up our cross daily, in full submission and obedience to our Lord and Savior.

“You were taught with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.” Ephesians 4:22-24.

If we follow these simple teachings and apply them to our lives, then we have confidence in Christ Jesus, that we will be saved. Now is the time to choose between life or death, will you choose to embrace the truth of life or reject it and walk the same road Cypher did?

An Invitation to Apply the Message

- ◆ Follow the truth.
- ◆ Do not harden your heart.
- ◆ Do not indulge the sinful -nature.
- ◆ Follow the teachings of the Bible.
- ◆ Avoid becoming like Cypher.
- ◆ Practice submission and obedience to God.
- ◆ Have humility.
- ◆ Do not be rebellious

Food For Thought

“Everything the body needs.”

Incredibly, scripture teaches us about two different kinds of food. Physical food, (good for fueling the body) and spiritual food (good for fueling the soul). While both are essential for sustaining life, there are some major differences that distinguish them from each other. Take physical food for example. It serves one purpose, to supply the physical body with nourishment for activity and growth. Spiritual food encompasses things like wisdom, understanding, discernment and maturity. It can also refer to the fulfillment of absorbing scripture and meditating on the truth of God.

Ignorance is Bliss

The movie addresses both types of food in a rather unconventional style, but the difference is still loud and clear. For this example, let's just say that symbolically the Matrix stands for the sinful nature, and reality is representative of living the truth or living by the Spirit of God. Now, using that analogy, apply it to the scene where Cypher is having dinner with Agent Smith. Here, Cypher is portrayed as the type of person who lives to indulge his senses, as evident by the steak dinner, fine wine and cigar. He comments,

“You know, I know this steak doesn't exist, when I put it in my mouth, the Matrix is telling my brain that it is juicy and delicious. After nine years, do you know what I realize? Ignorance is bliss.”

That confession gives you a brief glimpse of the condition of his heart, because

he would prefer to indulge his physical senses than live for the Spirit of God.

It is a clear contrast to the food that the rest of the crew is eating, back on the Nebuchadnezzar. Each of them has a bowl of food having the consistency of Cream of Wheat, when Dozer explains, “It’s a single celled protein combined with aminos, vitamins, and minerals. Everything the body needs.” Clearly, the crew is partaking in reality, and living by the Spirit, because they show no indication of indulging their physical senses with food. They only eat to meet the nutritional needs of their bodies. They do not “feed the flesh” with sensual indulgences, instead, they nourish the body and live for the Spirit.

Man Does Not Live By Bread Alone

This is a principle we must also come to understand and apply to our Christian walk. Jesus teaches that “*Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.*” *Matthew 4:4*. A strong statement showing that we must depend on God first for nourishment of the soul, then for nourishment of the body, not the other way around. Food should never occupy a place in our lives where it becomes more important than our God.

Eternal Food

Another example of spiritual food comes from the gospel of John. Jesus has just spoken to the Samaritan woman and she has gone to the village to tell others about the Messiah, when the disciples return urging Jesus to eat something, to which He replies, “*I have food to eat that you know nothing about...My food, is to do the will of Him who*

sent me and to finish His work.” John 4:32-34. Not only does it show that Jesus never lost focus on His goal, and that He never let physical hunger get in the way between Him and His Father, but it also teaches us that spiritual food can be just as sustaining to the body as physical food. You have already experienced this truth if you have ever fasted for more than one day. It is difficult to overcome the hunger, but once that first step is taken, it is amazing how effectively scripture and prayer feed not only the physical needs but the spiritual ones as well.

From Milk to Meat

As new believers, we are challenged, *“Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.” 1 Peter 2:2-3.* This challenge is twofold, first, we must begin by craving spiritual fulfillment in order to reach the second challenge, to grow up in our salvation.

We must endeavor to mature and move from spiritual milk to solid food.

“Anyone who lives on milk, being still and infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.” Hebrews 5:13-14.

We must make every effort to mature in our spiritual walk with Christ.

Otherwise, we fall into the same category as Cypher, living from a worldly perspective.

“Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly-mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly.” 1 Corinthians 3:1-3a.

Remaining at a state of spiritual infancy, will only become a hindrance in your walk with God serving as an obstacle, impeding your understanding of the deeper truths

of Christianity. Therefore, “ *Brothers, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking, be adults.*” 1 Corinthians 14:20.

An Invitation to Apply the Message

- ◆ Avoid living to indulge the physical senses
- ◆ Crave spiritual food and fulfillment.
- ◆ Do the will of God.
- ◆ Do not remain a spiritual infant/ Endeavor to grow.

More Food For Thought

“I don’t remember you ever bringing me dinner.”

Trinity enters Neo’s room with a tray of food. He is sound asleep, exhausted from an extensive training session. She brings him nourishment for his body. Outside, in the corridor, she encounters Cypher, who snidely remarks, “I don’t remember you ever bringing me dinner.” Laced with jealousy, this simple sentence reveals a hidden side of Cypher that explains the motivating factors behind his actions of betrayal. By his own admission, he has never been fed by the Holy Spirit of God. This accounts for his sad state of attitude and self-centeredness. Maybe you know someone like Cypher, maybe you have experienced a Christian in this state of mind. Whatever the case, Jesus has an answer.

Neo-Fed By The Spirit

This scene is to show you the difference between Neo and Cypher, one who is being fed by the Spirit and one who is not. Neo shows all the signs of someone who is depending on the Spirit of God for their daily sustenance. In other words, he exhibits the fruits of the Spirit, which are, “...*love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.*” *Galatians 5:22-23*. In fact, Morpheus and his entire crew exhibit the fruits of the Spirit, with the exception of Cypher.

Cypher Feeds on Lies

Cypher is self-seeking, jealous, envious, greedy and self-centered. Even though he knows the truth, he has never walked the walk or fully realized the freedom of living the truth. This is evident by the next statement, made during the moment of betrayal. "...all I ever do is what he tells me to do!...Between that and the Matrix -I choose the Matrix!" Clearly, Cypher has allowed lies to harden his heart against the truth, which in turn acts as a delusion that clouds his thinking. Cypher chooses the Matrix because he thinks it can be more "real" than the truth. He has exchanged the truth for a lie, causing him to serve his sinful desires and physical senses instead of yielding to the Spirit of truth.

Jesus Warns Against Ritual Without Roots

Jesus speaks specifically about these particular people.

"A farmer went to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed...some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root." Matthew 13:3-6.

This speaks about Christians who have lost their way. They have reduced their relationship with God to a ritual that consists of going through the motions, but their hearts are far from Him. Maybe once, in the beginning, they had zeal to follow the Lord, but now their relationship is stagnant, there is no growth because they have stopped seeking and now they are racked with jealousy over anyone who exhibits a fully functional relationship with God. They are envious of Christians who show evidence of spiritual growth, and as a result, they seek to sell everyone out, even themselves. *"And the final condition of that man is worse than the first." Matthew 12:45b.*

Complacency

Often times, Christians who exhibit these conditions also exhibit complacency. They have a conscious that has been seared from feeding on lies, resulting in a complacent disposition. They are unwilling to take the steps necessary to change for the good. Cypher exhibits this complacent Christian attitude with these words,

“There is way too much information. You get used to it and you don’t even see the code anymore...All I see is blond, red -head, brunette.”

With these words Cypher reveals that he is no longer sensitive to the truth. He cannot determine the difference between the truth and the lies. His heart and his conscious are damaged from his lack of enthusiasm in pursuing the truth.

The Word of God carries some stern warnings against complacency among the believers.

- ◆ *“At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps and punish those who are complacent, who are like wine left on its dregs, who think “The Lord will do nothing, either good or bad.” Zephaniah 1:12*
- ◆ *“Since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the Lord, since they would not accept my advice and spurned my rebuke, they will eat the fruit of their schemes. For the waywardness of the simple will kill them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them. Proverbs 1:29-32.*
- ◆ *“Laziness brings on deep sleep, and the shiftless man goes hungry.” Proverbs 19:15*
- ◆ *“We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.” Hebrews 6:12*

The Sower

Jesus goes on to explain the parable of the sower, and describe the spiritual

condition that results in this type of situation.

“The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away.” Matthew 13:20-21.

The resulting condition is...

“Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand. In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. For this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.” Matthew 13:13-15.

Cypher has been enlightened to the truth, but the truth is not real to him. He does not love the truth and as a result, the lies have become more of a reality than the truth will ever be. So he chooses to pacify himself with thoughts of material reward and earthly fame. Seeking a bargain with the enemy, he follows in the footsteps of the most famous betrayer ever known, Judas Iscariot, and just like Judas, he paid with his life.

Love God, Love the Truth

Do not be like Cypher and the ones spoken of in prophecy. Remember, you are building a relationship with your Creator, not practicing a ritualistic religion. Always seek the Lord with all your mind, heart, soul and spirit. Talk to Him like you would talk to your best friend and lover, for He is both. Love Him with your entire being and He will sustain you with His eternal Spirit of truth while guiding you into the knowledge and understanding of His eternal kingdom and His perfect will for your life.

An Invitation to Apply the Message

- ◆ Be fed by the Spirit of God.
- ◆ Avoid complacency at all costs.
- ◆ Build a relationship with God/ Not religion.
- ◆ Do not harden you heart to the Word of God.
- ◆ Love God, love the truth.
- ◆ Be diligent in seeking the truth.

The Hard Line

“They cut the hard line! It’s a trap! Get out!”

Did you happen to notice that the only way the Resistance had access to the Matrix was through the hard line? In order for them to move freely between the world of the Matrix and the higher reality, they had to be “plugged in” to the main computer. Once inside the Matrix, they could communicate by means of a portable phone, but in order to exit the program, they had to find and be connected to an old style telephone, complete with old wiring and cables. Their “hard line connection” served two purposes. For one, they are in constant contact with the operator, who can track their exact location in the program and always give them a way out. For another, the operator can download much needed information at a moment’s notice.

Fast Information

A perfect example of this takes place near the end of the movie. Neo and Trinity are on the roof of the government building, attempting to free Morpheus, and they find themselves needing information on flying a helicopter. Trinity pulls out a cellular phone and dials, “Tank, I need a pilot program for a military B-212 helicopter. Hurry!” Tank quickly downloads the information requested and moments later Trinity is jumping into the pilot seat of the helicopter. How is that for perfect timing?

This phenomenon works in the lives of Christians as well. There are two

advantages to being connected to the “hard-line”,

1. God will always send you the information you need, exactly when you need it. This holds true even if you don’t readily recognize that you need the information.
2. Sometimes God sends the information long before you need it. Then He just has to remind you that you already have it.

Jesus, the Hard Line Connection

This idea of being connected to “the hard line” is not new, in fact, it goes way back to the beginning. You see, for Christians, Jesus is “the hard line” that keeps us in constant connection with the Father,

“...because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore, he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.” Hebrews 7:24-25.

Jesus is the intercessor between God and mankind and it is only through Jesus that we have access to the Father of all creation, giving us the ability to move freely from our physical world into the presence of the living God.

The Vine and Branches

Jesus explains it like this,

“ I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing....If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.” John 15: 5,7.

As Christians, we need to remain “plugged in” to the true vine, just like a branch. We continue to grow and produce fruit only as long as we remain connected to the vine. A branch can not thrive and produce fruit once it is severed from its life -source, the vine.

Advantages of the Hard Line

Just as Neo and Trinity experienced, our being connected to the hard line definitely has its advantages. For example, Jesus becomes our advocate:

- ◆ Defending us to the Father on every occasion and in every circumstance.⁴⁶
- ◆ Interceding on our behalf.⁴⁷
- ◆ Providing a way out of temptation.⁴⁸

And since God's timing is always perfect, we have the information we need, exactly when we need it, to accomplish the things that God needs done.

Phone Home

We have constant communication with the Father through prayer, and it is as easy as picking up a cellular phone and dialing home. In fact, cellular phones and prayer have a lot in common. For example, they are both portable and that means you can take them wherever you go, and they are easily concealed, making them accessible in times of trouble and need, when a call for help or direction is necessary. But prayer has one advantage over cellular phones, and that is, you can never travel "out of range" with prayer. God always hears and He always answers, regardless of your situation.

One last thought, Satan is always going to be hard at work trying to sever the hard line between you and God. He will never stop looking for ways to separate you from God and convince you that you really don't need to follow God's direction for your life. One piece of advice, Satan is better known as the Father of Lies, and believe me he fits the ticket well. Don't listen to him.

⁴⁶ Hebrews 7:24-25

⁴⁷ Romans 8:27

⁴⁸ 1 Corinthians 10:13

An Invitation to Apply the Message

- ◆ Remain connected to Jesus, the hard-line.
- ◆ Pray on all occasions.
- ◆ Remain close to God regardless of circumstances.

Intimidation Factor

“You are going to help us Mr. Anderson, whether you like it or not.”

One of the intimidation tactics the enemy tries to use against us is the power play. He uses bullying techniques to intimidate you, trying to make you believe he is more powerful than he really is. In fact, the only power Satan has over you, is what you have given over to him. Jesus has already overcome the enemy for you, “*And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.*” *Colossians 2:15*. Even in his defeated state, Satan will try and use fears, doubt and disbelief to intimidate you into falling for his endless lies.

The Power Play on Neo

A perfect example of the power play, is executed by Agent Smith during his interrogation of Neo. He begins by saying,

“As you can see, we’ve had our eye on you for some time now Mr. Anderson....It seems you have been living two lives. In one life, you are Thomas A. Anderson, program writer for a respectable software company....The other life is in computers where you go by the hacker alias Neo, and are guilty of virtually every computer crime we have a law for...”.

Notice that Agent Smith is persistent in reminding Neo that he has committed unlawful deeds. He uses the law as leverage against Neo in an attempt to persuade him to focus on the things he has done wrong. This is the same exact tactic Satan uses in his attempt to defeat us. If he can succeed at making you feel unworthy by influencing you

to focus on the law instead of God, then he has planted seeds of doubt and insecurity in your mind that can hinder your walk with God. If you feed these doubts and insecurities, you'll find that they will take root and grow into a stronghold, and that is exactly what Satan wants.

The Power Play on Morpheus

Satan is a swindler. He takes delight in pillaging the hope and joy of a believer. He will use any avenue available to accomplish this task, but the most common method he uses involves disguising or concealing the reason believers have joy. This powerful intimidation factor is presented in a colorful scene depicting the captivity and torture of Morpheus.

We see Morpheus restrained with handcuffs and surrounded by Agents. The bruises on his face testify to the beatings and torture he has already endured. For Morpheus there is no hope of his escape. The Agents are relentless in their attempt to extract information while breaking down his mind, little by little. Agent Smith delivers an influential dissertation on human beings, hoping to destroy the last ounce of resilience in Morpheus.

“I’d like to share a revelation that I’ve had during my time here. It came to me when I tried to classify your species. I realized that you are not actually mammals. Every mammal on this planet instinctively develops a natural equilibrium with the surrounding environment. But you humans do not. You move to an area and you multiply and multiply until every natural resource is consumed and the only way you can survive is to spread to another area. There is another organism on this planet that follows the same pattern...A virus. Human beings are a disease, a cancer of this planet. You are a plague. And we are...the cure.”

With no hope in sight, Morpheus has accepted his death as inevitable. Now it's

just a matter of time.

Suddenly, an explosion in the lobby shakes the whole building causing the overhead sprinklers to shower the Agents. Moments later, a barrage of bullets fills the room delivered by Neo and Trinity, and hope resurfaces in Morpheus. An unmistakable soberness fills his countenance. With renewed strength, Morpheus breaks the chains that once bound him and begins running toward his freedom. Neo, his deliverer, has arrived.

So many times in life, we lose sight of the hope we profess in Christ. Satan is very skilled in disguising this hope by seeking to deter our thoughts in a negative fashion. His success with this tactic depends on how you view yourself. Satan would have you believe that you are "...a virus...a disease...a cancer...and a plague." He can make you feel so unworthy, that you literally can not see or experience the joy of your salvation. Once the joy is gone, all your hopes are soon dashed to pieces.

Satan regularly employs this method of intimidation in the lives of countless believers. They sit, much like Morpheus, chained by fears, doubts and confusion. They feel alone, destitute and abandoned by God. Their hope and joy have been captured by the adversary and as a result they feel utterly defeated in life.

Seeds of Doubt

An intricate part of this intimidation process is, introducing thoughts that could lead to sinful behaviors. The mind is the stronghold of the body and if Satan has control over your mind, then he will eventually have control over your body too. *"The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God."* Romans 8:7-8. So, do not listen to

the lies of the enemy. Instead, know that God, “...holds victory in store for the upright, He is a shield to those whose walk is blameless, for He guards the course of the just and protects the way of His faithful ones.” Proverbs 2:7-8.

Seeds of Wickedness

The second thing Satan does is plant seeds of sin and wickedness, that can take root and destroy the soul. A colorful demonstration of this concept is presented during the “bugging” process. Neo is informed that he will be made to help the Agents in their ongoing efforts to capture Morpheus. All three Agents participate as they introduce Neo to a squirming, detestable looking creature, that invades his body through the navel. It’s legs are long and spindly, resembling the roots of a tree, making it useful for invading the entire body.

This picture paints a clear image of what sin does to our souls and how destructive it can be to our bodies. The “bug” is representative of a seed of sin, planted by the enemy. It works its way to the center of your being, where the heart and soul make their home. It’s spindly legs wrap around your inner self and infiltrate your entire body, causing it to rebel against your spirit, which longs to follow God. In order to overcome this condition, we must allow God to extract the bad seeds, roots and all, and replace them with good ones. Which is exactly what happens to Neo, as Trinity prepares him for the meeting with Morpheus that leads to his acceptance of the truth.

Overcoming Sinful Seeds

There exists an interesting parallel between the “machine bug” and sinful seeds

sown by the enemy. Once they are extracted from the flesh, they no longer exhibit any power over that body. For example, when the “bug” was extracted from Neo, it became a harmless, lifeless piece of metal, and nothing else. When we, by the power of the Holy Spirit, overcome sin in our lives, then it becomes lifeless and powerless against us and our bodies. *“For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.” Romans 6:14.* So that by denying your sinful nature, you have overcome it and put it to death.

Artificial Hype and Jive

These artificial “power plays” primarily consists of a lot of hype and jive, designed to pull your attention away from God and on to the enemy. Do not give in to the seductive lies that flow from the mouth of Satan. Do not let him use fear, doubts, or disbelief to intimidate you into entertaining destructive thoughts, thereby giving over your mind to his agenda. Ground yourself in the Word of God and look to Him for your strength in overcoming enemy attack. God is your protector and defender, and as long as you abide in His perfect will for your life, He will prove faithful to protect you from the scare tactics of the enemy.

“ Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They overcame him with the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony;” Revelation 12:10-11.

An Invitation to Apply the Message

- ◆ Recognize the scare tactics Satan uses against the saints of God.
- ◆ Do not fall for the “power plays”.
- ◆ Ground yourself in the Word of God.
- ◆ Look to God for strength in overcoming the enemy.

- ◆ Retain the joy of your salvation by focusing on God.

Knowing Thyself

“Know thyself.”

Interestingly, the life that Neo portrays in the movie applies to nearly everyone. It addresses specific concerns related to non-believers and Christians alike. Neo’s life reflects almost every aspect of life in regards to the questions that drive us to discovering the truth of who we are and where we belong on this earth. Those are important questions that everyone has addressed in their own lives at one time or another. Questioning is an intricate part of what makes us human.

Before and After

As a non-believer, Thomas Anderson presents a view of life that is consistent with someone who has “...the look of a man who accepts what he sees because he is expecting to wake-up.” Mr. Anderson is someone who questions, contemplates and seeks answers because he begins to realize that there are things about life that do not add up. Our existence on this planet does not make a lot of sense unless you know the truth behind our creation and why we are here. Mr. Anderson is at this point in his life where he feels as if he is existing in a dream, and is expecting to wake -up at any moment. Once this happens, the adventure begins.

As a new believer, Neo takes us through a futuristic portrayal of the conversion process, complete with water baptism and awakening of the spiritual senses. He struggles to keep hold of the truth he has learned, even when his mind and body want to reject it. A position that many of us also experienced when we became enlightened to the

understanding and knowledge of God. After a brief moment of denial, he settles into his new life and begins a comprehensive training process with a crash course in faith, but comes to realize that he does not “know” if he is the One. Plagued with doubts and full of questions, we find Neo in pursuit of his true identity.

Died to the Old Life

It is important to note that Trinity offers some interesting advice in response to Neo’s questions about memories of his previous life. She says, “The Matrix can not tell you who you are,” meaning that his true identity was not defined by the life he lead in the Matrix. The same thing is true for born -again Christians. Through belief in Christ, we have died to our old way of life, “*For we know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin-because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.*” Romans 6:6-7. Therefore, we are no longer subject to the contemptible ideals that society uses to define individuals. We have freedom from the harsh standards of the world because our true identities can only be found in Christ Jesus. The more you know Him on a personal level, the closer you are to becoming the “one” God created you to be.

Discovery of Truth

Morpheus is useful in helping Neo discover his true, unique identity by leading him to the Oracle, a prophetess who has been instrumental in predicting the return of the One who will overcome the Matrix and bring freedom to mankind. Neo is informed that she is there to help him find the path, and in the process, she delivers some profound

advice about life, including some important changes in his perception of reality. While he is waiting to see the Oracle, he meets a child who appears to be able to bend spoons with his thoughts. Upon investigation, Neo finds out that by realizing the truth, it's himself that bends, not the spoon.

There are two important concepts presented here:

1. As you yield to the Truth of God you become flexible. The more you yield, the more you bend. You become moldable in the hands of God as He is shaping you to do His work.

“Yet, O Lord, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.” Isaiah 64:8

2. There is a change in Neo's perception that further enhances his understanding of the spiritual realm, an existence beyond the physical things he can see and touch. Realizing that there is more than meets the eye, is an important concept that Neo must learn in order to overcome the thoughts that keep his mind from letting go.

It is only after this important experience that Neo is then ready to meet the Oracle. That did not happen by mistake. Neo needed to experience this subtle change in perception so that he would be ready to accept the truth that the Oracle revealed. This is a wonderful example of how God prepares us for change. He gives us an experience that alters our perceptions just enough to allow our minds to accept a truth that we might have rejected if we had not first experience the change in perception.

Know Thyself

The Oracle is not at all what Neo expected, and after some polite conversation, she directs his attention to a small plaque above the door, written in Latin, “ *know*

thymself,” and begins by explaining that, “Being the One is just like being in love. No one can tell you, you just know it, through and through, balls to bones.” It’s a simple statement that carries a lot of significance that’s not just true in the movies, it is true in real life as well.

Part of being a victorious Christian and walking in the freedom of Christ, is knowing yourself, being familiar with your unique skills, strengths, limitations and knowing the gifts God has blessed you with. If you are not familiar with who you are, a great place to start looking is toward God. What you’ll discover is that similar characteristics are evident throughout all of God’s creation, supporting the fact that we were all created by the same God. Since all humans have a tendency to express themselves through the things they create, it is not hard to believe that God does the same thing. He created us in His image and with His likeness, therefore it is easy to see that we all carry a part of the Creator within us. *“For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”* *Ephesians 2:10.*

The more you understand who God is, the closer you are to discovering who He created you to be. Knowing this, without hesitation or doubt, is the first step in becoming the one He created you to be.

Self-Knowledge to Self-Sacrifice

Neo discovers that he will soon be faced with another decision that will ultimately change his life forever, only he doesn’t realize at this time what kind of impact this decision will have. It centers around Morpheus and his belief that Neo is the “One”.

Morpheus believes it so blindly that he is willing to sacrifice his life to save Neo, and that leaves Neo with a choice, “In one hand you’ll have Morpheus’s life, in the other, you’ll have yours.” Both lead to death, the question is, who will die?

This gives Neo a chance to experience first-hand, the power and conviction of belief. Morpheus not only believes, but is so convinced that he will sacrifice his life to save Neo. That kind of conviction is found in the Bible, and as believers, we are encouraged to exhibit that willingness to die for what we believe in. Jesus said, “*Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.*” *Matthew 10:39*. Not to mention that self-sacrifice is the ultimate expression of love for others. “*Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.*” *John 15:13*.

Both scriptures present an interesting view on life. Do we love it so much that we would not freely give it as a testimony to the conviction we feel about our Savior? Would we not freely give our lives to find our eternal life in Christ? Do you believe that Jesus can rescue you from the grip of death and escort you into his eternal kingdom? Are you willing to die for that belief? These are strong questions that each of us must answer in evaluating our relationship with Jesus. He already sacrificed Himself for you. What are you willing to do in response to His perfect expression of love?

A Work in Progress

Neo leaves the Oracle with a feeling of confusion and doubt about himself. I can’t help but wonder how many times in life we are faced with the same feelings of doubt and confusion, simply because we cannot see future events and the impact they

have on our lives.

The Oracle encouraged Neo, and only revealed the information that was important in getting him to the next level of understanding. God does this with us, and encourages us in the process,

“So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what He has promised.” Hebrews 10:35-36.

And *“...being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” Philippians 1:6.*

This confidence is not in our own abilities, but is centered on knowing that God is faithful to complete His work within us and faithful to deliver what He has promised.

A Step in the Right Direction

Until now, Neo has experienced events in his life that parallel those of believers and non-believers. He has been liberated from his former way of life, and now lives in the light of truth. He has undergone extensive spiritual training in faith and confidence but at this point is still plagued with the same doubts and fears that we struggle to overcome. Then a significant thing happens. The same event the Oracle spoke of materializes right before his eyes. Morpheus sacrifices himself to the Agents in exchange for Neo's escape from danger. It's when Neo realizes that everything the Oracle said was coming true, that he begins making steps in the right direction by devising a plan to rescue Morpheus. However, Trinity attempts to stop him with, “Neo, Morpheus sacrificed himself so that we could get you out. There is no way you are going back in.” and, Tank is very doubtful, claiming, “...it's suicide,” but Neo knows something and he

is finally beginning to understand. “I know that’s what it looks like but its not.

Morpheus was willing to give his life for something he believed in. That’s why I have to go. I believe I can bring him back.”

It’s Suicide

This is very similar to the point Jesus was trying to make with his disciples right before He was delivered into enemy hands. I’m sure the disciples didn’t fully understand why Jesus was so willing to put His life on the line. It is evident by Peter’s actions in trying to defend his Lord. “*Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant, cutting off his right ear.*” *John 18:10*. Clearly, Peter thought he was defending Jesus and taking a stand in Jesus’ name. From the disciples’ point of view, it probably looked like a suicide mission. After all, Jesus was the Son of the Living God, surely He could have saved Himself. In fact, He could, and that was the whole point.

“Do you think I can not call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen this way?” Matthew 26:53-54.

Just like Jesus, Neo had a prior prophecy about his life and the choices he would face. He knows that he can bring Morpheus back, and that realization is what motivates him to take a stand. At this point he chooses to become the instrument of salvation for Morpheus. Thus, he has chosen to become the “One” the Oracle prophesied about.

Knowing and Walking

As the events unfold, Neo’s perception of himself changes, effecting the

way he thinks, and suddenly he begins to believe that he is the “One”. An excited Morpheus adds, “Sooner or later you’re going to realize there is a difference between knowing the path and walking it.” Neo understood that he was *supposed* to be the One, but he actually *became* the “One” when he chose to begin *walking* in that knowledge.

The first step in realizing his potential and exercising it came when he decided to go in and rescue Morpheus, but it didn’t stop there. Neo took a stand in the subway tunnel and chose to stay and fight Agent Smith instead of running away. In doing this, he faced his fears instead of hiding from them, a decision that was paramount in overcoming his mind and preparing him to accept the reality of his true identity

God places us in similar circumstances that challenge our thinking and require us to begin to believe the things He has been telling and showing us from the beginning. You may understand the plan God has for your life, but what good is it if you never get up the courage to back it up with action? It’s the action that makes the difference.

An Invitation to Apply the Message

- ◆ Be confident in Christ and His everlasting promises.
- ◆ Know yourself; who God made you to be.
- ◆ Take steps in the right direction, toward God.
- ◆ Chose to lay down your life and **do** the will of the Father.
- ◆ Accept the reality of your true identity in Christ.
- ◆ Face your fears, don’t run from them.

The Matrix

“It is the world that has been pulled over your eyes to blind you from the truth.”

One of the most important concepts of the entire movie is learning exactly what the Matrix is. That's why we, like Neo, learn about it gradually, in bits and pieces. Just like a puzzle being assembled one piece at a time, we get a clearer impression of the finished picture with each new piece of information presented. Since knowing most of the Matrix depends on individual experience and perception, each person will have a slightly different view about what the Matrix is. While there are some concrete, universal concepts presented, it's important to recognize that there are many possibilities, depending on your own perceptions and levels of understanding.

You're Here Because You Know Something

Neo has just come face to face with Morpheus, a man with a notorious reputation that has, until this moment, existed only as a rumor. It is during this first encounter that Neo begins to discover the answers to some of the questions that have been plaguing his thoughts, like “What is the Matrix?” Before Neo can change his mind, Morpheus engages his curiosity with this intriguing line of conversation.

“You're here because you know something, what you know you can't explain but you feel it. You've felt it your entire life - that there is something wrong with the world. You don't know what it is but it's there, like a splinter in your mind, driving you mad. It's this feeling that has brought you to me.”

Christians recognize that this is not far from the truth of how we existed before we chose to give our lives to Christ. It's a feeling that you don't quite belong as part of the mass of people that make up this society. You felt out of place, like an alien in your own country. Yet, there is a deep sense of importance, like you should be putting every effort into doing something greater than just trying to exist, day to day. It's as if you were "wired" to accomplish something greater in life, and it's a feeling that cannot be satisfied with material things. It's what drives you to begin the quest for something better, and ultimately, it's what leads you to God. Once you find the truth, you realize that you have known it, deep inside, your entire life.

Mystery of the Matrix

The conversation continues as the mystery of the Matrix is beginning to unravel.

"The Matrix is everywhere, it's all around us, even now in this very room. You can see it when you look out your window, or when you turn on your television. You feel it when you go to work, when you go to church, when you pay your taxes. It is the world that has been pulled over your eyes to blind you from the truth."

Bingo! The great mystery is finally beginning to take shape. In this example, Morpheus is attempting to reach Neo by showing him that the world he has been existing in is an elaborate design to distract him from the real truth. The truth that there is an existence beyond the confines of the Matrix.

The Apostle Paul addressed this issue in regard to unbelievers and their relationship to the truth of the gospel of Christ. *"The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they can not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."* 2 Corinthians 4:4. Neo is just like an unbeliever. The Matrix is the *"world that has been pulled over his eyes"* to keep him under control and in

submission to Agent and machine dominance.

Prison of the Mind

Yet another piece of the Matrix puzzle falls into place as Morpheus goes on to describe Neo's current condition,

“You are a slave Neo, like everyone else, you were born into bondage, born into a prison that you can not see, or smell, taste or touch. A prison for your mind.”

This is a reality that we must all wake -up to. Just like Neo, we are all born into slavery, and bound in a prison that we cannot detect with our physical senses. We are slaves to our flesh, slaves to our self-centered nature and slaves to our sinful thoughts.

Jesus said, “*I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.*” John 8:34. It's from birth that we exist in a spiritual prison, with walls that were established long ago, in the garden of Eden, when Adam and Eve were ensnared in the wicked scheme of the deceiver. There is only one key opening this prison of sin, and that is Jesus the Christ, the Redeemer.

- ◆ “*Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,⁴⁹ because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering.*” Romans 8:1-3.
- ◆ “*He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the world.*” 1John 2:2.
- ◆ “*So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.*” John 8:36.

All I'm Offering is the Truth

⁴⁹ Please note: King James Version, “*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*” Romans 8:1

Dramatically, Morpheus ends the conversation by saying, “No one can be told *what* the Matrix is, you have to see it for yourself.” Then he presents Neo with an option of accepting the truth he just revealed or returning to the lies he once knew. With one last glance he adds, “All I’m offering is the truth.”

The paradox here is that we have all experienced the Matrix, because we were born into it. It is the sinful nature of mankind, a *condition* that perpetuates itself. Those that are in the Matrix can **only** be like the Matrix, never original, never changing, growing or evolving into something better.

When we reach the point of realizing that life doesn’t seem to be what we thought it was, then God makes contact, and just like Morpheus, He offers us the truth, in exchange for the life of lies we had been living. The best thing to do is...take the red pill.

Origin of the Matrix

As the movie progresses, we learn some history behind the reason the Matrix was created. During the interrogation scene with Morpheus, Agent Smith delivers a wonderful discourse on the origin of the first Matrix.

“Have you ever marveled at its beauty? It’s genius? Billions of people living out their lives, oblivious. The first Matrix was designed to be a perfect human world where no one would suffer and everyone would be happy. There was a disaster, no one would accept the program and entire crops were lost. Some believed we lacked the programming language to describe your perfect world. But I believe that as a species, human beings define their reality through misery and suffering. The perfect world was a dream that your primitive cerebrum kept trying to wake up from. Which is why the Matrix was redesigned to this: the peak of your civilization.”

Let’s look at this description of the first Matrix in conjunction with what we know about paradise, the Garden of Eden. First, we know that this garden paradise displayed

unsurpassed beauty and pleasing characteristics, making it the most perfect environment on earth. There was no fear, doubt, pain, suffering or even death. Every inhabitant of the garden lived in complete harmony and shared a common understanding. In this beautiful garden God placed His most prized creation, man kind. However, mankind brought disaster upon itself, and sin entered the world, causing a rampage of wickedness that defiled the entire race of humans within the time span of only a few generations. God's judgement resulted in a great flood, the cleansing of a primarily evil world and the beginning of a new era in the history of mankind.

You see, Agent Smith was actually retelling the story of creation and the great flood, he just relayed the information in computer terms.

Codes-Old and New

Agent Smith reveals two very important facts. In his terms the Matrix is a program, a written code in a computer language. Incredibly, the Bible also talks of a written code, handed down to the Israelites when God liberated them from slavery in Egypt. The Law of Moses was a written code, given to separate God's chosen people from the pagan world. This plays an important part near the end of the movie.

Two, that billions of people are living their lives oblivious to the truth of their circumstances. Their minds have been blinded to accept their current situation as normal. They live out their lives in misery and suffering, unable or unwilling to see it is a direct result of sin and wickedness.

System of Thought as Enemy

“The Matrix is a system, Neo. That system is our enemy. When you are inside, you look around and what do you see; businessmen, teachers, lawyers, carpenters. The very minds of the people we are trying to save...”

In this example, the Matrix stands for a “system” of thought that is an enemy to our freedom. This same “system” existed during the time Jesus walked the earth and still exists today, which is why Jesus passionately addresses the Pharisaical mindset.

Pay special attention to the environment surrounding Neo and Morpheus. They are walking through a large crowd of people who are dressed primarily in black clothing, except for an occasional person, who is dressed in pure white. Also notice that the same people are showing up over and over again. They have been duplicated. This is one example of how the Matrix works. It can never produce an original, it can only reproduce a **copy** of an original.

Now, match this image with the words Morpheus is speaking, “...*you see, businessman, teachers, lawyers, carpenters.*” These professions present two distinct differences in thought and here’s the link. The businessmen, teachers and lawyers represent the school of thought embraced by the Pharisees in Biblical times.

Pharisees and the Law of the System

The Pharisees prided themselves on being *professionals*. They were the businessmen, lawyers and teachers in Israelite society because they were educated in the Law. Their education merited the upper class position in society, thus they continually sought recognition from man for advocating the traditions of Israel. In their zeal to glorify themselves, they not only kept people from entering the kingdom of God, but they neglected the most important parts of God’s law: justice, mercy and faithfulness. They

became so puffed up with their own sanctimonious teachings that their hearts did not have room to embrace the Messiah. Jesus openly rebuked and exposed their wicked intentions as well as their hypocrisy, causing them to plot his demise.

One famous encounter with the Pharisees is documented in Matthew, chapter 23, where Jesus admonishes the crowds and his disciples against becoming like minded with the Pharisees. He exposes their wickedness by likening them to whitewashed tombs, blind guides, hypocrites, and a brood of vipers.

“Do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. They tie up heavy loads and put them on men’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them. Everything they do is done for men to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long; they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; they love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them ‘Rabbi’.” Matthew 23:3-8.

Jesus passionately opposed the Pharisees because they looked to man for personal glorification, while constantly drawing attention to themselves by proclaiming their own holiness through ritualistic religion. In fact, they were wicked and blind, leading others down the same path of spiritual destruction. This is a dangerous mindset that opposes the Spirit of God, hindering spiritual freedom, growth and maturity in your personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

“For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 5:20.

Carpenters and Pharisees

The *carpenters* Morpheus was speaking of are dressed in the white clothing. They represent the followers of the most famous carpenter ever known, Jesus of

Nazareth. His followers have been liberated from the bondage of the Pharisaical mindset, so it makes sense for them to be dressed in white clothes, a symbol of the redeemed children of God.

In direct contrast, the Pharisaic mindset is represented by the people dressed in black, who are still bound by this *system* of thought.

System Dependence

“You have to understand that most of these people are not ready to be unplugged, and many of them are so innervated, so hopelessly dependant on the system, that they would fight to protect it.”

A profound statement that is descriptive of the continued moral decline of our society today. From God’s perspective, the world exists in a constant state of spiritual darkness where mankind strangles itself in the chains of hate, deception, greed and love of power. Unscrupulous laws are created for the sole purpose of concealing man’s sinful nature while society continues to award deviant, immoral behavior, and persecutes righteousness. Generation after generation of man finds new and increasingly creative ways to define the boundaries of sin. Gradually, every craving and lustful desire of the sinful nature is accepted in the name of tolerance and understanding, while mankind boasts of its achievements. The iron claws of sin have captivated countless souls who ignorantly fight against their freedom. They fight for the right to sin, while condoning unholy behavior. A life long struggle that intensifies the chains of bondage and leads to the destruction of the soul. *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 6:23.*

As the training program comes to an end, Morpheus finishes with these words,

“... if you are not one of us, you are one of them.” Here, Morpheus distinguishes two groups of people, those who are still *wired* to the Matrix and those who are not. The world is filled with the same two kinds of people. Those who choose to serve Jesus as their Lord and Savior, and those who don’t. That’s why Jesus said, “*He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.*” *Matthew 12:30.*

Overcome the Matrix in Your Life

Jesus is the Light from which all things receive life. He came to expose the darkness of sin, restore sight to the spiritually blind, and liberate those in bondage to Satan. He delights in bringing love and warmth to the cold and lost, wisdom and knowledge to those who would seek, and freedom and eternal life to those who dare to believe and receive Him as Lord.

Do not let the sin and darkness that abound so freely in this world blind you from the truth of life. You must make a personal, heart-felt commitment to the Lord. Just going through the motions doesn’t count, and it won’t get you to Paradise. You must lay it all on the line, be honest with God, confess your sin and take a step in the right direction. He is waiting for you with the answers to all the questions that drive you.

“...It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters, and all liars-their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.” Revelation 21:6-8

An Invitation to Apply the Message

- ◆ The Matrix is a *system* of thought opposed to the truth.

- ◆ The Matrix is a prison of the mind.
- ◆ The Matrix is everywhere. You are *born* into its bondage.
- ◆ Jesus is the key to the prison of the Matrix

The Agents

“As you can see, we’ve had our eye on you for some time now, Mr. Anderson.”

The arrival of this unhappy trio of bad news is accompanied by sidesplitting audience laughter as they disguise themselves as stereotypical government agents, complete with earphones and government attire. Marked by unique speech patterns, these “Agents” couldn’t be more obvious if they wore a sign around their neck with big black lettering. In the Matrix, they represent control, coupled with domination of the masses of society. In reality, they are Sentient programs who, by the definition of the name, are capable of perception and consciousness, a strange combination for a computer software. For our purposes, they represent Satan and his followers, namely demons. They represent the antichrists, the false prophet and the beast, spoken of in Revelations.

These Agents of destruction make their first appearance in the beginning scene of the movie, where they attempt to apprehend Trinity. Although they exhibit the same super-human attributes displayed by Trinity, they are unable to match her speed and agility. This introduction to the Agents’ evil agenda, sets the stage for their ominous presence throughout the entire movie.

Agent Smith at Work

The first example of attempted manipulation and persuasion comes when the Agents begin interrogating Neo.

“We know that you have been contacted by a certain individual. A man who calls himself Morpheus. Whatever you think you know about this man is irrelevant. He is considered by many authorities to be the most dangerous man alive. My colleagues believe that I am wasting my time with you, but I believe you want to do the right thing. We are willing to wipe the slate clean, to give you a fresh start and all we are asking in return is your cooperation in bringing a known terrorist to justice.”

Agent Smith's behavior is a prime example of how Satan will launch a counter move to try and offset any progress made toward God. It follows the same pattern of manipulation employed against Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden where Satan enticed his first human victims. This face to face frontal attack is one of his bold attempts at intimidation and is usually accompanied by smooth words and counterfeit concern for your wellbeing.

Agents' Methods

Notice that Agent Smith begins by downplaying the importance of Morpheus and what he represents by using scare tactics to introduce doubt and confusion about Morpheus, in Neo's mind. He attempts to turn Neo against Morpheus by referring to him as a "known terrorist." Satan will try to do the same thing to us by introducing just enough diversion from the truth to create confusion and doubt in the mind of believers. He will even attempt to turn you against God by giving you a distorted view of the heavenly Father and the Father's will for you.

An easy way to escape this kind of attack is to familiarize yourself with the character of God and know that God never operates outside of his established character traits. When you hear things that do not match up with what you know to be true about God, you can easily dismiss them and their source.

Downplay, Distort, Deceive, Distract

The next thing he'll do is attempt to make you believe you are doing the right thing by rebelling against God's authority and he will try and entice you into rebellion by offering you a deal. Satan is a master in this method of enticement. He will bribe you with earthly delights and puff up your pride so that you will be tempted to indulge in physical pleasures, personal glory, and earthly power.

He knows full well the sins you have committed, just as you do, and he will use them to intimidate you into believing you are not worthy to receive forgiveness from God. He will try and manufacture a case against God, while building your ego up to resist the influence God already has in your life. When you find yourself in this situation, do like Neo did, and refuse to listen to his smooth words and erroneous logic because they will lead you down the path of death and destruction.

Upon occasion, the enemy will try to weaken your resolve by inundating you with distractions and the problems of every day life. He will watch carefully for the moment to strike, and it will usually be during a difficult time. He waits for you to be too tired, too stressed or too worried about your current circumstances to fight him away. Then he will close in and attempt to keep you from reaching out to God. Now, he can never stop you from reaching toward God, but he can try to convince you not to initiate contact through prayer. He can make you feel isolated and lonely, as if you don't have enough strength to pray for yourself. Then he is more equipped to harass you into helping him, even if it's more on a subconscious level.

A good example of this tactic is employed by Agent Smith during Neo's interrogation, "What good is a phone call if you are unable to speak? You are going to

help us, Mr. Anderson, whether you want to or not.” Neo’s mouth seals shut. A perfect depiction symbolic of the way Satan can make you feel, as if you’re unable to communicate your needs by crying out to God in prayer.

Agent’s Can Invade and Inhabit

Another major theme presented in the movie, is the ability the Agents have to move through the Matrix by entering the people who are still hard wired to the system. Morpheus explains it like this:

“Anyone we have not unplugged is potentially an Agent. They are everyone and they are no one. If you are not one of us, you are one of them.”

It’s not actually the people that Neo, Morpheus and Trinity are fighting. It’s the Agents moving through the people in the Matrix and using them to accomplish their wicked schemes. Therefore, those that have not been liberated from the Matrix are potential Agents.

In the spiritual sense, this movement is typical of demons, who will move from person to person while influencing them to accomplish the will of Satan. Jesus instructs us on these matters,

“When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, “I will return to the house I left.” When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first. That is how it will be with this wicked generation.” Matthew 12:43-45.

This, of course, is referring to the spiritual condition of a person, indicating that once an evil spirit leaves, if the heart of that person is not filled with the Spirit of God,

then the evil spirit will return and bring seven buddies with him, and things just go down hill from there. It also shows a parallel between those who walk in the truth and those that don't. In the movie, the Agents can use you, only if you are still hard wired to the system. This same concept is true in regards to your spiritual condition. If you are filled with the Spirit of God, then your "house" is full and an evil spirit will not be able to enter. If you are not, then that makes you accessible to the movement of evil spirits. The best way to avoid this accessibility is to fill your house with God.

Agents Can Transform and Camouflage

These Agents demonstrate another trademark of the enemy. Satan is a spiritual being and that means he is not limited by the confines of flesh and blood. He possesses the power of transformation and likes to camouflage himself to look like one of the good guys. In fact, the Bible says,

"...for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve." 2 Corinthians 11:14-15.

Remember that Satan knows what God expects from us because he himself fell from grace, a direct result of his prideful rebellion against the God of the universe. He delights in concealing himself and his plans in an effort to puff up your pride while tempting you to rebel against God like he did. Then you play right into his hand because you fall to the same level as Satan, and that's right where he wants you.

The Gatekeepers

Morpheus delivers some more interesting information about the Agents during the

training program with the woman in the red dress. He informs Neo that,

“We have survived by hiding from them and by running from them, but they are the gatekeepers. They are guarding all the doors, they are holding all the keys. Which means that sooner or later someone is going to have to fight them. I won’t lie to you, Neo. Every single man or woman who has stood their ground, everyone who has fought an Agent, has died. But where they have failed you will succeed...I’ve seen an Agent punch through a concrete wall, men have emptied their clips at them and hit nothing but air. Yet their strength and their speed are still based in a world that is built on rules. Because of that, they will never be as fast as you can be.”

And Neo replies, “What are you trying to tell me that I can dodge bullets?” and Morpheus responds, “No, Neo. I’m trying to tell you that when you are ready, you won’t have to.” Morpheus has just disclosed a wealth of information about the enemy that is consistent with what the Bible teaches about Satan.

First, Morpheus states that the Agents occupy the position of gatekeepers, meaning that they guard all the doors and hold all the keys. The question is, “What doors and what keys?” Here’s the answer. The “doors” are the gates of Hades and the “keys” are the keys of death, and at this point in the movie, there has not yet been a battle for possession of the keys of death. Morpheus is trying to prepare Neo for that battle to take place, but until then, the Agents maintain control of the doors and the keys. This is a parallel in reference to the time before Christ, when Satan held the keys of death and his helpers guarded the gates of Hell. Satan had control because death was a weapon he used against mortals from the beginning, when death entered the world on the coattails of sin. *“Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.” Romans 5:12.*

In order to conquer death, there must be redemption from the penalty of sin, and that can only come from the shedding of blood. *“In fact, the law requires that nearly*

everything be cleansed with blood and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.” Hebrews 9:22. So, in order to gain possession of the keys, which control all the doors, someone has to die, beat Satan on in his own territory, then be raised to life again. Enter Jesus of Nazareth, the perfect Lamb of God, sacrificed for the sins of mankind and resurrected to eternal life, conquering the prison of death forever. “He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.” Romans 4:25.

Morpheus stresses that up until this point, every man or woman who has faced an Agent has died, but where they failed, Neo will be victorious. Again, this is a parallel referring to the promise of a Savior to redeem fallen mankind. Morpheus knows that Neo is the “One” and he is trying to prepare him to beat the Agents in their own territory, the Matrix.

Agents Have Limits

Morpheus carefully explains the reasoning behind his assurance that Neo will defeat the Agents. “Yet their strength and their speed are still based in a world that is built on rules. Because of that, they will never be as fast as you can be.” What Morpheus was trying to say is that Neo would be able to overcome the “rules” that the Agents operated under. Even though they displayed exceptional strength and speed, they still had to abide by the rules that governed the Matrix. They could never be liberated from the Matrix like Neo and the rest of the crew.

That’s exactly what Jesus did, He overcame death and defeated Satan by overcoming the parameters in which Satan is required to operate. He stripped Satan and

his followers of all their power rendering them useless against us . “*And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.*” *Colossians 2:15*. When will we come to realize the full extent of the freedom He purchased for us on the cross?

Power play

The next opportunity we have to learn about the enemy, comes during another intimidation ploy against Morpheus. The Agents have captured him and are attempting to extract valuable information using various torture techniques. He has been handcuffed and beaten and is still unwilling to divulge the coveted codes to the Zion computer mainframe. Agent Smith delivers this dissertation about our society:

“The perfect world was a dream that your primitive cerebrum kept trying to wake - up from. Which is why the Matrix was redesigned to this: the peak of your civilization. I say “*your civilization*” because as soon as we started thinking for you, it became *our* civilization, *our* world.”

What better way is there to describe our civilization today? This world is black with corruption and overflowing with wickedness. There is no question that Satan is ruling this society. Since the fall of mankind, Satan has been instrumental in the propagation of sin and wickedness. You might even say that he has “cornered the market” in the sin department. Because of this he has *control* of society. Sin gives him access to that control. Therefore, by indulging in sin, you allow Satan to have access in your life. In sin, Satan is thinking for you and controlling you through the access that you provided.

“...*you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.*” *Ephesians 2:1-2*

God has ultimate control and authority in all matters, however, Satan has been given a period of time to establish his kingdom on this earth.

- ◆ *“The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months...He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation.” Revelation 13:5,7*
- ◆ *“For God has put it into their hearts to accomplish his purpose by agreeing to give the beast their power to rule, until God’s words are fulfilled.” Revelation 17:17*

Satan’s Pride

During the same interrogation, Agent Smith begins to get agitated with the lack of response from Morpheus. He wants the codes to the Zion computer mainframe and Morpheus is not releasing them. As the reality of his circumstances begin to close in around him he exhibits a rare display of anger and frustration.

“I’m going to be honest. I hate this place. This zoo. This prison. This reality, whatever you want to call it, I can’t stand it any longer. It’s the smell, if there is such a thing. I feel saturated by it. I can taste your stink and every time I do, I fear that I’ve somehow been infected by it...I must get out of here, I must get free. In this mind is the key. My key. Once Zion is gone, there is no need for me to be here! Do you understand? I need the codes! I have to get inside Zion!”

Try to imagine how Satan must feel about us, believers in Christ. He is a fallen angel who once dwelled in heaven and stood in the radiant glory of the living God. Pride rose up within him and caused him to rebel against God who cast him down to the earth like a bolt of lightning.⁵⁰ That pride and arrogance still remains, even though his dwelling place changed. His ego is so puffed up about his position as an eternal being that even the idea of coming into contact with a mortal man must make him feel

⁵⁰ Luke 10:18

contaminated. Not to mention that there is no redemption for fallen angels. So he is stuck where he's at until he receives judgement from the throne of God.⁵¹

It's ironic to see that the freedom he thought he would gain by usurping God's authority, only put him in a prison with a stricter code of conduct that he must follow. I imagine that he sees this planet as a zoo, filled with animals called humans that repulse him each time he comes in contact with them because his pride keeps him thinking that he is still a heavenly being. So why does he persist to harass us? It is in his nature to oppose the truth and anything having to do with the truth, that's why he is called the Father of Lies. Therefore, he naturally hates everyone who follows God, because God is truth. I get the impression that Satan thought that killing Jesus was the key to his freedom, and that somehow, by committing this injustice, he would defeat the will of God and free himself from the reality of his prison. Instead, he sealed his fate for eternity at the same time he was fulfilling the will of the Father. He was defeated by his foolish pride that blinded him from the truth and became his ultimate downfall because his prideful heart would not allow him to recognize the future implications that would come from the death of our Savior. He thought he was going to win because he killed Jesus. The thought never occurred to him that this holy sacrifice would strip him of all authority and power while bringing redemption and freedom to mortal mankind.

The Evil Trinity

One last observation about the Agents. There are three of them, Agent Smith, Agent Jones and Agent Brown, which are representative of the evil trinity - Satan, the

⁵¹ Revelation 20:10

false prophet, and the beast spoken of in Revelations, where we get a clearer picture of this evil trio.

“And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.” Revelation 20:10.

Dealing With the Adversary

1. When dealing with the adversary, it's important to remember these things:
 - ◆ He is the master of lies and deception with centuries of experience.
 - ◆ He does not fear humans. He manipulates them.
 - ◆ He seeks to alienate people from God through sin.
 - ◆ He seeks to bring mankind under his bondage and servitude.

2. There are three major areas that He will always tempt you with:
 - ◆ He will challenge God's words, manipulate their meaning and plant seeds of doubt in your mind.
 - ◆ He will assault your ego by appealing to your sense of pride.
 - ◆ He will appeal to your physical senses with lust, covetousness and earthly fame and fortune.

The Advantages of Following Christ

There is no reason to fear Satan because Jesus has already defeated him by the power of His glorious resurrection from the dead. This is an advantage for those who believe, because Jesus declared, *“I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.”*

Luke 10:19. While Satan is not afraid of humans, he trembles at the sight of a Holy Spirit filled Christian, walking in the freedom and footsteps of the Savior. So do not defeat yourself by empowering Satan with your fears, but trust God and He will turn your fear

to joy.

An Invitation to Apply the Message

- ◆ Recognize Satan and his tactics.
- ◆ Satan has the ability to transform and camouflage himself.
- ◆ Satan challenges God's Word and manipulates it's meaning.
- ◆ Protect yourself with the Word of God and the Holy Spirit.

Being the “One”

“Do you believe me now Trinity?”

Understanding the final scene of this movie is the most crucial step in understanding the message of the gospel of salvation. This is one of the many times throughout the movie that the events surrounding Neo’s life are parallel to the historic events that took place in the life of our Savior, Jesus Christ. This futuristic portrayal of Neo’s miraculous death and resurrection makes it easy for everyone to grasp the concept of salvation by giving the viewer a tangible picture of how Christ overcame the enemy with His own death.

Tangible Evidence

To begin with, it is very important to understand that many things happened as a result of the sacrificed life of the Lamb of God. Tangible evidence of His death rippled through the physical and spiritual realms, simultaneously, signifying the new covenant between God and man. Just like the announcement that followed His glorious birth, Jesus’ death was evident to all who were present, in more ways than one.

“From the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness came over all the land...At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split. The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life.” Matthew 27: 45,51-52.

These events are miraculous in nature, but the fact that they are even mentioned in the Bible, is an indication of their importance. Before Jesus gave up His spirit, for three

hours, darkness came over all the land. This is important because it signifies the three days that the body of Jesus laid in the tomb. For these three days, mankind was without the “Light of Life”, and it was not until His resurrection on the third day that the Light was restored.

The Veil is Torn

Likewise, the ripping of the temple veil is very significant in both the physical and spiritual realm. Scripturally speaking, the veil is often used to symbolize the hidden glory of God. A perfect example of this occurred each time Moses returned from his visit with God on the mountain. His face literally shone from being in the presence of the Lord and it was so bright to those who looked upon him, that he covered it with a veil.⁵² Spiritually speaking, that veil remains this very day, over the hearts of Jews when they read the law, causing them to overlook the glory of the Lord, because they could not withstand it. In regards to the temple, and under the dispensation of the law, the veil prevented man from experiencing the full blessing of the glory of God. So the ripping of this veil upon the death of Christ eliminated this physical barrier between God and mankind, indicating that the hidden glory of God is now revealed for all to see. As believers in Christ Jesus we have confidence to enter the holiest place because we are cleansed by His blood.

“Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, opened for us through the curtain, that is, His body...” Hebrews 10: 19-20.

Spiritual Rock Breaking

⁵² Exodus 34:29-33

The quaking earth and splitting rocks symbolize the spiritual breaking of Jesus as He gives up His spirit to the Father. Even in Old Testament times, Jesus is referred to as a “spiritual rock”.

“They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.” 1 Corinthians 10:2-4.

Ransom for the Righteous

The last significant event that took place during His death was, the resurrection of many holy people from tombs outside the city. This is important because it serves as a testimony for the Lord Jesus Christ, that by giving His life as ransom, death was defeated once and for all, and a promise of everlasting life was given to those who believe in Him and overcome until the end. Notice that the scriptures say that “ *all the bodies of many holy people were raised to life.*” *Matthew 27:52* This is indicating that the promise was given only to those who choose to live a holy life and follow Jesus. None of the unrighteous were raised to life.

Simultaneous Disturbances

All of this is to show you that there is physical and spiritual significance to everything that happened in the Bible and many times they occurred at the same time. This is also the case in the last scene of the movie. Deep within the Matrix, Neo is being chased by Agents. At the same time, the Nebuchadnezzar is undergoing attack from the sentient machines. It is also important to note that at the time of Neo's death in the Matrix, the Nebuchadnezzar is literally *torn* open by the sentient machines. This

parallels the earth quake that occurred when Jesus gave up His Spirit on the cross, as the earth was *torn* open for all to see.

Review the Prophecies

To end this story, we must first review the prophecies made about Neo and the way they correlate to the prophecies made about Jesus. Morpheus begins explaining,

“When the Matrix was first built, there was a man born inside who had the ability to change whatever he wanted. To remake the Matrix as he saw fit. It was he who freed the first of us, taught us the truth. As long as the Matrix exists, the human race will never be free. After he died, the Oracle prophesied his re turn and that his coming would hail the destruction of the Matrix, end the war, free our people.”

Here, Morpheus describes the life of the “One” who will free them and end the war, or maybe he was really describing the life of Jesus. Jesus was born “inside” because he was born of man and the Holy Spirit. Because He was God in the flesh, He possessed the ability to change whatever He wanted, and He remade it by performing all kinds of signs and wonders that defied natural laws. It was Jesus who freed the first men, they were known as His twelve disciples. He freed them from a Pharisaic mindset and taught them how to walk in truth and freedom. He also taught them that as long as sin exists, the human race will never be free. After He died, one of His disciples had a glorious vision of His return. An event that would hail the destruction of the Antichrist, end the spiritual war, and bring freedom to the people. Does this sound familiar? It’s the same story Morpheus told, only it’s in Biblical terms.

Interpretations of Neo’s Death

Now we can look at this final scene of the movie, and we can see it in a new light,

in comparison to the life of Christ. There are two distinct interpretations that explain this last battle. First and foremost, it is a wonderful representation of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Neo comes face to face with Agent Smith, who proceeds to discharge his weapon until its empty, resulting in Neo's death. As he fades from life, Trinity "breathes" life into him, by revealing her great love for him. Neo is then resurrected and made new, because now he can control the Matrix, as evident by stopping bullets in mid air. He actually "disarms" Agent Smith, by effortlessly defeating him with only one hand. Then, he is able to "see" the encoded symbols of the Matrix all around him, showing that he has broken the code and destroyed the Matrix. Finally, he destroys Agent Smith from the inside out, bursting through him with a radiant light, and making somewhat of a public spectacle of him in the process.

Now lets look at how this parallels the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Through the method of crucifixion, Jesus gave His life as ransom for our sins. He was miraculously brought back to life and glorified by the awesome power of God.

"So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." 1 Corinthians 15:42-44.

"For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, He cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over Him." Romans 6:9.

By the power of the living God, Jesus overcame the domination of death, and attained a glorified spiritual state, making Him a living testimony to the promise of eternal life. This victory over death made a public spectacle of the "powers and authorities" who once had dominion in death, but are now defeated and powerless, by the shed blood of the Lamb of God. *"And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he*

made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.” Colossians 2:15.

For the next comparison, let's say that the encoded symbols of the Matrix, are symbolic of the written code of the Old Testament Law of the Jews. Included in the blood sacrifice of the Lamb of God, was provision for cancellation of the old covenant Laws of Jewish customs, “ *...having cancelled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and stood opposed to us; He took it away, nailing it to the cross.*”

Colossians 2:14. Therefore, the death and resurrection of Jesus ushered in a new covenant between God and mankind.

“The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw nearer to God. And it was not without an oath! ...Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.” Hebrews 7: 18-22.

The Second Coming

The second way to look at this final scene is in relation to the prophecies about Neo and how they are congruent with the prophecies of the second coming of Jesus Christ. The Oracle prophesied that the return of “The One” would hail the destruction of the Matrix, end the war, and bring freedom to the people. That's exactly what happened when Neo conquered the Matrix by overcoming his own death. Now, he holds the keys to freedom and the control of the Matrix, including the power to remake the Matrix as he sees fit.

The Bible speaks of the second coming of Christ like this, “ *And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of His mouth and destroy by the splendor of His coming.*” *2 Thessalonians 2:8.* If the Matrix is symbolic of the dominion of the Antichrist, (with the Antichrist being Agent Smith), and

the war stands for the great tribulation, then the second coming of Jesus would in fact bring freedom to His people, end the war, and destroy the Antichrist in the process. This, of course, is represented by an intense, radiant light, that leads to the disintegration of Agent Smith. A move that clearly signifies the end of both Agent and machine dominance.

Jesus is the Only Way

One last significant thing to note. While Neo and Trinity were preparing to rescue Morpheus, Trinity posed an interesting query, “No one has ever done anything like this.” To which Neo responded, “That’s why it’s going to work.” The reason their rescue plan would be successful is because it had never been attempted before now.

It’s the same thing with Jesus. No one had ever done anything like what He did to save mankind. No wonder the Jews did not readily accept Him as the Son of God. No one recognized Him because this plan of salvation had never been attempted before. Even Satan was duped. He believed that if he killed Jesus, he would be able to thwart God’s plan. Never before had anyone been able to defeat the power of death. Satan obviously didn’t realize that by killing Jesus, he was actually fulfilling God’s will while simultaneously sealing his own eternal destruction. Jesus took the power of death away from Satan, rose from the dead, and then sent the Holy Spirit to empower the saints. WOW! What a powerful testimony! No wonder He is the **only** way to eternal life.

*“Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgement, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.”
Ecclesiastes 12:13-14.*

An Invitation to Apply the Message

- ◆ Recognize the significance of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- ◆ Recognize that mankind needs a Savior.
- ◆ **Only** Jesus could do what He did.
- ◆ Jesus is the **only** way to eternal life.

The End, Or Just The Beginning?

“Where we go from there is a choice I leave to you.”

“I know you are out there. I can feel you now. I know that you’re afraid. You’re afraid of us, you’re afraid of change. I don’t know the future, I didn’t come here to tell you how this is going to end, I came here to tell you how it’s going to begin. I’m going to hang up this phone and then I’m going to show these people what you don’t want them to see. I’m going to show them a world without you, a world without rules and control, without borders and boundaries, a world where anything is possible. Where we go from there is a choice I leave to you.”

This closing statement made by Neo can be interpreted in several different ways. For our purposes, let’s divide it into two sections. In one sense, he is addressing those who do not yet know the truth. Those would be the ones afraid of change, afraid to let go of the reality that they know and have grown comfortable with. They are threatened by what they don’t know and too afraid to let go of what they do know, and that means they would fight to hang on to the very things that are killing them.

“What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?” Matthew 16:26.

“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” Matthew 10:28.

Neo continues by explaining that he doesn’t know the future, and that he didn’t come to tell us about the end, he came to tell us about the beginning. We have the same assurance from Jesus, who spoke of His glorious return, *“No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.” Matthew 24:36*, showing that He did not know the future, in regards to when it would happen. Then He explains in Revelation, *“Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will*

give to everyone according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.” Revelation 22:12-13. Therefore, He came so that we could have a new beginning with Him, so that those who overcome will inherit their rightful place in Paradise, ushering in the new era of eternal life with God. So this is really just the beginning of the glorious things still to come.

The rest of the message addresses the Agents, or the enemy, directly. Neo says, “I’m going to show these people what you don’t want them to see. I’m going to show them a world without you, a world without rules and control, without borders and boundaries, a world where anything is possible.”

Now that the enemy is powerless, Neo is free to enlighten others by showing them the truth. He will teach them how to live, free of the bondage brought by fears, doubts and disbelief. They will learn how to exist in the Matrix uninhibited by the control of the Agents and unhampered by the limitations of the physical world around them. In reality, they will know the truth, and they will act upon it. They will overcome, because Neo overcame.

This is a world without Satan. It is a world that is not controlled by fleshly things or hampered by physical rules. It is a world that exists in another dimension, where anything is possible because, “...*with God all things are possible.*” *Matthew 19:26*

The next scene shows Neo blasting through the city skyscrapers headed straight toward heaven, leaving the earth in his wake.

Note: the parallel between Neo soaring through the air toward heaven and Jesus being lifted up as He ascended in to heaven after His resurrection. “*After He said this He was taken up before their very eyes...*” *Acts 1:9*

The last line of the message, is directed toward those who still need to make a decision about the life they are leading. Neo said, “Where we go from there is a choice I leave to you,” and this is the question that faces you today if you have not yet made a choice to follow Jesus Christ. The options are now very clear, and the only thing left is making the choice and taking the first step of faith toward your Creator. I encourage you to do it now, even where you sit. Make the choice to follow Jesus Christ, and enter into the truth of life. Let this be a new beginning for you,

“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that He may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus.” Acts 3:19-20.

An Invitation to Apply the Message

- ◆ If you are ready to give your life to Jesus, **or** if you want to make a **new** commitment to follow Christ, then repeat this prayer with all your heart, mind, soul and spirit:

Lord Jesus Christ,

I admit that I have made poor choices and that I have sinned against You. I realize that according to Your Word, I stand condemned as a sinner and have fallen short of Your glory. I thank-you for sacrificing Your sinless life, so that I may live. I lay my life at your feet. Please come into my heart and forgive me of my sins. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit, teach me to be obedient to Your commands and to walk in the light of Your Truth. Today I choose to make a heart-felt commitment to You. I give You my heart and my life. Mold me to be more like You, so that I may serve You and complete the plan You have established for my life.

In Your holy name, Amen.

Everything Else...

“Ironically, this is not far from the truth.”

There remains several wonderful “coincidences” that stand out in the movie but did not fit in with anything else. I’ve added this chapter as a way to wrap up some loose ends. However, I realize that I could have missed something, somewhere along the way. There are endless possibilities of interpretation relating to this movie, and this is by no means an end. And yet, maybe it’s the beginning of something altogether new.

1. Neo is an anagram for “One”
2. The sign on the Nebuchadnezzar indicated that it was built in the U.S.A in 2069.

The other reference was unusual, Mark III, #11. When cross-referenced in the Bible, we come up with, “*Whenever the evil spirits saw Him, they fell down before Him and cried out, “You are the Son of God.” Mark 3:11.*

3. Morpheus shows Neo a battery and explains that the entire charade is an attempt to turn human beings into a power supply for the machines. If you think of this on a spiritual level, then you can see that it’s actually true. Satan has no power over us, except the power we give him through our fears, doubts and unbelief. Imagine the amount of power that comes from an entire planet of people feeding the ego of the enemy. In a sense, humans are Satan’s power supply.
4. The Oracle could be similar to the prophetess Anna, who gave testimony about the Christ child on the day they brought Him to the temple to be named.

“She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.”
Luke 2:37-38.

5. The “bug” that Neo acquired from his visit with the Agents, could represent a “thorn in the flesh” as described by the apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians. *“...there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.” 2 Corinthians 12:7.*

6. Mr. Reinhart delivers a stern lecture to Neo about the internal workings of “the Company”. *“...every single employee understands that they are a part of a whole. Thus, if an employee has a problem, the company has a problem.”* This sounds just like the explanation Paul gives the Corinthian church about the body of believers.

“The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all it’s parts are many, they form one body... If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.” 1 Corinthians 12:12,26.

7. When Trinity is speaking with Cypher on the phone, she is given an opportunity to confess or deny her belief in Neo. She confesses her belief, showing that it only takes the belief of one faithful saint, to bring about a miracle. A biblical example:

“The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.” James 5:16-18.

8. When Morpheus takes Neo to see the Oracle, you may have noticed that each one of the team members were dressed in black, with the exception of Switch, who was dressed in white. I found several meanings hidden in this symbolism:

- ◆ In the Bible, white clothes or robes are symbolic of the redeemed. Someone who has been forgiven is now “white as snow”.

- ◆ The white clothing could be symbolic of the church or “Bride of Christ” in dark times. (black clothing)
- ◆ As a believer in Christ, we are called to “come out” or be different than the world. We should be as different as black is to white.

9. A brief scene with Morpheus and Trinity speaking over Neo, after he is taken from the water into his “new life”, shows us an example of the triune Godhead. The Father, the Son and The Holy Spirit, represented by Morpheus, Neo and Trinity respectively. The Bible gives us many examples, like,

“And as He was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on Him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.” Luke 3:21-22.

This is one of the first complete pictures of the Trinity as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in which they are present simultaneously.

10. Twice, Neo calls out a name and Trinity responds. The first time is in the beginning when they first meet. He says, “Jesus”, and she says, “what?”. The second time is when they are riding in the car, on the way to see the Oracle. Neo says, “God.” And Trinity again answers, “what?”. Since she answers to both names, it is only obvious that she is representing the actual Trinity. I think this is a very subtle way to redirect the thoughts of the viewer, back to God the Father, Jesus His Son, and the Holy Spirit, the only true Trinity.

Note: These names are never without meaning or significance. They always address the owners, and they are *always* listening.

11. Reflections play an important role in this film, and there are two instances in particular, that are worth noting. During the interrogation process, Agent Smith uses Neo’s dual lifestyle as a means of intimidation,

“It seems that you have been living two lives. In one life, you are Thomas A. Anderson, program writer for a respectable software company. You have a social security number, you pay your taxes and you help your landlady carry out her garbage. The other life is lived in computers where you go by the alias Neo, and are guilty of virtually every computer crime we have a law for.”

The interesting thing about this is the reflection in the Agent's glasses as he is explaining this to Neo. In one lens, we see Thomas A. Anderson program writer, in the other we see Neo, computer hacker. Here, Neo is given an option of choosing one of the two lifestyles he has been living, and we can easily see the parallel in the reflection. The second time it happens Morpheus is posing a question, and again, Neo must decide which life to choose. In one lens we see Thomas A. Anderson with the blue pill, and in the other we see Neo and the red pill. Both instances reflect the parallels of choice that we face in our lives every day.

- 12.** Another interesting parallel is the symbolism of the woman in the red dress. I'm speaking of the fact that she is dressed in red, or scarlet, which has specific meaning in Biblical terms. The color scarlet represents sin, as spoken by the prophet Isaiah, *“Though your sins are like scarlet, they will be white as snow;” Isaiah 1:18a*, and she is dressed to look seductive, like a prostitute, indicating that she represents the great prostitute spoken of in Revelation.

“The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet...I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus.” Revelation 17: 4-6.

The “sin” that is attributed to the scarlet color she is wearing, is the persecution of the saints of God. Also, scarlet is the color of blood, and notice that she is drunk with the “blood of the saints”. Its interesting to liken her to sin, knowing that Mouse

programmed her to act as a distraction in a training program. Now, thinking of this, how often does the enemy try to distract us with sin? It would be wise to avoid the woman in the red dress the next time she walks by.

13. Regarding the two lives Neo was leading, its worth mentioning that Agent Smith revealed a truth to Neo that almost went unnoticed. The truth is, “One of these lives has a future. One of them does not.” Many of us find ourselves leading two lives, serving two masters, per say. This can not continue, a choice must be made, a stance must be taken. *“Simply let your “Yes” be “Yes” and your “No”, “No”; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.” Matthew 5:37.* An easy way to distinguish between the two options is this: God offers eternal life for those that follow Him, the alternative is eternal damnation. Take your pick.

14. In the subway station, Neo encounters Agent Smith, who delivers quite a beating, causing Neo to spit blood in both realms. Trinity responds by wiping his mouth with a cloth and exclaiming, “Jesus, he’s killing him!”. This is a precursor to the final scene, where Neo is actually shot to death. The parallel is that Jesus was beaten before he was crucified, and Trinity’s words are leading the viewer to recognize this as symbolic of the beating that Jesus received before his crucifixion.

15. During the subway station encounter, Agent Smith continually refers to Neo as Mr. Anderson, especially when he was trying to hold Neo in front of the train. “Do you hear that, Mr. Anderson? That is the sound of inevitability. It’s the sound of your death. Goodbye, Mr. Anderson.” To which Neo responds, “My name, is Neo!” and quickly escapes the grip of Agent Smith while narrowly escaping the train. The point

being that, Satan is always going to try and remind you where you came from. He is the accuser of the brethren, and he will continually try to make you feel unworthy, like a sinner. At this point, Neo has had enough, and he decides to exert some of his new found freedom by declaring his new name and identity. Thus giving us an example of how to effectively respond to and eliminate the enemy.

- 16.** There are nine actual verbal references to Jesus Christ and God the Father, not to mention the countless insinuations and endless references to the life of Jesus.
- 17.** In the lobby of the government building where the Agents held Morpheus, there was a guard reading a newspaper with a large question mark that covered the entire back page. This is a visual reference to the fact that the newspapers, or other media, do not contain the answers to life's problems. The only true answer to all questions that plague the minds of mankind is Jesus Christ.
- 18.** In the beginning of the movie, when we see Neo sleeping at his computer terminal, notice the information flashing on the computer screen. They are news articles about Morpheus and how he evaded the Agents.
- 19.** In the Heart O' the City Hotel, we see a brilliant display of speed and agility demonstrated by Trinity. At one point, she runs up the wall and circles around the enemy to avoid being shot. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we should all be able to run circles around the enemy, just like Trinity. In fact, we should run so many spiritual circles around him that he gets dizzy trying to catch us.

- 20.** In the night club, when Trinity first approaches Neo, she tells him that she is there to warn him of the danger he's in. This is an example of how the Holy Spirit of God wakes us up and makes us realize that we are in danger of eternal damnation if we don't repent and turn to God for forgiveness.
- 21.** Notice in the background, that there are City Phone Directories located in strategic places throughout the movie. (Neo's apartment, on top of the fridge in the Oracle's kitchen etc.). The City Phone book would be a directory to all the phone lines, a.k.a. the hard-lines located throughout the city. Supposing that were true, it would be the equivalent to the Bible, our directory to the Hard Line (Jesus).
- 22.** There is a scene where Cypher is offering Neo a drink. Cypher indicates to Neo that being the One is an awesome responsibility, then he offers Neo a suggestion to run. Cypher seems to be saying that this is more than anyone should have to do and if you're smart you'll run. He is also pointing out that Neo could find it a source of personal pride and a way to gain personal power. This is typical of Satan's methods of temptation with personal indulgence, personal glory, and or earthly power. Just like Jesus, Neo is being tempted in subtle ways, even when the lady in red tempts him with sex.
- 23.** In the Construct program, Morpheus describes the downfall of mankind and the reason behind the creation of the Matrix. He explains, "We were united in celebration as we marveled at our own magnificence." This reminded me of the tower of Babel in the Bible.

"Come let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves...But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower that the men were building...If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan will be impossible for them...So the

Lord scattered them from there all over the earth and they stopped building the city.”
Genesis 11:4-6,8.