

# Sustainable War

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## **GoStrategic (Formerly Strategic Christian Services)**

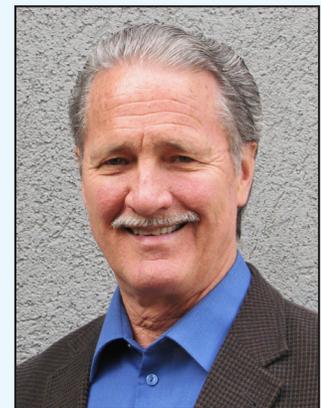
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A former business owner, Dennis Peacocke is the founder and president of GoStrategic, a Christian leadership organization dedicated to demonstrating the relevance of Christianity to every area of contemporary life. He has authored four books: *On the Destiny of Nations*, *Winning the Battle for the Minds of Men*, *Doing Business God's Way*, and *The Emperor Has No Clothes*, as well as recorded numerous audio and video presentations.

Dennis and his wife Jan reside in Santa Rosa, California. They have three adult children and eleven grandchildren.





# Sustainable War

Preparing God's People while Preserving His Leaders

## Introduction

This teaching deals with the equipping of people with God's vision by leaders who can fight a sustainable war without burning out.

**Teachings 1-5 by Dennis Peacocke** focus on the challenges ministry leaders face in engaging in a prolonged spiritual campaign of full service for God without burning out.

- Issue #1: The necessity of knowing your assignment and your sphere.
- Issue #2: The necessity of handling responsibility properly.
- Issue #3: The necessity of long range perspective and long range building.

**Teachings 6-8 by Jim Durkin and Carlos Ramirez** focus on the biblical mandate and necessity of challenging and equipping God's people with the life and power of God's vision and seeing it released within them.

- Jim Durkin shares out of the vision that has changed the lives of many thousands.
- Carlos Ramirez shares on how and what that vision has produced in the nations he is working with.

This manual covers only the material presented by Dennis Peacocke.



Jesus entered the temple courts, and while he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him. "By what authority are you doing these things?" they asked. "And who gave you this authority?" —Matthew 21:23

## ***By What Authority Are You Doing These Things?***

### **I. The vertical commissioning—knowing your assignment.**

A. Dealing with the most critical factor of all—the nature of your **commissioning** and the strength of your **faith** in that commission.

1. The commissioning of the believer is the launching of life and ministry and the issue of the ultimate challenge you face under pressure and stress.

2. Let us look at some biblical examples of the power of the commissioning of God:

- |                                           |                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| a. <i>(God directly)</i>                  | MANKIND: (Genesis 1:26-28) The driving power and scope of our task on earth.                        |
| b. <i>(God directly)</i>                  | ABRAHAM: (Genesis 12: 1-5) The power to forsake stability and put everybody and everything at risk. |
| c. <i>(A dream)</i>                       | JOSEPH: (Genesis 37:5-11) The power to endure injustice based on a God-ordained dream.              |
| d. <i>(God directly)</i>                  | MOSES: (Exodus 4:17) The power to deliver Israel from oppression and make them a people.            |
| e. <i>(The prophet)</i>                   | JOSHUA: (Deuteronomy 31:14, 23) The power to lead people into war and conquest.                     |
| f. <i>(The prophet)</i>                   | DAVID: (I Samuel 16:5-13) The power to rule as a king.                                              |
| g. <i>(God directly)</i>                  | JEREMIAH: (Jeremiah 1:4-19) The power to speak against the nations on God's behalf.                 |
| h. <i>(An angel)</i>                      | JOHN THE BAPTIST: (Luke 1:11-20) The power to prepare God's people of Christ.                       |
| i. <i>(An angel)</i>                      | MARY: (Luke 1:26-38) The power to be used to birth and care for Christ.                             |
| j. <i>(The Father)</i>                    | JESUS: (Matthew 3:16-17) The power to perfectly obey and represent God.                             |
| k. <i>(Jesus)</i>                         | PAUL: (Acts 9: 4-6) The power to birth and direct a cosmic movement.                                |
| l. <i>(A brother)</i>                     | ANANIAS: (Acts 26,14-18; Acts 9:15-16)                                                              |
| m. <i>(A council and the Holy Spirit)</i> | PAUL AND BARNABUS: (Acts 13:2-3)                                                                    |
| n. <i>(Apostolic authority)</i>           | ELDERS: (Acts 14:3)                                                                                 |

3. The all-important issue to sustain us in testing, trials, success, and defeat is to know ultimately "by what authority are you doing these things?"

- a. When were you commissioned by God?
- b. Was it Him or were you "talking to yourself" in His name? (Jeremiah 5:30-31)

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- i. What did He say for you to do?
- ii. How are you to do it?
- iii. Who are you to do it with?

B. The second major issue: Is your life embodying and aligned with your commission?  
(The power of the internal commission)

1. Internal Alignment produces authority and power. Jesus spoke as one “having authority” (Matthew 7:29) out of His life.
2. What are some of the attributes of internal alignment: (“Faith” is what God calls this). Your “internal conversation” has come to agree under tested pressure with what your external confession is concerning your commissioning. “Anxiety” is what we mean when we describe an unsettled alignment between the internal conversation, the external conversation, and the results which God is confirming. This anxiety is what either forces an adjustment to your declared commission or helps burn you up if the alignment does not take place.
3. Scriptural examples of this “war of alignment” regarding a commissioning coming to either adjustment or true faith are (out of many):
  - a. Gideon: (Judges 6:11-40) His severe testing of God’s commission.
  - b. John the Baptist: (Matthew 9:14-17; 11:2-15) “Are you the one or should I look for another?”
  - c. Rahab: (Joshua 2:9,11; Hebrews 11:31) “I’ll betray my nation.”
4. My own experiences with this battle of alignment:
  - a. Early 1980s on the conceptual level (what I see): In my room in D.C. hotel room.
  - b. July 11, 1989, Miami hotel room re: calling elders to the gates.

C. The third major issue is: How to work with God (Philippians 2:12-13) to produce renewable fuel for your commissioning (The power of spiritual discipline).

1. When something is “given to you” (disciples—Matthew 13:11; Paul and crew—Acts 27:24; Timothy and gift from presbytery—1 Timothy 4:14), your responsibility and choice is to actively receive it.
2. Actively receiving God’s ongoing commission means to work it and continue to use the commissioning to define:
  - a. What you lack that you must add to yourself through diligence.
  - b. What you carry that you cannot afford to carry (body, soul, and spirit).
3. The “renewable fuel” is the by-product of what is produced in this struggle, i.e., the fuel of obedience to the Holy Spirit.

## II. Summary issues with which to stand before the Lord:

- A. When and to what have you been commissioned and prepared?
- B. How deep is your alignment to the commission, i.e., “Where is your faith?”
- C. Are you producing renewable fuel?

## ***Running in Your Lane: The Challenge of Spheres and Growth***

**I. Burning, but not being consumed (fighting the sustainable war), requires a clear understanding of, and obedience to, the laws of commissioned spheres (the vertical commission: knowing your sphere).**

- A. All of God's commissions have limitations upon and around them.
  - 1. Even Christ's commission was specific and, therefore, limited:
    - a. "To the Jews" (Luke.2:34; John12:20-24) (rejection of direct involvement in the Gentile world).
    - b. "To what Father initiated" (John 5:30).
    - c. "To work only where He saw God working" (John 5:19).
  - 2. Paul was extremely conscious of his commissioned sphere and staying within its limits (2 Corinthians 10:13-17).
    - a. To go beyond your boundaries is to labor where you have no jurisdictional authority.
    - b. To labor where you have no authority will burn you up.
- B. The whole issue of limits and limitation challenges and reveals our motives.
  - 1. The commissioning of man (Genesis 2:26-27) to labor for God is square one.
  - 2. The testing of his limits in fulfilling that commission (Genesis 3:1-7) reveals man's willingness to work independently from God.
- C. Some of the issues arising from this willingness to work independent of God are:
  - 1. David and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11:1-5)—presuming the king can circumvent the law (status).
  - 2. David and the ark (1 Samuel 6: 1-11)—presuming the king can circumvent the priest.
  - 3. Saul and the sacrifice (1 Samuel 13:12-14)—presuming the king can alter methodology of spheres (offices).
  - 4. Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4:28-37)—presuming the king can claim power independent of God.
  - 5. Moses. (Exodus 2:11-14; Acts 7:25)—presuming the call of God can be activated as a commission at the holder's choice (timing). A calling is not a commissioning!

**II. Honoring your commission requires diligence to steward your sphere "as unto the Lord."**

- A. Stewarding our work requires protecting it from the fallenness that surrounds us.
  - 1. The classic example of stewarding a commissioning and reporting back to God for evaluation is found throughout John 17 in Christ's priestly prayers.
  - 2. His diligence to protect and preserve His prize relationships is amazing (John 17:6-11; 19-22; 24-26).
- B. All commissions from God have both an offensive and defensive aspect.
  - 1. We are commissioned to advance God's kingdom (Matthew 16:18).

2. We are commissioned to guard what has been taken (Acts 20:28-31).
  3. To take more land than you can manage is a guaranteed road to burn-out and God warns us against it, "lest beasts multiply" (Deuteronomy 7:22).
- C. Stewarding our work requires us to deal with the issues and challenges of growth and adaptation.
1. *Growth* deals with the expansion of our work.
  2. *Adaptation* deals with the fitting in of our work to what God is doing through other legitimate commissions. Example: Peter fitting in with Paul's work.
  3. Let us examine some of the major issues related to growth. Are you after public growth or effectiveness? "Tell no man" (Matthew 16:20; Isaiah 42:2) (dealing with the challenges of attention and security).
    - a. Are you willing to let your "prayer endurance" serve as an indication of your ministry borders?
    - b. Is your ministry primarily building for this generation or as a generational bridge?
    - c. Are you giving up effective discipling for the sake of growth?
  4. Let us examine some of the major issues related to adaptation.
    - a. As our personal commissions affect larger circles of influence, they increasingly touch other commissioned ministries. How do they relate?
      - i. Cooperative and supportive or competitive and exclusive? (Inclusivity)
      - ii. A demand for hierarchy or commitment to productivity? (Effectiveness)
      - iii. A willingness to adapt to changing methodologies or a commitment to fixed agendas (adaptability).

### III. Summary issues with which to stand before the Lord:

- A. Are you functioning on the basis of a calling or a commissioning? How do you know?
- B. What is your defined sphere, who defined it, and are you staying within it?
- C. Are you committed to God's will, God's way, and God's timing?
- D. Are you after effectiveness or recognition, adaptation or independence ?

## **"Understanding the Challenge of Holding Responsibility God's Way"**

### **I. Standing before the Lord on the proper foundation: The son who serves rather than the servant who is a son.**

- A. God serves and works out of His relationship to us (Father) and so must we relate towards Him as sons and daughters first and servants second.
  - 1. We are born into a family, not a job (Romans 8:16-22).
  - 2. "Workaholic" Christian leaders (vision-infused believers) change the world, but their lives are unsustainable if their service to God supersedes their relationship with Him!
  - 3. The more effective the service, the deeper the relationship with God must be out from which the service proceeds.
- B. The challenges of serving God in an apostate world and fantasy-loving church can un-redemptively break you if you don't understand how to work from God's relational foundation.
  - 1. You can never do all you should; sons accept this as a divine limitation while servants rupture themselves trying to fulfill this.
  - 2. A son or daughter is what I am; service and sacrifice are something that I do.
  - 3. Servants will not properly guard their relationship with God as the supreme priority because their work for Him slowly assumes preeminence.
- C. The challenges of a "dominion orientation" require this balance:
  - 1. Man is not created to work (take dominion); his work is the means to his fellowship and discipling under God.
  - 2. Sons find primary meaning in our standing with God, not what He does through them. I am for Him; His work is through me.

### **II. Practicing truths that lead to tempering, not rupture.**

- A. Pressure can produce one of two responses:
  - 1. Rupture: where the pressure breaks apart the unity of the person or thing.
  - 2. Tempering: where the pressure strengthens and condenses the essential strength of the object under pressure by removing unessential ingredients.
- B. Some of the major issues involved which can produce either rupture or tempering, depending on how we handle it, are as follows:
  - 1. Religious idealism vs. looking through "street-fighter eyes" (John 2:24-25). "Jesus knew what was in the heart of man."
    - a. What should be vs. what is.
    - b. What could be vs. what has been.
    - c. What will be vs. paradoxes God's word reveals: "both-and" or "either-or."
  - 2. Tenacity balanced against walking in the reality of an interruptible agenda.

## UNDERSTANDING THE CRITICAL ISSUE OF PERSPECTIVE RELATIVE TO PERSONAL IDENTITY:

- Self = Your agenda vs. Self = Principles → Agenda
- Misplaced Identity vs. Correct identity
- Candidate for Rupture vs. Openness to Interruptions that Temper

Motives
Timing
Execution

## EXAMPLES OF JESUS DOING GOD'S WORK AS HE WAS "INTERRUPTED" ON HIS WAY TO FULFILL HIS AGENDA:

- Matthew 9:1-7 Healing the paralytic on His way home.
- Matthew 9:18 His meal is interrupted to heal Jadas' daughter.
- Matthew 9:20-22 His interruption is interrupted to heal the hemorrhaging woman.
- Matthew 14:13 Alone with God, He is interrupted to teach the people.
- Luke 17:11-19 He heals the lepers on His way to Jerusalem.

3. Performance must not be seen as God's primary agenda; mature fellowship and rulership is God's primary agenda for you. What we produce (external) reflects the internal. God is after the internal first!

### III. Measuring our days by the yardstick of long-run efficiency (Psalm 90:12).

- A. God is committed to producing co-rulers for Himself.
  - 1. Co-ruling produces fellowship in the yoke.
  - 2. Rulership skills lead us to understand how God thinks and acts (Psalm 103:7).
- B. The increasing pressures of a truly successful ministry forces us to temper our rulership skills in some of the following ways:
  - 1. Leveraging our tasks and time: Making one action usable in more than one situation. How can I use this action or product to serve a variety of needs?
  - 2. Doing your work first when possible: Sorting through and prioritizing what only you can or must do yourself first at the schedule point of greatest productivity.
  - 3. Doing long-term work daily: Separating out and prioritizing work that is strategic and long-term vs. "paper shuffling" and house-keeping.
  - 4. Building tools and people that work when you're not there: staff, product, environment, procedures.
  - 5. Recognizing the difference between the public office vs. the priority study. The office is public and relational; the study is personal and strategic.

### IV. Summary issues with which to stand before the Lord:

- A. How clear are you on relating to God as a son who serves? How will you hold this priority under task pressure?
- B. How do you stand in faith and reality vs. cynicism or unrealistic expectations?
- C. Are you interruptible?
- D. Are your work days planned out strategically?

## "Abiding In God's Rest"

### I. Let us look at the overview concepts involved in this study.

- A. God's provision for man's rest is the sabbath.
  - 1. Rest is a pattern God set for man to follow.
  - 2. Rest is a gift from God to man.
- B. A balanced Christian life is built upon three major components:
  - 1. Spiritual disciplines.
  - 2. A Christian worldview.
  - 3. A Godly lifestyle.
  - 4. True rest is impossible apart from a maturing life in all three areas.

### II. Let us examine some of the issues involved in the concept of God's sabbath rest for man.

- A. The Scripture says that the sabbath is a permanent earthly gift rather than a religious exercise necessary for man's salvation.

- 1. What did the Old Testament say about the Sabbath?

*"See, the Lord has given you the sabbath, therefore He gives you bread for two days on the sixth day. Remain every man in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day." –Exodus 16:29*

*"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and made it holy." –Exodus 20:8-11*

The 23rd chapter of Leviticus deals with the rest of the principles of the sabbath.

- 2. What did Jesus say and illustrate about the sabbath?

*"And it came about that He was passing through the grainfields on the sabbath, and His disciples on the sabbath, and His disciples began to make their way along while picking the heads of grain. And the Pharisees were saying to Him, 'see here, why are they doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?' And He said to them, 'have you never read what David did when he was in need and became hungry, he and his companions: how he entered into the house of God in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the consecrated bread, which is not lawful for anyone to eat except the priests, and he gave it also to those who were with him?' And He was saying to them, 'the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath.' Consequently, the Son of Man is Lord even of the sabbath" –Mark 2:23-28*

*"And He said to them, 'Is it lawful on the sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save a life or to kill?' but they kept silent." –Mark 3:4*

- 3. What did Paul say?

*"Therefore let no one act as your judge in regard to a festival or a new moon or a sabbath day." –Collosians 2:16*

*"One man regards one day above another, another regards everyday alike. Let each man be fully*

*convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God.” –Romans 14:5-6*

4. What else does the word say about the “rest of God?”

*“There remains therefore a sabbath rest for the people of God. For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall through following the same example of disobedience.” –Hebrews 4:9-11*

B. How do we appropriate a sabbath rest and take it out of the realm of religious duty into the realm of revelation and rest?

1. Rest in God is a privilege-producing life, not a legal duty required for salvation.
  - a. Time and silence are required to refresh us and renew us in terms of what is important to God and important to us as human beings.
2. Our inability to experience a sabbath rest usually reveals in us:
  - a. Pride: "I don't need rest."
  - b. Unbelief: "God and others can't really do the work without me."
  - c. Confusion: "My priorities do not permit me to rest and be renewed."

C. Some of the essential blessings of a regular time of rest are as follows:

1. The gift of silence (Isaiah 32:17).
  - a. Silence reveals anxiety and a "drivenness" in us like nothing else so that we can be healed.
  - b. Silence allows us to learn to listen to both God and ourselves on significantly deeper levels.
2. The opportunity to gain God's perspective on ourselves, others and the eternal view of our lives (Psalm 90:12; Moses' cry).
  - a. It is extremely difficult to see ourselves under the demands of the "schedule."
  - b. Perspective is the ability to put current goals and activities in the context of a life-time's real value in God. This cannot be done while in gear.
3. Taking the opportunity for self-examination is pleasing to God (Psalm 131).
  - a. Peace forces upon us vulnerability before the Holy Spirit.
  - b. Peace allows our spirits to become "un-trafficked" and, therefore, renewed in sensitivity.
4. "The man of the tombs" deliverance (Luke 8:26-39) was characterized by his ability to be still both internally and externally.

### **III. The seeing and practicing of the three major components of our walk in Christ brings deep peace and clarity of service both to God and man.**

- A. We must see the necessity of practicing essential spiritual disciplines:
1. Without discipline, nothing requiring sacrifice can be obtained.
  2. In assessing our goals in God, one of the first questions must be, "What will that cost?"
  3. Spiritual disciplines (study, prayer, rest, exercise, sowing to our "humanness," patience,

temperance, etc.) are the "currency" required to purchase the goals.

- B. We must see the necessity of deepening our biblical-based Christian worldview:
  - 1. Our body, soul, and spirits are continually bombarded with the lies and static of the world system.
  - 2. We cannot be free or free others being both deprogrammed for the wisdom of the world and reprogrammed to God's truth continuously.
  - 3. This "renewing of our minds" brings both the focus of a warrior and the exhilaration of freedom to our being and to those around us.
- C. We must likewise sow into the peaceable fruit of a Godly lifestyle:
  - 1. A Godly lifestyle, as we have already seen, can be described as living at a pace and an inner rest that allows us to experience God, each other, and ourselves in a manner which makes life both deep and sweet, rather than demanding and blurred.
  - 2. We must go to war with the world's "hurry up" offense by dealing and practicing peace over our lives.

#### **IV. Summary issues with which to stand before the Lord:**

- A. Are you hiding behind the "sabbath isn't necessary for my salvation" objection to practicing some kind of regular rest and time with God? If so, consider dealing with this.
- B. What routines are built into your life that show God and your loved ones the value of your being with them without interruption or distraction?

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## "Building Across Time"

### I. The premises upon which we will conclude:

1. God is restoring time as a tool to the church, instead of time being a tyrant.
2. A Godly perspective refocuses the leader's life from one of self-importance to one of appreciating our possible significance to others.
3. A Godly perspective on time forces us to build through others lives.

### II. Joseph carried a word that motivated his brothers to action 400 years after he gave it: (Genesis 50:25; Exodus 13:19)

- A. Lives that are deep in God live beyond their time and move others to action.
  1. Scripture is filled with the lives of others who, "though they are dead, they speak unto us."
  2. Our concern must, therefore, be to live in such a way that those who follow after us are moved to join themselves to our work in Christ, albeit in their own unique way.
  3. Our children are our "arrows across time" (Psalm 127:4) and our spiritual sons and daughters, like Timothy to Paul, are our lives on earth until we return.
- B. In order to reach across time, we must reach across generations and make disciples.
  1. You cannot make disciples and "burn out" at the same time.
  2. Making disciples will not only keep us in perspective, it will keep us from living "one man shows" that crash and burn. We see this as we look around for examples of this in the religious world.
  3. Jesus came to birth "sons and daughters of the Kingdom" (Matthew 13:38) who are the "good seed" He was sowing.
- C. God's answer for the nations' needs are disciples (Matthew 28:19).
  1. Disciple-making demands of us that we live as we want others to live, not just show them "ministry" or teach them to study the Bible and pray.
  2. You cannot make disciples and not think about what will truly matter next week, next year, and as you die.
  3. You cannot think about and do what really matters without being before the Lord regularly and for sustained periods of time.
  4. Joseph built a word in the silence of his prison cell that carried across 400 years of time. He became someone to others that when they left, they wanted his bones with them.

### III. Summary issues with which stand before the Lord:

- A. How are you building words that can reach across time?
- B. Who are your disciples and how are you teaching them to live?
- C. Is time a friend or foe to you?

*"Let our sons in their youth be as grown-up plants, and our daughters as corner pillars fashioned as for a palace." —Psalm 144:12*