



The Way Of Victory Over The Practice Of Sin

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“Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.”

NKJV I Corinthians 6:19, 20

We are to glorify God in our body, because we are bought, redeemed. Knowing this, our words and actions are to reflect that we have been delivered from sin. Our life is to be characterized by faith and obedience to the will of God. If this were automatic, then Paul's exhortation to do so would be pointless. This practical aspect of our redemption has to do with our everyday life and how redemption comes to bear on all our choices. We have been redeemed from the very power of sin in our day-to-day life. This is not automatically a reality in the experience of every believer. Personal, daily victory over sin is only a reality as each individual is faithful to obey the will of God on an on-going basis. The way of victory over the practice of sin is an area of the Christian experience with which a great number of God's people struggle.

After salvation, many of God's people remain slaves to the dictates of sin, even though they have been fully redeemed from its guilt and penalty. Those believers whose lives are characterized by sin and disobedience

to the will of God are described as carnal and babes, spiritually immature. (*I Corinthians 3:1 – 3*) They obey the dictates of their fleshly nature of sin.

The consequences of such carnality are that one falls into the snares and chains of the purposes of Satan. (*II Timothy 2:23 – 26*) He desires to rob God of His glory by making His children a reproach to their Father by stealing their joy, peace and spiritual fruit. Carnality also results in loss of eternal reward and a full inheritance. (*Revelation 3:11, II John 1:8*)

Four Scriptural Keys To Living Free From The Power Of Sin – We find in the New Testament four keys to living free from the power and influence of sin. They are: 1) The New Nature, 2) The Word, 3) The Spirit, and 4) Proper Fellowship. Because Jesus went to the cross, all who believe in Him have been provided these four things. When applied, they will always result in a godly life.

1) The New Nature – If you are going to live a life of godliness that honors your Redeemer, the first thing you must understand is that, as a child of God, you now possess two natures, the Old sinful nature with which you were born and the New Nature that you received when you were spiritually born again. Paul told the Corinthians that all who are in Christ are new creatures and that old things have passed away. (*II Corinthians 5:17*) Does that mean that the desire and ability of the Christian to sin is completely removed or eradicated? Of course not, experience and sound doctrine make it clear that believers can and do sin. (*I John 1:8 – 10*) However, the Bible declares the truth that the provision has been made for us to live differently than before we were saved. Real changes have been brought to bear in

our hearts and minds. Before, we had no choice but to live according to the dictates of sin. Now things have changed. Now we have a choice.

*“Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.” NKJV **Romans 6:4***

– 6 Our identification with Christ has made these changes possible. All that we were in Adam was judged and stripped of life and power before God through the sacrifice of Christ. My great-grandfather, C. E. Foster, has been quoted as saying, *“Some people preach suppression, hold the old man down, but that is not according to Scripture. Others teach eradication, to be sanctified by a second definite work of grace, have the old man eradicated root and branch. But that is not scriptural, either. The Bible teaches Paul's message to us is not suppression, not eradication, but identification. We were identified with Christ in His death, His burial and His resurrection.”*

The following illustration may help you to understand the inward battle that goes on within the believer concerning the struggle with sin even though we have already been provisionally redeemed, liberated from the guilt and penalty of sin.

At the time of this writing, the United States is in the middle of a post war conflict in the country of Iraq. Before the war, Sadaam Hussein was the absolute dictator of Iraq. His word was law and the citizens of

Iraq had only one choice, obey. Sadaam was overthrown and defeated in a decisive victory by an overwhelming force of American and coalition troops that liberated Iraq and now occupy the country. The cost of the liberation was paid at the expense of the liberators. The war was won and Sadaam overthrown, but at the present time, Sadaam is suspected of still being alive somewhere in Iraq. Many Iraqis don't know how to act. Many are still afraid of Sadaam and are afraid to speak against him since that has been their way of life for decades. His influence still has an affect upon them, even though he has been decisively removed from power. Many suspect Sadaam or at least those closest to him are behind the many terrorists' attacks that are taking place in Iraq against American interests and against the Iraqi people. Yet despite the ongoing battles and post war conflicts, things are different now. The Iraqis now have a choice to enjoy the benefits of freedom from Hussein. That choice of liberty is something they did not possess before. As the Iraqi people learn to identify themselves with the American forces and the newly formed government, and as they rely on American power and resources, they can begin to enjoy the prosperity of peace and Sadaam's influence over the daily routine of the Iraqis will diminish. But if many Iraqi's continue to choose to identify with Sadaam and his old ways, or resist the American backed government, the country will be in a constant state of conflict for a long time to come.

The power and authority of sin was defeated on the cross of Jesus Christ. The Old Man, all that we were in Adam, including the sinful, fleshly nature which is that power within us that pulls us away from God and towards all that is against God, was stripped of its

authority and right to rule us. Before, we were helpless to resist sin's power, but now things are different. We've been given a new life. Like Sadaam, (at the time of this writing) the sin nature doesn't just go away. It is not annihilated. It still tries to exercise power and resist the clear superiority of the new life of Christ that has come to occupy the heart of the believer. As we learn to identify with the Christ-life within, we will begin to experience the reality of our liberty in Christ from sin. If we rely on the power and resources of the New Man, we will begin to enjoy the blessings of the liberty purchased for us by the victory of the cross. If we do not, our life will be characterized by the constant inner conflict described by Paul in **Romans 7:14 – 25**. Please, take time to read **Romans 7**. Paul speaks of two "I's," "two laws," of the "sin dwelling within" and the "inner spiritual man." This conflict with the sinful nature within is a lifelong conflict, but the good news is that we need not daily lose the battle. We can always overcome the temptation to sin by relying on the strength of the inner man. At the stage in Paul's Christian experience of which he wrote in **Romans 7**, he had not yet learned that secret.

Some may ask, "Why did God choose to leave the Old Nature within the believer?" God is certainly able to eradicate the sin nature within us, and will do so in eternity, but God has chosen to allow the sin nature to remain in the believer that we might be taught and prepared now to rule and reign with Christ in eternity. We must learn the way of victory in this life if we are going to sit with Christ in His throne. We must live by faith, trusting and relying on God's Word and faithfulness to do for us, in us and through us what He said He would do. (**Romans 5:17**)

The way of victory over sin is not eradication. Sin still dwells within and resists the will of God. Nor is it by suppression. We cannot try to beat back the appetites of our Old Nature with will power or rules and regulations. The Iraqi people were unable to throw off Sadaam's chains by their own power and they are still powerless to resist his terrorists' attacks by their own power. The only way of victory for the believer is through identifying ourselves with and relying on the power and provisions of the New Nature, the Christ within.

Since our victory is found only in the power and provisions of the New Man, let's look at how He is described in the New Testament. In *II Peter 1:2 – 4* it is described as the divine nature. It is the very nature of God that resides within us. In *I John 3:9* we are told that that nature, which is born in us of God, cannot sin. *Philippians 2:12, 13* reveals to us that it is God, that divine nature within, that works in us godliness and obedience to the will of God. We read in *Ephesians 4:17 – 24* that we are to put off the habits or lifestyle of the Old Nature and put on the provisions of the New. Just as we go to the closet each day and choose what clothes we are going to put on today, we must daily go to the Lord in prayer and choose to walk in the power of the Christ within. I am weak, but He is strong.

Please, take time to read *Romans 6*. In *verse 11* we are told to reckon, which means to count with God. In other words, we need to say what God says about our circumstances, our choices and ourselves. Instead of constantly making excuses for our sin, we need to say, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." *Philippians 4:13* Thank God for the Christ within that is able to resist every temptation. When we

do fail, we must still reckon with God and call it what it is, sin. Such reckoning will lead us to repent and return to a life of obedience.

In *Romans 6: 12, 13* we read the following phrases: “do not let,” “do not present... to sin,” “present,” or yield “to righteousness.” Sin for the believer is not an inevitable, unavoidable, irresistible force. Sin is a choice not to yield to the Christ within. The way to victory over sin in your daily life is to choose, today, to yield your will to the will of God.

Romans 6:16 tells us of the importance of simple obedience. Simply do what the Christ within compels you to do. The New Nature cannot sin. It can only do the will of God. Obey it and you will do the will of God. Godliness, for the believer in Jesus Christ, is as simple as choosing to obey the will of God.

2) The Word – The second key to an overcoming life of godliness is an understanding and an application to our lives of the Bible. If you are going to be strong in the inner man, you need a steady, well-balanced diet of spiritual food. (*Hebrews 5:12 – 14*) The spiritually mature, by an understanding of the Word, are able to discern between good and evil, righteousness and sin. The Bible reveals the will and purposes of God. If we are ignorant of that will and those purposes, how can we possibly live according to them? Knowing and obeying the truth of God’s Word will free you from the ignorance of sin. (*John 8:31, 32*)

Paul wrote the Thessalonian saints and commended them for their exemplary faith. How were the Thessalonians able to walk worthy of the Lord? They received Paul’s doctrine as God’s Word and obeyed it. That Word of God became a power, a force, and an

energy that worked in them effectually to produce a life of godliness. (*I Thessalonians 2:11 – 13*)

Colossians 3:16, 17 teaches us that we should let the word of God dwell in our hearts, that is, let it take up residence in our heart in order that whatever we do or say is done for the glory of Jesus Christ. The Psalmist who wrote *Psalm 119:9 – 11* understood the power of hiding the Word in his heart in order that he might not sin against God.

This is why the study of the Bible is so important. Carnality and all of its bondage and loss will characterize Christians who are ignorant of the teachings and instructions of the Bible. Do you want to live a life of godliness that glorifies the Lord? Dedicate yourself to the study of God's Word. (*II Timothy 2:15 / II Timothy 3:16, 17 / I Timothy 4:12 – 16*)

3) **The Spirit** – The third key to godly living is found in *Romans 8:1 – 17, 26 – 27*. This passage reveals to us the secret that the Apostle Paul learned in order to overcome his constant failure in his struggle with indwelling sin that is described in *Romans 7*. The way of victory over sin is to fully surrender to the ministry of the Holy Spirit. In *Romans 8:2* Paul describes two laws, principles or forces; the law of the Spirit and the law of sin and death. The Spirit frees us from sin because He is more powerful if we will yield to Him. He reveals to us the will of God and then enables us to obey. (*Philippians 2:13*)

We find the phrase, “*according to the flesh*” in *Romans 8:5* In *Romans 8:8* we have the phrase, “*in the flesh.*” These are important phrases to understand if we are going to understand the way of victory over sin. All who are not saved are in the flesh. They are citizens

of the realm of sin and death. Those in the flesh cannot please God. Believers are not in the flesh, but can walk according to the flesh. The saved can act and think like the unsaved. This does not please God. To be carnally minded, which is the only mind the unsaved have, is for a Christian to think like the world. To be carnally minded is death. (**Romans 8:6**) Carnally minded believers experience death to testimony, spiritual fruit and reward.

All believers possess the life of Christ within as well as the Holy Spirit, by virtue of being partakers of the divine nature, which we receive from the Triune God. (**II Peter 1:4**) Therefore we are not in the flesh, but in Christ and He is in us. (**Romans 8:9 – 11**) The Spirit dwells or has taken up residence in every believer as described in **Romans 8:9**. He has sealed us unto God. (**Ephesians 1:13**) He is the agent of our new birth and is a part of that divine nature of which all believers have partaken. This gives us the potential for full victory over sin in our lives. However, there is a fuller sense in which we should allow the Spirit to dwell in us or to inhabit our heart, mind and body as His own abode. It is to give Him full control of our life. Giving the Spirit full control of your life entails seeking and receiving the fullness of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues, as well as daily seeking His direction and enabling to do the will of God. Those that are led by the Spirit are mature sons that will enter into a full inheritance with Christ. (**Romans 8:14 – 17**)

To be led of the Spirit is to consider Him to be the One in charge of your body, your life. (**I Corinthians 6:19, 20**) Our body is His Temple. We need to stop acting like our life is ours to live. You wouldn't walk

into someone else's house and start moving things around or bringing things in to that house that you knew would upset the owner. Don't live your life without seeking the direction of the Holy Spirit. *"I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."* NKJV **Galatians 5:16, 17** This is the way of victory over sin. If you don't take time to seek and be sensitive to the Spirit's direction, you will be characterized by carnality. Pray, read the Word of God that the Holy Spirit inspired, meditate on it. Give the Holy Spirit opportunity to guide you.

4) Proper Fellowship – The fourth and final key to victory over sin is to seek out proper fellowship. I want to be careful with this point, because it is possible in some rare circumstances, that this key element may not be available to us. In such cases, it is important to understand that the New Nature, the Word and the Holy Spirit are quite sufficient for us to live a life of godliness. In those rare occasions where fellowship with godly people is not available, God will enable you to live godly.

Nevertheless, God's order for His people is that we assemble ourselves together and fellowship with one another for the purpose of promoting godly living in ourselves and in one another. This is one of God's gracious provisions to us, the fellowship of the body of Christ and to deliberately choose to neglect it leads to carnality. **Ephesians 4:11 – 16** teaches us that there is strength, health, maturity for every member of the body as each one does their part when we come together to minister and to be ministered to.

"Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits." Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to

your shame.” NKJV I Corinthians 15:33, 34 Many believers never learn to live godly lives because they constantly surround themselves with ungodly friends and counselors. Their ungodly or carnal friends and family have more influence on them than does the Christ within or the Word and the Spirit.

Obviously, we are called to proclaim the Good News of the Gospel to the lost of this world. We have constant interaction with the ungodly at work, school and in the community; and we are to take advantage of those opportunities to represent Christ and His love to them. However, we are not to look to those relationships for the kind of companionship that is necessary for mutual strength, comfort, encouragement and guidance. (*II Corinthians 6:14—18 / Amos 3:3*)

“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” NKJV Hebrews 10:24, 25 Those who neglect the assembling of themselves together with God’s people are characterized by carnality and spiritual immaturity because they are rebelling against God’s order for their spiritual growth and well-being.

“Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” NKJV II Timothy 2:22 We are to pursue righteousness together with others who are doing the same. It will strengthen and encourage you in your walk of godliness.

Conclusions

Those who are characterized by carnality and

disobedience to the will of God have failed to avail themselves of one or all of these key provisions of the cross of Christ. They fail to enter into the practical aspect of their redemption. Those who are characterized by godliness are not superhuman. They are simply those who have availed themselves of God's gracious provision of a New Nature, the Word of God, the Holy Spirit and proper fellowship.

“For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.” NKJV **Romans 5:17** Because Jesus redeemed me, I have been given the ability to reign over sin in my life and to walk in godliness. The reward of reigning over sin in this life will be to reign with Christ in eternity. To identify with the Christ within today will result in being identified with the Christ revealed and glorified in eternity. **Revelation 19:6 – 8** reveals that the eternal partner of Christ, the Lamb's Wife, will have made herself ready to rule together with Him by preparing herself a wedding garment that is made up of the righteous acts of the saints represented by the clean, white, stain free linen. Sin and carnality are stains and blemishes in the lives of God's people. Those who overcome sin and learn to walk in victory are preparing themselves to be the Lamb's Wife. They are sewing their wedding dress now. Thank God for the privilege of being identified with Christ in all His power, wealth and glory!

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