



EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

THE VICTORIOUS LIFE

NOTES

Introduction

One of the most important doctrines that Christians, young or old, must grasp is that God wants each believer to have victory over sin. **God has already** given it to each child of God, but many are not appropriating it in their lives.

But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

(1 Corinthians 15:57)

In the letter to the Church at Corinth, Paul reminded the Christians:

Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;

(2 Corinthians 1:10)

Here we learn that God has delivered us from sin—past, present and future.

Past

We have been delivered from sin's **penalty**.

Present

We are being delivered from sin's **power**.

Future

We will be delivered from sin's **presence**.

As Christians, each of us is faced with the problem of sin.

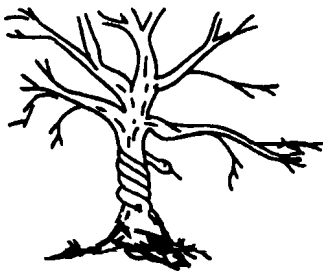
If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

(1 John 1:10)

But although we are all faced with the problem of sin, many Christians are not enjoying victory over sin in daily living. They are still in bondage to old habits and temptations. Why are so many Christians not experiencing the victory that is already theirs in Christ?

The Nature of Fallen Man

NOTES



Sin entered the human race through the first man and woman that God created. Eve disobeyed in the garden, and Adam followed, plunging all of mankind into sin.

Often the question is raised, “Why did God ever put restrictions upon man in the first place? If man had no rules to break, there would have been no sin.”

Although the Bible never addresses itself specifically to that question, it does allude to it. When God created man, He created him in the image of God (Genesis 1:26,27) with a WILL, an INTELLECT and EMOTIONS. It was therefore imperative that God should place man in a context where these attributes could become operative. If God had kept man in a protected environment with no choices available, these attributes would have been invalid.

God gave man freedom to use his will, and restrictions or laws for man’s own good. God gave man the choice to obey or to disobey (will) based upon his intelligence (intellect) and his love for God (emotions).

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

(Genesis 2:16-17)

Sin came into the world when man chose to abuse his God-given freedom and disobey God’s restrictions. Ever since our first parents sinned, all men born have the same nature of Adam when he sinned—one which abuses God-given freedom and disobeys God’s restrictions.

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

(Romans 5:12)

The Bible classifies all fallen men as “in Adam.” For this reason all men are dead in sins.

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

(Ephesians 2:1)

The Nature of Redeemed Man

When Jesus Christ came, He revealed man's true state of sin and rebellion against God. The teachings of Jesus revealed our old fallen nature.

If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin.

(John 15:22)

And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

(John 3:19)

Because of God's great love for us in Christ, we who are saved are no longer dead in sins (in Adam), but alive together with Christ (in Christ).

But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

(Ephesians 2:4-5)

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

(1 Corinthians 15:22)

As Christians, now rightly related to God, we are to live daily in accord with our new sphere of life "in Christ." Yet we discover quickly that we at times sin and act as we used to do "in Adam." Paul describes this struggle we face in the Christian life.

For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

(Galatians 5:17)

Why do we have this struggle? We struggle because our outward man is yet unredeemed and perishing, but our inward man is a new creation in Christ by the Holy Spirit. We will have this struggle until the Lord changes our bodies to be like His. Until that time He has given us His Holy Spirit to enable us to live the kind of life we should in accord with our new identity "in Christ."

For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.
(2 Corinthians 4:16)

And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

(Romans 8:23)

For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

(Philippians 3:20-21)

Victorious living is possible through obedience to the Spirit.

As we walk daily by the Spirit that God gave us at salvation, we can please Him. This is victorious living—living in accord with all that we now are in our new identity “in Christ” by the power of His Holy Spirit!

And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

(Ephesians 4:23-24)

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

(Romans 8:2)

That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

(Ephesians 3:16-19)

For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

(Romans 7:22-25)

And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

(Galatians 5:24-25)

Summary

Before a person becomes a Christian, he is spiritually dead. We inherit Adam's sin nature and the Bible classifies us as being "in Adam." Because of God's love, we who have received Jesus are made alive "in Christ." God's Spirit now lives and dwells within us. However we still often find ourselves wanting to act in the old nature of Adam rather than the new nature of Christ. This struggle exists because our outer man is still unredeemed even though we have a new inner man as the result of God's Spirit living in us. This struggle will continue until our bodies are one day changed to be like His. Until that change takes place, victory is possible if we will choose to act in accordance with our new identity "in Christ." By living in obedience to God's Spirit, He gives the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

(Galatians 5:17)

The person who lives by bodily impulses alone is sold out to sin.

Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

(Romans 6:16)

For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

(Romans 7:14)

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

(Romans 8:7-8)

Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

(Ephesians 2:3)

Victory over the flesh is possible through obedience to the Spirit.

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

(Romans 8:2)

The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

(1 Corinthians 15:56-57)

And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

(Ephesians 4:23-24)

And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

(Galatians 5:24-25)

Victory Over Sin

Four Stages of Progression Into Sin

There are four stages of progression into sin described for us in the Scriptures. We will examine these stages from two different passages.

The Original Sin

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both

were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

(Genesis 3:6-8)

Achan's Sin

The people of Ai were able to defeat the Israelites because Achan took spoils which he had been commanded not to take. In his confession he said:

When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.

(Joshua 7:21)

From these two passages we can easily identify the four stages.

① Sight

Sin always begins with sight. We see something, either in our minds or with our eyes, which we would like. At this point we must deal with the problem if we are serious about having victory. We are not responsible for the first look, but we are responsible for the second.

② Desire

The second stage into sin is desire. If we have not dealt with the problem at the eye gate, the problem will make its way into the heart, and we will begin to covet the desire. Sin is very hard to deal with if it gets to this point.

③ Taking/Action

At this stage the **act** of sin is committed. Sin **never** just happens spontaneously. Sometime in the past it has been entertained in the mind and heart, and when the opportunity presents itself, the act is almost inevitable. At this point victory has surrendered to defeat. It is too late for anything but forgiveness.

④ Hiding

Sin always ends with fear and shame. Adam and Eve hid themselves from the presence of God. Achan hid his stolen treasures. The sinner no longer wants to look God in the eye, so he seeks cover and darkness. Jesus said:

And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

(John 3:19-20)

As long as the person hides from God, his fellowship with God will be broken. This is exactly what Satan wants—for us to be cut off from God’s presence and power. We are then even more vulnerable to further temptation and sin. The only solution is open confession to God.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

(1 John 1:9)

Categories of Sin

In John’s first epistle, he warned his readers to beware of three kinds of sin.

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

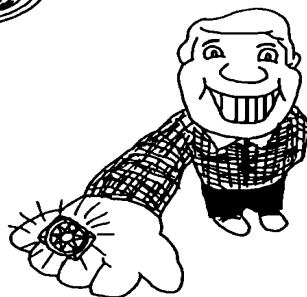
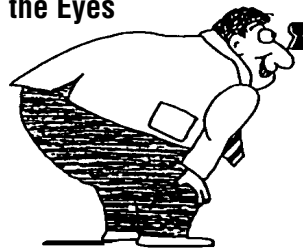
(1 John 2:15-16)

Any sin which we battle will come under one of these three categories:



The LUST of the Flesh

The LUST of the Eyes



The BOASTFUL PRIDE of Life

- **The Lust of the Flesh**—This includes bodily temptations caused by Satan’s attacks on our senses. Some of these would include sexual sins, sins of intemperance in eating or drinking, laziness, etc.
- **The Lust of the Eyes**—This category includes covetousness, seeing and desiring things that we cannot or should not have. It would also include mental and visual indulgences which may not be overt acts but are nevertheless sinful (watching pornographic films, reading bad literature, allowing the eye to wander at will).
- **The Pride of Life**—This is the desire to be great in this life—to build your kingdom here on earth through riches, power and status.

Think for a moment about the sin you battle. Into which of these three categories does it fit? Remember, these things are not of the Father but of the world, and John warns us in the very next verse:

And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but
he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.
(1 John 2:17)

Overcoming Sin

Realize Its Terrible Consequences

Playing with sin is like playing with fire. It can only be a matter of time before you are hurt. Remember that:

For the wages of sin is (always) death...
Romans 6:23

Although you cannot lose your eternal life once you have become a child of God, sin can still cause your daily witness, your family and your general enjoyment of life to be dead and unproductive. Sin is like termites. For a long time things may look good on the outside, but underneath the whole structure is being eaten away. Eventually, sin will catch up with you.

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a
man soweth, that shall he also reap.
(Galatians 6:7)

Confess and Forsake It

Because of Christ’s death on the cross we can confess our sins and know that we will find forgiveness.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive
us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
(1 John 1:9)

But simply asking forgiveness over and over again for the same sin is not the same as living a victorious life. We must also forsake the sin, determine to be done with it and seek God's help in daily victory.

He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.
(Proverbs 28:13)

When the Israelites entered the Promised Land, God warned them not to let the inhabitants remain in the land. He commanded them to destroy all the godless kingdoms that were in the Promised Land.

But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell.

(Numbers 33:55)

When we became Christians we entered into God's Promised Land. But we also are commanded to get rid of the strongholds of sin that are in our lives. If we do not do so, these sinful patterns will become pricks in our eyes and thorns in our sides—never allowing us to live in peace.

**What sinful habits
have you not confessed and forsaken?**

Surrender Yourself to God

There is absolutely no way to have victory without surrender to God. Most of us like the idea of being **independent** and **able to handle life** on our own. But the Bible says that no one is independent; we are all serving someone or something.

Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?
(Romans 6:16)

The choice is not, "Should I yield myself or not?" The choice is, "To Whom shall I yield?" Without being yielded to Christ, I will never have the power to overcome sin.

Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.
(Romans 6:13)

Resist Satan

Satan is a defeated enemy. Christ has conquered him. If we are submitted to God, we can confidently resist Satan, knowing that he will have to back down.



Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

(James 4:7)

Don't give up. Don't stop resisting sin. Satan wants you to lose heart and feel defeated, but in reality it is he who has already lost!

Renew Your Mind

Repressing sin will not clear up the problem; it will only explode again somewhere down the road. We must learn to substitute and replace the bad with the good. The best way to replace evil or sinful thoughts is through Scripture memory. This was Paul's message to the Romans.

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

(Romans 12:2)

The next time you are under attack from the enemy, reach for your Bible verses and start reviewing them. The devil has no counter-defense against the Word of God. His only defense is to keep you from picking up the Word. I often tell people the difference between victory and defeat is in your recollection of the Scripture. If you pick up the Sword of the Spirit (Word of God), you will be able to fight back. If you don't review what the Bible has to say—you will be defeated in the end. Your renewed mind will give you the power and encouragement to resist the enemy. *Knowing* the Word of God is the *key* to a victorious life.

Pray for Help and Victory

Jesus commanded His disciples:

Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

(Matthew 26:41)

He set the pattern for their prayer by including:

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
for ever. Amen.

(Matthew 6:13)

God has promised victory and will deliver if we seek Him.

But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory
through our Lord Jesus Christ.

(1 Corinthians 15:57)

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