

## SPIRITUAL VICTORY (9)

**Victory Key #2** - Believe and admit the truth to God that only He can give us spiritual victory.

**Spiritual victory is a faith fight, not a works fight.** Dr. Martin Luther said “we should despair of ourselves and pray to God for faith as the Apostles did (Luke 17:5).” (*The Complete Sermons of Martin Luther*, Vol. 2.2, p. 306). Actually it comes down to a fight between your faith and your works. What God asks us to do for victory is to believe the truth. Somehow in our Bible reading, we have lost sight of a critical “**faith**” principle that surfaces so many times I cannot even begin to count them all. The principle is that God is our strength, our help, our deliverer, our victor. One cannot help but see this when one reads the Psalms. David clearly expressed his own helplessness to do anything and his total dependency on God for everything. Such statements such as “O LORD, lead me in Thy righteousness” (**Psalm 5:8**) or “Lead me in Thy truth and teach me” (**Psalm 25:5**) or “lead me in a level path” (**Psalm 27:11**) clearly show us that **spiritual growth and victory are God’s doing not our doing**. One of the biggest causes for failure in one’s spiritual life is the neglect to realize this. When we are at the place where we totally place our faith in the Grace of God for spiritual victory, admitting that we ourselves will not and cannot achieve it, we have just put ourselves on a path of victory.

Hear me and hear me well - anything good, everything good that we have - physically or spiritually comes from God, not us. **Not one time does God ever want His people to think that victory belongs to them.** The problem we have had is that we have robbed God of His glory, time and time again, thinking that victory was achieved by choices we made. Most theologies conclude that the chief end of man is to glorify God, but the problem, when it comes to spiritual victory, is that most haven’t learned to stop glorifying self and start glorifying God. The prevailing theme of the Bible is that victory belongs to God and is given in pure Grace.

There are statements in Scripture that clearly lead us to this conclusion both in the O.T. and the N.T.

- 1) **Deuteronomy 29:4** - “Yet to this day the LORD has not given you a heart to know, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear.” The clear teaching of Moses is that God is the One who must grant spiritual victory. This teaching was given in the early days of Israel.
- 2) **Deuteronomy 30:6** - “Moreover the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendents, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, in order that you may live.” Notice carefully God must do the work in a person’s heart and soul in order that they will love Him. Why? Because man, by his own nature will not choose to do this.
- 3) **Proverbs 3:5** - This is one of the most famous verses in the O.T. and it specifically instructs us to trust in the Lord and not ourselves. You and I cannot trust ourselves for spiritual victory because we will never find it in ourselves.
- 4) **Ecclesiastes 3:12-14** - Solomon says there is nothing better than for a man to enjoy life in a proper relationship with God and then he says this ability is a “gift of God.” He says everything God does will remain forever. If we are to have a spirituality that is victorious that stands forever, God must do it because we will never accomplish this by our choices.

## SPIRITUAL VICTORY (10)

- 5) **Matthew 16:15-17** - In this text, Jesus specifically informs Peter that the only way he figured out any spiritual truth was because God let him. No flesh and blood human will ever figure out any thing about God. Our nature will not permit it. We must look to Him for development and for victory.
- 6) **John 3:27** - John the Baptist makes a statement that has been overlooked by many - “a man can receive **nothing**, unless it has been given him from heaven.” You and I cannot have spiritual victory, unless God gives it. What is missed is that God won’t give it as long as we are looking to ourselves for victory, but only as we look to Him.
- 7) **John 15:5** - Jesus said to His disciples “**apart from Me you can do nothing.**” You cannot progress in your spiritual life and you cannot bear fruit apart from Him. Why? Because we have corruption and only by His grace may we accomplish anything in the spiritual life. If a person believes he can achieve spiritual victory on the basis of his own choices then where is the need for Jesus Christ? In fact, if a believer will choose good, this statement of Jesus doesn’t make any sense. G. Campbell Morgan said I have a theory that Christ cannot fail; therefore, if I am under His direction, I cannot fail. He said I also have a testimony that my theory works (*The Westminster Pulpit*, Vol. 3:p. 87).
- 8) **Ephesians 1:11** - Paul says concerning the Sovereignty of God - “having been predestined according to His purpose who works **all things after the counsel of His will.**” Our spiritual victory will not be found in our will, for all things are connected to God’s will. If we are to have spiritual victory, His will must will it because our will won’t.
- 9) **Philippians 4:13** - “I can do all things **through Him** who strengthens me.” Do you see Paul’s point? The strength for spiritual victory **is not found in Paul, but in Him, in Christ.**
- 10) **James 1:17** - James says, “**Every good thing and every perfect gift is from above,** coming down from the Father of lights.” Spiritual victory is a good thing and it is a gift from above. There is no hint that spiritual victory is something found down here in us.

These are just some of the many, many passages that clearly communicate that any victory in our spiritual lives is from God, not us. In fact, if you even desire spiritual victory, that too is from God (**Philip. 2:13**).

One would have to be totally ignorant of history, ecclesiology and theology not to recognize the tremendous level to which God raised up the famed German reformer Martin Luther in the 1500s. In fact, his stand at the Diet of Worms in 1521 has been called “the continental divide of modern world history” (Eugene F.A. Klug, *The Complete Sermons of Martin Luther*, Vol. 5, p. 11). His defense of the Grace Gospel turned the whole world upside down. The actual book in the Bible that initially led Martin Luther to his conclusions about the complete sinfulness and helplessness of man and the need to totally rely on the Grace and Mercy of God, instead of one’s own works, was the book of Psalms (*Bondage of the Will*, pp. 21-22).

## SPIRITUAL VICTORY (11)

It is no wonder because when you look into the book of Psalms you soon realize man does not do good and if anything good is to happen, God must do it. Time and time again the Psalmist cries out to God for deliverance and help and there is never any hint that he thinks he can help himself. We cite just a few examples from this powerful book:

Psalm 32:5-7 - the key to victory over sin is to pray to God for victory.

Psalm 33:13-22 - God's grace granted to those who fear Him, not admire themselves.

Psalm 34:6 - David saw himself as a poor, miserable man who cries to God for victory.

Psalm 40:1-3, 4\* - Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD for victory.

Psalm 41:1 - It is one who admits he is helpless that God delivers.

Psalm 42:5 - When your soul is in despair you will not ever find victory in you, but in God.

Psalm 46:1 - It is God who is our refuge in strength in times of trouble.

Do not all of these passages teach us specifically not to trust in ourselves for victory but in God? They most certainly do. **When you come to the matter of our spiritual victory, we will never find it in ourselves.** We won't be strong enough, we won't make the right choices and we will fail every single time until we learn the lesson of the Psalmist, "our hope and help for deliverance is totally and only in the LORD."

You and I are never more Davidic than when we are acknowledging before God that we are incapable of spiritual victory over every temptation and that we cry out to Him, believing that only He can give us His grace and help. Our spiritual victory is not about what we can do, it is about admitting what we cannot do. These two critical actions, admitting truth and crying out to God, are the two critical keys to real spiritual victory.

George M. Cowan wrote back in 1946, "Herein is the secret of victory. Quietly trusting the Holy Spirit within us to do what one cannot hope to do by himself, believing that He is able to carry off the victory without any human assistance" (*Bibliotheca Sacra*, 103:411, Dallas Theological Seminary, p. 375, 1946).

We are not speaking here of just asking God to help us during the day with some struggle, we are speaking of "entering into a definite covenant-understanding with God in which natural ability and resources are renounced and confidence is exercised toward the Spirit that He will Himself Actuate and motivate the entire life" (Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 6, p. 263).

The key to victory then is not just asking God to help in the midst of a temptation it is truly and honestly and humbly admitting that we are, as God's Word says, totally unable to do right and therefore we are trusting God's sovereign Grace to kick in and for the Holy Spirit to take charge.