

Gospel Truth

Biblical Instruction and Encouragement for the Mission Field Worldwide.

PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.
—Ephesians 6:11

God made provision through His Son Jesus Christ and through the power of the Holy Spirit for His children to live a victorious and godly life. A spiritual war is raging, and souls are being deceived and overcome by the power of the Devil. Many professing Christians are living in a condition of sin and failure. The good news of the gospel is that God has made provision in this dispensation for us to conquer sin and daily experience a life of victory and joy.

A practical experience of victory means that a soldier of the cross must put on the whole armor of God, in order to have the ability to resist and overcome the trickery and power of the Wicked One. God has not left us defenseless but has given us equipment to enable us to march forward and be victorious over ALL the power of the enemy.

If a soldier leaves one of his weapons or a part of his armor behind and does not take it into battle, he is exposed and is not adequately equipped to fight. All it takes is one vulnerability to be overcome. The same applies to the Christian. We must avail ourselves of every provision God has made; in so doing, we shall be able to STAND faithful, true, and victorious. Ephesians 6:14-17 lists the whole armor of God.

Belt of Truth: The belt of the Roman soldier kept the armor in the proper place. It is the

absolute, binding, and infinite truth of God’s Word that will guide us safely to Heaven. The Devil is a liar, and he is working in the world and inside chapels and homes. It is the holy Word of God that will expose the deceptions of the enemy and provide light in the darkness. Truth compromised makes weak Christians and brings defeat. Pure truth brings power and strength to the saint of God and gives ammunition to fight the destructive lies of the world and of false religion.

Breastplate of Righteousness: This body armor protected the chest and heart of the soldier. It is the righteousness of Christ in us that protects and preserves our spiritual life. Resting in the righteousness of God and not in our own strength enables us to live holy in this ungodly world. With Christ, the child of God will then make decisions that promote spiritual safety and that will guard against the defilement of the world. Soldiers of Christ cannot leave behind righteousness, or they will be overtaken by sin. When Christians guard their hearts and minds and love God and His holy way above all else, they will conquer the lusts of this world.

Shoes of the Gospel of Peace: Shoes provided protection to the feet during the long journey. Everywhere Christians walk, they should be going with the good news of the gospel. Jesus is the giver of peace and that peace should surround and fill our hearts. Furthermore, children of God should be seeking peace in all of their relationships with people. Destructive

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“God has made provision in this dispensation for us to conquer sin and live daily a life of victory and joy.”

WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT...

Word of God

2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Matt. 24:35

Relationship of Love

Matt. 22:37-40; John 14:21-23; 1 John 4:7-11

Repentance

Acts 3:19; Acts 17:30; 2 Cor. 7:10

New Birth

John 3:3-7; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:1-4;
Eph. 2:1, 5-6

Freedom From Sin

1 John 5:18; Matt. 1:21; John 8:11

Infilling of the Holy Spirit

Acts 19:2; Acts 15:8-9; Acts 1:8

Holiness

Luke 1:73-75; Heb. 12:14; 1 Peter 1:15-16;
Titus 2:11-12; Rom. 6:22

Kingdom of God

Luke 17:20-21; Romans 14:17; John 18:36

The Church

Acts 2:47; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Col 1:18

Unity

John 17:20-23; Gal 3:28; Rev. 18:2-4

Ordinances

Matt. 28:19-20; Matt. 26:26-30;
1 Cor. 11:23-27; John 13:14-17

Divine Healing

Luke 4:18; Isaiah 53:4-5; James 5:13-16

Sanctity of Marriage

Matt. 19:5-6; Luke 16:18; Rom. 7:2-3;
1 Cor. 7:10-11

Outward Appearance

1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Cor. 11:14-15; Deut. 22:5

End of Time

2 Peter 3:7-12; John 5:28-29; 2 Cor. 5:10;
Matt 25:31-46

Pacifism

Luke 6:27-29; Luke 18:20

Worship

John 4:23-24; Eph. 5:19; 2 Cor. 3:17

Great Commission

Mark 16:15

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relationships have caused many Christians to fall. Shod your feet with the gospel of peace and pursue harmony rather than strife and contention with your family and neighbors.

Shield of Faith: The shield of the Roman soldier was four feet tall. It provided protection for the soldier from the arrows and spears of the enemy. Faith in God is a shield and protection from the onslaught of the Devil. During temptations, trials, afflictions, and all manner of difficulty, let us lift up the shield of faith and maintain our trust and confidence in God, His love, and His provision.

Helmet of Salvation: Vital for survival in battle, it protected the head and the face of the soldier. Salvation is a gift of God and only by His grace and power can we live victoriously. When we are saved, we can live life with confidence and assurance that we are protected and empowered by God. We are no longer controlled by sin, the flesh, or those around us. We are protected and safe as we trust in the divine work of God.

Sword of the Spirit: The sword was an offensive weapon used in combat against the enemy. The soldier is not to live always on the defense but is to move forward, gaining ground. God gave His Holy Spirit to empower the child of God to effectively defeat the enemy and to gain more ground. The Sword of the Spirit is the "Word of God"; it is the Bible and that spoken by the Holy Spirit. It empowers us to defeat the enemy just as Jesus did when He used Scripture to defeat the Devil in the wilderness temptation.

God did not commission us to live holy like Christ without providing us everything we need to overcome the power of the enemy. Equip yourself, not with the ideas and philosophies of the world, not with the doctrines of religious organizations, but with the armor of God. The defeated, the backsliders, those wounded by sin and the powers of the flesh can rise again and live victoriously by the power of God. There is hope and wonderful victory! ■



The *Gospel Truth* is a quarterly periodical published in the interest of the Church of God for instruction and encouragement in the truths of the Bible. Visit us online at www.thegospeltruth.org and subscribe to the email notification list to receive current publications. The *Gospel Truth* is printed in many countries for local distribution and is supported by free-will offerings. A tax receipt will be sent upon request.

—Editor, Michael Smith

Gospel Truth, P.O. Box 2042, Nixa, MO 65714 USA
editor@thegospeltruth.org

Editorial



To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. —Acts 26:18

On the road to Damascus, Jesus appeared to Saul. Saul inquired, “Who art thou Lord?” Jesus replied, “I am Jesus” (Acts 26:15). Jesus then proceeded to explain His divine call and plan for Saul. He was to share the gospel that people’s eyes might be opened and that they might be turned “from the power of Satan unto God.” Hallelujah! That is still the gospel message of today. The power of Satan has been broken; there is deliverance and victory for the sinner and backslider.

With tears and much joy, I write this edition of the Gospel Truth on the subject of victorious Christian living. Too many people are continuing to live in sin and are desperately trying to stop the sin business. As they struggle and fail, overcome by addictions and by the flesh, their faith is being eroded. Many no longer believe there is a personal experience of salvation. Rejoice with me as you read this paper. There is still deliverance from sin and still power to resist temptation. God can, will, and is transforming lives.

Consider a verse of the wonderful words to the song, *There’s Power in the Blood* by Lewis E. Jones.

Would you be free from the burden of sin?
There’s pow’r in the blood, pow’r in the blood;
Would you o’er evil a victory win?
There’s wonderful pow’r in the blood.

Refrain:

There is pow’r, pow’r, wonder-working pow’r
In the blood of the Lamb;
There is pow’r, pow’r, wonder-working pow’r
In the precious blood of the Lamb.

We need no longer bow under the servitude of sin but live in freedom through the power of the blood. I thank God for that experience. One famous song says, “I’m just a sinner, saved by grace.” I praise the Lord that is not my experience. I WAS a sinner but am no longer because Jesus lifted me up and out of sin.

The plan of God is good and sufficient. If an individual is not living a victorious life, it is not a lack of God’s power. Many people fall back into sin because they fail to seek God for the infilling of the Holy Spirit. I am convinced this is one of the greatest needs among Christians today. People need to fully consecrate their lives on the altar of sacrifice and be filled with the fire and power of the Holy Spirit. It is the steady, balancing power of the Holy Spirit that helps a Christian live a daily life pleasing to the Lord. It resolves an up-and-down, back-and-forth experience that so many people are living.

May the Lord bless you as you study the theology of this teaching, but even more so, may you be encouraged and challenged as you open your heart to live this victorious life.

Michael W. Smith

April 2023

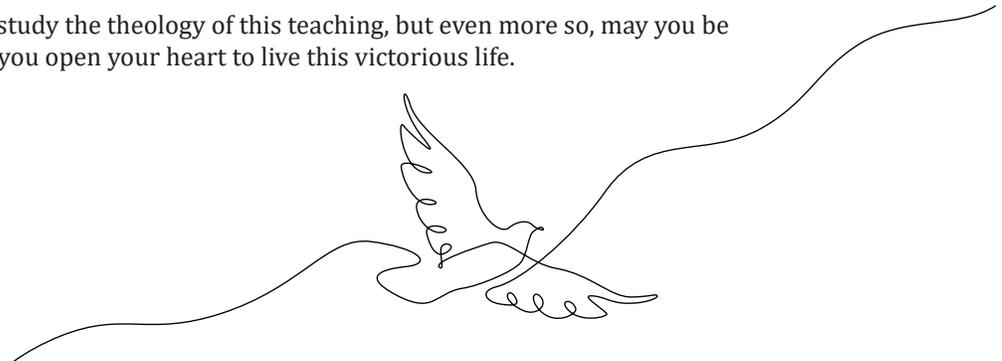


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Bible Study Guide

Subject: A Victorious Christian Life

Scripture Reading: *But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.* —1 Corinthians 15:57

Summary: There is an experience available through God's plan of salvation to live a consistent, victorious life over sin and the world.

I. Freedom from Sin

- A. Romans 6:1-2 Shall we continue in sin?
- B. Romans 8:3 What the law could not do.
- C. Matthew 1:21 Jesus saves from sin.
- D. 2 Corinthians 5:17 Old things are passed away.
- E. Romans 6:6-7 Freed from sin.

II. Power to Live Without Sin

- A. 1 John 1:7 Cleansed from all sin.
- B. 1 John 3:6-8 Sin is of the devil.
- C. 1 John 5:18 Born of God.
- D. Romans 6:12-14 Sin shall not have dominion.
- E. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 No longer unrighteous.

III. Instruction Not to Sin

- A. John 8:11 Go, and sin no more.
- B. 1 Corinthians 15:34 Sin not. (1 John 2:1).
- C. Titus 2:11-12 Deny ungodliness/live godly.
- D. 1 Peter 2:21-22 Follow Christ's example: no sin.

IV. Power of the Spirit

- A. Luke 24:49 Endued with power.
- B. Acts 1:8 Holy Ghost gives power.
- C. John 14:26 Spirit comforts and teaches.
- D. Zechariah 4:6 Victory by God's Spirit.

V. Promises of God

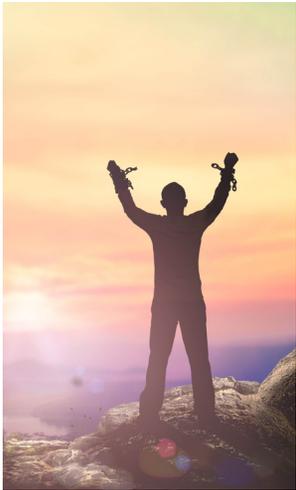
- A. John 8:36 Ye shall be free indeed.
- B. 1 John 5:4-5 Victory that overcometh the world.
- C. Luke 10:17 The devils are subject.
- D. 1 Corinthians 10:13 Escape temptation.
- E. Psalm 44:3 Victory by God's hand.
- F. Philippians 4:13 All things through Christ.
- G. Deuteronomy 20:4 God will fight for you.
- H. 1 John 4:4 Greater is He.
- I. John 16:33 Christ has overcome the world.

Conclusion

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. —Romans 8:37

Why did Jesus
tell people to
“GO AND SIN NO MORE”
If sinless living
was impossible?

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING



“The Word of God is not ambiguous: ‘The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.’”

Shall we continue in sin? Do we have to yield to the temptations of the Devil? Must we remain in a state of perpetual failure and defeat in our Christian experience? NO! Thank God, there is an experience of victory and conquering power through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Salvation from Sin

The apostle Paul posed this very question in Romans 6:1-2, “Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid.” The largest percentage of the Christian world says that we MUST sin more or less every day. They minimize the sacrifice of Christ to the grace of forgiveness but fail to acknowledge and accept the grace of redemption that elevates fallen mankind from their sins to a state of victory through the power of the blood. “What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Romans 8:3). Under the Law dispensation, people were incapable of living without sin—the moral violations that separate man from God. Jesus came to do that which the Law could not do. His very name speaks of the true plan of salvation, “For he shall save his people FROM their sins” (Matthew 1:21).

There is Deliverance

False teachers and movements reduce this glorious salvation plan to Christ saving his people IN their sins. The Devil and his messengers are propagators of false teaching to steal the real hope and joy of true salvation. Praise God, we can be saved from the very power of sin to walk in righteousness and holiness. The Scripture so clearly teaches a life of victory and deliverance from bondage. “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17). The old habits, the addictions, the lusts, the bitterness, all the things that hold people captive in sin are broken through the power of God. Sin is destroyed and

conquered that “henceforth we should not serve sin” (Romans 6:6). The Christian can and must live a victorious life over sin and its bondage. No matter how great the power of sin is, there is deliverance in salvation.

The Transformed Life

Paul acknowledged the past sin of converts in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. Some were fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, thieves, drunkards, etc. “Such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, by the Spirit of our God.” No sinner will inherit the kingdom of God. All have sinned, but lives are transformed by the provision of God. The power of the blood of Jesus is greater than the power of sin. How sad that so many professing Christians have not experienced true salvation. Salvation will radically transform the life and enable an individual to overcome all sin by the grace of God! The Word of God is not ambiguous: “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

Sin Not

Sin is a result of the influence and power of the devil. Jesus came to this earth and died that He might “destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8). Verse 6 states, “Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not....He that committeth sin is of the devil.” The apostle declares again in 1 John 5:18 “We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not...and that wicked one toucheth him not.” May all the world hear and know that in this generation there is a life of freedom from sin and the power of Satan has been broken through Christ. “Sin shall not have dominion over you:

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for ye are not under the law, but under grace” (Romans 6:14). What previously controlled and dictated behavior in sin under the law has been broken by the delivering power of grace.

God’s Grace Enables Sinless Living

While theologians can twist and work to excuse sin, the Word of God teaches a life of practical and real victory over sin. Jesus Himself told the woman in adultery, “Go, and sin no more” (John 8:11). He was not instructing her to do something she was incapable of but was giving her the hope and power to go and live without the bondage of those adulterous practices. Paul gave the same instruction in 1 Corinthians 15:34, “Awake to righteousness, and sin not.” Peter exhorts us in 1 Peter 2:21-22 to follow in the steps of Christ who “did no sin.” Truly, the



grace of God that brought salvation teaches us, “that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Titus 2:11-12). This is victorious living!

Full Salvation

Salvation is a wonderful experience wherein a sinner believes in Christ, repents from sin, and is forgiven and cleansed by the blood of Jesus. The vessel is then clean, but God wants to fill it up with His Holy Spirit. Jesus told His disciples to “tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:49). Similarly, Acts 1:8 states, “Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.” This is a key ingredient and provision for living a victorious life. The infilling of the Holy Spirit is an integral part of the full plan of salvation. The Holy Spirit gives power to the Christian to consistently say “no” to the Devil, “no” to the flesh, “no” to the world, and power to say “yes” to the Lord. The Holy Spirit comforts, teaches, guides, and gives power (John 14:26). The indwelling Holy Spirit will give strength in weakness and will fortify the flesh so that victory and holiness are maintained.

“The Holy Spirit gives power to the Christian to consistently say “no” to the Devil, “no” to the flesh, “no” to the world, and power to say “yes” to the Lord.”

Promises for the Believer

The Word of God is full of promises that encourage the children of God as they face a dark world. Freedom from sin does not have to be a temporary condition, for the promise is given, “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (John 8:36).

We can take courage that, “Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world” (1 John 5:4-5). The life of a Christian is not one of defeat and it is not defined by failure; it is defined by victory and power and growth. We need not fear when Satan rages and roars, for even the devils are subject to us in the name of Jesus (Luke 10:17). When temptation is strong and it seems there is no way out, God has promised to “make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Corinthians 10:13). At times the flesh is weak and the power of the enemy is strong. However, when we are equipped with the armor of God, we can rely on His power to do for us what we are not able to do for ourselves.

The children of Israel did not conquer Canaan by their own sword but by the right hand and arm of God (Psalm 44:3). God will fight for His children (Deuteronomy 20:4) and preserve them to the end. We can claim the promises of God and say with Paul: “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13). Be encouraged and seek for and live that life of victory in spite of circumstances and feelings, for “Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

Jesus knew that the world was dark and that there were struggles within and without, but He, as the giver of peace and victory, encourages us still today: “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). There is peace, victory, and power over all sin, and we can live daily victorious lives for “We are more than conquerors through him that loved us” (Romans 8:37).

“Lord help us never settle for defeat or failure, but let us be lifted up by the power of Jesus and by the Holy Spirit and lay claim to the wonderful, victorious living that is found only in You. Amen.” ■



What does it really mean to “live free from sin?”

When an individual gets saved, the scripture is clear that there is power to live without sinning. “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin” (1 John 3:9). When people discuss the issue of sin, it is important to establish and understand the definitions.

The New Testament gives four primary definitions of sin—those things which separate man from fellowship with God. A true child of God lives without violating these scriptures.

“All unrighteousness is sin” (I John 5:17).

“Sin is the transgression of the law” (I John 3:4).

“Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (James 4:17).

“Whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Romans 14:23).

For even more clarity, the Mosaic Law was “our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ” (Galatians 3:24). Mankind under the law was not able to maintain a life of victory without sinning. Consider David who committed adultery and Abraham who lied. Their hearts were to serve God, but they did not have power to maintain a life without sin; so they were dependent upon animal sacrifice according to the law of God to be forgiven. Under the New Covenant, there is power in the blood not only to be forgiven but to “go and sin no more.” The Law was given by God to reveal sin so we might understand it and know we cannot live without sinning in our own ability. “By the law is the knowledge of sin” (Romans 3:20).

In the New Testament, sin is an issue of the heart and is rebellion against God and His way, for through Christ we CAN live without breaking the law. It is noteworthy that when Paul and John speak of those who will not go to Heaven, they spell out some specific things—idolatry, fornication, adultery, lying, stealing, drunkenness, etc. These things are MORAL violations that separate one from God. These are sins.

Does living a victorious life free from sin mean that I will never make a mistake or have a failure?

This is a very pertinent question for the topic at hand. I have yet to meet a Christian who is saved and full of the Holy Spirit who has never had a failure or made a mistake. However, there is a difference between sin and falling short of the perfection of grace. Christians must love God above all else and their purpose and desire should be to be like Christ. This does not mean that we are humanly perfect. We do not commit the moral violations that separate from God, but there are areas in which we are to grow. If we need to grow, it means there are lacks. Those lacks are often revealed through mistakes and failures.

For example, a Christian might not respond with the fullness of joy or patience in a frustrating situation. This is a failure or a mistake. The true Christian will not excuse it but will seek the Lord to grow in that area of life. A child of God is not then defined by their failures but by their victories. That thing could become sin if the person decides they will accept the failure as their spiritual identity and settle for less than grace.

2 Peter 3:18 teaches us to, “grow in grace” and 2 Peter 1:5 instructs us to “add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge...” There is growth in the Christian experience, and the longer we serve the Lord, the more like Christ we should become. The ministry was placed in the body for the “perfecting of the saints” (Ephesians 4:12). Hence, a Christian has areas in which to grow and to be perfected in Christ.

The children of Israel were faced with many battles in Canaan. As they yielded to God, they won mighty victories. There were still giants and walled cities in the land, but they had victory through the power of God as they were obedient.



DID YOU KNOW?

Probe Ministries released statistics from a 2020 survey of 3,106 Americans aged 18-55.

- More than 60% of young Christians (18-39) believe that Jesus, Buddha, and Muhammad are all equal in regard to a path of salvation.
- 30% of born-again Protestants agreed or were not sure if Jesus sinned while on earth.
- Nearly 80% of young adult Catholics are uncertain if Jesus lived a sinless life on earth.



A Word
in Season

WHEN FAITH WAVERS

Contact

The Gospel Truth
P. O. Box 2042
Nixa, MO 65714
USA

Email:
editor@thegospeltruth.org

And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him. —Matthew 14:31

As the ship was tossed with waves and the winds blew in the dark of the night, Jesus came walking on the water. The disciples were fearful, thinking it might be a spirit. Jesus spoke and told them, “Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid” (Matthew 14:27). What a wonderful privilege to hear the voice of the Savior in the difficult storms of life. His presence and voice are still penetrating the storms today.



Peter desired to go out on the water to Christ. Jesus bade him come; and so, in the middle of the storm, Peter stepped out of the boat. What faith and trust. Peter walked on the water toward Jesus. This was a great physical display of the victory that is in Christ!

Peter was able to overcome the natural properties of the water by the power of God. Salvation is similar in that we are able to overcome our natural propensity to sin and live holy lives by the power of God.

As Peter walked on the water, he looked around and saw the severity of the storm. The reality of the danger caused his faith to waver, and he began to sink. Before he was overcome, he cried out to the Lord. “Immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him”, reproving him for his lack of faith. When they got back to the ship, the storm ceased.

Victory is wonderful! Experiencing the divine power of God that enables us to overcome sin and the world is a miraculous blessing. However, there are times when the storm may get very intense; if we are not careful, our faith may also begin to waver. We need not sink if we keep our eyes on Jesus. If we find our faith wavering when the powers of this world and of the flesh begin to pull hard, we can cry out to the Lord and He will lift us up; that is our loving Savior.

As the Lord stretches out His hand to us when our faith begins to waver, how can we do less for our fellow brother or sister in the Lord? ■

HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD