

## *How to Claim Victory Over Sin*

Have you heard about the evolutionary way of getting the victory over bad habits and sins? It is sometimes called the TAPERING method or the TRYING method, but generally, it just doesn't work. Oh, it partially works, of course, because old age takes care of some temptations and sins, and time settles the rest when death comes. But do you know why TRYING does not work in overcoming the devil?

Why can't we fight the devil for a few months and finally drive him away? Because the devil is stronger than we are. We could fight him for a year, but he would still be stronger than we are at the end of that year. Trying will never break the power of sin in a single instance because we are facing an enemy who will always be stronger than we are. What, then, is the answer to our weakness and defeat? This question leads us to the sweetest and most sublime secret in the Word of God.

First of all, one must understand that all of Heaven's gifts are available to us through the promises of the Bible, and we receive them by faith. Peter describes the "exceeding great and precious promises" and assures us that "by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature." 2 Peter 1:4. Mighty power is stored within the promise to fulfill itself to all who claim it in faith. So few are willing to believe that the promised blessing becomes theirs the very moment they believe it. Why is it so hard to believe implicitly that God will do what He promises?

Now, let us come down to the very heart of victory and consider the four simple scriptural steps that any believer may take in claiming God's power. Four texts will illuminate the amazing transaction. FIRST: "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 15:57. Allow your mind to savor the fantastic message of these words. VICTORY IS A GIFT! We do not earn it by our efforts or deserve it because of any supposed goodness. The only thing we need do is ask for it, and the victory will be given to us freely by Christ. He is the only One who has ever gained the victory over Satan, and if we ever possess the victory, it will have to come as a gift from Him.

Let me ask you something. Do you need victory in your life over some binding, miserable habit of sin? Some are slaves to appetite, to alcohol, or tobacco. Others are struggling helplessly against impurity, anger, or worldliness. The Bible says you may have the victory as a gift through Jesus Christ. Do you believe He will give you that power if you ask Him? How certain can you be that God will answer your prayer for victory immediately? Here is how sure you can be - just as sure as Christ's words are true!

Our SECOND text is Matthew 7:11, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" Is it a good thing when you ask for victory over tobacco or any other fleshly or moral evil? Of course it is! And you don't even have to ask if it is God's will! He has already told us in the Bible that it is His will to destroy the works of sin and the devil. If we pray for more money or a better job, we should always ask according to His will, but the victory over sin is promised to everyone who asks in faith.

Will God give the victory when we ask Him? Jesus said He is more willing to give this good

thing than we are to feed our children when they are hungry. He is waiting to honor your faith and to "supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:19. These assurances are so open-ended and unlimited that our minds are staggered by it. Why have we been so reluctant to apply for the provisions of grace? Why is it so hard to believe that God means exactly what He says?

Here is the next question. How do we know we have the victory after we ask Him? Simply because He said we would have it. We know God does not lie. We can believe His promise. The very moment we ask, we should accept the fact of fulfillment, thank Him for the gift, get up and act as if it has been done. No kind of proof-feeling or sign should be demanded or expected. The self-fulfilling power in the promise is released in response to our faith alone.

This brings us to the THIRD text found in Romans 6:11, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The word RECKON means to believe, or to consider it done. Every practice of faith should be focused on that one request for victory, and then, it should be accounted as done. Do you remember how Peter walked on the water? He asked Jesus if he could step out of the boat onto the raging sea, and Jesus told Peter to come. But how long did Peter do the impossible by walking on the water? The Bible says, "When he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me." Matthew 14:30.

What was Peter afraid of? He was afraid of sinking and drowning. In spite of Christ's assurance that he could safely walk on the water, Peter began to doubt the word of the Master. That is when he began to sink. As long as he believed the promise of Jesus and acted in faith, he was safe. When he doubted, he sank.

Now, what is the impossible thing as far as you are concerned? It is not walking on water. It is overcoming that tobacco habit or other besetting sin. And Christ says, "Come to me. I will give you victory." As long as you believe that you have been delivered, you will have the victory. It is as simple as that. The very moment you ask for victory it will be placed in your life as a reservoir of power. You won't feel it, but it is there. It will remain there as long as you accept it in faith.

For some people the deliverance is so dramatic that they lose even the appetite for the sin. Tobacco addicts have sometimes been delivered from the craving. BUT THIS IS NOT THE USUAL WAY GOD DOES IT. Usually, the desire remains, but in the moment of temptation, the power to walk past the temptation springs forth from within. Faith accepts the fact of deliverance and constantly claims the victory which is in the secure possession of the believer.

The final step to victory is described in our FOURTH text, Romans 13:14, "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof." So strong is the confidence in the appropriated power of God that no consideration is given to falling under the power of that sin again. Under the old TRYING plan, provision was made to fail in most cases. Cigarettes were placed on a shelf, and the smoker said to himself, "I'm going to try never to smoke again, but if I don't make it, I know where they are." But under the TRUSTING plan, we have no reason to fear failure on the grounds of human weakness. Victory does not depend on our strength but on God's power. We might fail, but He cannot fail. Cigarettes are thrown away. All plans that might involve any degree of compromise are abandoned.

Little Jimmy was in trouble because he had gone swimming against his mother's orders. When asked why he had disobeyed her, Jimmy answered, "Because I got tempted." Mother then said, "I noticed that you took your bathing suit with you this morning. Why did you do that?" Jimmy answered, "Because I expected to get tempted." How typical of those who do not quite trust their own strength to win the victory. They make provision to fail.

Someone might raise the objection that this could be discouraging. Suppose the person does fail? Even Peter began to sink. Would it not shake confidence in God if the victory was not maintained? No. Peter's sinking had nothing to do with the failure of divine power. It did not change Christ's will for him to walk on the water. It only pointed up Peter's need of stronger faith to enable him to obey Christ's command. Our faith could weaken. We might need to be reminded of our total dependence upon His strength. But this does not diminish from the beautiful plan of God to impart power and victory through "the exceeding great and precious promises" of the Bible. Without faith by the receiver, not even God's promises can be appropriated. The limits are clearly defined in the words of Jesus, "According to your faith be it unto you." Matthew 9:29.

There it is, friend, in all of its simplicity. **AND IT WORKS!** If you are willing to be delivered, it works. Nothing will help the one who is not willing to give up the sin. But if you want it, it is there. **VICTORY, POWER, DELIVERANCE** - just reach out in faith and it is yours. Believe it and claim it this very moment. God wants you to be free.

Remember this as you continue your intercession and Bible studies: Jesus can change your mind to the point that satan, the enemy of your soul, will never be able to tempt you with any sin **THAT YOU DO NOT WANT TO DO!**

It's your decision. No person can ever tempt you above what you are able to bear – as long as you remain prayerfully connected to Jesus!

Now, walk in liberty and freedom.

Dave Roberson