

SPIRIT BAPTISM & ABIDING IN CHRIST

BY
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- Has your Christian experience been all you hoped it would be?
- Has your life been one of short victories over temptation followed by periods of frustrating failure?
- Do you have besetting sins that you don't seem to be able to gain the victory over?
- Does your service for the Lord seem to be unfruitful?

If this is your experience as a Christian, this book has perhaps the best news you have ever heard!

Has your Christian experience been all you have longed for? The unfortunate truth is that the majority of us as Christians ride a spiritual roller coaster. We are elated on a spiritual high at times of victory only to plummeting into feelings of guilt and frustration due to the defeat of a reoccurring sin. We sincerely desire to obey Christ in all things, but despite all our earnest prayers for strength, we eventually fall back into our old sinful habits.

It is sad to say that most Christian's have never understood or had the elusive experience of Christ fully abiding in them. I use the word elusive because this experience is so simple yet few have discovered it.

Let me tell you of a story about a man named John. Over the years John has had a problem with anger. Now he has become a Christian and he is convicted that anger isn't a quality that would glorify the Lord whom he deeply loves. He reasons that if the power of his sin was broken at the cross, he can now stop becoming angry when the temptation comes and finally have the victory. The next week at work a new co-worker is hired in the office who insults John. Immediately his temper begins to rise. He realizes the temptation and puts forth effort to subdue his angry thoughts however finds that they keep lingering. He turns his mind away from the temptation again and again and tries to reason with himself not to give into it. For a while he is successful then he sees this person and the thoughts well up inside him again. He doesn't want these thoughts but seems helpless to overcome them. He begins asking himself why these thoughts of anger keep rising and concludes that he must not have asked or received from God enough power to assist him in his efforts. Now he pleads with God to remove his anger and give him the power needed to have the victory. He reads and rereads the Bible verses like "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" and feels next time for sure he will be ready when the temptation comes. Unfortunately he continues in this same pattern of being overcome with this reoccurring sin and

more confusion and feelings of defeat set in. He now questions his own sincerity and, because of his feelings of failure, has no peace in his walk with the Lord.

Could your name be inserted in this story? Could your weakness of pride, coveting, over eating, lust, cursing, or any one of a thousand other sins be the temptation? Like John, most of us as Christians are caught up in this same frustrating cycle and haven't come to realize the significance or reality of Christ actually dwelling in us to give the victory. Then discouragement really comes when we open the Bible and read verses like: ***"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."*** 1 John 3:9. The victorious life that the Bible says we should live seems impossible to attain. It is easy to begin to reason that perhaps these are only goals—the ideal standard—that we should strive for but is not reality for any to attain. After all God has to call the Christian to the highest standard. He can not give His approval to sin, no matter how small it may be. My friends, God has not called us to a standard that He is not capable of achieving in us!

The truth is when you truly abide in Jesus you can rest fully in Him and live in the success of His victory. The Bible says, ***"Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not..."*** 1 John 3:6. When you abide in Him and He abides in you, "You will no longer be anxious about anything. You will have full confidence that He is able to carry out His will in you life, and His will is yours. It will make no difference where He takes you for that is His concern. In the simplest position He must give you grace, and in the most difficult position His grace is sufficient."

When this blessing is understood and applied to the heart the believer will proclaim from the depths of his heart, "Christ did it all!" ***"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."*** Ephesians 2:8,9. The deliverance Christ gives lays all of man's boasting in the dust. Man can claim no glory for the victories over temptation and sin and all the glory will go to God!

My friend, do you desire victory and peace in your life? It is God desire to give it! It is my prayer that through this message you will find it!

THE CHRISTIAN STRUGGLE

After the new birth in Christ the Christian soon discovers that there are two natures living in him. One desires to follow sin and the other desires to obey God and bring Him glory. Paul describes this intense conflict: ***"For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do..."*** For I delight in the law of God against 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." Romans 7:19-23.

I am sure every Christian can relate to this struggle. We go day after day, month after month, year after year and never obtain total victory over sin. Paul said, ***"I delight in the law of God,"*** desiring to obey God in all things but then cried out ***"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"*** Romans 7:24. Then in verse 25 He describes the key to victory! ***"I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord..."*** Romans 7:25. We must abide in Jesus and He in us—let Jesus live out His life in us through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Paul further elaborates on this in his letter to the Galatians: ***"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."*** Galatians 5:16.

Throughout the New Testament there are several expressions used that are referring to the same experience. These are: ***"Abide in Christ," "Christ abides in you," "Walk in the Spirit," "Christ in you,"*** and ***"Have the mind of Christ"*** and there are others. They all refer to Christ living out His life in you through the Holy Spirit! *[I strongly encourage you to obtain the book titled, "The Baptism of the Holy Spirit" for an in-depth understanding and study on how we, as Christians, receive the Holy Spirit in fullness.]*

Christ has won the victory over sin for you at the cross. As long as you stay connected to Him and allow His Spirit to dwell in you, His victory is yours! Your struggle is not with sin; your struggle first, is to maintain your connection with Him! And second, to keep faith in His promises to live out His divine nature in and through you! The victory you experience is, and will continue to be, proportional to your connection!

The truth is after becoming a Christian, you now have two natures struggling for supremacy. These natures are in constant conflict in you, and will be, until the day you die or the day Christ comes. As you walk in the Spirit, Christ can continue moment by moment, hour by hour, day by day to manifest His character and victory in you by the power of the Holy Spirit. He has promised, ***"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ"*** Philippians 1:6.

Ironically enough, the problem that the struggling Christian has isn't that he or she doesn't want to obey God. The problem is that they don't know how to let God manifest His power for victory over the sin in their lives that He has promised. In a moment we will focus on this connection and victory, but first I want to add that it is important to remember that God understands your struggle. If at times in this struggle you fail, Jesus is still your ***"advocate with the Father."*** 1 John 2:1. If you fall into sin and hear the Spirit's conviction on your heart, confess your sin and you can claim the promise that you are immediately forgiven. ***"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. And as many times as you are sincere in the asking, He will be sincere in the forgiving! At times when you struggle and Satan is tempting you to doubt your own sincerity as a Christian, fall back into the arms of God and rest in the assurance of salvation. The very fact your feeling remorse and the sense of failure, proves God's Spirit hasn't left you. If you continue to receive Him you are His child. The Bible says, ***"as many as received him, to them gave him POWER to become the sons of God."*** John 1:12.

CHRIST'S VICTORY IN US

Now let us focus on how Christ can live in us and how we can live victorious. The first step in experiencing complete deliverance is to recognize that you have absolutely no power in yourself to obtain victory! Some, out of pride and desiring the respect of others, have learned correctness of behavior. However, obedience to God with a pure heart cannot be achieved by our own efforts. The natural born sinful nature is so strong in you that it's power will make you a slave unless the stronger power of God delivers you!

Isn't it ironic that we as Christians accept Christ as our Savior by faith; we accept forgiveness for sin by faith; we accept the gift of salvation by faith; then the first thing we do is try to follow God's commands by our own efforts! We spend time in prayer asking God to give US strength, willpower, and the ability to overcome. Instead our prayer should be for the Holy Spirit to dwell in us. Ask Him to manifest Christ's character in us, and then depend on HIM 100% for the victory!

No matter how convinced you are that God's power united with YOUR effort will make the difference; the truth is it won't! Your striving to obey will always lead to eventual failure! God can do His part but you will always fail on yours! Just as you accepted Christ by faith, you must abide in Him and allow Him to abide in you by faith also! The Bible gives us the advice, ***"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him"*** Colossians 2:6. This is the key to lasting victory in your life! Our victory over temptation and sin comes only as we allow Christ to live out His life in us. In an abiding relationship with Christ, your struggle is not with temptation, your struggle is to keep your connection with God and His promises of victory ever before you! The Bible states: ***"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."*** 2 Peter 1:4.

Peter goes on to tell us that as we partake of the divine nature, which is Christ living in us, we will be growing more and more like Christ. Paul describes how it is accomplished: ***"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."*** 2 Corinthians 3:18. As we stay connected to Him and allow Him to manifest His character through us, then we become more and more like Him "by the Spirit of the Lord."

CHRIST'S VICTORY & SINS BROKEN POWER!

Four facts that make victory over sin in the Christian life possible:

(1) Jesus was in all points tempted yet with out sin: ***"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."*** Hebrews 4:15.

(2) When Christ died on the cross he died the death we deserve because of our sins: ***"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."*** Isaiah 53:5, 6.

(3) When Christ died on the cross the power of the sinful nature of the believer was broken. Here is how the Bible describes it: ***"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin...Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."*** Romans 6:6, 11. The fact that Jesus died on the cross and broke the power of your sinful nature is a historical fact. It only becomes a reality in your life if you believe it! But to know and believe that your sinful nature was broken at the cross is still not enough; remember we have no ability in and of ourselves to obey God. We will be victorious over sin and temptation only as we allow Him to manifest His perfect character and life in us!

(4) Christ's resurrection validated Him as the Provider of salvation and freedom from the guilt, penalty and power of sin. ***"And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places"*** Ephesians 1:19, 20. Christ's victory, death, and resurrection is everything for the Christian! This event is in the past tense meaning it has been accomplished, our part is to believe it! Our deliverance from temptation and sin is not based on what we can do. It is based on what God has already done for us in the person Jesus Christ. When this truth becomes a reality in our faith, we will then have the victory over sin and will discover the secret of living the holy life God calls us to live!

Now you ask, "On a day to day basis is a consistently obedient life really possible?" The Bible says: ***"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."*** Romans 6:6. Here my friend is the answer! You and I are not capable to live victorious except by letting Jesus live out His life and manifest His character in and through us! Here are a few of many texts throughout the Scriptures that support this concept:

"...but Christ liveth in me..." Galatians 2:20.

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith" Ephesians 3:17.

"...we have the mind of Christ." 1 Corinthians 2:16.

"...which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" Colossians 1:27.

I challenge you to lay aside your previous conception of what you believed about "Christ living in you" was and believe that He literally is in you by the daily baptism of the Holy Spirit. Now that you believe Jesus is literally in you, 1 Cor.2:16 says you have

His mind. ***“For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.” 1 Corinthians 2:16.*** When you have the mind of Christ you will have the virtues of Christ. He will manifest these traits by His Spirit through you: love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. Galatians 5:22, 23.

Let me repeat the point. What I am presenting is to quit asking for “help” to overcome temptation and sin. Because if you try to do it; it all comes back to you and you will ultimately fail! What I am presenting is to ask for the Holy Spirit and literally allow Christ to live out His life in you and here is how to do it! You have to be fully submitted and connected to Christ with a fresh baptism of His Holy Spirit every day. This can only happen when you spend time in His Word, time in prayer, and claim God’s promise to fill you with the Spirit when you ask!

HERE IS WHAT TO DO WHEN IN TEMPTATION

A = **[ASK]** “I ask Jesus who lives in me to please turn my thoughts from _____.”

B = **[BELIEVE]** “I believe You live in my body and believe my sinful nature’s desire to _____ was broken at the cross.”

C = **[CLAIM]** “I claim Your promise for You to reveal Your divine nature in me and give me Your pure character and desires to replace mine.”

D = **[DEPART]** “I allow You to turn my [mind or body] away from _____ and replace it with something pure. Now I praise You and thank You and rest in YOUR victory through me.”

Let’s retell the story about John and see what happens when he is connected to God and has Christ abiding in him. In past years John had a problem with anger. But now he is a Christian and loves the Lord with all His heart. Because of his love, he wants to bring glory to God in every part of His life. John has come to realize that there is no good thing in Him but there is victory in Jesus Christ! Each morning John re-surrenders his heart and life to Christ and spends time in prayer, reads the Bible, and claims God’s promise to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask. The next week at work a new co-worker is hired in the office. When he thought John couldn’t hear, he makes an insulting comment behind John’s back. Immediately John’s thoughts of anger begin to rise, but now instead of attempting to subdue and fight off his anger by His own effort, he chooses to ask Jesus to deliver Him. He remembers the ABC’s of victory and applies them to this temptation. First, in a silent prayer, he **ASKS** Jesus who lives in him, “Lord, since Your Spirit lives in me, please turn my thoughts of anger from this man.” Second, he says, “I **BELIEVE** you are in me right now and I believe my sinful nature’s power to make me lose my temper was broken at the cross. Third, says, “Please Lord, I want to **CLAIM** Your divine nature and Your holy thoughts to replace mine.” Forth, he says, “I choose to **DEPART** from this temptation by allowing You to help me to depart [mind or body] away from this temptation and draw my thoughts and attentions to that which is pure. And I thank You, give You praise, and rest in Your victory!!”

Now, with a smile, John walks away praising God from the depths of his heart! The reason is because He knows the victory was all because of Christ and not of himself. John knows his weakness in this area so chooses purposely not to be around this individual anymore then is needed to complete his work. He decides

ahead of time that when thoughts about this individual come to mind he will ask to see him as Jesus sees him. At times his sinful nature draws him in to the temptation but he quickly gives it to the Lord and asks Him to manifest His pure thoughts. As he does this the temptation occurs less and less frequently.

My friend, put your name and your temptation in this story and you too in this same manner, minute by minute, day by day, will be allowing Jesus to live out His life in you. The victory is sure! You are simply choosing to give your will to God concerning each particular temptation.

It is important to understand that at the point you become aware of the temptation and make the choice to turn away, you haven’t sinned by being tempted. The Bible says, “... **[Christ] was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.**” **Hebrews 4:15.** Since we are born with sinful natures it isn’t our fault we are tempted; but then with every temptation there comes a point we make a choice.

In the first chapter of James this process of temptation that leads to sin is described: ***“But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” James 1:14, 15.*** Sin only occurs when you choose to dwell on the temptation; at that point sin is conceived. You have sinned in your heart and, if dwelt upon long enough and given opportunity, you would physically commit the sin.

My friend, to choose and believe is our part to play in obtaining victory over every sin and temptation. We choose to give God our will for any given temptation and we are victorious by Christ’s power who dwells within us. Here is how the Bible describes this amazing partnership: ***“And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” 2 Corinthians 12:9.*** Where most Christians err is they think giving God their will means they are to use their own will power to obey! They are doomed to eventual if not immediate failure.

Like Paul, we need to realize that His strength is made perfect in our weakness. The weaker we know ourselves to be, the sooner we stop trying to exert our puny strength in overcoming a thorny temptation in our life. Notice He said, “My strength” not your strength. When we rely on God’s strength then we start seeing His mighty power revealed through us. Then we can begin to experience God’s mighty power in our life. We have to stop thinking that it is us who is doing the overcoming and rely on God for it! Christ is our victory! Christ is our deliverance!

Thinking of your past, have you ever wondered why after years of prayer God hasn’t taken you out of the path of certain temptations? Now you know why. He leaves them there for you to grow to understand that His strength is made perfect in your weakness! My friends when you start experiencing deliverance in Christ as your Victor then you can say with Paul: ***“Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.” 2 Corinthians 12:10.*** Believe it or not you will actually come to praise God for your infirmities in your life because they help you experience the amazing power of Christ through you! In light of this, now this verse makes perfect sense: ***“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.” James 1:2-4.*** You now will experience what Paul described: ***“As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.” 2 Corinthians 6:10.***

In the midst of the most difficult circumstances you will be able to rejoice because Jesus is manifesting Himself in you! Your faith in Christ develops an endurance that will lead to Christ manifesting Himself more and more in your life. By Christ’s victory in you, you will grow in the image of Christ as He, through the Spirit, reveals areas of your life that need changing.

All my Christian life I have never understood the following text: ***“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30.*** In my experience I always thought, “No Lord, its not easy, it is a lot of hard work,” and it was! And the reason was that I was carrying the yoke and not letting Christ do it!

The day we as Christian learn the principle of Christ abiding in us and us in Christ is the day we begin to experience true sanctification. We are told this is a life long process in each of us: ***“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” Philippians 1:6.*** When we are fully surrendered, walking in the Spirit, and letting Christ abide in us; then He can begin the life long process of change within us. As time goes by and we are changed into His image, our sinful nature becomes less and less dominant and our temptation to the things of this world become weaker and weaker. Now His commandments are not grievous, we are able to keep His commandments by faith—faith in Christ working His victory in us!

WHEN YOUR FAITH IS TESTED

At times you will struggle a test of faith but you must remain in continual 100% surrender. At these times you must keep reminding yourself that you are in this test of faith by God allowing or His even directing it. You may not understand, but abide in His promise that He will work it out for your good and live in constant submission to His will. The Bible says, ***“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” Romans 8:28.***

Christ, our perfect example, who allowed the Father to manifest His glory throughout His life found Himself in this severe test of faith. In the Garden before His crucifixion He prayed for His cup of suffering to be taken from Him, but each time continued to yield to the Father’s will. ***“...O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.” Matthew 26:42.*** The Father understood the struggle Jesus was going through but could not remove it and fulfill His divine plan. Because of His connection to His Father, His source of strength, He willingly submitted and obeyed even though it was difficult to do.

At times in your life you will experience severe trials and temptations you don’t understand, but in faith choose to trust God and know that Jesus is abiding in you to help you through. Remember we are at our time of greatest weakness when we are physically, emotionally, or spiritually exhausted. In these times don’t let Satan tempt you to distrust and lose your hold on God. The Bible says: ***“Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.” Hebrews 12:11.*** If you have Christ abiding in you and you endure, you will receive the ***“peaceable fruit of righteousness”*** that God has promised.

My brothers and sisters, with this wonderful hope I must also give you warning of 2 dangers. These are pride and presumption. First, we must watch out for pride and always recognize our need of Christ’s continual presence in our life. We must depend on Him fully for victory and not on ourselves. The Bible says, ***“Wherefore***

let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” 1 Corinthians 10:12 and ***“Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.” Proverbs 16:18.***

The second warning is against presumption, don’t play on the devils playground: ***“But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.” Romans 13:14.*** If you have an area of known weakness, don’t put yourself in the way of temptation. Be aware of self-deceit which will seek to draw you to a situation where you will be tempted. Also be aware of rationalization. At times your sinful nature will tempt you to compromise but don’t!

CONTINUING IN THE VICTORY

Christ, when tempted in the wilderness, set a perfect example of the elements of victory.

- (1) He was filled with the Spirit
- (2) He did not place Himself in the way of temptation
- (3) He was in close communion with His Father by prayer.
- (4) He studied Scripture and knew God’s Word.
- (5) He depended on the Father for victory (John 5:19; 14:10)

It was by these essential elements that He obtained victory over every temptation. If we overlook any of these elements we are being presumptuous in thinking God will overlook our negligence and give us the victory anyway. When we fall short in these areas we will experience defeat. Without these in place we cannot keep Christ abiding in us.

My friends as I close I will let the Bible reiterate the key to success: ***“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him” Colossians 2:6.*** This is the elusive formula in serving the Master you love but find it so hard to remain true too! This is the key to lasting victory in your life! Your faith can only stay strong when you stay connected. Your victory over temptation and sin comes only as you allow Christ to live out His life in you.

If you have been blessed we invite you to order the book entitled, “Spirit Baptism & Abiding in Christ.” The full text contains much more including: additional Bible references; Spirit of Prophecy references; insight on how to receive full baptism of the Holy Spirit; insight on how the Sabbath and abiding in Christ go together; insight on how truly abiding in Christ will empower your service for Him; and much more!

Titles available from the author Pastor Dennis Smith

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