

## SPIRITUAL VICTORY (6)

- 8) **Ecclesiastes 7:20** - “Indeed **there is not a righteous man on earth** who continually does good and who never sins.” Do you get this? There is not one person who will use his will to become a righteous man on earth.
- 9) **Isaiah 64:6-7** - “For **all of us** have become like one who is unclean and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; and all of us wither like a leaf and our iniquities, like a wind take us away and **there is no one who calls on Thy name, who arouses himself to take hold of Thee.**” Isaiah believe there wasn’t one person on earth who would choose to call on the name of the Lord and take hold of Him and His ways. In fact in **Isaiah 46:12** God said in a context of His sovereignty (v. 9-11) that people were far from His righteousness and stubborn-minded. Our heart, our mind, our will is in stubborn rebellion.
- 10) **Jeremiah 10:23** - “I know, O LORD, that a man’s way is not in himself; nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps.” Jeremiah knew something most don’t; victory is never found by you using your will to direct your steps but it is found in the LORD (v. 24). He must do the corrective work if we are to have spiritual victory.
- 11) **Jeremiah 17:9** - The prophet Jeremiah said, “The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick, who can understand it?”(17:9) **The man who must know it and must admit it and understand it is the one who wants any spiritual victory.** The very context of this statement is that of trusting totally in the Lord, as opposed to trusting in man (17:5, 7-8). God’s Word does not encourage us to find victory over our depraved heart in ourselves, but in Him. This very context teaches Israel and us that hope is in Him, not ever in us (17:14). He wants us to look to Him and His Sanctuary for victory, not to ourselves. And this is a key missing link to spirituality.

These are just a few of the many, many passages that paint the true picture of our spiritual condition. Our will is not good and it will not make good choices and if we are to progress to spiritual victory, it starts by admitting what is Biblically and really true.

### **Category #2 - Some New Testament Passages.**

When we turn to the New Testament we see that God’s Word gives us exactly the same portrait of ourselves.

- 1) **Luke 11:13** - Jesus classified His own disciples, who had just asked Him to teach them to pray, as evil. Why? Because in them lieth no good thing.
- 2) **John 5:40** - Jesus specifically said people were **unwilling to come to Him** for life. Man will not use his will to come to Christ. Martin Luther said that John is “an eloquent and powerful scourge of free will” (*Bondage of the Will*, p. 302).
- 3) **John 6:37** - Jesus said, “**All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me.**” Jesus did not believe people came to Him because of a choice they made with their spiritual will, but by a choice His father made. Martin Luther said that “every statement concerning Christ (believe in Him) is a direct testimony against free will” (*Bondage of the Will*, p. 312).

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- 4) **John 6:44** - Jesus said “**No one can come to Me** unless the Father who sent Me draws him.” No man will use His will to choose to be right with God. It is not that a person will not choose with his will to be right with God, it is that He cannot choose. His will is so against God that it cannot respond.
- 5) **Romans 3:10-12** - Paul writes, “There is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; all have turned aside and have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one.” This text does not flatter the will of man, it tells the truth about it and if we are to progress in our spiritual lives, we too, must admit this truth.
- 6) **Romans 7:14** - Paul’s assessment of his own will was this: “**I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.**” There is no hint that Paul expected to find spiritual victory in himself.
- 7) **Romans 7:18** - Paul’s statement about his own will was this: “**For I know that nothing good dwells in me**, that is, in my flesh for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of good is not.” Paul knew the truth that many today don’t know, we are not capable of making choices to do good.
- 8) **Romans 7:21** - Paul says, “I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do good.” Paul found something not too many believers discover and that is the truth that our evil will, will keep us from choosing to do good.
- 9) **Ephesians 2:3** - We were “**by nature**” children of wrath. Our will, our nature is not good. We need to realize that our natural bent is to sin and do the opposite of what God wants. Not much spiritual progress will be gained until one realizes this.
- 10) **James 1:14-16** - James writes: “But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust, then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished it brings forth death. Do not be deceived.” Deceived about what? About thinking that we will use our will to pursue godliness. We will use our will to pursue evil and only God can give victory.
- 11) **I John 1:8** - “If we say we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.”

The key to spiritual victory is to acknowledge the truth - our will is bent to sin and victory in the spiritual life will not ever be found in our heart, mind or will.

I am convinced that this is the key to the book of Job. Job was a believer who was classified by God in the best possible way. There was no one like him on earth (**Job 1:8; 2:3**). Yet at the end of the book, Job repents (**42:6**). Repented of what? His self-sufficiency (**Job 40:11-12**). God used trouble to bring Job to the point where he saw himself for what he was (**Job 13:23; 15:14, 16**). One of the keys to this was he did not try to cover the truth about himself, namely he was a sinful transgressor (**Job 31:33**). Beginning at chapter 38, God brings Job to repentance with a verbal barrage designed to show Job just how far short of God’s glory he really was.

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These are just some of the many passages that speak to the problem of our fallen, sinful nature. Other passages may be examined which say exactly the same thing: **Job 11:12; Psalm 58:2-5; 94:11; 130:3; 143:2; Ecclesiastes 9:3; Jeremiah 13:23; 16:12; Hosea 6:7; Matthew 7:11; 12:34; 15:19; 16:23; Luke 1:79; John 3:18-19; 8:23; 14:17; Romans 6:20; I Corinthians 2:14; 3:3; Galatians 3:22; Colossians 1:13,21; 2:13; 3:5-7; II Timothy 3:2; I Peter 1:18; 4:2; II Peter 1:4; I John 1:8; 2:16; 5:19.** In Daniel's great prayer for Israel he humbly acknowledges that righteousness was not found in him or the nation, but in God (**Daniel 9:5, 7**).

In **Matthew 16:23**, when Jesus rebukes Peter and his satanic suggestion, we may notice that the issue Jesus addresses concerns a **“setting your mind”** issue. This is no small matter for **this becomes the key to spiritual victory, what you believe in your mind can give you victory.** If you think you can find spiritual victory based on your intellect, emotion and will, your mind is set on the wrong thing.

G. Campbell Morgan said, “In the days of our young manhood we feel so self-sufficient ... we think we can do the high thing, the noble thing in our own strength. O that God may reveal to us at once that this is not so... One of the most important lessons to learn is “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” You and I cannot fight and win the battle of spirituality for evil is too strong for us and its forces ruin us. “In your own strength you cannot overcome” (*The Westminster Pulpit*, Vol. 8, pp. 228-229). **Our spiritual victory will never be found in our sinful insufficiency, but in our total dependency on our sufficient God.**

When King David gave his final charge to Solomon before he died, he told Solomon that a critical key to God blessing him was that he was to walk before God “in truth.” With all his heart and soul (**I Kings 2:4**). It was this very charge which was a prelude to Solomon's prayer to God for help (**I Kings 3:7-9**).

We will never become spiritually victorious if we are not willing to admit the truth about our heart and soul - “in us lieth no good thing.” When one admits this, it opens a door for God and His Spirit to lead to victory. If you spend your Christian life thinking you are pretty good in the sight of the Holy God, in and of yourself, you spend your life living contrary to what God has revealed. We aren't good, God is good and God is gracious and our responsibility is to acknowledge to Him what we know is absolutely true.