

# God's Master Plan For Victory (V – is for victory!)

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**You Must Get Out of Prison**  
**Freedom From the Past**

**You Must Take Back What You Own**  
**Reclaim Surrendered Ground**

**You Must Stay on the Right Road**  
**The Romans Road to Freedom**

**You Must Wear the Right Clothing**  
**The Armor of God**

**You Must Walk in the Right Direction**  
**The Spirit-filled Walk**

**You Must Become Confident in the Right Person**  
**Confident in Christ**

\*\*\* Victory is a matter of claiming what you have in  
Christ through faith and aggressive prayer.\*\*\*

**We are already victors in Christ** (1 John 5:4). **We are victors – not victims!** Dr. Alan Redpath has often said, “Let’s keep our chins up and our knees down - we’re on the victory side!”

**You can’t live beyond what you believe!** It’s not what you feel but what you believe that counts!

**“We are more than conquerors  
through him that loved us”  
(Rom. 8:37)**

Every Christian has the same victorious *promises* (Rom. 6:6; 1 John 2:14; 2 Pet. 1:4; James 4:7), the same *power* from God to provide victory (Eph. 6:10; 2 Pet. 1:3), and the same *provision* for victory (Eph. 6:10-18; James 4:7; Gal. 5:25). What you do with these spiritual blessings depends on your own:

1. Personal understanding and application of truth to your life (John 8:32; Eph. 6:14, 17).
2. Personal surrender (Rom. 12:1)
3. Personal faith (Eph. 6:16; 1 John 5:4)
4. Personal love for the Lord (Mk. 12:30; John 21:15-17)
5. Personal obedience to what God says (2 Cor. 7:1; Psalm 1:1).

**Section One**

**You Must Get Out of Prison  
Freedom From the Past**

You cannot change the past, but the past can change you! Are you controlled by past sins, past regrets, past failures, past family problems? For many the past is like an anchor that drags them down into the pits of despair, discouragement, and defeat. How do you overcome the past, so the past does not overcome you?

**1. You must accept God's forgiveness.**

As a Christian, God has completely dealt with all of your sins by placing them on Christ (1 Cor. 15:3; Heb. 9:28; 1 Pet. 2:24). As a result of Christ taking your sins upon Himself you can know as a Christian that God has completely and forever acquitted you of all that you ever did that was sinful or wrong.

Ephesians 4:32 - "even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."  
Colossians 2:13 - "having forgiven you all trespasses." 1 John 2:12, "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. Colossians 1:14, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Hebrews 10:17, "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." Psalm 103:12, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." Micah 7:19 - "and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea."

When you trust Jesus as your Savior all of your sins are forgiven - past, present, and future. Do you really believe this? You can't live beyond what you believe! God has forgiven you forever. Everything you ever did or will do is cleared before God. There is one word that needs to be written on the door of your heart. It's the word "forgiven!"

**The prayer of acknowledgment:** "Dear God, I acknowledge that what You have said is absolutely true. I've been forgiven of every sin that I have ever committed and ever will do. I accept the complete and total forgiveness that You have provided for me through Jesus. I will not be led astray by feelings but believe in the promises of your Word that tell me I'm forgiven forever and accepted in Your presence. Thank you dear Lord for granting me total pardon for my sins. I accept Your forgiveness so I can be freed from the plaguing guilt of the past. In Jesus' name, Amen."

## **2. You must change how you think about God.**

You cannot blame God for putting you in certain adverse family circumstances, evil environments, or wrong places and then pile more blame on God for the sinful acts you committed, the lifestyle of sinful patterns you developed, or the pain or many bitter memories that haunt your life (Rom. 9:20). Many times you ask, "Why did it happen to me?" "God, it's just not fair." Without realizing it you begin to question God's providential ways and accuse God of doing wrong or being the cause of what you did (Gen. 3:12). When doing this you allow Satan to build up a spiritual stronghold or barrier "that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God" (2 Cor. 10:5) which means you allow Satan to distort your thinking or conception of God in some way.

Satan wants you to question God's goodness, God's love, God's faithfulness, God's forgiveness, God's justice, God's ways, and God's

reputation (Gen. 3:1). He wants to distort your knowledge or thinking of God in some way so that you harbor resentment.

**If you want to be honest, you must change your attitude about God!**

We are bitter because we think God has given us a bum deal in life. Many times we must change our attitude about God. First, you must believe that God always does what is right (Gen. 18:25) and that His ways are just and right (Rev. 15:3). God places you in the family of His choice by His own sovereign choice (Psalm 139:13-15). Second, you must believe that God works everything together for good in your Christian life (Rom. 8:28; 2 Cor. 4:15). God can use the past and turn it around for some good purpose in your life, mainly, conforming you to His image. Third, you must always remember that God never tempts you to sin (James 1:13). Furthermore, you are responsible for your own sin – not God (James 1:14). Fourth, you must confess to God (1 John 1:9) that you have harbored wrong thoughts of bitterness toward Him. Like David, you must cry out to God and confess, "Against thee only have I sinned" (Ps. 51:4).

**The prayer of acknowledgment:** "Dear God, You are always right in what You do. Just and true are Your ways, Lord God Almighty. I've sinned against You in trying to place blame on You for the predicaments in my life, the past situations I have faced, the foolish things I've done, and the sins that I've committed. Forgive me for blaming You. I have sinned against You dear Lord in not believing that You are always right in what You do, and what You allow to come into my own life. I believe that You can help me learn from the past and make me into a better person in the present because of the past. Dear Lord, do a work of grace in my heart and life. In Jesus' name, Amen."

**3. You must forgive others.**

Many people need to forgive others. Unforgiveness and bitterness hold people in bondage to the past. Jesus said in Matthew 6:14-15, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Jesus was not saying you must earn forgiveness. He was saying don't be a hypocrite! If you want forgiveness, you must be willing to change your mind about the sin in your own life and forsake it (repent of sin). Jesus' point is this. There can be no forgiveness in the Christian life without repentance and confession of sin (1 John 1:9). One of those

plaguing sins that must be dealt with is an unforgiving spirit toward others. Most of the ground that Satan gains in the live or people is due to unforgiveness (2 Cor. 2:10-11). Matthew 18:21-22, "Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven." In essence, Jesus was saying that every time you think of what somebody did to you there needs to be forgiveness. You must make a point to remember to forgive that person.

Ephesians 4:32, "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." If God forgave you of all your sins at the expense of sacrificing His own Son for you then surely your can forgive others even as He forgave you? The message of the cross stands for forgiveness! Face the cross and it will make forgiveness much easier. If you cannot forgive another person then you need to take a crash course on the cross and remember what Christ went through for you when He suffered and bore your sins upon Himself on the tree (Isaiah 53:1-10 - read it and weep). Are you ready to forgive someone? The ball is in your hand. Forgive.

**There is only one way to get rid of a dandelion. Pull it out by the roots!** This is what you must do with bitterness and any unforgiving spirit that has germinated inside of you. Don't allow the root of bitterness to destroy you (Heb. 12:15). Don't keep saying, "I've been hurt" or "I have resentments." These are nothing more than a bitter spirit. Bitterness is a poison that destroys your whole spiritual life. Admit that you are bitter and forgive. Let go and let God create a heart of forgiveness and new life of freedom from sin. The Lord will set you free from bitterness.

Here are some points to remember when forgiving others.

### **1. Forgiveness is a choice, not a feeling.**

The old nature will never create within us the right feeling to forgive. We may not feel forgiving toward somebody, but we must forgive them as an act of the will based upon what is right to do. *You do not have to be a victim of your feelings and circumstances. The Bible (truth) needs to become the center of your existence – not feelings and circumstances.* God's commands are directed to our wills, not to our emotions. He does not say, "Do this if you feel like it." The Bible says you must forgive. When you

choose (not feel) to obey God and His Word your feelings will eventually fall in line with the truth. You must never allow your feelings to become the criteria for what is right. Obedience to God's truth precedes forgiveness. Rebellion always leads you away from the truth (1 Sam. 15:23). You must simply do what God tells you to do. You can respond with forgiveness out of obedience to truth even when your feelings say no. The old nature will seek to generate feelings that are wrong so you cannot follow feelings. You simply must obey God and do what is right (Acts 5:29). When you forgive the Spirit and new nature will work together to generate proper thoughts and feelings of love, mercy, and grace toward those that have wronged you in the past. *In Ephesians 4:32 God is not asking you to feel something but to do something!* Are you ready to forgive in spite of your feelings? . Forgiveness is a choice, a crisis of the will.

## **2. Forgiveness involves a willingness to live with sin's consequences.**

When forgiving you must be ready and willing to live with the ongoing circumstances of the offender's actions or even some of the things that you have done. For instance, you do not always get a storybook ending to your life where an offender apologizes and sets things straight. This is not realistic. Are you willing to live with the circumstances created by someone who has wronged you in the past? This is an essential action if we are to escape the consequences of a bitter spirit. We must be willing by God's grace (1 Cor. 15:10) and the Spirit's assistance (Gal. 5:25) to live with the circumstances created by the past and commit our way unto the Lord (Psalm 37:5). Are you willing?

## **3. Forgiveness must be specific.**

Don't say, "Lord, I forgive all those who I need to forgive." This is a shallow cover up for your sin. Don't say, "Lord, please help me to forgive," because He is already helping you to forgive. Don't say, "Lord, I want to forgive," because in saying this you are bypassing your own personal responsibility. Specifically name those you need to forgive and then forgive them and free yourself from bitterness. Forgiveness is always a straightforward confession (1 John 1:9).

#### **4. Forgiveness can only take place when you stop blaming others.**

Sometimes we can't forgive others simply because we think they are responsible for the way we turned out. In other words, we can't forgive others, since we believe we have committed sin, as a result of what others have done to us. If you are blaming others for your sin, then you cannot forgive them. The old sin nature will want you to blame other people and even God for what is really your own fault and sin (Gen. 3:12-13). But you can never allow God's grace to work forgiveness in your heart when you push the blame on others or use them as a scapegoat. You are not a victim as psychology says. You are a sinner! You must face the facts and take responsibility for your own sin if you are ever going to forgive others (James 1:14).

**The prayer of acknowledgment:** "Dear God, I repent of my sin of bitterness and unforgiveness. I'm responsible for sinning and doing wrong. I confess that I have harbored bitterness and resentment in my heart toward other people. I take full responsibility for my own sinful and bitter heart. Forgive me for not being forgiving. I pray that during this time of self-examination You would bring to my attention those people that I need to forgive. I acknowledge that I need to forgive some people that have wronged me or sinned against me in the past (name them before God and release them to God).

"Lord, I bring these names before You today so I can let You know that I'm forgiving them of the wrongs and sins that they have committed against me. As part of my forgiveness, I'm also willing to live with the circumstances that these sins, which were committed against me, have created. I'm getting rid of my bitterness and unforgiving spirit toward these people and releasing myself from the grip of bitterness and any unforgiving spirit. Through repentance and confession of this sin I take back the ground or territory in my heart and life that I have surrendered to the devil (Eph. 4:27). In Jesus' name, Amen."

#### **4. You must claim forgiveness for yourself.**

God has forgiven you. Are you now ready to claim your forgiveness in Christ and apply it to your life? How silly to believe God can forgive you but then turn around and not be willing to accept forgiveness for the bad and sinful things you have done. This is an oxymoron or contraction of the worst

sort. Stop holding grudges against yourself! If God has forgiven you, it only stands to reason that you can accept the forgiveness offered through Christ. Paul certainly accepted God's forgiveness for the terrible things he did in his past when speaking about his own ignorance and the way God's mercy and grace were showered upon his life (1 Tim. 1:12-16). These are the words that came from the lips of a person who was willing to let go of the past. The same can be said about David (Rom. 4:7-8). Yes, it's a contradiction to believe that God has forgiven you, but at the same time you cannot accept your forgiveness in Christ. If you really believe in your heart that you are forgiven, you will apply it to your own life.

Sometimes you don't want to receive God's forgiveness because the devil has sold you a bill of goods that you are no good and not worth forgiving (Eph. 6:16). In this case, you must believe what God has said and accept His forgiveness by faith on the basis of His promise (see Eph. 1:7, Col. 1:14). Other times you might think you are better than other people and don't really need to seek forgiveness. This is a lie from Satan (1 John 1:8-10). God knows your weak frame (Ps. 103:14). You're no better than any other person (Phil. 3:12). Stop being so proud (Ps. 16:18). Stop comparing yourself with others (Luke 18:9-14; 2 Cor. 10:12). You can't fool God. Admit your sins, weaknesses and failures (REPENT of your sins – Rev. 2:5) and then find the grace to accept God's forgiveness for the sinful things you have done. Lastly, don't drown in your own self-pity and sing, "Nobody knows the trouble I've seen." Deny yourself of self-pity like you would other things that stand in the way of true discipleship (Luke 9:23).

Remember: The greatest freedom in the world is the freedom of forgiveness. Are you ready to forgive yourself?

**The prayer of acknowledgment:** "Dear Lord, I need to come to the place right now where I actually accept my forgiveness in Christ for the things that I've done in the past. Right now, in this quiet moment, I believe that Jesus Christ has totally forgiven me of all my sins, all the sinful things that I've done against You, against others, and against my own body. I stand forgiven in God's site and claim my forgiveness in Christ. Lord God, I have accepted Your complete and total forgiveness, and in doing this, I can now in good conscious apply this forgiveness to my life. I choose to no longer live in bondage to my past sins, defeats, and regrets. I accept, apply, and release myself from my past sins, regrets, and sorrows. I no longer want to live in guilt but find rest in your forgiveness. In Jesus' name, Amen."



## What Does it Mean to Live in the Past Tense?

You may be living in the past tense instead of the present tense. Living in the past tense means that you have not accepted the forgiveness that Jesus offers to you. It means that you are allowing the past sins, sad circumstances, and discouragements to defeat you in your present living. You are allowing bitterness and resentment to keep you from living victoriously in the present. It means that you are sitting around having a pity party for yourself and feeling sorry for yourself because of all the things that have gone wrong in your life. You are singing the blues, "Nobody knows the trouble I've seen." You lack joy, peace and freedom in life because you are haunted by the past and are not willing to let Jesus liberate you from your past and those sins, which have kept you in bondage for so long (bitterness, resentment, lust). Living in the past tense is the defeat mode of the Christian existence. In this mode of existence, you have no real purpose or reason for living. But remember one thing. You choose to drown in self-pity and live in the past, but God wants to put purpose back into your life. There is an "afterward" that is peaceful and joyous if you allow God to heal you of your past (Heb. 12:11).

### Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen!

You will never be free from the past if you keep feeling sorry for yourself. Psychology says you should feel sorry for yourself since you are victim of circumstance, disease, and the actions of other people. Psychology says that you should pamper self, love self, serve self, excuse self, and exalt self. But the Bible says you must crucify self (Rom. 8:13), hate self (Luke 14:26), blame self (Deut. 24:16; James 1:14), humble self (Luke 18:14) and deny self (Luke 9:23). The point is this. Don't sit around feeling sorry for yourself ("woe is me") and make excuses for your unforgiving spirit and bitterness that you harbor in your heart. Don't drown in your own sorrows and self and create in your own mind an excuse to keep living the same old sinful patterns. Deny yourself of self-pity and sorrow and stop living in the past.

**Excuses, Excuses!** You will never be free from the past if you keep making excuses for living the way that you do. "And they all with one *consent* began to make excuse" (Luke 14:18). The devil brings many excuses to your mind. Satan says, "You deserve to sulk in self-pity after what you have been through. You should feel sorry for yourself. You have

every right to be mad. The mess that you have made out of you life is not your fault but the fault of someone else. God's plan for victory doesn't work. You couldn't change if you tried. You don't have any time to change with your busy schedule. Your sin is too great for God to forgive. The excuses go on and on. Vance Havner said, "An excuse is only the skin of a reason, stuffed with a lie." God doesn't want your excuses; He wants your heart (Ps. 119:32, 34; 40:8). Someone said, "Excuses, excuses; you'll hear them every day; the devil will supply you, if you listen and obey."

### **What Does it Mean to Live in the Present Tense?**

This means you must live in the present victory God has provided for you and experience God's present spiritual blessings of joy, peace, and freedom in Christ. As a born-again Christian, God has promised you present joy, peace, and freedom in Jesus Christ instead of the sorrow that comes from living with overwhelming fear, constant dread, bitterness, or deep discouragement and defeat because of various activities or changes that have occurred in your past. *Living in the present means to live in such a way so that your past does not haunt you and control your life.* It means that you can learn to live without plaguing fears, guilt, and discouragement that is associated with the past.

As we live life in the present tense (not the past), accepting God's forgiveness, living in close fellowship with Christ, striving to be more like Him, we will not allow the enemy to torment us with the past. Satan loves to remind us of the things we've done so he can keep us in bondage to guilt. Satan says to us, "Remember that awful thing you did? How can God use a person like you?" "Remember what that person did to you? You should be bitter against them." It's during these moments of temptation that we must claim the promises of forgiveness and freedom we have through Christ. After all, Jesus said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). To know the truth is to experience the liberating truth of Scripture in our lives. If you know God's promises and claim them by faith you can be free from the guilt and pain of the past ("free indeed" – John 8:36).

### **What Should You Do With the Past?**

Philippians 3:13 says, Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before."

This means that you should be future-oriented in your living ("forgetting those things which are behind") instead of baby-sitting the past. Please keep in mind that in Bible terminology, "to forget" does not mean, "to fail to remember." Apart from hypnosis or a brain malfunction, no mature person can forget what has happened in the past. You may wish that you could erase certain bad memories, but you cannot. "To forget" in the Bible sense really means to "no longer to be influenced by or affected by something." So, "forgetting those things which are behind" does not suggest an impossible feat of mental and psychological gymnastics by which you try to erase the sins and mistakes of the past. It simply means that you break the power of the past by living for the future. You cannot change the past, but you can change the powerful influence of the past. You cannot go in the past and rewrite it, but you can rewrite your future and the way you live today.

### **Getting Rid of the Past**

How do you FORGET the past or refuse to allow the past to ruin your Christian life in the present? It's very simple. Some clues are found in this same chapter. We must accept God's forgiveness and the righteousness that we have in Christ (Phil. 3:9), develop a close walk and relationship with Christ (Phil. 3:10), accept our imperfections (Phil. 3:12), and live for the future (Phil. 3:13-14 - "reaching forth unto those things which are before") - new spiritual goals, new spiritual plans, new spiritual adventures, new victories, new spiritual growth, and most of all, striving to be more like Christ in our daily living (Phil. 4:14 - "I press toward the mark").

### **Praise and the Past**

Paul had a terrible past (Acts 22:4). But whenever Paul remembered his past, he was seen turning his past memories into times of praise and thanksgiving for how God had saved him and transformed his life (see 1 Cor. 15:9-10; Eph. 3:8, 1 Tim. 1:12-15). When Satan reminds you of your dark past you must then learn to go to the Lord in praise and thanksgiving for the grace that He has showered upon your life in spite of your past sins and failures (1 Cor. 15:10). Praise can turn painful memories into occasions of thanksgiving to God for His abundant grace and deliverance. Try praise when Satan attempts to disrupt your life with the past. Praise works. Praise changes things!

"In heaven's eternal bliss,  
The loveliest strain is this,

May Jesus Christ be praised.  
The powers of darkness fear,  
When this sweet chant they hear,  
May Jesus Christ be praised."

Think of this: If Jesus cannot deliver you from the past then God's Word is a lie, His power is insufficient, and Christianity and Christ is all a hoax! But God is greater than our past. Jesus said in Luke 4:18, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised."

Jesus is the Freedom Maker. Do you really want freedom? Are you ready to start on a new journey of experiencing forgiveness, freedom, and joy in Christ?

**The prayer of acknowledgment:** "Dear God and heavenly Father I want to begin a new journey today. I want a new beginning. I do not want the past to defeat my Christian life any longer. I don't want to live in the past tense. I want to live in the present tense. I believe my past is buried and You will never bring it against me again. It is under the blood of Christ. Right now I am claiming Your promises concerning forgiveness and Your power to liberate my life from past guilt, sins, and regrets. I want to live closer to Your Son Jesus Christ and become more like Your Son. I am going to stop pitying myself and allowing the devil to defeat my life. I'm taking back the territory in my heart and life that I have surrendered to Satan (Eph. 4:27). Dear Lord, I want to be free and accept the spiritual liberation that you have provided for me. In Jesus' name, Amen."

## Section Two

### You Must Take Back What God Owns Reclaim Surrendered Ground

Section two naturally flows out of section one. In order to get out of prison and be freed from the shackles of sin (sexual sin, occult, foul speaking, rock music, pride, lying, plaguing feelings of guilt, anxiety, regrets, deep-seated feelings of bitterness, depression, anger, fears, negative thoughts, irrational feelings, habitual sins, etc.) you need to repent of these sins and

in so doing reclaim the surrendered ground that you have given to Satan. You actually addressed this in section one as you prayed through two separate prayers. Now let's consider this concept of reclaiming surrendered ground in more detail.

Ephesians 4:27 states, "**Neither give place (territory or space) to the devil.**" 2 Corinthians 2:11 states it this way, "**Lest Satan should get an advantage of us** (a greater part, portion, or share of our life): **for we are not ignorant of his devices.**" The concept of giving ground to the enemy is very critical. The soul can be viewed as a checkerboard with areas of jurisdiction (ground). Ground can be viewed as legal jurisdiction. You give ground to the enemy by allowing wrong thoughts and sin to control or master your life, such as the sin of unforgiveness (2 Cor. 2:7-10) or anger (Eph. 4:26-27). However, it's not necessarily one moment of anger that gives Satan a strong foothold upon your life but anger that is stored up, nurtured, and allowed to turn into bitterness and other horrible things (2 Cor. 10:4-5). Nevertheless, when you allow sin to control your life you really are giving up areas that God is to control as your rightful Master (Rom. 6:22; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; 1 Pet. 2:16; Eph. 6:6). God has bought you and you are His lock, stock and barrel. As your Master, God alone has the right to rule and control your life. He has the right to call the shots.

When I give ground to Satan I am also opening myself up for him to attack me in a greater way. I create a starting point (beachhead or foothold) for the devil to work in a greater way in my life. When you allow Satan to take ground in your life you allow him to capture you in his trap (2 Tim. 2:26). Satan has many "**snare**s" or traps (2 Tim. 2:26) that he uses to find an *entry point* into your life such as the sensual woman (Prov. 7:10-23), flattery (Prov. 29:5), the fear of man (Prov. 29:25), evil times (Ecclesiastes 9:12), pride (1 Tim. 3:6), the desire to be rich (1 Tim. 6:9), occult paraphernalia (Acts 19:19) and opposing sound teaching (2 Tim. 2:25). When all areas of the checkerboard (soul) are under God's control you experience victory. However, if you surrender any of these areas of the soul to Satan, he takes charge of them and begins to rob you of your victory in Christ by slowly eating away at your spiritual living. In time he can establish a strong foothold in your life (2 Cor. 10:4-5).

Romans 12:1 states, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye **present your bodies** a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is your reasonable service.*" This verse speaks of absolute

surrender to God. If you have been in bondage for a long period of time, there comes a specific point in time whereby you must surrender to God your entire body for His holy purposes and glory and ask God to reveal anything in your life that is keeping you from having spiritual freedom. When you do this God will begin to bring the skeletons out of the closet. He will reveal what is keeping you in bondage if you do not already know. **But you must be willing to place everything on the altar of surrender and sacrifice (music, alcohol, bitterness, hatred, tobacco, depression, lust, pride) that is hindering your freedom and by so doing in a practical sense put to death the sinful deeds controlling your life by saying no to sin and yes to God (Rom. 8:13; Gal. 5:24; Col. 3:8; Luke 9:23, 14:27, 33).** There is no middle ground! Remember that God does business with those who do business with Him (James 4:8).

All must be placed on the altar without any strings attached. When doing this you will be presenting yourself as a vessel for God to use for His holy purposes (Rom. 12:1). When you place yourself on the altar it becomes an act of your will and you say, "God, I want to place every area of my life under your control." In surrender you present to God your entire body for righteous living and holiness and in so doing take back those areas that Satan has ruled or captured in your life. By an act of the will you must place your total personality, body, and life at the disposal of God and present it to Him to use as He pleases. Romans 12:1 teaches that you are surrendering your body to be used for God's holy purposes ("**holy, acceptable unto God**") both in the sense of being set apart for His use, and holy in the sense of being used for only pure and righteous purposes.

You need to answer the question, "**Who is going to be the final authority in my life?**" There are really only two ways: your way, or God's way, the self-life or the cross-life, the selfish life or the surrendered life. Jesus said in Luke 14:33, "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." Surrender is an absolute requirement. If you want to get out of the realm of emotional struggle and defeat you must surrender to the Lord. If you want to have victory over persistent and plaguing sins you must surrender. You must realize that you don't call the shots any more! You must take your hands off of your own life and turn it over to God unconditionally.

Jesus said in John 12:24, "**Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it**

**bringeth forth much fruit.**” This speaks of personal surrender. The death of a seed results in fruit. This analogy relates to discipleship (following Jesus) and means that a person must hate his own life (his own sinful ways and personal agenda in life – vs. 25) and totally surrender. In other words, a person must be willing to put to death his own sinful ways and his own personal plans and goals. This is the self-sacrificing way of life.

In short, a person must be willing to put to death the self-life - his sinful patterns of behavior, wrong relationships, the improper use of time, comforts, personal agendas, and completely turn his life over to the control of Jesus. Like a seed put into the ground, a person must die to self, sin, and Satan’s control over his life. When you surrender everything to Christ you will be able to bring forth godly fruit (vs. 24) and serve Jesus Christ (vs. 25). You will be like a seed that dies for the purpose of producing a harvest of new fruit. Absolute surrender is the key to breaking the power of sinful bondage, experiencing newfound victory, and producing godly fruit in your life.

James 4:7 says: **“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”** You must submit yourself to God by dedicating your body (Rom. 6:13; Rom. 12:1-2), mind (Phil. 4:8), and emotions to loving Him (Matt. 22:37; Luke 14:26) and your will to serving Him (Eph. 6:6-7). *The believer must be willing to submit to God in every area of his life.* He must be willing to rank himself under God’s authority or else he will experience constant defeat. If a person is not ready to fully submit to God he will live in defeat and be swallowed up by the devil (1 Pet. 5:8). You must ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to your mind what is hindering your freedom in Christ and then surrender your entire life and sinful ways upon God’s altar dedicating your body and life fully to God.

**If you have been in bondage to sin for a long time, there comes a point of repentance, surrender, turning the life completely over to God, and taking back the territory of your life that was given to the devil.** The Bible says you must surrender to God and in doing so you can reclaim your lost territory that the devil has captured. This automatically occurs when you surrender your life to God. Through confession, repentance, and the voluntary surrender of your body to God, you can take back the ground that you have surrendered to Satan. Of course, there is the need for daily confession and getting right with God for some sin that we have committed (1 John 1:9). **But for many who have been under**

**long-term sinful bondages (sex, drugs, alcohol, nicotine, occult, bitterness, depression, anger, negative feelings, worry, unforgiveness, lying, pride, pornography, feelings of guilt) this truth about surrender and taking back ground that Satan has captured from our lives is a truly liberating experience.** There is an immediate battle and it becomes evident that Satan does not want to give up the territory of our lives that he has stolen from God. Satan wants to master our lives and steal away from God what is rightfully His.

Romans 6:13 states, “**Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.**” You can be sure that a satanic stronghold and stranglehold has been reached in your life *when sin reaches a habit stage*. You can know that Satan has gained a strong foothold. So, what you need to do is surrender to God by presenting your body to Him for His use and glory. Sometimes after a long history of bondage, getting very specific in our surrender is helpful. *We surrender to God by actually presenting the parts of our body to God that have been used by Satan to keep us in bondage (our eyes, feet, ears, hands, mouth, nose, sex organs, stomach, brain)*. You might need to surrender your sexual body parts and sex drives to His control and any other sins of bondage. This will be mentioned again in our next section because it is so very important.

The act of surrender involves taking some simple steps to freedom. If you want to surrender then you must take the steps to freedom – **repentance, reclaiming, ruin, replacement, reliance**. We will look at each one of these individually. Remember that these steps to surrender involve the **initial surrender** (Rom. 12:1) that you must make to the Lord in order to free yourself from the past. This surrender is the *foundation* that will help you to begin rebuilding your Christian life. Your surrender will allow you to have a new beginning or start in your Christian life.

This surrender is necessary so that you can free yourself from the strongholds that Satan has had on your life for a long time. After you have surrendered your life you will then be ready to live a victorious Christian life on a daily basis by yielding or surrendering your body to the Lord to prevent yourself from sinning (Rom. 6:13). How this is done will be outlined in further studies. For now, follow these steps of *initial surrender* and reclaim



the surrendered ground that you have given to Satan. This will get you started you on the right journey.

**Note:** Some Christians are fearful of surrendering their life to God because they know by their own past experience that they cannot live as God wants them to live (Rom. 7:14). However, you will discover that one of the steps of surrender involves *reliance* on God for power to live differently. This is the secret Paul had to learn in his own Christian life (Rom. 7:18; 8:4; Phil. 2:13). He could not have victory on his own power (2 Cor. 12:10; 2 Cor. 4:7). As you surrender to God you are also dedicating your life to His power to change your life.

You must also remember that surrender does not mean that you will always live perfectly following your surrender (Phil. 3:12; 1 John 1:9). Surrender simply means you come to God with a heart broken over sin, a genuine heart that is free from hypocrisy (1 Pet. 2:1; James 1:8), a heart that is willing to change, a broken heart that is completely dependent upon God to transform your life (Ps. 51:17; 34:18). When you initially surrender, you are turning everything over to God (your past, sin, body) and giving God the permission to totally control your life and begin changing your life. However, this change will take place progressively (not all at once) as you learn the secret of living the victorious Christian life (1 Thess. 4:3-4; Phil. 2:12-13; 3:13-14; 2 Cor. 3:18).

When you surrender, God does not expect perfection but gradual new victories that begin to change and reshape your life. Every Christian knows that there is not victory *all* the way (perfection) but victory *along* the way (many victories). After your initial surrender, you must learn to dwell on the positive victories instead of the negative defeats and find how God is beginning to work in your life and change your life for the better (Phil. 1:6 – “he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ”). *One victory does not constitute winning the war nor does one loss constitute losing the war.* However, if you want to change, you must mean business with God and initially surrender everything to God. Are you ready to say, “I am willing Lord, to be just exactly what you want me to be.” If so, surrender your life to God right now.

**The act of surrender involves taking these simple steps to freedom.**

## **1. Repentance**

Repentance is linked to the initial surrender process. To bring anyone to genuine freedom from sin there must be repentance of sin. There must be a “godly sorrow that worketh repentance” (2 Cor. 7:10). Conviction of sin that leads to repentance (a change of mind about sin that includes an inward desire and willingness to forsake sin) is a work of the Holy Spirit. Only the Holy Spirit can put His finger on sin and bring repentance into the heart of a person (Acts 2:37; Rom. 8:4). Victory in spiritual warfare must start with repentance. Without genuine repentance, nothing of any lasting value will happen. Repentance is essentially a change of attitude about your sin before God. You develop a holy hatred for sin with a mindset of absolute surrender or commitment to letting go of your sin and turning to God.

The Bible talks about “the hidden things of darkness” (1 Cor. 4:5) and it’s these very things that we must be willing to *renounce* (give up, repudiate, disown) if we are going to be victorious. This is done through repentance. The act of surrender involves *relinquishing* (giving up, putting aside) your body for God’s holy purposes and glory. We present our entire body and will to the Lord Jesus Christ so He can become our absolute Master. We no longer are willing to share our body and life with any other sinful force (1 Cor. 6:15). Surrender involves renouncing the strongholds and work of the enemy in your life and committing yourself wholly to the Lord Jesus Christ. This step to freedom is a point of decision and destiny for the Christian life. There needs to be a distinct time when we wholeheartedly surrender to God and then we should have a daily mind of surrender.

James 4:8-9 gives us the *preparatory step* for victory when saying, “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *ye* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *ye* double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and *your* joy to heaviness.” This passage calls believers to prepare themselves for victory so they can resist the devil (James 4:7). The preparation is a cleansing process of repentance and drawing near to God in communion and fellowship. There comes a time when we must have a complete change of mind and attitude (repentance) about our sin, which results in a holy hatred for sin in light of God’s holiness, a heart-felt mourning over sin, and a willingness to turn to God and change. A believer cannot be helped until he is ready and willing to repent and turn away from his sins.

Proverbs 28:13

“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh *them* shall have mercy.”

## 2. Reclaiming

Reclaiming is a natural part of the surrender process. This is what we spoke about already. It's the Biblical concept of yielding ground to Satan when you allow sin to control your life (Eph. 4:27). When you yield some ground to Satan in your heart and life you also set yourself up for further attacks to be marshaled against you through destructive thoughts and temptations. Giving Satan jurisdiction over parts of your life leaves you vulnerable and opens up the door for the Evil One to attack you in a greater way. Surrender will ultimately lead to reclaiming for God (1 Cor. 6:19-20) the ground that you have given over to Satan (1 Tim. 5:15).

Through repentance (Rev. 2:5) and confession of sin (1 John 1:9) this reclaiming process occurs automatically but in those cases where many months and years of bondage has occurred it may be beneficial to verbally pray to the Lord that your are taking back the territory in your life and heart that Satan has stolen from Him. As you pray to God you can tell Him that you are renouncing Satan's works and ways in your life and share with the Lord that you want nothing to do with Satan's grip upon your life any longer. Satan has taken claim to certain territory in your life that is to be Gods (Rom. 14:8). Therefore, Satan's claim over your life can be renounced in prayer and this declaration can be a real turning point for you, especially if you have felt Satan's strongholds upon your life in some key areas. You must take back the ground that is to be only for Christ and call Satan's bluff.

## 3. Ruin (demolishing)

This step to freedom naturally flows out of the last step and will always occur when you possess a broken and surrendered heart. This involves tearing down the strongholds of lies (John 8:44) deceptions (Rev. 12:9), and accusations (Rev. 12:10) that Satan has built up in your mind. Eventually the ground you surrender to Satan can become a stronghold in your mind that you must tear down. **2 Corinthians 10:5** explains what a stronghold is: “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that

exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”

**A stronghold is a false idea or unscriptural idea from which you make wrong decisions and improper judgments. It is a skewed pattern of thinking that leads to practicing wrong actions and spiritual defeat.** *Deception occurs when your mind and emotions believe something that isn't true.* And remember, sometimes deception is 90 percent truth and 10 percent lie. Beware! The stronghold occurs in your “**imagination**” or the area of your mind (how you think) and carries over into wrong choices, unholy actions, or sinful patterns of living. These wrong thought patterns are pictured as an elevated structure (“**every high thing**”) that is designed to distort your thinking about truth and God. The picture is that of a wall or a tower from which defenders discharge their ammunition in order to keep advancing soldiers from winning the battle.

The elevated satanic structures of opposing ideas, speculations, reasonings, theories, views, philosophies, tactics, and false teachings attempt to implant wrong thoughts in your mind about truth and God. You must demolish or take down (“**Casting down**”) these wrong patterns of thoughts in your thinking process. This is the ruin or demolition process that must occur in the surrender process. You are to demolish thoughts that seek to enthrone themselves in your mind, which are against truth and those thoughts that exalt themselves against the “**knowledge of God**” (2 Cor. 10:5). The Evil One wants to distort your knowledge or thinking of God in some way so that you harbor resentment in your heart toward God. Satan wants to manipulate your thinking process concerning what you know to be true about God (“the knowledge of God”). Therefore, you must think right thoughts about God.

**Satan tries to give you a distorted view or picture about God – God’s love for you, God’s goodness, God’s faithfulness and forgiveness, and God’s providential ways over your life.** Sinful thoughts from Satan challenge your view of God in relationship to His character of goodness, righteousness, justice, faithfulness, and holiness (Gen. 3:1-5). Satan wants you to ask these questions, “Is God really good? Why would God allow this to happen to you? Does God really know what He is doing? Are you sure God cares for you? Don’t you think that you have a right to question God and be bitter against God?”

It should be no surprise that after a person has surrendered to God and given God His rightful place that Satan will not give up his lost ground or territory without a fight. He will seek to tempt you in the realm of your mind to lead you back to the place you were. But you can replace his tempting thoughts with truthful thoughts. Begin to memorize Scripture (Eph. 6:14, 17; John 17:17; Phil. 4:18) that you can use to resist the “bait” Satan will dangle in front of you to regain the ground you surrendered to God. Dear friend, you must cast down the wrong thinking that is keeping you from surrendering to God’s will and word. Once the barriers or walls in your mind have been torn down, the door to the heart can be opened in a new and fresh way.

#### 4. Replacement

This step of surrender and freedom one again naturally flows from the previous one. 2 Corinthians 10:5 goes on to say that you must demolish or take down the wrong patterns of thoughts in your thinking process and then replace them with right patterns of thought. Whenever you remove something, you are to replace it with something else. Once Satan’s towers of lies, deceptions, and accusations are demolished they must be replaced with towers of truth. This is done by bringing your thought patterns under the rule and authority of Jesus Christ (“**and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ**” – 2 Cor. 10:5).

In other words, how you think must drastically change. Your belief systems or thought patterns must be placed under Christ’s control, rule, and authority instead of Satan’s. You must bring your thoughts in line with what Christ says, desires, and is pleasing to Him. This is done through acknowledging Christ’s teaching (John 8:32; 17:17) and changing the content of your thinking (Phil. 4:8; 2 Tim. 3:16). In short, Christ needs to capture your mind (“**bringing into captivity**”) with His absolute standard of truth so your thinking process can be submissive to His rule instead of Satan’s rule (“**to the obedience of Christ**”). The intruding thoughts of Satan must be replaced with thoughts that are in accord with obeying Christ and His truth. A renewing or renovation of your mind must occur (Rom. 12:2). Out with the bad and in with the good.

This replacement process is accomplished when you prayerfully begin to pray through Bible verses that deal with the promises of victory (Col. 2:15; Rom. 6:6,13-14; 8:31, 37; 1 Cor.15:57; 2 Cor. 2:11,14; 1 Jn. 2:13; 5:4) and

those specific areas that you need to address to change your faulty thinking patterns. This is why you need to learn the Word of God. You need to effectively and prayerfully apply those portions of the Bible to your life that will give you victory over such many things.

Below is a list that can act as a guide to give you Biblical direction and guidance in overcoming wrong thoughts and actions. The Bible has the answer on how to live and not to live. Psalm 119:105 declares: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

### **A Biblical List for Spiritual Guidance**

Worry (Phil. 4:6-7; 1 Pet. 5:7; Isa. 26:3-4; 41:10, 13; 2 Cor. 12:9-10; Matt. 6:33-34), stress (1 Pet. 5:7; Phil. 4:7, 9; Isa. 26:3), jealousy (Prov. 14:30; James 1:14-15; 1 Cor. 13:4; Job 5:2; Prov. 3:31; 23:17), pride (Prov. 6:16-17; 16:18, 1 Pet. 5:5; 1 Jn. 2:16), anger (Eph. 4:26, 31-32; Col. 3:8; Jam. 1:19-20; Rom. 12:9; Ps. 4:4; Prov. 14:17, 29; 15:18; 16:32; 20:22; Jonah 4:4, 9), lying (Ex. 20:16; Ps. 15:1-2; 34:14; Prov. 12:22; Col. 3:9; Eph. 4:25; 1 John 2:21), loneliness (Duet. 31:6; Ps. 25:16; 65:5-6; 102:7-11; 142:1-4; Heb. 13:5), fear (Ps. 34:4; 1 Pet. 5:7; Josh. 1:9; Isa. 41:10, 13; 1 Jn. 4:18; Matt. 6:34), depression (Ps. 16:8; 34:18; 43:5; 46:1), discouragement (Ps. 42:5-6; 46:1; Isa. 41:10; 2 Cor. 4:8-9), grief (Ps. 23:4; 34:18; 116:15; 147:3; Rom. 8:38-39; Phil. 1:21-23; 2 Cor. 5:6-8; 1 Cor. 15:51-52; Isa. 26:3; Isa. 41:10; Ps. 147:3; John 14:1), divorce (Matt. 19:6; 1 Cor. 7:39, 10-11; Mal. 2:15-16; Luke 16:18), abortion (Ex. 20:13; Ps. 139:13-16; Jer. 1:5; Prov. 14:12; 12:15; 16:2; Ps. 32:3-5; 40:1-3), alcohol (1 Cor. 6:19-20; Eph. 5:18; Gal. 5:19-21; Rom. 13:13-14; 1 Pet. 4:1-3; Isa. 5:11-12, 22; Hab. 2:15-16) rock music (Ps. 40:3; 2 Tim. 4:4; Rom. 6:13; Phil. 4:8; 1 Pet. 2:11; 1 Cor. 6:19-20), eating disorders (1 Pet. 4:3-4; 1 Cor. 3:16-17, 19-20; Prov. 23:2), covetousness (Luke 12:15; Rom. 13:9; 1 Tim. 6:9-10), contentment (1 Tim. 6:6-8; Phil. 4:11-12), gossip (Prov. 11:13; 18:8; 21:23; 26:20, 22; Ps. 141:3; James 1:26; 3:11; 1 Pet. 3:10; Eph. 4:29; Col. 4:6; 1 Tim. 5:13), past memories (Phil. 3:13-15; Luke 9:62; Eph. 4:22-23; 2 Cor. 5:17; 10:4-5; Phil. 4:8), guilt (1 John 1:8-10; Isa. 1:18; 43:25; Mic. 7:18-19; 103:12), syndromes (Ps. 91:1-16; Is. 43:1-2; 42:11), submission (Eph. 5:21-22; Col. 3:8; 1 Cor. 11:3; 1 Pet. 3:1,5-6; Heb. 13:17), church attendance (Heb. 11:25; Ps. 84:0; 122:1), television/movies (Ps. 101:3; Eph. 5:4; Rom. 8:5-6; Isa. 5:20; Col. 3:1; Phil. 4:8; Rom. 12:1-2); improper dress (1 Tim. 2:9-10; Prov. 11:22; 31:10; 1 Pet. 3:3-5), temptation (Jam. 1:14; 1 Cor. 10:13), sexual purity (Ex. 20:17; Rom. 13:14; James 1:21; 1 Thess. 4:3-6; Gal.

5:19-21; Eph. 5:3; 1 Cor. 6:15-20; Job 31:1; Matt. 5:28; Heb. 13:4; 1 Tim. 2:22; Col. 3:5-10), homosexuality (Rom. 1:24-27; Jude 1:7; Lev. 20:13; Rom. 8:5-6; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Ps. 141:4; 1 Pet. 4:1-3; Gal. 5:16); unforgiveness (Eph. 4:30-32; Matt. 6:14-15; 18:21-22), occult (Eph. 5:11; 6:10-12; 1 Pet. 2:9; Deut. 18:10-12; Gal. 5:19-20; Isa. 8:19; 1 John 4:4), procrastination (Ps. 90:12; Eph. 5:15-18; 1 Cor. 15:58), laziness (Prov. 10:4, 12:24, 13:4, 20:4, 31:27; Ecc. 10:18; 1 Tim. 5:8-14; 2 Thess. 3:10-12; Heb. 6:12; Rom. 12:11; 1 Cor. 15:58; Gal. 6:9), lack of faith or unbelief (Ps. 20:7; Isa. 26:4; Prov. 3:5-6; Jer. 17:7-8; Mk. 11:22), trials (2 Cor. 1:3-4; 1 Pet. 1:6-7; 4:12-13; 2 Tim. 2:3; James 1:12; Rom. 8:28).

Many Christians create note cards and begin to pray through portions of Scripture when being tempted by the devil. It is the Holy Spirit that teaches you the Word of God (John 14:26) and guides you in all truth (John 16:13). It is the Holy Spirit who reminds you of what you have learned (John 14:26) and enables you to practice what He has taught you through the Scriptures. The “sword of the Spirit” (Eph. 6:17) is your defense in that the Holy Spirit brings important verses to your attention in the time of temptation. The Holy Spirit drives home the truth of the Bible to your heart and life so you can know the truth *experientially* and be set free (John 8:32). You simply need to prayerfully apply these verses to your life by faith and use them in the time of battle as Jesus used the Scriptures in the time of His battle with Satan (Matthew 4). Getting the truth into your mind and getting the lies out of your mind is essential for victory.

**2 Corinthians 10:5 is a verse of action!** You must submit your mind to the right Commander! You must allow your intellect to be submitted to Christ and no longer think thoughts that are disobedient to Christ’s truth and mastery over your life. Instead, you must bring your thoughts under “**obedience**” to Christ’s truth and mastery over your life. Satan wants to corrupt your mind from “the simplicity that is in Christ Jesus” (2 Cor. 11:3). This means that Satan seeks to detour our thinking away from our devotion or commitment to Christ relationally (fellowship), devotionally (service), and doctrinally (truth). The strongholds of Satanic lies, which defy truth and timeless Biblical principles, must be cast out of your mind and a renewal process must take place (**Rom. 12:2 – “renewing of the mind”**) whereby you replace the wrong with the right or the bad with the good (Phil. 4:8). Changing these wrong patterns of thinking will naturally result in a change within our everyday living (Phil. 1:11; Col. 3:8-14; Eph. 4:25-32). This is because we act how we think (Prov. 4:23; 23:7).

Do you think that the horrible, vile, depressing, negative, and even blasphemous thoughts, which torment you, are actually your own thoughts? If so, you fail to realize that Satan and his workers fill your mind with all kinds of intruding thoughts (Eph. 6:16). Choosing the truth may be difficult if you have been living a lie. David lived a lie for a time in his life. When he finally found freedom, he wrote, "Blessed *is* the man ... in whose spirit *there is* no guile" (Psalm 32:2). Remember that deception is the subtlest of all satanic strongholds (Gen. 3:1). Satan's lies of deception are at the heart of addictive behavior. *Once you believe Satan's lies they become truth to you. And if what you believe isn't true, then how you live won't be right. People may not always live what they profess, but they always live what they believe (Prov. 4:23).*

Satan brings sinful and wrong thoughts into your mind because he knows sin can deceive you (Heb. 3:13). Satan says, "It's okay to indulge a little. You can't help yourself. You were born this way. It's not your fault (1 John 1:8). You should feel sorry for yourself. You don't need to go to church today. It's not important to pray and read the Bible every day. Some of the Christian Rock music isn't so bad. You are stupid and will never amount to anything. It can't be wrong since it feels right. You can watch a little bit and get away with it. Just a little drink won't hurt you. You are a victim of circumstances. It's not your fault."

Remember: Your thoughts can come from God (Matt. 16:16-17), Satan (Matt. 16:22; James 3:14-15), the old sin nature (Heb. 3:13; Rom. 7:18; Gal. 5:17; Matt. 15:19), or from yourself ("flesh and blood" – Matt. 16:17; Isaiah 55:8; Luke 24:38; 1 Cor. 14:38). Many times Satan will work in connection with the old nature (Eph. 2:2-3; 1 Tim. 6:9). He likes to *fan the flame* that is already started on the inside of you by the drives and evil incentives of the old nature. He works in connection with the sin nature to deceive us mentally and then keep us in bondage. But let us remember that the way you think is really the beginning of victory, or the start of your spiritual downfall and defeat.

God does not want your thoughts to control you. Rather, God wants you to control your thoughts by replacing the bad with the good, and the unscriptural with the scriptural. When doing this you bring your thought patterns under Christ's rule and in obedience to His truth.



## The Antidote is Faith

Faith is the Biblical response to the truth (“the shield of faith” - Eph. 6:16). **Faith is the victory!** We are to possess faith in God’s promises and power to deliver us. God’s delivering grace “**is sufficient**” (2 Cor. 12:9) to give us victory over everything we face in life. Our problem is that we don’t believe that God is! We don’t activate faith in God’s power and promises. Believing and practicing truth is a choice (Psalm 119:30, 32; Joshua 1:7-8). You might say, “God’s truth just doesn’t work for me.” This is a deception from the devil. God’s truth always works (sets you free) when rightly applied to your life (John 8:32; James 1:25). Resisting the devil involves believing and acting upon the truth by simple faith. 1 Peter 5:8-9 says, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith (body of revealed truth – the Scriptures) ...” When you say, “I want to believe God, but I just can’t,” you are being deceived. You can always believe God! “Have faith in God.” Faith is something *you decide to do*, not something *you feel like doing*. You must accept God’s way of victory and believe His Word is true. **Remember that when you pray in doubt, you do without (James 1:6-7).** I must approach God’s truth and promises by faith and claim what I have in Christ – victory and freedom from sin’s power.

The Mental Game: You must remember that the presence of a thought in your mind is not sin. You sin only when you keep the thought in your mind and accept it as being true or act upon it in lust (James 1:14-15). *Just because you think a thought does not mean you must accept it or obey it.* **The presence of a thought does not mean that it will happen.** In other words, you do not create reality by your thought life or simply by what you think. You can declare war on your thoughts and old ways of thinking or any perverted way of thinking by demolishing every wrong, depressing, angry, evil, and wicked thought sent into your mind by the enemy. You don’t have to be ruled by wrong thoughts. God has promised to give you “power” (2 Tim. 1:7) to do what is necessary and a “sound” (self-disciplined) mind, which results in a disciplined way of life (1 Tim. 4:7; 1 Cor. 9:27) that is victorious.

“Sow a thought, reap an action. Sow an action, reap a habit. Sow a habit, reap a character. Sow a character, reap a destiny.”

## 5. Reliance

Ephesians 6:10, “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.” When you surrender to the Lord and yield to God by faith you will naturally be relying on His power or strengthening grace to carry you through. So, relying on God’s strength is in some way connected with the surrender process. You give yourself fully to God and His power to accomplish His purpose and goal in your life. James 4:6 speaks of the importance of relying upon God for strength and then James talks about submitting to God and resisting the devil for victory (vs. 7). Verse six reads, “But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.” Reliance on God’s strength is a prerequisite and part of the surrender process.

**God’s requirements are God’s enablements!** You need grace if you are ever going to be victorious. God’s inworking grace (empowering and strengthening grace) gives you the power that you need to overcome sin (Phil. 2:13 – “**For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure**”). This means God gives us new desires to hate sin and do His “will” and also gives us the power to “do” what is right. What is your problem? Has God failed? Why are you playing around with sin in your life? Why are you defeated today when God has made you to be a winner and victor? The answer may lie in the problem of pride. When you allow pride to come into your life God withholds His spiritual power. God’s resists your pride and withholds His victorious grace from your life. The pride of self-love (Luke 14:26), self-centeredness (Luke 18:10-12), self-living (Luke 9:23), and self-sufficiency (2 Cor. 3:5) keep you from surrendering to the Lord and relying on Him for daily help, strength, and victory (Eph. 1:19 “And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power”).

In summary, when one surrenders, they put into practice the steps to freedom. These steps include genuine **repentance**, which leads to **reclaiming** the ground you lost to Satan. Reclaiming this lost territory involves **replacing** your old thought patterns with Biblical and godly patterns as you learn to express **reliance** on God’s promises and strength by activating personal faith.

## New Beginnings

The Christian life is a series of new beginnings (1 John 1:7-9, James 4:8; Ps. 23:3; 51:12). When you fall on the battlefield you don't have to stay wounded. And even if Satan begins to recapture some areas in your life once again you can take the steps to healing and freedom and get right back up. You know how to fight back. You can surrender certain areas of your life to the Lord through repentance and reclaim the lost ground (Eph. 4:27). Many times this automatically occurs in your Christian life when you confess your sin to God and ask for restoration or returned fellowship and blessing with the Lord (1 John 1:9). In other words, even when Satan does get a foothold in your life, your surrender occurs simultaneously with your repentance and confession and Satan is once again evicted from your life. What a blessing when Satan is evicted! However, let me repeat something.

*One victory does not constitute winning the war, nor does one loss constitute losing the war.* Living the Christian life is a series of victories and losses. But remember this one thing. When you suffer one defeat it does not mean that Satan is taking over the territory of your heart and life again. Many times Satan simply causes you to stumble or fall along the way with his traps. Satan only gets a strong foothold in your life when you fail to confess your sin (Ps. 66:18) and allow sin to fester in your heart and begin to dominate or control your life once again (1 Cor. 3:3).

The thing you need to remember is to *keep short accounts with God* and confess your sins as they invade your life. Solve the sin problem immediately by confession and get right back up. You are on the victory side! Through Christ you are a victor – not a victim! There will be gradually more victories than defeats as you learn the secret of yielding to God in the normal Christian life (Rom. 12:3; 6:13) and staying free from the power of sin. Christians are not *sinless* people but they can *sin less* as they learn the secret of daily victory and grow in Christlikeness (Phil. 3:10). Keep standing firm in God's power and resist the devil (James 4:7). This is a winnable war! When you are free you might ask, "Will I always be like this?" The answer is you will always be free as long as you remain in right relationship with God (James 4:8; 1 John 1:5-7). Fellowship with God is the key to freedom.

Your responsibility is to obey what God says. When you obey God's plan of surrender (the initial steps to freedom) and put into practice these truths,

it's only then that you can cleanse yourself (through obedience to God's truth) and claim God's victory (2 Cor. 7:1). From then on you can grow in your Christian life through yielding to God's power (Rom. 6:13). And remember that victory is a matter of claiming what you have in Christ through faith and aggressive prayer.

### **The Prayer of Surrender**

"Dear Lord Jesus, I'm repenting of my sin. I see my sin as a horrible transgression against Your holiness and have a sincere desire to change my life. I confess that I've allowed my life to be overcome by the thoughts and practices of the devil. I ask Your forgiveness and right now I renounce my sinful and wrong thoughts, as well as my sinful involvement with the enemy (name specific sins), as a counterfeit to true Christianity. I renounce all selfish goals and choose to only love You out of a pure heart and good conscience (1 Tim. 1:5). I am coming to You as your child, purchased by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 1:18-19). You have the right to own me and use me (1 Cor. 6:19-20). I reject any and every way in which Satan has claimed ownership of me.

"Right now, I reject and disown all satanic lies, power, and fleshly sins in my life and believe that You have delivered me from the power of darkness and translated me into the kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. 1:13). I believe You have come to destroy the works of the devil in my life (1 John 3:8). I believe that you defeated Satan on the cross. Because of Satan's defeat he no longer must have control and power over my life (Col. 2:15). I believe that my spiritual position in Christ grants me complete victory over Satan (Eph. 1:19-23). You have placed me in Christ 'Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion' (Eph. 1:21). I accept the fullness of God's victorious provision and power to change my life. 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me' (Phil. 4:13).

"Dear heavenly Father, rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft (! Samuel 15:23). Jesus said that the truth will set me free (John 8:32). I know that in action, attitude, and thinking that I have sinned against You with a rebellious heart. "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned" (Ps. 51:3). I ask for Your forgiveness based upon the blood of Jesus (1 John 1:7-9). I want You to shed light on the full extent of my rebellion so I can choose to adopt a submissive spirit and servant's heart in every area of my life. I also acknowledge that I have been deceived by the father of lies (John 8:44). I

also acknowledge I have been deceived by sin (Heb. 3:13) and as a result have deceived myself (1 John 1:8). I know that walking in the light of God's holiness is the only way to maintain fellowship with You (1 John 1:7).

"Right now, I reclaim the ground in my mind, heart, and life that I've surrendered to the enemy (Eph. 4:27). I reclaim this ground on the merits of the blood of Jesus Christ, which has defeated the devil and given me victory. I have overcome the enemy by the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 12:11). I now ask the Holy Spirit to continue to lead me in truth (John 16:13). I ask You to 'Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if *there be any* wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting' (Psalm 139:23-24). I want only Your thoughts and only Your truth. I want to renew my mind with the truth of Your Word (Rom. 12:2).

"Dear God, I stand against Satan's deception by tearing down the strongholds that the enemy has had over my mind and life (2 Cor. 10:4-5). From this point onward I'm going to actively replace Satan's thoughts with the absolute truth of Your Word. I'm going to live by Your promises and no longer be deceived by the devil. At this specific time, I rededicate my entire life to You. Dear Lord, I surrender my body to you right now (if necessary, name what parts of your body). I give my whole self to You and want to turn my life completely over to Your mastery (Rom. 12:1). I choose to present my body as an instrument of righteousness, a living and holy sacrifice, and refuse to allow sin to reign in my body (Rom. 6:12-13). I want to deny myself, pick up my cross daily, and follow You (Mat. 16:24). Right now, I forsake everything to follow You (Luke 14:33). I surrender all!

"I give myself wholly to Thee and will trust in Your power and provision to grant me continuing victory. I choose to be strong in the Lord and rely upon His strength and His might (Eph. 6:10). I realize that apart from Christ I can do nothing (John 15:5). I put no confidence in the flesh (Phil. 3:3). I ask that You will fill me with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18) and empower my life so that I may live above sin and not carry out the desires of the flesh (Gal. 5:16). I choose to walk by the Spirit's power and provision (Gal. 5:25). Based upon the victory You have already provided for me I crucify the flesh (Gal. 5:24) and bring my body into subjection (1 Cor. 9:27). Just now I'm submitting myself to You and resisting the devil (James 4:7). I declare myself to be completely signed over to You and committed to the Lord Jesus Christ Who is my Master.

“I believe that I am married to the Lord Jesus (Rom. 7:4). I will now love You more than anything else (Matt. 22:37-39). Lord, renew and revive me today. I want to abide in You (John 15:4). Restore unto me the joy of Your salvation (Ps. 51:12). I will love You without end. I am dying to my sin and selfish way of living (John 12:24). I am willing to be just exactly what You want me to be. I am Yours forever. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

### Section Three

#### You Must Stay on the Right Road The Romans Road to Freedom

This section of Scripture deals with your daily Christian living and how to have victory over sin. Once you have initially surrendered your life to the Lord you can stay free from the power and control of sin by learning to walk on the Roman’s Road to freedom. So, section three natural flows out of sections one and two. When you are free from the past and have totally surrendered to the Lord you must learn the secret of staying free. If you don’t want to go back to the spiritual prison of the past you must walk in the freedom that God gives to you in your present Christian experience and not allow sin and Satan to rule your life. Here is how it is done.

#### The First Stop on the Roman’s Road

##### The place called “know”

#### You Must Know That You Died With Christ (the first spiritual transaction)

Romans 6:6 - **Knowing** this, that our old man is (has been) crucified with *him*, that (a result) the body of sin might be destroyed, that (a result) henceforth we should not serve sin.

This is the first thing you must KNOW. When Jesus died on the cross a spiritual transaction occurred where you actually died with Jesus. The result of this spiritual transaction was this. The “old man” you once were has been put to death. *The old man is the old person you used to be when you were unsaved and a slave to the sin nature.* This old person was put to death with Jesus Christ when He died on the cross. This is how Jesus provided victory over sin for you. This is the basis or groundwork for all

your victory. **His death on the cross and your death with Him (“planted together in the likeness of his death” – Rom. 6:5) means that the old person you used to be under the slavery of sin is dead and no longer must rule your life.** *You must know this!* The human body that was once controlled by the sin nature (“body of sin”) was “destroyed” (put out of business, inactivated, terminated) when you died with Christ so that sin no longer should dominate and defeat your life. In short, you don’t have to “serve sin” any longer since Jesus put to death the old person you used to be and your slave relationship that you once had with the sin nature. You are free from sin’s power and slavery! *You must know this!* You can’t live beyond what you know.

“This one thing I know, this one thing I know: God in great mercy pardoned me, snapped sin’s fetters and set me free. One I was blind but now I see. This one thing I know.”

### The Battle is Not Yours, But God’s

You must remember that Romans chapter six teaches that *the victory has already been won* by the Lord Jesus when He died on the cross. **You don’t win the victory; Jesus won the victory for you!** The old person we used to be under sin’s power has already been put to death and now we have become a new regenerate (born again) person under the control of our new Master (God) instead of the sin nature. The work of victory has already been done. Christ has provided the actual victory for you when dying on the cross. You can’t do something that Christ has already done for you. In fact, you can’t do anything (“**the battle is not yours, but God’s**” – 2 Chron. 20:15). All you can do is believe what has already transpired and by faith claim it to be true! Reginald Wallis said: “The triumphant Christian does not fight for victory; he celebrates a victory already won. The victorious life is Christ's business, not yours.”

### Do You Still Have a Sin Nature?

Yes! Your death with Jesus does not put to death your old sin nature. You still have a sin nature (Rom. 7:14-25). You died to sin but sin did not die to you (“ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin” - Rom. 6:11). Your death with Jesus simply changes the old enslaving relationship which your body once had with the old nature. When the Bible says that you are “freed from sin” (Rom. 6:7) it means you have been freed from your old slave

relationship to the sin nature that you once had. Sin no longer must rule your life even though the sin nature or sin principle still resides in you.

**Prayer of victory:** “Lord Jesus I thank You for putting to death the old person that I used to be. I understand that I no longer must serve sin or allow sin to control my life and ruin me. Lord Jesus, sin will not take charge of my life. I believe what You have done for me and I thank you for the freedom You have given to me over sin. Thanks for liberty! In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

### **You Must Know That You Were Raised With Christ (the second spiritual transaction)**

Romans 6:8, “Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.”

This is the next thing you need to KNOW. You need to know that you have been raised with Jesus Christ from the dead (“we shall be also *in the likeness of his* resurrection” - Romans 6:5). You were not only spiritually united with Jesus’ death (basis for victory) but also spiritually united with Jesus’ resurrection (the power for victory). Resurrection means new life. When you were raised with Christ it means you experienced a spiritual type of resurrection with Christ where you became a born-again Christian with God’s life (John 3:3, 7). This spiritual transaction with Christ’s resurrection gave you His very own life and nature (“live with him” – Rom. 6:8) so that you can now share His own victorious life and “walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4). *You must know this!* Because you now have Christ’s life within you can depend upon His power and strength for daily assistance and moment-by-moment depend upon Christ’s resurrection power operating on the inside of you. Think of it. Christ lives within you and you have His very own risen life to grant you power and victory (Gal. 2:20 – “yet not I but Christ liveth in me”). The “I” is out of the picture and has been replaced with the living Christ who grants you power to live victoriously.

Paul said that he wanted to know Christ experientially by coming to grips with what he calls “the power of his resurrection” (Phil. 3:10). The old person (“old man” – Rom. 6:6) you once were died but in your resurrection with Christ you became a new person (“new man” – Eph.4:22) that now has Christ’s life to help you on in daily victory over sin and temptation.



## The Complete Spiritual Transaction

Ephesians 4:22 & 24 conclude: "That ye (have) **put off** concerning the former conversation (manner of living) the **old man** (the old person under the slavery of sin through your death with Christ), which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts." "And that ye (have) **put on** the new man (a born again person sharing Christ's resurrection life), which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness (a holy and victorious way of living)." Now you know!!

**Prayer of victory:** "Lord Jesus, I thank you for allowing me to be raised with You from the dead so that I can now have Your own life and power to assist me. I thank You that you put to death the old person I used to be under sin's power. I praise You that I now have your resurrection life on the inside of me to give me victorious strength and power. I need You at this very moment to help me be strong. I fully depend upon Your power at this very moment so I can walk in newness of life. In Jesus' name, Amen."

### The Second Stop on the Roman's Road

#### The place called "reckon"

#### You Must Believe That It's True

The secret of victory is to first "know" (Rom. 6:3) that we are united with Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection, and because of this spiritual union or tie with Christ we are freed from sin's dominion. Now, by a simple child-like act of faith we are to "**reckon**" (Rom. 6:11) or count this wonderful victorious transaction as being true. The transaction is done! I am my Lord's and He is mine! The victorious transaction of victory has already taken place and you must claim it by faith. **Reckoning something as true means you believe it is absolutely true by a definite act of faith.** By faith you claim that Jesus Christ has already provided the way of victory for you through His death on the cross, and put to death the old person that you once were, when you were lost and without God.

Romans 6:11 explains:

"Likewise reckon (count this to be true by faith) ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

**To “reckon” is your responsibility!** To reckon means to calculate something as being true and right through simple faith. When you go to the bank and cash a check you are reckoning. You are saying, “I believe that the person who wrote this check is true and honest in what he wrote. I believe there is money in his bank account to cover the check.” **The Bible says you are to take a step of faith and believe that you have actually died to your old slave relationship to sin and are now a born-again child of God who is presently “dead indeed to sin” (dead to sin’s power and slavery).** This means you must reckon or believe that your former slave relationship to sin (sin nature) has been terminated (“old man is crucified” - Rom. 6:6) and you no longer must serve sin and allow sin to run your life. The sin nature has lost its position as master over your life forever! *Do you really believe this?* Believe it for yourself.

You must also reckon or believe that you are **“alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord”** (Rom. 6:11). This means that through your spiritual resurrection with Jesus you now share His life and are “alive” spiritually (born again) and can have a new slave relationship “unto God” (with God) as your new Master. Your slave relationship with the old master (old nature) is terminated (“dead indeed”) and a new Master relationship has been established with God whereby you can yield yourself to God instead of sin (“unto God”). Think of it. You can now live for God and please Him in your daily living as your new Master since you share Christ’s power to help you live free from sin’s power and give you victory. *Do you really believe this?* Believe it for yourself. Reckon it to be true. You can bank on it!

“I own no other Master,  
My heart shall be Thy throne.  
My life I give henceforth to live,  
O Christ for Thee alone.”

**Prayer of victory:** Dear God at this very moment I reckon myself as being dead to sin’s power and the old slave relationship I once had with sin. I reckon myself as being raised with Jesus and possessing His very own life for power and victory. As a little child, I give to You my simple faith. I believe that everything You have done for me is true and right now, at this very moment, I claim my victory through Christ and avail myself to His power and provision for victory. God, you are my new Master (not sin) and I give myself wholly to Thee (not to sin). In Jesus’ name, Amen.

We have been traveling the Roman's Road to freedom or liberty from sin's power. We have two more stops. Keep traveling on the Roman's Road instead of your own road.

### The Third Stop on the Roman's Road

#### The place called "yield"

### You Must Surrender Your Body to God

Romans 6:13 commands, "Neither **yield** ye your members (the members of your body) as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members (members of your body) as instruments of righteousness unto God."

**This is also your responsibility.** The gearshift is in your hand! If you leave your Christian life in park you will not be victorious. A parked position is a defeated position! But if you put your Christian life in gear you will get moving and not be defeated.

The Bible says that you must do more than just "**reckon**" by faith that you are victorious through Christ. You **MUST** also take the initiative to "**yield**" or surrender and present to God, who is your new Master, the very members of your human body (eyes, ears, mouth, tongue, feet, sex organs, stomach, brain, etc.).

Yielding means to surrender. You surrender when you present or offer your entire body to God for His holy purposes (Rom. 12:1). It's your responsibility to yield. *Are you ready to do this?* Romans 6:19, "... even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness."

Yielding means that you are giving God charge or mastery over your body. You should no longer yield yourself to the old sin nature (slave master) that once ruled your life ("**Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin**"). Instead, you should yield or present your body to your new Master who is God ("but yield yourselves unto God") since you have been spiritually raised with Jesus Christ and share His new life and power to live victoriously ("**as those that are alive from the dead**"). Because of your victorious union with the resurrected Christ, you can present the members of your body to God ("**as instruments of**

**righteousness unto God**") and live victoriously. You are now joined to the living Christ. This victorious union enables you to serve your new Master who is God. Therefore, victory does not come by struggling but by surrendering your body to God as you rely on the power of the living Christ. The scriptural word *is yield*. When I yield it becomes an act of the will where I surrender completely to my Master as I rely on the power of the indwelling and living Christ (Gal. 2:20).

"I surrender all, I surrender,  
All to Thee my blessed Savior,  
I surrender all."

In the most practical sense, yielding or surrender is when you say "no" to sin and stop doing it. First, when yielding to God you are claiming the promise of victory. *When you yield, you are putting into practice what is already true – you died to sin's slavery through Christ's death and are raised with Christ to share His power.* Second, when yielding to God, in a practical way, you put to death within your own Christian experience those sins that are seeking to control your body at the present time (Col. 3:5-8 – **"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth"** and Rom. 8:13 – **"If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live"**).

You have an obligation and responsibility to forsake the flesh (sin nature) by yielding to God instead of sin. *Yielding is your choice.* You must deny the inclinations, desires, and efforts of the old sin nature to impose its lifestyle on you. This is done by believing what Christ has already accomplished for you. Christ has already broken the power of sin over your life and has given you Christ's resurrection power to live victoriously. When realizing this liberating truth you can yield to God's mastery over your life, instead of sin's mastery, and put to death ("**mortify**") sin in your life in the sense that sin no longer must defeat your life and control you. This is the practical side of yielding.

### Can You Defeat Sin?

No! You must always remember that you do not have the ability to break the power of the old sin nature. In other words, you can't on your own strength die to sin's power and defeat the mastery of sin over your life. Surrender or yielding does not mean you rely on your own power and

ability to defeat sin in your life. Yielding means you rely on God's promise of victory - you are already freed from sin's slavery and power (Rom. 6:6-7). Yielding means you rely on Christ's present resurrection power to give you victory over sin (Rom. 6:4-5).

Note: Many Christians have a wrong concept of victory. They claim that entering into the "deeper life" of holiness and victory means you must walk down a church aisle every Sunday, kneel at an altar, grit your teeth, and die to sin's power which is trying to control and defeat your life. Some even claim that in their own power and strength they can do away with (eradicate) their old sin nature. This is absolutely false. **Remember that you have already died to sin's power and slavery (Rom. 6:7). You can't do something that is already done for you through Christ's work ("our old man is or has been crucified" – Rom. 6:6).** The only thing you can do is by faith "**Reckon**" (count the victory as being true) and by faith "**yield**" to your new Master Jesus Christ which He has already provided for you through His death and your spiritual tie to His resurrection power. 2 Cor. 4:7 reminds you "that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."

**The application of victory to your life is a faith step, not a self-effort step, where you attempt to die to sin's power, and defeat sin in your own strength.** The act of your will to destroy sin in your life becomes a legalistic step of self-effort to overcome sin and put down sin by your own ability. Some Christians feel that through their groping, moping, and hoping they will conquer sin in their life. They somehow feel if they fight sin and kick at sin long enough that they will conquer sin in their life. **Let us remember; it's not fighting that brings you victory – it's your faith. Faith is the victory – not fighting.** We must have faith that we have already died to sin's power and slavery and have God's power to deliver us from temptation and the power of sin. *The key to victory is yielding to what is already true, not striving to free yourself from sin through steps of intense weeping, mourning, and self-effort.*

When you simply believe what God has said (Rom. 6:6-8) and love God more than sin (Rom. 12:9; Mark 12:30), it's then that you will be ready to yield (surrender) to God's mastery over your life (Rom. 6:13) and free yourself from sin's temptation and power. This personal cleansing is accomplished by simply yielding to God and becoming obedient to whatever God tells you to do (2 Cor. 7:1 – "cleanse yourselves"). We

“cleansing ourselves” by becoming obedient to what God tells us to do. Without obedience there can be no cleansing. So the way of victory is simple. Yield! We yield to God as our New Master and obey Him instead of the flesh.

**Prayer of victory:** “Dear God, at this very moment I surrender or yield every part of my body to You (mention specific parts) since You are my new Master and Lord. I give myself completely to Thee. Every part of my body I present to You. I’m thankful that I can do this right now because I have been raised with Jesus and share His new victorious life and power to overcome sin. So here is my body Lord. Use me Lord, not a *part* of me, but *all* of me for Your service and glory. I can’t do this on my own strength. I acknowledge that I can’t die to sin’s power and defeat sin through my own self-will and effort. I need Christ’s resurrection power operating in my life right now and today. Lord, I believe that Christ has already defeated my slave relationship to sin and has now given me His resurrection power to live victoriously. I’m only trusting in His provision and power to grant me victory. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

## The Fourth Stop on the Roman’s Road

### The place called “serve”

## You Must Become God’s Slave

We no longer must “**serve**” sin (Rom. 6:6) as someone who is a slave to sin’s power. Instead, we have now been liberated to serve God as our new Master through righteous and godly living. This is the basic teaching of Romans chapter six. The word “**servants**” speaks of *slaves who are bound to serve their master and do his bidding*. Slavery points to servitude or service. The idea of our slavery or service means several things in the context of Romans chapter six.

First, *we can now serve God as our Master instead of sin*. Romans 6:22, “But now being made free from sin, and become **servants (slaves) to God**, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.” A Christian slave is a servant of their Master (God). Because of the victory we have in Christ, we can be a slave to God’s will and serve Him by living and obeying the Lord instead of sin.

Second, we can now become a servant of righteous living. Romans 6:18, “Being then made free from sin, ye became the **servants (slaves) of righteousness**. We are called upon to serve God, as our new Master, by becoming obedient or following His righteous ways for our daily lives. *We can be a slave to righteousness living instead of sinful living because Christ defeated sin and since His power is operating in our lives.* We don’t have to serve sin any longer but can now follow after righteousness because of the victory through Christ.

Here is the point; once you have **reckoned** your victory as being true and have **yielded** or presented your body to the Lord, *you are now ready to serve Him through righteous living.* You have been “made free from sin” (the old slave relationship you once had with the sin nature) and can now serve God as your new Master with actions that are righteous, holy, and pleasing to Him. You don’t have to remain defeated in sin but begin serving the Lord with consistency and commitment. Romans 6:17 states, “**But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin ...**”

**It’s all past!** You are no longer bound to your old master. You once were a servant of sin but now you have been freed from the old slave relationship you had with the sin nature. Because of this sin no longer must rule your life. Now you can become what the Bible calls “**servants of righteousness**” (vs. 18) and produce “**fruit unto holiness**” (vs. 22). **We are actually a slave and servant of righteousness. What liberty and freedom this is!** We have the liberty to serve God and do what is right and holy instead of being bound to the shackles of sin (“**being free is Christ’s servant**” – 1 Cor. 6:22).

“I’m free from the fear of tomorrow,  
I’m free from the guilt of my past.  
I’ve traded all my shackles for a glorious song;  
I’m free praise the Lord free at last.”

Romans 12:1

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, **which is your reasonable service.**”

**Prayer of victory:** “God I thank you that my bondage to the sin nature is all past. I’m free. I no longer must serve sin. You delivered me from my old

slave master which was sin. Right now I'm reaffirming that I'm Your slave and that I will serve You instead of sin. I will serve You because I love You. I will serve You because I'm free from sin's bondage and slavery. I will be a servant of righteousness and holiness for this is what You have made me to be. In Jesus' name, Amen."

## Section Four

### You Must Wear the Right Clothing The Armor of God

This study also deals with your daily Christian living and how to have victory over sin. When you have initially surrendered your life to the Lord you can stay free from the power and control of sin by learning how to apply God's spiritual armor to your own life. In this study section, you are going to discover how important it is to *dress for success* in the spiritual battle against Satan and his demons (Eph. 6:12). Remember that your real battle is with Satan. Because of this you must know what to wear to war.

The introductory verse that leads into the section of Scripture explaining the armor is Ephesians 6:10. "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." This means two things. First, as you dress for war you must do so trusting in the Lord's power and strength that is already available to you for victory. You dare not put on the armor in your own strength or ability. There can be no victory without complete dependence upon the Lord's power. Second, wearing the Christian armor ("the whole armour of God" – Eph. 6:11) is another way to experience God's victorious power in your life (Eph. 6:10). In other words, God's power is also channeled into your life through wearing the proper armor. Be sure of this one thing. God's power is needed so "ye may be able to withstand in the evil day" (the time of temptation) – Eph. 6:13.

In other words, the only way you can be strong in the Lord and His power is to wear the armor that God has provided for you. So, as you put on the armor, you must do so by trusting in God's power, and at the same time realize that you will also experience His protective and life-changing power in your own life, as you practice wearing the spiritual armor. You cannot forget one piece of the armor, which is designed to protect you against Satan and his evil workers ("take unto you the whole armour of God" – Eph.



6:13). If one piece of the armor is not worn you will become vulnerable to one of Satan's fiery darts.

It's true that we already have this armor for in Christ we possess all the spiritual blessings we need for victory (Eph. 1:3). Nevertheless, it's our duty to experientially, mentally, and prayerfully place this spiritual armor on our lives (Eph. 6:11). In a similar way, we are told to "put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13:14). Essentially, this is what it means to wear the armor. When we are putting on the armor we are putting on Christ. We must actively and mentally place this armor on our lives in order to experience victory. We must claim our victorious ground through Jesus Christ by taking an active role in using God's armor. This explained as putting on God's armor (Eph. 6:11) or experientially using it in our everyday life. If we don't do our part by staying on active duty, using the armor, we are likely to become a causality in the war. We must take an active part in this prepared strategy for victory.

**Prayer of Confidence:** "Dear God, as I approach this study on the armor of God, I want to learn the importance of how to dress for spiritual success and victory. Teach me the right way to dress. I want to prepare myself for the battle with Satan as I learn these important truths. I am going to be strong in the Lord and the power of His might, as I learn the secret of successfully dressing for the spiritual battle, which I must face every day. I will put on each piece of armor trusting in Your strength. I also want to experience Your victorious power operating in my life in a new way as I learn the secret of dressing successfully. In Jesus' name, Amen."

### Belt of Truth

The belt of truth ("loins girt about with truth" – Eph. 6:14) speaks of the believer's life being pulled together and surrounded by truth in the time of battle (compare 1 Pet. 1:13). You are to prepare your mind and life for action and get ready for spiritual combat. You are to get focused on the battle and be prepared by making a *total commitment to truth* and setting our mind on *following truth* at all costs. Truth is a victorious factor in the life and experience of the Christian soldier. Truth is the great liberator. This piece of the Roman soldier's armor would represent several things.

### *Truth of Your Identity in Christ*

First, you must know the truth about your identity with Christ and the victorious inheritance that you already possess in Christ (Eph. 6:10 – “in the Lord”). In Christ (a place of spiritual union) you share Christ’s power (“the power of his might” – Eph. 6:10). *You draw from God’s power only as you realize your union with Christ.* You are to live in the power of the great Victor as you put on the armor and wear the armor on a daily basis.

“Soldiers of Christ arise and put your armor on.  
Strong in the strength which God supplies through His eternal Son.”

In Christ (a place of spiritual position) you have already shared in His victory over sin (Rom. 6:5-7) and Satan (Eph. 1:19-23; Col. 2:15; 1 Cor. 3:21-23). Christ’s complete victory can be claimed as your own victory. Knowing the truth that you have a spiritual position in Christ and that you share His victory is very important. You must know the truth that you are co-crucified (Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20), co-resurrected (Rom. 6:5, 8) and co-exalted (Eph. 1:3; 19-23) with Christ as Victors over sin and Satan. You must know that you are a victor or overcomer in Christ (1 John 5:4) so that you do not have to be overcome by sin and Satan. You must have your “loins girt about with truth” – even the truth about your spiritual identity and victory in Christ.

### *Truth of Scripture*

You must also know the truth of Scripture, which liberates you from sin (John 8:32; James 1:25). As a roaring lion, Satan stalks believers and we must learn to resist him “steadfast in the faith” (the truth of Scripture - 1 Peter 5:8–9). Satan is the father of lies (John 8:44) and will seek to deceive us with his many lies (Gen. 3:2-3). Truth counteracts Satan’s lies. Truth is not flexible but revealed in the final authority of Scripture. Truth is not what feels right to you (relativism) but what is firmly anchored in the absolute standard - the Bible (John 17:17 – “thy word is truth”). The Biblical truth that spells out your personal victory over sin and Satan (Col. 2:15; Rom. 6:6, 13-14; 8:31, 37; 1 Cor. 15:57; 2 Cor. 2:11, 14; 1 Jn. 2:13; 5:4) and other Biblical texts of truth that you use to counteract Satan’s lies becomes the key liberating force in your life. *Victory is a truth encounter.* You cannot out-muscle, out-shout or out-smart Satan. But you can out-truth Satan. You must have your “loins girt about with truth.” Jesus said in John 8:32, “And

ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” Jesus said that you can be “free indeed” (John 8:36).

“Fierce may be the conflict, Strong may be the foe, But the King’s own army, None can overthrow; Round His standard raging, Vict’ry is secure, For His truth unchanging Makes the triumph sure.”

### *Truthful Living (Integrity)*

In regard to your own life, you must also be an individual of truth (truthfulness or sincerity). This would mean that you are a truthful and honest person that is full of integrity and free from guile and hypocrisy (“thou desirest truth in the inward parts” – Ps. 51:6). You must be earnest, sincere, and free from pretence. First, you must be honest with yourself and with God and admit that you struggle with sin and need victory (1 John 1:8). You will need to confess your sin and learn to totally depend upon Christ for victory (1 John 1:9). Second, your desire for victory must be sincere, real, and genuine (Joshua 24:14; 1 Cor. 5:8; Eph. 6:24). You must earnestly desire victory and have no seed thoughts or second thoughts in the back of your mind about sinning against God. Don’t become a person who is trying to commit himself to God while holding back sinful pleasures in your heart that you still want to enjoy. Don’t try to put one hand in the world and another hand on Christ (James 4:4). This double standard always gives Satan a starting point and stepping-stone to work in your life (Eph. 4:27).

If you are a person of truthfulness (integrity) you will have a settled conviction and determination to possess victory. You will not possess a double standard or divided opinion in your heart. The man of truthfulness or integrity is not a “double-minded” man (James 1:6-8) nor is he a double-hearted man (Matt. 6:19-21) trying to live in two different worlds (the spiritual and earthly) and seeking to serve two masters (Mat. 6:24). You must learn to love God with all your heart (Matt. 22:37). You must be truthful, real, and genuine. God is looking for the real deal! He is looking for a person of integrity. You must have your “loins girt about with truth.”

Jesus said in Luke 12:35, “Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning.” The soldiers in Christ day had to pull up their tunic through the belt area to secure it around their waist. When doing this they could run and be ready for battle. So it is today in your Christian life. You must be

ready at all times for battle (Matt. 13:25; 26:41; 1 Thess. 5:6; 1 Pet. 4:7; Eph. 6:18). You must be ready to counteract Satan's lies by using the truth about your identity in Christ (spiritual union and position of victory), the absolute truth of God's Word, and also become an individual of truth by living a life of personal integrity and excellence before God. In every way you must be ready for the battle as you learn to apply truth to your life. Stay alert and prepared. Tighten up your belt and be ready at all times to do battle and keep the lights burning.

**Prayer of confidence:** "Dear God, as I reflect upon the belt of truth, I want to mentally place this piece of spiritual armor on myself to protect me from the enemy. Just now I place the belt of truth upon myself believing in the truth of my victorious union with Christ and position of victory with Christ in Heaven over the enemy. I claim my inheritance and victory in Christ. I am a victor in Christ and not a victim. I also claim the truth of Your Word, as my own, and believe every word of it instead of the lies of Satan. I know that the truth will set me free from sin's power and Satan's lies. I dedicate myself to Your absolute and final truth as found in the Bible. The Bible is my only standard. I declare that the Bible stands above my own reasoning and all other manmade philosophies. Also, I want to express my truthful or earnest desire to live for You. I want to be truthful and honest before You as I pray and live out my daily life. I want You to know that I am sincere about wanting victory and keeping my life clean before You. I want to serve You with sincerity and truth. You alone are my Master and I will serve You because I love You. In Jesus' name, Amen."

### Breastplate of Righteousness

The "breastplate of righteousness" (Eph. 6:14) speaks of the believer's life being surrounded by righteousness. It becomes a very protective portion of the spiritual armor that you must wear to combat Satan. This piece of the soldier's armor can represent several things.

#### *Positional Righteousness Before God*

First, the breastplate of righteousness can represent the perfect righteousness that you have been given before God's presence. You must always understand that you have a perfect righteous standing or position of acceptance before God's presence through Jesus Christ. In short, this means that God has forever accepted you in His presence. The Bible

teaches that Jesus Christ actually becomes your righteous standing before God's holy presence so that you are eternally accepted before God on the basis of Christ's perfect righteousness. Christ is "made unto us righteousness" before God (1 Cor. 1:30). The perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ has been imputed or imparted to your life and God now sees you perfectly righteous before His presence through Jesus Christ. This is called positional righteousness before God's presence.

Christ's righteousness has been given to you or has been imputed or placed on your spiritual account before God (Rom. 4:3, 6-7). When God looks at you He looks through Jesus Christ and sees that you are perfectly and forever clothed in the perfect righteousness of His Son. This is called positional righteousness before God's presence. This perfect and eternal righteousness before God becomes yours when you trust Christ as your Savior (Rom. 3:22 – "the righteousness of God which is by faith"). Your spiritual status before God is now a person who has been acquitted of all guilt and you now have a position of acceptance before God on the basis or ground of Christ's righteousness – not your own way of living or how you feel (Phil. 3:9).

How does this righteousness standing before God protect you in the time of spiritual warfare or battle? The promise of Christ's righteousness protects you from feelings of guilt and condemnation before God (Rom. 8:33-34). This is important because Satan will try to defeat your life by bringing personal accusations against you. Satan brings thoughts of deception into your mind attempting to convince you that God does not accept you when you sin or that God is finished with you. The Evil One makes you feel guilty and condemned before God when you sin against Him.

When you fail the devil tries to bring the guilt trip upon your heart and life, so he can keep you in spiritual depression and defeat. He tries to feed you the lies that God no longer accepts you or that God has given up on you and that you will never amount to anything. He reminds you of both your present sins and then brings up your past sins, which you have committed, in order to make you think and feel that God has abandoned you and no longer loves or accepts you. In addition, the devil also accuses you or whispers in your ear words like this: "Admit it. You are a loser. You are no good. God will never forgive you for what you have done. You have lost God's love and favor."

Once you start to listen to Satan's lies you become defenseless. But when you remember that you stand in the perfect righteousness of Christ Satan's accusations against you cannot defeat your life. You can remember that God always loves and accepts you *unconditionally* in His holy presence because of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. God sees you through the righteousness of His Son and because of this God always accepts you and loves you as His own child no matter what you do or have done in the past. God always loves you unconditionally and will always accept you as His child. The righteousness of Jesus Christ assures you of this! God will always love you and accept you no matter how many times you fail since you stand in Christ's perfect righteousness. So you must claim your righteous position in Christ. The Father sees you through the Son's perfect righteousness (Jude 24). This provides you with assurance of your eternal acceptance before the Father and His unending love for you (Rom. 8:37-39).

### *Practical Righteousness in Daily Living*

Second, the breastplate of righteousness can also represent your day-to-day righteous living. This too is an important part of your protection against satanic attack. 1 Tim. 6:11 says, "But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness ..." Revelation 22:11 reminds you of this same important truth when saying "... he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." When you fail to live a consistent righteous life, you will become much more vulnerable to Satan's attacks upon your personal life. As a believer you must seek to live a righteous and holy life on a daily basis before God (1 John 2:29; 3:7) and never try to excuse your sin and overlook those things in your life that are wrong (1 John 1:8). Satan always gets an advantage over your life when you harbor certain sins in your heart and life (2 Cor. 2:10-12) and fail to live a righteous life.

Second Corinthians 7:1 reminds you that you must practice obedience or righteous living through cleansing yourself outwardly ("filthiness of the flesh" - body) and inwardly ("and spirit" - the inner life). Both outward righteous living and the inward purity of a righteous heart provide spiritual stability and a stable environment, which helps you as a Christian soldier to maintain victory when combating evil. The breastplate of righteousness will help the Christian soldier to maintain both an outward life and inner life that is tender, righteous, and pure in the spiritual realm. Psalm 24:4 puts it this

way: “clean hands, and a pure heart” or a total life that is outwardly and inwardly operating efficiently for Christian living and service.

Remember that the soldier’s breastplate protected the heart (vital physical organ) and as a Christian you need to protect your heart (the vital spiritual organ) on the inside of you from sinful thoughts. This is done by counteracting unrighteous patterns of thoughts with righteous thoughts that are true and pleasing to God (Phil. 4:8). In wearing the breastplate of righteousness, the Christian soldier will protect the heart (inner control center) of their life from being swept away into sinful fantasy, rebellion against God (Ps. 78:8), and wickedness (Ps. 141:4). This is because sin generates from a heart that is controlled by the sin nature (Jer. 17:9). Remember, your heart is the seat or control center of your entire life (Prov. 23:7). So, you must keep your heart right before God, or your inner spiritual life righteous and pure, and then your outer life (how you live) will be righteous (Prov. 4:23). Also remember that it’s possible to look clean and righteous on the outside but be unclean and unrighteous on the inside (Matt. 23:27).

Righteous living can only be experienced when you practice daily obedience to God’s Word. You must accept and obey the truth, say no sin, and keep your life right before God. Cleansing yourself means you must obey God’s truth instead of your own will and the old nature. This will involve not going to those places that tempt you or watch and listen to those things that tempt you. It involves saying no to sin and yes to God on every level. *God will not do something for you that you can do for yourself.* You must take the initiative to cleanse yourself (2 Cor. 7:1) by becoming obedient to what God says, by not placing yourself in those environments that tempt you, and by simply saying no to sin. Satan always has a greater advantage in your life (2 Cor. 2:11) when you fail to practice righteous living. However, living a righteous life keeps you from developing “spiritual hardening of the arteries” which slowly kills your spiritual life and affects your day-to-day power and victory that you can experience.

**Prayer of confidence:** “Dear God, as I reflect upon the breastplate of righteousness, I want to mentally place this piece of spiritual armor on my life and remember that You unconditionally accept me as your child through the righteousness of Jesus Christ. I believe that I’m clothed in the perfect righteousness of Your Son and I have positional righteousness and eternal acceptance before Your holy presence. I claim this to be true based upon

your promise and not my feelings. I believe that because of Christ's perfect righteousness You will always love me and never condemn me before Your presence. "Nothing shall be able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:39).

"I will not believe Satan's lies that discourage and depress me. I accept your unconditional love and acceptance of me on the basis of Christ's perfect righteousness. I place myself in Your loving arms of acceptance and flee to Your eternal refuge and love. I want to dwell "in the secret place of the most High" and "abide under the shadow of the Almighty" (Psalm 91:1).

"Dear God, I also want to express my desire and commitment to live a righteous life, both outwardly and inwardly, so that Satan will not take advantage of my life through my own unrighteous living. I want to possess both clean hands and a pure heart. Right now, I want to confess my sins (name them – 1 John 1:9) and make a commitment to live a life that is pleasing to You. I dedicate my entire life to Your personal will. I surrender every area of my life to your truth (my thoughts, body, schedule) so that I might live a righteous life that is pleasing to You. In Jesus' name, Amen."

### Gospel Shoes of Peace

The Gospel shoes of peace ("feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace" – Eph. 6:15) presents the truth how the believer's victory is somehow connected with peace. The word "shod" means to bind feet with shoes and the word "preparation" means readiness. The entire thought seems to be this. There is a spiritual readiness or preparedness that comes through the "gospel of peace" which helps you in the time of temptation. If you want to be prepared for battle you must know about the Gospel of peace. The Gospel of peace, which you have and possess, prepares you for the spiritual battle with sin and Satan. Therefore, you need to be wearing the gospel shoes of peace. You can't go barefoot in the time of battle! Satan will be sure that you stub your toe and suffer pain and defeat. Whoever heard of barefoot soldiers!



Positional Peace  
(Peace with God)

There is a positional peace that comes through the Gospel, which prepares you for the battle. As a result of the work of the Gospel (death and resurrection of Christ) you are prepared or ready for the battle knowing that you have a *positional peace* or peaceful standing before God's presence (Rom. 5:1 – "we have peace with God"). The gospel of peace brings you into a place where you possess a positional peace before God's presence. Through the work of the Gospel (Christ's finished work) you have had your sins forgiven (past, present, future) and been forever acquitted of your guilt before God's holy presence (Heb. 7:25). Because of this acquittal you are no longer God's enemy (Rom. 5:10). Instead, God is at peace with you and you have a peaceful standing of acceptance before Him. Knowing that you have a peaceful standing before God through Christ's finished work provides you with the reassurance that God has accepted you, loves you, that He is with you, working on your behalf, and that He will never leave you (Isa. 41:10) or let you down as His child (John 6:20).

Think of it. You were once the enemy of God (Col. 1:21) but are now at peace with God forever! God is not angry with your life. God is not your enemy. God is not against you. God will never condemn you or judge you. God will always unconditionally accept you as His own child. God will never disown you as His child. He will always take you back and make you feel at home with Him. You are His forever!

"Things that once were wild alarms  
Cannot now disturb my rest;  
Closed in everlasting arms,  
Pillowed on the loving breast.  
Oh, to lie forever here,  
Doubt, and care, and self resign,  
While He whispers in my ear—  
I am His and He is mine."

The fact that you are at peace with God will help you to keep your footing in the time of battle and remain stable and strong (Joshua 1:6-7). The positional truth that you are at peace before God prepares you ("preparation of the gospel of peace") for the spiritual battle. Because you are at peace with God, He has accepted you in His presence and will never

leave you nor forsake you in the time of battle (Heb. 13:5). God is not against you. God loves you. God accepts you as His child and wants to come to your rescue (Ps. 46:1). *Always remember that it is Satan who is against you. God is not against you.* Furthermore, you are at peace with God but at war with Satan. Don't allow Satan to steal this truth from your heart. Satan was banned from the presence of God (Isa. 14:12; Ezek. 28:16) but you are accepted in God's presence forever (Rom. 5:1) and have God's refuge and unending love (Rom. 8:38-39) to help you on to victory. The Gospel has brought you positional peace before God and this in return prepares you for the spiritual battle providing the assurance that God has accepted us and that we are at peace with God. This reminds us that God is our constant companion in life and that He will always help us, accept us, and love us, even when we fail.

### Practical Peace (Peace of God)

There is a practical peace that comes through the Gospel, which prepares you for the battle. Another result of the Gospel (death and resurrection of Christ) is that the believer is saved and then provided with a day-to-day *practical peace* for your life (Phil. 4:7 – “peace of God”). This is a peace that frees you from anxieties and fears, which come from the harassment that Satan brings into your life, through demonic pressures and temptations. Thank the Lord for the Gospel of peace or the practical peace that comes into your life when you receive the Gospel message. God's peace is promised to you in the time of spiritual conflict with the enemy and prepares you (“preparation of the gospel of peace”) for the battle (Col. 3:15; John 14:27; Isa. 26:3). What a refuge we have though the peace of God.

I don't have to fear that Satan will destroy me and make my life miserable, but can possess God's peace through the time of battle, knowing that God is on my side and will not allow my heart to be disturbed from His perfect peace and rest. You must always remember that God's saints are the objects of His deep concern and care and the Lord provides peace for them in the time of battle. The Gospel has brought God's peace into your life and this in return prepares you for the spiritual battle.

“Like the sunshine after rain, like a rest that follows pain, like a hope returned again, is the peace that Jesus gives. Oh the peace that Jesus

gives, never dies it always lives, like the music of a psalm, like a great eternal calm, is the peace that Jesus gives.”

Pursuing Peace  
*(Sharing the Gospel of Peace)*

There is also a pursuing (sharing) peace. This means that you should take the Gospel message, which tells how a person can have peace with God (Rom. 5:1) and share it with other people who are lost in sin. This is evangelism. When you have your “feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace” it means that you are ready to share the Gospel message with others. You are prepared to be a witness for Christ and bring the message of peace to others – the message how they too can have peace before God.

But you may ask, “How does sharing the Gospel of peace with others help in your own personal battle with Satan?” To state it simply, being prepared or ready to witness for Christ, or staying active in the Lord’s service, keeps you from idleness and spiritual lethargy. Our Lord said, “But while me slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way” (Matt. 13:25). Readiness to witness and serve the Lord will keep you active in the work of the Lord instead of the devil’s work. The Bible says you should be prepared or ready to *share the Gospel of peace* with others wherever you go. Romans 10:15 says, “And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!”

Sharing the message of peace that others can have before God keeps a Christian actively engaged in the work of God. Activity in God’s work (evangelism) is one way to help ward off the attacks of the devil (1 Cor. 15:58). Laziness provides a wedge for the devil to work in your life. A lazy man is the devil’s workshop. Someone said: “The train of failure usually runs on the track of laziness.” Satan usually can get to you faster when you are idle and stay cooped up in your own little world of self-centeredness and do not serve the Lord (1 Tim. 5:13-15). Sharing the Gospel of peace with others keeps you active in God’s work and this in return keeps your mind engaged on spiritual things and others instead of yourself (John 13:1-16).

Starting to love and serve others will help you to overcome fear and many other sins because it gets your mind off yourself and redirects your attention to the needs of others (1 John 4:18). *Self-pity and self-centeredness usually becomes a breeding ground for Satan to work.* You must deny yourself of pity (Luke 9:23) and start sharing the Gospel of peace with others through email, letters, tracts, and witnessing. It will help keep you on the victorious road instead of the road of defeat.

So, you can conclude that your positional, practical, and pursuing peace (evangelism/service for the Lord), which is related to the Gospel message, prepares you (makes you ready) for your spiritual battle with Satan. It provides you with strength, stability, and steadfast service for the Lord, as you face your number one spiritual enemy in the world, who is the devil.

**Prayer of confidence:** “Dear God, as I reflect upon the Gospel shoes of peace. I want to mentally place this piece of spiritual armor on my life. I believe that I am at peace before Your holy presence and that you will always love and accept me as your child. I’m Yours forever. I can never be lost from You. I am loved with Your everlasting love. I thank You that You have accepted me as Your child and I’m no longer counted as Your enemy. I know I will never again will be separated from Your presence. I’m thankful that You will never forsake me or stop caring for me. Since I am at peace with You I know that I can always count on your presence and help in the time of spiritual battle. You are my caring heavenly Father and I’m thankful that I can always cry unto you and know that You are there to hear and help me (Gal. 4:6).

“I also am thankful for the practical peace that you give to me in my daily life as I face trials and temptations. Dear Lord, I know that your peace will guard my heart from overcoming worry, fears, and anxiety. I believe your peace will give me stability in the time of spiritual battle with my enemy. I am going to be still and know that You are God (Ps. 46:10). I know that with Your peace I can pass through the spiritual battles of my life with an inner quietness and calm knowing that You are with me and will help me. I know that you will always lead me beside the still waters (Ps. 23:2).

“Dear Lord, I also want to commit my life in a greater way to sharing the Gospel of peace with others so that I might be actively serving You and not my own self-interests. I want to serve You in a greater way and stop being so self-centered. I deny myself of self-pity and commit myself to your work

and service of spreading the Gospel of peace in a greater way. In Jesus' name, Amen."

### Shield of Faith

Next, we come to the "shield of faith" (Eph. 6:16) which is said to extinguish the "fiery darts" of Satan. Satan shoots fiery suggestions into our minds to lust, look at something we should not, be angry, or demonstrate pride. He also shoots fear, depression, worry, doubt, and self-pity into our minds. When we become afraid, we lose our faith in the Lord's ability to help us. So we need to keep the shield of faith in front of us at all times so Satan's flaming or suggestive arrows do not take root in our hearts and minds. The believer's steadfast faith in God's person and power (Eph. 6:10; Gen. 15:1), God's providence (Rom. 8:28; Prov. 3:5-6; 1 Cor. 10:13), and God's promises (Rom. 10:17; 2 Pet. 1:4; 2 Cor. 1:20) bring faith into our hearts. These things act as a pump to transport faith into our hearts, so that we can overcome the devil.

The important thing is to quench the fiery dart immediately by acting in faith. Instantly look to Christ by faith, recall some promise of the Word, and believe it. If you don't the fire will start to spread, and if you add fuel to the fire it will burn beyond your control. Your feelings will get aroused and upset, and before long Satan will be in control. So, faith is the victory – the shield of faith. *To trust is to experience triumph in Christ.* Faith is the victory that overcomes the world! Faith believes that God can provide the Christian with victory over any sin. Faith says, "No matter what happens God will give the victory." We must have faith and believe that nothing is impossible with God (Luke 1:37). When we pray in doubt we do without (James 1:6-7). Faith is utter dependence on God – upon His presence and power. Faith puts God between the believer and the enemy.

"Strong to meet the foe,  
Marching on we go,  
While our cause we know  
Must prevail;  
Shield and banner bright  
Gleaming in the light,  
Battling for the right,  
Me ne'er can fail."

It's important to remember that Satan wants to weaken our faith in the truth of God's Word during the struggles and hardships of life (see 1 Thess. 3:1-7 - note the emphasis on faith in this chapter). When Satan tempted Eve, he began by weakening her faith in God - Gen. 3:1 - "Yea, hath God said?" We must never forget that Satan's number one goal is to weaken our faith in the truth of God's Word and that we are victors in Christ. When our faith is weakened, we are vulnerable to Satan's fiery darts. The shield of faith is an absolute necessity in the time of battle. We must keep it ever before us or we will be wounded by Satan's fiery suggestions. Hebrews 11:33-34 speaks about believers who possessed great faith in the time of the devil's persecution and suffering - "Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Someone created an acrostic of what true victorious faith stands for and must claim during the Christian battle.

**F** – Forgiveness of sin  
**A** – Assurance of salvation  
**I** – Identification in God's family  
**T** – Triumph over Satan  
**H** – Hope of deliverance

**Prayer of confidence:** "Dear God, I want to lift up the shield of faith right now and protect my life from Satan's temptation. By faith I embrace the truth of your Word. I am a victor in Christ. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me (Phil. 4:13). You have overcome the world and Satan (John 16:33). I believe this to be true. Right now I'm putting my faith in a specific promise found in the Bible (name a promise that fits the temptation and your need). Right now I'm lifting up the shield of faith and putting my trust in Your power and assistance in my life knowing that "greater is he that is in you (me), than he that is in the world (1 John 4:4). I am resisting the devil by faith at this very moment as I cling to Your power and promise (James 4:8). In Jesus' name, Amen."

### **Helmet of Salvation**

The "helmet of salvation" (Eph. 6:17) refers to protection for the believer mind. The salvation or deliverance being referred to is the practical salvation (present tense of salvation) in the believer's life (1 Thess. 5:8).

Satan's invasion our thinking processes is the way he defeats our lives. The mind is a spiritual entity tied to the spiritual world and this is where Satan tempts us – the realm of our unseen spiritual existence. The mind is susceptible and vulnerable to Satan's lies, half-truths, errors, and other counterfeit ways that he has designed to manipulate and control our minds. In order to possess victory our minds, which are a spiritual entity, must be reprogrammed with the truth of God's Word (Rom. 12:1-2). We must change our thinking habits (Phil. 4:8).

Thoughts that are wrong must be replaced with thoughts that are righteous and holy. Thoughts of defeat must be replaced with thoughts and promises of victory. Thoughts of discouragement, despair, and divisiveness must be replaced with truthful thoughts that rest upon the foundation of God's Word. Satan will bring thoughts into your mind like, "You can't do anything right. You will never amount to anything for God. There is no hope for you. Give up. You don't have to go to church today. Skip prayer meeting and devotions." These kinds of thoughts are not from our own thinking, as the devil would want us to believe, but from Satan's own book of thoughts. The believer must learn to take inventory of his thought life and possess a solid rock commitment to truth (John 8:32). After all, your faith is only as great as your knowledge of the object of your faith, which is truth.

Little knowledge results in little faith. If you only believe what you feel you will be led through life by emotional impulse after another and never have freedom through the absolute standard of truth – the Bible. Once we know truth our feelings can line up with truth. *We must walk by faith according to what we believe or know to be true.* The counterfeit and deception must be exposed and demolished by the unbreakable standard of truth (2 Cor. 10:4-5). Choosing the truth may be difficult if you have been living a lie. Remember that deception is the subtlest of all satanic strongholds (John 8:44).

*The helmet refers to the mind controlled by God, which provides daily spiritual deliverance (salvation) from Satan's thoughts.* Satan is a deceiver (2 Cor. 11:1-4; Rom. 12:9) and we must learn to think thoughts geared around the truth if we are going to be victorious. If Satan gets his thoughts into our mind, we will be deceived by his wiles (Eph. 6:11), possess a corrupted mind (2 Cor. 11:3) and play into his masquerade of deception (2 Cor. 11:14). The most powerful weapon in Satan's arsenal is the power of suggestion. Satanic suggestions will constantly keep us in defeat if we do

not wear the helmet of deliverance (1 Tim. 4:1). When we reprogram our minds or thinking patterns, God can control the mind and Satan cannot lead us astray. *Let us remember that intellectual deception and defiance is the reason we live in defeat.* Our minds can become a spiritual junkyard that needs to be emptied and replaced by new righteous and victorious thoughts (Eph. 4:23 – “renewed in the spirit of your mind”). The believer must learn to demolish the satanic thoughts and not allow them to control his mind (and keep guard over his mind (1 Pet. 1:13 – “gird up the loins of your mind”).

Although we cannot escape evil thoughts from racing into our thinking process, we can rid ourselves of evil thoughts and do not have to be overcome by them. If we entertain the conception or thought of lust too long, then rejecting our passion will become increasingly difficult. In fact, sin will be generated (see James 1:13-15). There is a short time span between the conception stage of sin (“lust hath conceived”) and the actual birth of sin (“bringeth forth sin”). The Bible says, “make not provision for the flesh” (Rom. 13:14). This word has the basic meaning of planning ahead or forethought.

This means that we allow the flesh to control our lives when we think about sinful or wrong thoughts too long. We dwell upon wrong thoughts, plan them out in our minds, and eventually end up doing them. In short, when we plan to sin, we will sin! Most sinful behavior results from wrong ideas and lustful desires that we allow to linger in our minds too long! Then too, we make provision for the flesh (make plans to sin) when we buy things that are associated with temptation, go places that are associated with temptation, watch things that tempt us sin, when we make it easy for ourselves to sin, and when we give a higher priority to the physical than to the spiritual. We should not indulge the flesh even a little. Rather, we should, as someone stated: “Give no chances to the flesh to have its fling.”

We are what we think (Prov. 23:7 – “as he thinks so is he”) so we ought to “think on these things” (Phil. 4:8) or those very things which are rooted in truth, purity, holiness, and righteousness. Satan shoots his “fiery darts” (satanic suggestions – Eph. 6:16) into our minds and we need to deal with these thoughts or they will overcome our spiritual thinking processes. If we fail to program truth into our minds and hearts we will be victimized by Satan and ultimately become a victim of the world culture.



Earl Radmacher said it best:

“The truth of God establishes our vision, straightens our course, and resets our compass on the North Pole of accurate thought.”

The way we think is really the beginning of victory or the start of our spiritual downfall and defeat. And we must remember that our victory does not lie in having our minds occupied with the enemy – the devil. Our victory lies in looking unto Jesus and keeping our eyes fixed upon Him (Heb. 12:2; Phil. 1:21; Eph. 6:10). Jesus is the Victor! Victorious Lord! Victorious Lord! Jesus as Lord is the only One who “able to succour (aid) them that are tempted” (Heb. 2:18). Someone once remarked: “We must never see Satan without seeing God.”

Reference to the imagery of the Roman helmet is also called the “the hope of salvation” (1 Thess. 5:8) which in the context refers to the blessed hope and promise of Christ’s imminent return or coming again before the Tribulation Period. Satan would like to get the believer’s attention off of Christ’s coming since His return is to be a strong motive and incentive for holy living (1 John 3:2), strength (James 5:8), and faithfulness (1 Cor. 15:51-58; Rev. 2:25; 3:3,11). If Satan can get our minds away from this doctrinal truth it will be a subtle victory for the enemy. Perhaps today!

**Prayer of confidence:** “Dear God, right now I want to apply the helmet of salvation (deliverance) to the area of my mind. I surrender my mind to Your will and Word. I want to possess the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16). Right now I want to guard my mind from the intruding thoughts of the enemy (the devil). I therefore submit my mind to Your absolute truth and control. I will not believe the lies, half-truths, and errors of Satan. At this very moment I’m placing my mind under Your sole authority and bringing ‘into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ’ (2 Cor. 10:5). I will not allow Satan’s fiery darts to defeat my life. Just now I’m placing this specific truth in my mind (name the Bible truth that applies to your situation) and claiming Your victory. Lord, may the words of my mouth and the mediation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight (Ps. 19:14). In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

### **Sword of the Spirit**

Finally, there is the “sword of the Spirit” (Eph. 6:17) which is said to be the “word of God.” The Holy Spirit inspired the Bible (2 Tim. 3:16). It was given to us through the ministry of the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21). Therefore, it is

the Holy Spirit that teaches us the Word of God (John 14:26) and guides us in all truth (John 16:13). It is the Holy Spirit who reminds us of what we have learned and enables us to practice what He has taught us through the Bible. The “sword of the Spirit” means that the Holy Spirit drives home the truth of the Bible to our hearts and lives and makes it very practical in the time of temptation (Heb. 4:12). It is the Holy Spirit who also applies the power of the “sword” against our foe.

The Holy Spirit wrote the Word and the Holy Spirit brings important verses to your attention in the time of temptation to produce sanctification and victory in our lives (John 15:3). You simply need to take these verses by faith and use them in the battle. The Bible is the book of the Spirit and it is to be used in conjunction with prayer as we do battle with Satan (Acts 6:4). But remember that our words, which come forth from our lips, are not magic. *The Holy Spirit does not use our words but His inspired words revealed in the Bible.* The Holy Spirit is the One who empowers His Word when we pray through Bible verses dealing with the promises about victory. He is also the One who empowers us as we use His Word.

The sword will be of no value to us if we forget about the power of the Author (Acts 1:8) and when we are grieving or quenching the Spirit’s ministry in our lives (Eph. 4:30; 1 Thess. 5:19). We cannot effectively use the Word of God in warfare unless the Holy Spirit is controlling us (Eph. 5:18). Using the Scripture without the strength of the Author will lead to defeat (Gal. 5:25). This means that we should not deify the Bible and make it into some kind of book of magic that we seek to use in our own power and strength.

The emphasis on the “word (rhema) of God” (utterances or sayings of the Scriptures) in Ephesians 6:17 means that the believers must quote specific portions of the Bible that will help them in the very battle which they are facing. *It’s one thing to wear the belt of truth (Eph. 6:14) and know truth to counteract Satan’s lies but it’s another thing to actually speak forth truth in the time of battle.* This word is very significant for it actually indicates the need to speak forth the Word of God to Satan in the time of battle and make application of those portions of Scripture that have immediate application to the situations we are facing (“Let the redeemed of the Lord say so - Ps. 107:2).

Many believers still have their sword in the sheath. The enemy responds to God's sayings. *The old adage says: the best defense is a good offense.* A thorough knowledge and skillful use of the Word (spoken Word) is a most formidable weapon when doing battle with our spiritual enemy. The Bible says that the believer must resist the devil ("Whom resist steadfast in the faith" - 1 Pet. 5:9). This means we must know the truth of Scripture so that we can resist the devil's temptations and lies, which he brings before us, in order to ruin our lives. Since our primary weapon against the devil is the Word of God, we must learn to aggressively quote the Scriptures as Jesus did in the time of temptation. We may even want to use some of the very verses Jesus used (Luke 4:4; 4:8). It is good that we have verses ready to combat the three major categories of temptation mentioned in 1 John 2:16 – "the lust of the flesh" (1 Pet. 2:11; 1 Thess. 4:3), "the lust of the eyes" (Job 31:1; Ps. 101:3) and "the pride of life" (Prov. 16:18; 29:23; 1 Tim. 3:6; James 4:10; 1 Pet. 5:5).

Other verses that you can bring to your attention when the devil tempts you, would be verses that strike at the very core of the devil's defeat (Gen. 3:15; John 12:31; 16:11, 33; Rom. 8:37; 16:20; Colossians 1:13; 2:15; Heb. 2:14-15; 1 John 2:13; 3:8; 5:4; 5:18; Rev. 12:11; 20:10). In the time of temptation, you should emphasize those verses that bring God's promise for personal victory to your attention (Ps. 16:8; 91:1-6; Rom. 6:6,13-14; 8:37; 1 Cor.15:57; 2 Cor. 2:11, 14; Phil. 4:13; 1 Thess. 5:23-24; Heb. 13:20-21; Jude 24-25) and your authority over Satan in Christ (Eph. 1:19-22). As you prayerfully speak to the Lord about the victory of the cross, God's promises for personal victory, and your authority over Satan, through the use of Bible passages, Satan will flee your presence as a defeated coward (James 4:7). The Bible brought before your mind and heart will provide a means of escape from the devil's old temptations and bag of tricks (see Psalms 119:11). There is no substitute for persistent, steady, consistent application of God's Word against Satan. The devil was defeated by the Lord's persistent use of the sword (Luke 4:1-13).

"O may I love Thy precious Word,  
    May I explore the mine,  
May I its fragrant flowers glean,  
    May light upon me shine!  
O may I find my armor there!  
    Thy Word my trusty sword,  
I'll learn to fight with every foe  
    The battle of the Lord."

*We must remember that doing battle with the devil is a truth encounter. Satan cannot be out-muscled or out-shouted, but he can be out-truthed! Truth is the liberating agent and way of victory! Satan wants you to doubt the plain things and the main things of the Bible. He wants to get you to suffocate these main truths of Scripture by replacing them with your own fleshly decision to live contrary to His Word and holiness (Luke 8:12; Gen. 3:1-5). Satan can try and make something, which is evil, appear to be spiritual to us. He is a master at this trade. But the better you know the Word of God, the easier it will be for you to detect Satan's lies and reject his offers. You need to effectively and prayerfully apply those portions of the Bible to your life that will give you victory.*

The reappearance of a previous list is important since we must go to the Word of God to find truth, reveal our sins, and give us guidance.

### **The Bible Answer List**

Worry (Phil. 4:6-7; 1 Pet. 5:7; Isa. 26:3-4; 41:10, 13; 2 Cor. 12:9-10; Matt. 6:33-34), stress (1 Pet. 5:7; Phil. 4:7, 9; Isa. 26:3), jealousy (Prov. 14:30; James 1:14-15; 1 Cor. 13:4; Job 5:2; Prov. 3:31; 23:17), pride (Prov. 6:16-17; 16:18, 1 Pet. 5:5; 1 Jn. 2:16), anger (Eph. 4:26, 31-32; Col. 3:8; Jam. 1:19-20; Rom. 12:9; Ps. 4:4; Prov. 14:17, 29; 15:18; 16:32; 20:22; Jonah 4:4, 9), lying (Ex. 20:16; Ps. 15:1-2; 34:14; Prov. 12:22; Col. 3:9; Eph. 4:25; 1 John 2:21), loneliness (Duet. 31:6; Ps. 25:16; 65:5-6; 102:7-11; 142:1-4; Heb. 13:5), fear (Ps. 34:4; 1 Pet. 5:7; Josh. 1:9; Isa. 41:10, 13; 1 Jn. 4:18; Matt. 6:34), depression (Ps. 16:8; 34:18; 43:5; 46:1), discouragement (Ps. 42:5-6; 46:1; Isa. 41:10; 2 Cor. 4:8-9), grief (Ps. 23:4; 34:18; 116:15; 147:3; Rom. 8:38-39; Phil. 1:21-23; 2 Cor. 5:6-8; 1 Cor. 15:51-52; Isa. 26:3; Isa. 41:10; Ps. 147:3; John 14:1), divorce (Matt. 19:6; 1 Cor. 7:39, 10-11; Mal. 2:15-16; Luke 16:18), abortion (Ex. 20:13; Ps. 139:13-16; Jer. 1:5; Prov. 14:12; 12:15; 16:2; Ps. 32:3-5; 40:1-3), alcohol (1 Cor. 6:19-20; Eph. 5:18; Gal. 5:19-21; Rom. 13:13-14; 1 Pet. 4:1-3; Isa. 5:11-12, 22; Hab. 2:15-16; Prov. 20:1; 23:31) rock music (Ps. 40:3; 2 Tim. 4:4; Rom. 6:13; Phil. 4:8; 1 Pet. 2:11; 1 Cor. 6:19-20), eating disorders (1 Pet. 4:3-4; 1 Cor. 3:16-17, 19-20; Prov. 23:2), covetousness (Luke 12:15; Rom. 13:9; 1 Tim. 6:9-10), contentment (1 Tim. 6:6-8; Phil. 4:11-12), gossip (Prov. 11:13; 18:8; 21:23; 26:20, 22; Ps. 141:3; James 1:26; 3:11; 1 Pet. 3:10; Eph. 4:29; Col. 4:6; 1 Tim. 5:13), past memories (Phil. 3:13-15; Luke 9:62; Eph. 4:22-23; 2 Cor. 5:17; 10:4-5; Phil. 4:8), guilt (1 John 8:10; Isa. 1:18; 43:25; Mic. 7:18-19; 103:12), syndromes (Ps. 91:1-16; Is. 43:1-2; 42:11), submission (Eph.

5:21-22; Col. 3:8; 1 Cor. 11:3; 1 Pet. 3:1,5-6; Heb. 13:17), church attendance (Heb. 11:25; Ps. 84:0; 122:1), lust-producing television/movies/Internet, etc. (Ps. 101:3; Eph. 5:4; Rom. 8:5-6; Isa. 5:20; Col. 3:1; Phil. 4:8; Rom. 12:1-2); improper dress (1 Tim. 2:9-10; Prov. 11:22; 31:10; 1 Pet. 3:3-5), temptation (Jam. 1:14; 1 Cor. 10:13), sexual purity (Ex. 20:17; Rom. 13:14; James 1:21; 1 Thess. 4:3-6; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:3; 1 Cor. 6:15-20; Job 31:1; Matt. 5:28; Heb. 13:4; 1 Tim. 2:22; Col. 3:5-10), homosexuality (Rom. 1:24-27; Jude 1:7; Lev. 20:13; Rom. 8:5-6; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Ps. 141:4; 1 Pet. 4:1-3; Gal. 5:16); unforgiveness (Eph. 4:30-32; Matt. 6:14-15; 18:21-22), occult (Eph. 5:11; 6:10-12; 1 Pet. 2:9; Deut. 18:10-12; Gal. 5:19-20; Isa. 8:19; 1 John 4:4), procrastination (Ps. 90:12; Eph. 5:15-18; 1 Cor. 15:58), laziness (Prov. 10:4, 12:24, 13:4, 20:4, 31:27; Ecc. 10:18; 1 Tim. 5:8-14; 2 Thess. 3:10-12; Heb. 6:12; Rom. 12:11; 1 Cor. 15:58; Gal. 6:9), lack of faith or unbelief (Ps. 20:7; Isa. 26:4; Prov. 3:5-6; Jer. 17:7-8; Mk. 11:22), profanity (Col. 3:8; 4:6; Eph. 5:4), gambling (Luke 12:15; Rom. 13:9; 1 Tim. 6:9-10; Phil. 4:11; Hag. 1:6) and trials (2 Cor. 1:3-4; 1 Pet. 1:6-7; 4:12-13; 2 Tim. 2:3; James 1:12; Rom. 8:28).

Whatever your area or areas of weaknesses are you want to develop an arsenal of verses to deal with them and be ready for the evil day of temptation. This will help you to target specific temptations. As stated above, many Christians create note cards and begin to pray through portions of Scripture when being tempted by the devil. It is the Holy Spirit that teaches you the Word of God (John 14:26) and guides you in all truth (John 16:13). It is the Holy Spirit who reminds you of what you have learned (John 14:26) and enables you to practice what He has taught you through the Scriptures. The "sword of the Spirit" (Eph. 6:17) is your defense in that the Holy Spirit brings important verses to your attention in the time of temptation. The Holy Spirit drives home the truth of the Bible to your heart and life so you can know the truth *experientially* and be set free (John 8:32). You simply need to prayerfully apply these verses to your life by faith and use them in the time of battle as Jesus used the Scriptures in the time of His battle with Satan (Matthew 4). Getting the truth into your mind and getting the lies out of your mind is essential for victory.

Let us not forget: *Our innermost being must be directed by the objective truth of Scripture and not the subjective experiences, feelings, and moods that we like to feel.* We must accept God's Word as our final authority since the strongholds in our mind (2 Cor. 10:3-5) are reinforced by our own feelings, and the deceptive thoughts and lies of Satan. We can either cling

to a wrong belief system and to wrong *subjective* feelings or believe God's *objective* written truth and claim His victory. Beware of trusting your own fleshly feelings.

“The arm of flesh will fail you,  
Ye dare not trust your own.”

**Prayer of confidence:** “Dear Lord, I am going to use the sword of the Spirit right now as I do battle. I am going to speak forth Your Word in my time or prayer to remind myself of Your will and plan for my life. I am reminding myself what the Bible says in this particular area where I am struggling (speak forth a particular portion of Scripture that applies to your temptation and need). Because I know Your truth, I can understand what to avoid and what to do because I know that “thy word is truth” (John 17:17). I refuse the lies of Satan and accept Your standard and truth as my only guide. At this very moment I am also going to speak forth the victory that You have provided for me.

“Dear God, I know and believe what Romans 8:37 says, “Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.” I believe in John 16:11, “the prince of this world is judged.” John 16:33 reminds me to, “be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” Colossians 1:13 declares my victory, “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son.” 1 John 2:13 says, “I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one...” 1 John 3:8 gives this promise to me, “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

“1 John 4:4 adds this wonderful promise of victory that I’m applying to my life right now: “Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.” 1 John 5:4 is my promise for victory, “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith.” Revelation 12:11 grants me victory through the blood of Christ: “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony...”

“Dear God, thank You for the sword of the Spirit that I can use to bring my mind, will, and life under Your perfect will and authority and grant me victory over my enemies. I fully submit to the truth, guidance, and

commands of Your Word. I will determine to follow them by your power. In Jesus' name, Amen."

### **Prayer and Victory**

Each piece of the armor must be put on with prayer. *This is how we make the armor of God work in our daily experience.* We must mentally pray on the armor. That's why in Ephesians 6:18 we are told to wear the armor "praying always" and "watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."

"My Soul be on thy guard,  
Ten Thousand foes arise;  
The hosts of sin are pressing hard  
To draw thee from the skies.  
Oh watch and pray,  
The armour ne'er lay down;  
The fight of faith will not be o'er  
Till thou receive the crown."

#### **Personal Prayer for Victory**

The believer must remember to pray in his time of personal battle with Satan ("praying always with all prayer" – Eph. 6:18). Through praying in faith we mentally pray on each piece of spiritual armor and then put each piece to work whenever the enemy attacks us. These defensive pieces of armor, which are provided by God, require no action on our part except to put them on by faith and trust God to make them work. Through prayer we contact God and pour our hearts out to Him. And when we do this we will actually pray on these pieces of armor, claiming what they will do for us, and then let God make them work for us in the time of battle. When we do this the enemy will be defeated.

Each one of us as God's people must learn the secret of relying on the Lord's daily power through the provision of His armor. Believers must effectively use each piece of God's armor in the time of spiritual warfare through the ministry of prayer. We must pray forth Scripture references of truth and center our minds on truth instead of lies. As we pray, we must claim our righteousness in Christ and the Gospel shoes of peace (peace before God and the peace of God), and express our complete faith in God for victory. We must mentally pray the armor on claiming the provisions that

the armor gives to us (truth, righteousness, peace, faith) as we effectively use it against the enemy.

“Put on the gospel armor,  
Each piece put on with prayer”

Then too, as we pray we will be demonstrating that we are depending upon God for help and strength in the time of battle. All of the armor and all of the fighting, without prayer, will only lead to defeat. The enemy will override you if you fail to pray, as you should. *There is a definite prayer battle that we must be engaged in today.* And remember that truth and prayer are linked together in the Bible. We should not lack either of these important details for victory. God’s Word reveals the will of God for our lives (Ps. 40:8; 119:105) and prayer enables us to receive God’s power to do His will in the time of temptation. Each believer must take time to pray and then maintain an attitude of prayer and dependency throughout the day (Col. 4:2). In short, we must keep the receiver off the hook! We must put on the armor with prayer and then realize that prayer is what makes all the armor work, as it should. The armor begins to work only as we pray. Prayer is the secret!

The beloved hymnwriter, William Cowper wrote:

“Restraining prayer, we cease to fight;  
Prayer keeps the Christian’s armor bright;  
And Satan trembles when he sees  
The weakest saint upon His knees.”

### Corporate Prayer for Victory

It’s also vitally important that believers remember to pray for each other in the time of battle (“Watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints” – Eph. 6:18b). *We need to get in the habit of praying that God’s people would experience victory in their lives.* We need to pray for victory to be experienced in the lives of other saints. How often we forget this! We are quick to condemn the saints but forget to pray that they would be victorious over the world and the enemy. There is power in corporate praying (Acts 12:12-13; Col. 4:2-3; 2 Chron. 7:14). Intercession for the saints to live victoriously is vital, necessary and commanded by God. Jesus prayed for Peter when He knew the devil was tempting him



(Luke 22:31-32). Let us be alert to the needs of others and pray intercessory prayers for their victory over the Evil One (“Watch and pray” – Matt. 26:41). And when we do let us remember, “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16).

“Principalities and powers  
Mustering their unseen array,  
Wait for they unguarded hour;  
Watch and pray.”

## Section Five

### You Must Walk in the Right Direction The Spirit-filled Walk

Galatians 5:16-17

“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.”

Walking in the Spirit means a moment-by-moment dependence upon the Spirit’s power for victory. We must tap into the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in order to experience victory and fruitfulness.

I. The walk we must have – vs. 16 (walking in the Spirit’s presence, power, and provision for daily victory)

**We must keep in step with the Spirit! We must rely upon His daily and constant provision and power for victory.** As we put one foot in front of another to walk, in a similar way we must walk one step at a time depending upon the Spirit’s provision of victory. It’s a daily and moment-by-moment walk with the Spirit.

II. The war that we must face – vs.17 (internal war between the flesh and Holy Spirit)

The sinful nature is seeking to dominate our lives but so is the Holy Spirit who lives within us as Christians. The Bible says “**ye cannot do the things that ye would.**” In other words, if the flesh wins the war at a given

point in our life, then the flesh (old sin nature) **keeps us from living a holy life** (It keeps us from doing what we otherwise would do, if we had yielded to the Spirit's power). If we allow the Holy Spirit to win the war within us, then **the Holy Spirit keeps us from living a sinful life** (what we otherwise would do had we yielded to the flesh).

III. The winning victory we can possess – 18

Galatians 5:18 says:

“But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.”

To be “**led of the Spirit**” in this context means to be directed in the way of victory. If we walk in the Spirit (in the living presence of His power and provision) we will also be led by the Spirit to live victoriously over sin. Sin will not master our lives and we will be confident that we are not living under the law (trying to gain victory by following rules through our own human strength and abilities).

**The only way we can be what God wants us to be is to cooperate with the Holy Spirit.** You will note that the Holy Spirit **leads** us. He does not coerce us, pressure us, not does He bully us or drive us. He gently leads us on to victory as we yield to His power. He leads us on to victory as we meditate in Scripture during our quiet time, He leads us by His constant available presence which is within us, as He quickening our conscience, restraining us, reproofing us, urging us, and empowering us to live victoriously.

The Bible emphatically declares that “**ye are not under the law.**” We have learned that **justification** is not possible by legalism (works and human effort) but the same is true of **sanctification** (it cannot be achieved by human works or effort). Those who are Spirit-led (living victoriously by the Spirit's power) **are not under the law**. This means when a person is relying upon the Spirit's inward work they are not relying upon external rules and regulations to grant them victory and sanctification. When we rely on law, a sign that reads, “**Stop,**” it does not provide us with the inward power to live according to God's standard.

**The sign (rule) may be good, but the power comes from within.** The Holy Spirit gives us the aid and assistance to live a holy life. This is what we have seen last time.

Key Point: If a believer is being **led by the Spirit (His internal power to live victoriously)**, then he is not under the constant, conscious pressure of legalism, whether imposed by others or by himself. He is free from legalism (depending only on rules, regulations, and works to gain sanctification) and he can live only in the Spirit's power for victory.

Since the legalists in Paul's day tied the process of sanctification to a person's final salvation, through a **system of legalism (law/works/self effort)**, Paul deals with the whole matter of legalism as it pertains to both sanctification and salvation. The conclusion is simple: **neither sanctification nor salvation comes by legalism (self-effort, law, works). It comes through the Spirit's enablement (Acts 1:8).**

## Section Six

### You Must Become Confident in the Right Person Confident in Christ

Living a confident and victorious Christian life is linked to the Christ-life. Christ is the secret! You must learn to live in continual dependency upon the work, ministry, and power of Jesus Christ. You can only have victory through Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit's ministry in your life is to reveal the power of the life of Jesus Christ to you in a daily and practical way ("the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ – Phil. 1:19). When we are allowing the Holy Spirit to reveal the life of Jesus Christ to us we will say:

"For to me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain" (Philippians 1:21).

This means that your life revolves around the person of Jesus Christ. We are to live for Him, love Him, serve Him, and draw from His power and strength for victory. Living victoriously comes from our relationship and spiritual walk with Jesus Christ.

1. The death of Christ defeated your enemy (the devil).

Colossians 2:15 reveals this liberating truth: "And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them (demonic forces) openly, triumphing over them in it." When Jesus died upon the cross he marched in triumph over Satan and his forces and won a great victory over the powers of darkness. This is exactly what the Bible teaches. Jesus'

death upon the cross defeated the devil's power and realm of authority over your life.

Though Christ's death the devil's plan to keep people in the realm of spiritual death (Heb. 2:14 – "subject to death") and under the power of sin (Heb. 2:15 – bondage") was thwarted. Jesus broke this devilish plan and provided the way of victory over the devil to them that put their faith in Him (1 John 5:4). Because of this you can now live free from the devil's fear and power through "the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe" (Eph. 1:19). The word "power" in this verse suggests that you possess a spiritual dynamic or living force for everyday living. God's energetic power, the same kind of power that raised Christ from the dead and exalted Him in glory within the past (Eph 1:20-21), is the same kind of power that we have indwelling our lives at this present moment (Phil. 3:10 – "power of His resurrection"). What an amazing source of spiritual vitality, power, and strength for living the Christian life! Instead of the devil's authority and power controlling your life you can now allow Christ to control your life. The devil is defeated and you now have power over his strongholds.

The Bible repeatedly teaches that when Jesus died upon the cross He won a great victory over Satan, sin, and the system of the world (John 12:31-32; 16:11, 33; Matt. 12:25-29; Rom. 6:6), and so did the believer (1 John 2:14; 3:8; 5:4; Gal. 1:4; Col. 1:13; Rom. 6:6), since he has died with Christ (Gal. 2:20 – "I am crucified with Christ" and Rom. 6:1-6 – "planted together in the likeness of his death"). Victory is assured to the believer on the basis of the victory that Christ provided through His work upon cross.

Let us never forget one thing. Satan was rendered powerless at the cross of Christ. His authority, power, and jurisdiction over your life has been canceled out and his doom is sealed. Jesus spoke about the victorious event of the cross as He looked forward to His death - "I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). Jesus completely defeated the world system (the devil and demons) that were against God. His death upon the cross was the legal ground of victory.

"Fainting soldier of the Lord,  
Hear His sweet, inspiring word;  
I have conquered all thy foes,  
I have suffered all thy woes.

Struggling soldier, trust in Me.  
I have overcome for thee!"

Jesus has overcome the world and Christ's victory now becomes your victory. This is because you have overcome with Christ. You share in His victory and now possess His power to live differently and victoriously.

1 John 5:4 declares:

"For whatsoever (referring to our human spirit) is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith."

We share in Christ's victory as an *overcomer* of the world system and Satan, since we are united or joined with Christ in His victorious death upon the cross over sin and Satan. In addition, since the human spirit ("whatsoever") in the believer's life has overcome the world system that is against God, through the new birth and subsequent implantation of God's life and nature, each believer can experience a life of victory. The Bible is teaching that the believer's overcoming victory is assured through the new birth even though the conflict is still raging. We possess Christ's life and share the victory with Him!

Jesus said in John 16:33:

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

And yes, we have overcome in and through Christ, since we share in His victory over sin and Satan. **We are already victors! We don't have to pray for victory or beg for victory.** When going to prayer we must thank God for the victory we already possess and pray for discernment and strength to overcome sin and our enemy - the devil. Through aggressive prayer we must by faith claim our victory that we already have in Christ, plead the promises and truths of God's word that bring victory into our lives (Matt. 4:1-11; Eph. 6:17-18; Ps. 119:76), and rely upon His power to (Phil. 2:13).

2. Your union with Christ brings victory into your life.

Union with Christ means that you possess a new spiritual location and placement in Christ. You have a *spiritual togetherness* with Jesus Christ.

Jesus describes your union with Him in John 14:20, when He says, “ye in me, and I in you.” This union is further described as being “in Christ” (1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:17) and “Christ in you” (Col. 1:27) or “I in you” (John 15:4). These Bible words and expressions describe the believer’s spiritual union (togetherness) with Christ, which comes about at the time of salvation (1 Cor. 12:13), and lasts throughout their entire Christian life (Rom. 8:38-39).

**Your union with Christ is a place of position, privilege, power, perfection, protection, and personal fellowship.** Being “in Christ” (a place or location) and possessing this spiritual togetherness with Him is the secret for living the victorious Christian life. We share Christ’s life!

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer said:

“To be in Christ means to be a partaker of all that Christ has done, all that He is, and all that He will ever be.”

**Where you are, is the secret of victory!** You are in union with Christ and share in His victorious work and life. The Bible speaks of the believer being in union (spiritual union) with Christ in several ways: His death, burial, resurrection (Rom. 6:3-4), and ascension (Eph. 1:3). **Our union or relationship to Christ’s death (the ground of victory – Rom. 6:6) and our union with the resurrection of Christ (the power of victory – Rom. 6:4-5; Gal. 2:20) and our union with the ascension of Jesus Christ (the authority of victory – Eph. 1:19-23) brings each believer into a place of victory and authority over Satan.**

In view of the believer’s union with Christ’s death (“the likeness of his death” – Rom. 6:5) we have participated in His victory over sin (Rom. 6:1-6) and the devil (Heb. 2:14). The conquest of Calvary should continually be upon the mind and heart of the believer. Jesus keep me near the cross!

“Near the cross! O Lamb of God,  
Bring its scenes before me;  
Help me walk from day to day,  
With its shadows o’er me.”

In view of the believer’s union with Christ’s resurrection (“in the likeness of his resurrection” – Rom. 6:5) we can live in reliance upon Christ’s risen life and power for victory (“so we also should walk in newness of life – Rom. 6:4).

Because you are linked or tied to the life of Jesus Christ you presently have God's dynamic power residing within you through the application of Christ's risen life ("we shall also live with him" – Rom. 6:8 and "Christ liveth in me" – Gal. 2:20). The believer's union with the resurrected Christ guarantees them a moment-by-moment supply of resurrection power ("the power of his resurrection" – Phil. 3:10; Eph. 1:19-20) so that they might walk in victory.

"Up from the grave He arose,  
With a mighty triumph o'er His foes  
He arose a Victor from the dark domain,  
And He lives forever with His saints to reign.  
He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!

In view of the believer's ascension with Christ "**in heavenly places in Christ**" (Eph. 1:3: 2:5-6), or the heavenly location where Christ dwells, we now have *complete authority over Satan* so that we no longer must be overtaken by His strongholds and power. I am seated in Christ, in the heavenlies (a place of spiritual location in the throne room of God) "Far above all principality, and power" (Eph. 1:19) and dwell with Jesus Christ who "hath put all things under his feet" (Eph. 1:22). I must learn to **look down in order to have victory!** I must remember that with the ascended Lord in Heaven, I have authority over the enemy. This means the enemy does not have to possess authority over me. I am a victor in Christ who has been blessed with "all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3). Your daily dependence upon Jesus Christ (faith in His power, provision, and person) brings victory into your life.

Galatians 2:20 declares our victory:

**"I am crucified with Christ** (dying the death with Jesus Christ and partaking of His victory over sin, Satan, and the sentence of the Law): **nevertheless I live** (physically); **yet not I** (the old "I" or self-righteous, self-centered person I used to be under sin's power and Satan's authority), **but Christ liveth in me** (in His resurrection life and power): **and the life which I now live in the flesh** (this earthly body) **I live by the faith of the Son of God** (faith in the power of His resurrection life and victory), **who loved me, and gave himself for me** (the motivation for living victoriously)."

Faith means reliance or dependence. The Christian lives by continual dependence on Christ, by yielding to Him, by allowing Christ to live His life

in him. Jesus did not die for me in order that I might go on living my life as I choose. He died for me so that I might be able to live out His life in mine and be victorious. Thus, the believer's rule of life or compelling and motivating force in life is Christ. It is not a matter of keeping certain laws and human determination or will power. **It is not a matter of striving, but of trusting in Christ's power and provision.**

**When you experience the victorious application of Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension within your life, it's only then that you can live confident in Christ.** Confidence in His person, power, and provision is all we need to live victoriously. Our confidence in Christ can bring us through every temptation and test of life.

God has given you the *will* power (Philippians 2:13 – “God which worketh in you both to will and to do”), the *Word's* power (John 8:32 – “the truth shall make you free”) and the *walking* power (Galatians 5:25 – “walk in the Spirit”) that is necessary to live victoriously. There is no excuse for you to live in spiritual defeat. A Christian chooses to either live in defeat or victory. You have no other person to blame.

3. Your love for Christ and loyalty to Him should motivate you to possess victory.

Our desire to live victoriously should be consumed by a passionate gratitude and love for Christ. Jesus said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). “If a man love me, he will keep my words” (John 14:23). Our simple love for Christ should motivate us to follow God's truth and live victoriously. Whatever we do we are to do because we love Jesus Christ. The Bible teaches that the believer possesses a spiritual and intimate union with Jesus Christ. Union speaks of two people who are joined together. They are two people who are living together in a loving and intimate relationship, which can best be described as the union of a marriage relationship (“married to another” – Rom. 7:4). This is how our relationship is expressed with Christ. The believer is actually pictured as being married to Jesus Christ and possessing a loving relationship with Him. Christ dwells in our hearts by faith (Ephesians 3:17) and we possess an intimate relationship with Him. A marriage speaks of the union of two people together who share one another's life. It is an intimate, close, and sharing relationship where both enjoy each other's presence.



In a marriage, we are to love our partner and be loyal to that partner. This is the same motivation that we possess in order to do right and live victorious on a daily basis. We are to love Jesus Christ and be loyal to Him for He is our partner for life.

## Conclusion

**Faith is the victory!** If you follow God's master plan for victory, you can and will be victorious! You don't have to live in continual defeat under Satan's power. God has completely planned and provided the way of victory for every child of God. *The ball is now in your court.* You must claim your victory by faith ("and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even our faith*" (1 John 5:4). Faith ("above all, taking the shield of faith - Eph. 6:16) is the vehicle that brings victory into your life. You need to have faith in God's person, power, and provision for victory (Rom. 6:5-13; Eph. 6:10-18; James 4:7). When we learn to walk by faith in God's Son (Gal. 2:20) and God's Word (Eph. 6:17) we will live victoriously. We will be able to tear down the strongholds of Satan over our lives (2 Cor. 10:5) and bring our thoughts and lives under God's authority as our Master and Lord (1 Cor. 6:19-20; 7:22; Rom. 14:8).

You must actively by faith claim God's promises and then yield to Jesus Christ for His power and victory. It's yours to claim. It's not enough to *know* that we have victory in Christ. We must seek to *apply* this victory to our lives by actively engaging our faith in God's riches and resources (Eph. 1:3). The *principle of appropriation* is important if we are going to actually experience victory over sin and the devil. And faith is the way we appropriate victory to our lives. Faith is the victory.

"Faith is the victory!  
Faith is the victory!  
O glorious victory  
That overcomes the world."