

*God Always Causes Us
To Triumph*

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

As Christians, it is imperative that we realize the victory is ours. God has called us to be witnesses unto this world, and our witness is to be one of triumph. We serve a God who *always* causes us to triumph in every situation.

This is what real Christianity is all about. We are spending far too much time living from beneath and not from above. He purchased us to be His children and to walk as His disciples.

God's plan of redemption was executed so that we would live as the head, not as the tail. Each of us can enjoy and revel in the greatest privilege, which is to overcome negativity and emotional turmoil by being filled with the Spirit.

Chapter One

THE SAVOR OF HIS KNOWLEDGE

“And the Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man” (1 Samuel 10:6).

“Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and shew us former things? *let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, It is truth.*

“Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen; that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.

“I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour.

“I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore *ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I am God*” (Isaiah 43:9-12).

A couple recently began coming to our church. After struggling through years of drug abuse, alcoholism, and immorality, each of them became gloriously saved. The husband called me and all he could say at first was this: “I just could never have believed it. *I could never have believed it!*”

He went on to say, “The Holy Spirit did something in me. I was a stranger to God, but the grace of God was spoken, and there was a transformation so pure and so complete that it is difficult to believe.”

This man’s obedience to what he heard produced power in his life, which now manifested the savor of God’s life.

“Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?” (2 Corinthians 2:14-16).

This is a very beautiful passage when it is understood and faith is executed in it. May each of us grab hold of our potential and the provi-

dential possibilities of what God can do in us individually and uniquely. God will impart something to us whereby we understand that nothing is impossible with Him (Matthew 19:26; Luke 1:37).

A fixed heart produces a good, positive, ongoing manifestation of a wonderful viewpoint. Our lives become so relevant to God's provisions. We reach a place where we can pray quickly, ask something in Jesus' name, and believe with all of our hearts that He will do it (John 14:14).

True Success through Mercy

Mother Teresa of Calcutta, India, a magnificent servant of God, took care of many, many poor and diseased children and adults. In her travels, she had audiences with presidents, kings, and statesmen with their crowns, jewels, and fine clothing. One of these dignitaries said to her, "It must be very discouraging to be in a ministry that is not successful. You are always poor, and you always have more and more people to serve. You really have nothing."

Mother Teresa, dressed as she almost always was in a plain Indian sari, simply answered, "God didn't give me a ministry to be successful,

He gave me a ministry of mercy.”

Then she said that she never starts out a day without an imparted attitude of faith in Christ. “I know He is always with me and always blessing me in every place, though I am an unworthy servant.”

How different that attitude is from the kind referred to by the prophet in Jeremiah 17:5-6: “Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited.”

Oh, how God’s people need to be filled with His Spirit, so that whatsoever we do, in word or deed, we would do it heartily to glorify God, giving thanks to Him through Jesus Christ.

Chapter Two

ABIDING IN HIS PROVISIONS

In my morning prayers, I begin by saying, “God, I believe You. I thank You for hearing every word I pray. I know You love to respond to my prayers.” There may be cases where after we have done the will of God, we have need of patience before we receive the promise. So, we are told to cast not away our confidence in Him (see Hebrews 10:35-36).

There are so many who just don’t see good when it comes. They are born again, and may even be living in stable, prosperous countries. Their lives today are much better than the lives of many of the early Christians, and certainly easier than the experience of many people who are living in third-world countries.

Matthew Henry, the great Bible commentator, was robbed once and made these entries in his diary about the experience: “Number one, I thank God I didn’t have much. Number two, I

thank God they didn't take my life. Number three, I thank God that I was the man being robbed and not one of the men doing the robbing. And, number four, I thank God that I believe He allowed it to happen for my good."

Contrast that attitude with that of someone who can't see good when it comes. Surely, you have met these people. All you can do is love them and pray for them. You don't judge them, because you could be walking in their shoes. They do not see good because they do not see God.

A young man I know struggled as he was challenged by Satan and the demons of hell. He failed miserably for a while, but his parents prayed. In an attempt to change the negative trends in his life, he enrolled in a disciplined, military-like school. Students there even had to march in formation on their way to eat their meals.

Through the continued investment of his family and other Christians, this man became gloriously saved and delivered. Now he is an amazing, transformed instrument of Christ, with such a positive attitude as he works in the youth ministry. Recently, he brought *forty* young men and women to church from his old school.

Plug into the Power Within

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Philippians 4:8)

“Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit” (Jeremiah 17:7-9).

These words bring in a positive spiritual attitude. Real Christianity is an attitude that believes that through joy, abiding, and meditation, God can keep us. In the light of the glorious provisions of His Kingdom within us, we truly can live moment by moment without falling into sin or iniquity, without falling into the temptations of Satan. We have a power within us that will make us witnesses for God in the angelic conflict.*

Christians are cross-examined by Satan in the details of life. He goes to God with our attitudes, trying to disqualify us as Christ's witnesses. Satan, the accuser, will tell God the Father, "This one is disqualified because he witnessed for *me*, not for You, when he was under pressure." But, this does not happen to the spiritual Christians who do not see the heat when it comes. Their leaf is always green, they are not careful in the years of drought, and they will not cease from yielding fruit.

Actions of Love

A woman was going through tremendous suffering, battling diabetes and kidney disease. She needed to have part of her leg amputated but had no money for the operation. Her precious brother sold his house and gave her the money she needed. Later, when she needed a kidney transplant, the brother volunteered and gave her one of his. His body did not recover well, and he was still feeling the effects of losing a kidney two years later.

"How do you feel?" he was asked. "Your home is gone. You've given up a kidney, and now you're sickly."

"I feel wonderful!" he said. "I did something

for the sister I love, and I would do it a thousand times over because of what Christ did for me.”

Thanks be to God, who always causes us to triumph, for He makes manifest the savor of His knowledge by us in every situation (2 Corinthians 2:14). *That* is Christianity. That is the glorious walk of a disciple. It is the privilege of a lifetime to be filled with the Holy Spirit, to not speak in negativity, and to not enter into emotional rebellion or the inconsistency of a Laodicean spirit (Revelation 3:14-17). This spirit of lukewarmness is imparted through the atmosphere by demons from hell to short-circuit your future and make sure you can't witness for God.

**For more about spiritual warfare, we suggest that you read two booklets by Pastor Stevens, Dealing Precisely with Demons and Exposing Satan's Armies, Grace Publications, 1998.*

Chapter Three

OVERCOMING CONTROVERSY BY CHOOSING LIFE

“Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? *ye are even my witnesses*. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any” (Isaiah 44:8).

“Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: *for the LORD hath a controversy* with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land” (Hosea 4:1).

“*And I subscribed the evidence, and sealed it, and took witnesses, and weighed him the money in the balances*” (Jeremiah 32:10).

The “controversy” refers to a case in a courtroom. It means Satan appears before God to reveal how you respond in the details of life. When the devil has access to your marriage and family, he tests you, trying to mock your testi-

mony and disqualify the evidence of the love of God in your life. Satan wants to make it so you cannot pass the fruit-testing of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and temperance.

As in Jeremiah's case, God has sealed the evidence against Satan. We are God's witnesses, and so also is the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:32). "Ye are witnesses, and God also," (1 Thessalonians 2:10a). Joshua 24:22 says, "Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the LORD, to serve Him. And they said, We are witnesses." In time, we have a privilege to face Satan; he cross-examines our testimony to see who we are in Christ and what we believe, to see if the savor and manifestation of God's knowledge comes out of us in every place.

Satan tests us privately and also as a body of believers. When he tests our prayer life and our attitudes, we can come out strong in the Lord, in the power of His might, resisting the devil, and causing him to flee. Just as the man who sold his house and gave up his kidney for his sister, we can say, "I thank God through the glory of Christ I can go through this thing."

"Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for *false witnesses* are risen up against

me, and such as breathe out cruelty” (Psalm 27:12). These false witnesses refer to demons. Often, I counsel people who do not recognize that there are forces of hell and forces of heaven battling—armies of demons under Satan and armies of angels under God. God’s Kingdom within us is real, and when we learn to abide and decide that in Christ we can overcome anything, then we can be recovered from attitudes, from bondage, from habits, and from wrong relationships. God has placed in us the power to be His witnesses. In Acts 1:8, He said that “ye shall receive power...and ye shall be witnesses unto me.”

Our Unequivocal Capacity

If only we understood that we are more than conquerors through Him who loves us, we would have an unequivocal capacity to communicate the savor of His knowledge. We have the capacity to communicate unto those who are saved and to those that perish: life unto life and death unto death (2 Corinthians 2:15-16). We have a privilege to have joy within us. It is an act of free volition—a decision of the will. God gave Adam and Eve free volition, and they ate of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. As a

result, their consciences came into being. The conscience reflected moral light for their free volition.

In Deuteronomy 30:19, God says, “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing, therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.”

Christians have the power of God within—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (John 14:23). When we choose Him, His Kingdom takes over, and miracles can happen.

We can't fully explain what victory is like. A victorious attitude is a way to think, a way to communicate, and a way to act, according to the power that works in us (Philemon 6). Any Christian can begin to blossom wherever he is, if he chooses Christ with a positive attitude.

When something comes against us, we can think it through and, with our free volition, enter a requisition of His power. We can choose to say, “No” to sin, and God's power will enforce that “No.” It is not what is in our own ability that brings victory; it is God's power that enforces the decision. This is why Jesus said in Luke 9:23, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily,

and follow me.”

“Do you want to drink?”

“No, I deny my right to drink.”

“Do you want drugs?”

“No, I deny my right to choose drugs.”

“Do you want to lust or look at pornography?”

“No, I deny those things—they have no value and no rights in me.”

Then, the Holy Spirit thanks us as He is manifested, and the grace of God flows within. The power of God goes up like a spring of praise to Him and out like a river of life to people. This is how Christians can have abundant lives and victorious attitudes. Prayer lives can be revolutionized. Marriages, families, and friendships can be renewed in the knowledge of the new man (1 Samuel 10:6).

Ephesians 4:23 tells us to be renewed in the spirit of our minds. Colossians 3:10 speaks of being renewed in the knowledge of God. We can be renewed with God’s love and life as a force within. Our new inner man can abound, take over, and not allow the habits of the outer man to rule. It is revolutionary to live by grace and faith. This comes by believing, confessing, and acting. It’s a glorious thing and it makes a Chris-

tian feel like a spiritual billionaire.

Do you choose life and blessing? Or, do you choose to be negative about things, like the location you are in and the adversities you face? A Philippians 4:8 attitude will always cause us to triumph as “more than” conquerors. There is no striving or straining, only believing and letting Christ live out His life in us in every situation, by the Word of Life (Philippians 2:16).

Chapter Four

LIVING AS THE HEAD WITH RENEWED STRENGTH

“And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hear-ken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day” (Deuteronomy 28:13)

“Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.

“Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God?

“Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.

“He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.

“Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:

“But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint” (Isaiah 40:26-31)

We have been given the absolute Word of God with over seven thousand promises and its sixty-six books. God has set it apart and sanctified it for us in our hearts. When a pastor communicates the Word of God, the Word is initiated through the human spirit and the Holy Spirit to the eternal soul of the believer. That soul can choose to be familiar, passive, or asleep. A soul can be occupied with a spirit from the air, or it can be meek, mixing faith with everything it hears, believing utterly in the totality of the Scriptures, growing more equipped to live, and becoming more ready to face Jesus Christ. At every service, we have this privilege of becoming part of an absolute provision from Christ.

Ecclesiastes 9:10 says, “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.” Whether eating or drinking, we are to do it all to the glory

of God. The function of God's Kingdom, the participation of God's thinking, the power of God's Spirit, and the grace of God's love—all should be operating in our hearts.

The original Hebrew text in Isaiah 40:26-28 declares, "Have you not experienced the understanding that the Creator of the ends of the earth, [(the Lord Jesus Christ)], thy God, has never become weary? and there is no searching of His understanding." We can readily say that we grow weary because we are human, and it would be easy to think that God also grows weary from watching us, but He doesn't. He can do all things, and not a thing can be withheld from Him (Job 42:2). The God who created all the stars and all the host of heaven never tires and never faints. He gives power to those that faint, and strength to those that have no might.

The average counselor may just see another session with someone who is weary, someone who is fainting spiritually, and who does not know how to wait upon the Lord. But I love to give counsel using the passage that says, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." After reading Isaiah 40:31, I might say, "You can choose *not* to wait on Him and just confess how terrible life is; and perhaps, you're

even thinking of moving somewhere to get away from it all. But, you have Christ in you. You can't always feel Him, and though He is speaking, you may have trouble hearing Him. Yet, He is with you, though you don't see Him now."

I was preaching once at a church in North Carolina, saying, "Get on fire for God! Keep your heart on fire! Don't be slothful—renew your strength and realize that life is very short! Make a commitment to God that whatever you do, you will do it with all your heart." Right after I was finished, an older gentleman, about eighty years of age, got up and said, "I am re-enlisting right now."

First, our strength is renewed inwardly. Then, we mount up with wings as eagles—upward strength, which God gives from above. Then, we run and are not weary when we develop outward strength. Finally, with onward strength, we can walk and not faint. Inward, upward, outward, and onward—all of these strengths are ours.

Waiting on the Lord

"Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the

LORD” (Psalm 27:14)

“Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day” (Psalm 25:5)

“And I will wait upon the LORD, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him” (Isaiah 8:17)

Waiting upon God is a very beautiful thing. It is being a “waiter,” serving God. What a beautiful thing to know that God does not grow weary, nor does He faint. He created all of the host of heaven; He designed our bodies and minds as well; and He offers us a supernatural impartation when we know how to wait upon Him.

When we look at our circumstances, we may not want to wait upon God. But if we would recognize our need to be renewed inwardly and receive outward and upward strength to carry on our duties with all the energy that God can supply, then we will not become weary or faint. Finally, when we also receive onward strength to continue in God’s grace, depression and anxiety have no place, and God is glorified!

In Deuteronomy 28:13, God promised He would make Israel the head and not the tail. God wants to make us the “head,” experiencing

His overcoming authority, and not to be like some little tail wagging behind a dog. God wants you to be an overcomer in your business, in your home, in your marriage, in your prayer life. He wants to make you victorious in your relationships and to give you the desires of your heart. God doesn't want you to be the tail. He says, "I want your life to be from above only, not from below."

Who started this idea that Christians should be anything other than triumphant? Satan, that's who. Explain to me why the world should enjoy the benefits of logistical grace while Christians struggle. It is one thing to suffer for righteousness' sake and to learn obedience (Hebrews 5:8). But it is another thing to suffer because you refuse to possess an active faith, a living goal, an eternal purpose, and a renewed mind. We have to do everything with all of our might. Let's believe God dogmatically and dynamically, with all of our hearts. Believe God and refuse anything that distracts from His faith.

A woman who attended one of my first churches had been drinking one evening and was in a terrible accident. At the hospital, she told me she was so ashamed and said, "I want to be saved." We later helped her to complete

high school and college, and she became an executive secretary. When I would see her, she would always say, "Pastor, I'm the head now and not the tail anymore."

Providential Reversals

God wants His people to be the head! He wants you to be the best businessman, the top salesman, the wisest executive; He wants to make you better than the others. He wants you to be above only and not beneath. When we receive God's vision of who we are in Christ, when we receive His provision of what we can do in Christ, when we receive God's power to be all that we are in Christ, then we have divine ability to do everything God Has ordained for our lives (Philippians 4:13). We go forward in the streams of the rivers of life as real men and women of God, believing and confessing Christ. We are not to live in defeat.

When a man or woman discovers that he has Christ's wealth and resources in him, there is not a single thing his mind cannot do. He can have healthy emotions and go forward with power in a vision. Here, in Baltimore, we have had a great providential reversal during the past twelve years. God has revealed something for His glory

and His honor.

Imagine what a Christian can do when the joy of the Lord is His strength. He rejoices and knows how to wait upon God. This believer thinks from above. His affections are set on things above and not on things below. God's thinking is way above this universe. It goes way beyond three dimensions, although He takes over those three dimensions to bring glory to Himself.

Think back to that moment when it really dawned on you that God loves you just as you are. You are saved forever. Every sin was paid for. You are seated above and He quickened you by grace. What did you think when this reality entered into your heart?

You He quickened, when you were dead in trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1-3). What a thrill it was finally to hear someone say, "God loves you; He wants to come inside of you. This is what the Scriptures say." You believed it, and just like that you were going to heaven. You did not doubt it; you were sure of it. You received Christ into your life because you knew it was Good News.

"I, even I, have spoken: yea, I have called him: I have brought him, and he shall make his

way prosperous. Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord GOD, and his Spirit, hath sent me. Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go" (Isaiah 48:15-17)

God wants to make our way prosperous. He will teach us to profit and show us the way we should go. If we ask, He will give us wisdom (James 1:5). "Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee" (Hebrews 6:14).

CONCLUSION

God wants His people to live as children of God. If we go through something, we know it is for promotion in eternity. We can be promoted forever by revealing Christ in the angelic contest, and we will reign with Him. God wants to bless His people and have them know how to draw from His blessings and make things happen. In order to do that, we have to wait upon Him.

Israel stopped at Marah, which means bitterness, not realizing they were just seven miles from Elim—a beautiful, tropical place filled with trees and water. They parked at the desert place when another choice would have taken them right into a blessing (see Exodus 15:23-27). God is saying to us, “If you would only realize how I want to teach you which way to go and guide you with Mine eyes (Psalm 32:8), you would understand how much I want you to be blessed.”

A businessman I know claimed some verses

from the Bible, and he is prospering. He believed; he prayed; and the blessing is way beyond anything he imagined. The scope of his blessing is incomprehensible.

God knows how to bless us. He knows the way to go and how to make it work. But somehow, some way, some of us have become disconnected. Maybe we feel that if we are lacking now, that we are “more spiritual.” But God wants us to triumph—to be the head and not the tail.

Let’s take God at His Word. Pray and go forward as though things are going to happen. God is glorified as we wait upon Him. He will honor us and strengthen us. We will run and not be weary, we will walk and not faint. We will go forward with a conversation that is from above and a citizenship that is from heaven. We don’t have to live as a second-class citizens. Instead, we will go forward in victory, from glory to glory and from strength to strength (Psalm 84:7).

Go forward! The Bible is presenting the truth when it says that you can be blessed by your God, personally and in everything. Believe God for His providential reversals and His providential blessings. No matter what it is, take a step of faith and go offensively toward Satan’s

territory, wearing the whole armor of God—and have fun doing it. Know that God will never leave you nor forsake you. Not one of His promises will fail.

Every promise is yea and not nay (2 Corinthians 1:19-20). Know it, believe it, get excited about it. Run—don't be weary. Walk—don't faint. Wait upon the Lord, and He will renew your strength. You *will* mount up with wings as eagles. You *will* triumph! The Word of God received with transforming power will become life in your inner man.