



A Spiritual Encouragement Message **January 23, 2021**

Three Simple Steps For Overcoming Any Sin

By Randall Jarrell

“We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us” (Romans 8:37). Whoever you are, whatever your struggles and temptations may be, sweet victory is yours for the taking. Right now! All you need do is appreciate, appropriate and act upon what already belongs to you in the person of Jesus Christ. You are guaranteed success in whatever battle you may be fighting, not because you are sufficient for the battle - You are not! - but because there are massively powerful provisions at your fingertips, in Christ.

Here are three simple steps that will release you from the grip of even the most besetting sin.

1. Name the Thing

Honesty is the precursor to victory. Before God, and in your own conscience, call your sin exactly what it is. Cease all explanations and excuses. Just get on your knees and confess that this thing is absolutely opposed to God’s character, that it is hurting others and destroying you. Verbalizing the truth of the matter is vitally necessary. Doing so awakens a deeper sensitivity and places your heart in an honest position before God and before yourself.

Moses instructed Israel, “It shall be, when he is guilty in any of these matters, that he shall confess that he has sinned in that thing” (Leviticus 5:5). Confess “that thing,” the specific “thing,” for exactly what it is, without reserve and without any kind of justification. David gave us an example of total transparency before God: I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,’ and You forgave the iniquity of my sin (Psalm 32:5).

Stop hiding! Stop lying! Stop explaining! Simply tell the truth.

2. Decide and Act Against the Thing

There lies within you a God-given power to choose. It’s a power no force in the universe can prevail against. Satan himself, and all his unholy angels, cannot make a man or woman sin when the will has decided not to.

The biblical word for the movement of the will away from sin and toward God is “repentance.” It basically means a deliberate change of mind and direction. The moment you decide against sin

and begin to act in a new moral course, new neurological, synaptic pathways immediately begin to form. Your mind actually begins to take on a new shape! Paul says you literally “become renewed in the spirit (the bent or inclination) of your mind” (Ephesians 4:23). As the repentant frame of mind is sustained, a new personhood is formed in the image of Christ. New patterns of thought, feeling and behavior become easier with every passing day. You become naturalized to and at home in character of God.

3. Receive Power Over the Thing

No matter how honestly you confess your sin, and no matter how firmly you decide against your sin, your willpower does not innately possess the quality and kind of power you need to overcome. Of yourself, you are utterly bankrupt of the moral oomph to obtain victory.

Well, you are in desperate need of a power outside of and above yourself to be poured into the moral fiber of your being. You need a steady inflow of a particular kind of power that is not of human origin. This power is not a mysterious or nebulous thing. It’s not a magical wave of energy or some kind of miraculous act of divine fiat that bypasses your awareness and freewill. “The love of Christ compels us... He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again” (2 Corinthians 5:14-15).

That is, the love of Christ is the power that moves us to cease living for ourselves and to begin living for Him. The love of Christ, alone, is of sufficient power to break the strength of sin at its most foundational level, at the level of our natural inclination to live for self.

“We through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith... faith energized by God’s love” Galatians 5:5-6. God’s love is the vital energizing factor in the victorious Christian life. No other power will do because no other power can do. “God does not employ compulsory measures; love is the agent which He uses to expel sin from the heart” The practical question is this: If God’s love is the power I need, then how do I tap into it? How do I drink it in? How do I get God’s love into the moral fabric of my being? The Bible offers a simple answer to this vital question. Paul says that God’s love gains access to our lives through the conduit of comprehension; that is, through the rational faculties of the mind:

“I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ... that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen” (Ephesians 3:11-21).

Paul is clear here. The inner moral strengthening we need is none other than the love of God, in Christ. We need to become rooted and ground in this love. And the way we do it is by giving our minds over to the task of comprehending God’s love manifested in Christ. This love, when comprehended, is “the power that works in us.” This is Paul’s exact point. When assimilated

through the medium of understanding and faith, God's love becomes the muscle behind the entire experiential process of victory over sin. Read that again and again until you understand it and believe it.

To the degree that you believe—both intellectually and emotionally—that the matter of conquering sin depends on you, you will fail. Conversely, to the degree that you give your heart over to dependence upon the love of God, you will succeed. From self-centeredness to God-centeredness — this is the fundamental and crucial paradigm shift upon which victory over sin hinges. Hang the entirety of your faith-weight precisely here, and you will be more than a conqueror through Him who loves us.

So there you go—three simple (and infinitely powerful!) steps to overcome any and every sin.

1. Name your sin with honest confession before God.
2. Decide with repentance against your sin.
3. Receive a steady intellectual and emotional inflow of God's love as your source of power over sin.

With these three simple faith-actions, there is no sin that can hold you down.