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HOW TO CLAIM A VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIFE

Ed Nichols

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The claiming or appropriation of a victorious Christian life takes place when Christians permit God in Christ Jesus to live a victorious Christian life through and in them. Living a victorious Christian life, according to Bill Gillam is not difficult to live. It is impossible, in and of one's self.¹ Permitting Christ to live in one's life requires that the born again believer have an understanding of what is standing in the way of living victoriously. Put in simple terms, standing in the way of claiming a victorious Christian life is one's old flesh or one's sins committed while still in the unregenerate state of his Adamic nature.

God's word provides the solution to life's dilemma of being spiritually dead in Adam. God provided a sacrifice for man's Adamic nature in that one's sin was crucified with Christ. One's acceptance of Christ's work on his behalf creates in them a new spirit, they are born in Christ through His death and resurrection. Once one accepts Christ, God accepts him in Christ. In Christ, is the key to coming to God in a new birth experience.

To claim a victorious Christian life one must appropriate a life in Christ first. Obviously this appropriation is a good deal more complex than the previous statement. Perhaps, appropriation should be examined.

Examination of appropriation must start with fundamental facts. First, unbelievers are considered by God as unacceptable to enter into His kingdom. Consequently, one must first appropriate Christ's finished work on Calvary for the sin of mankind. By confessing and repenting of sin, and placing faith in Christ, one is made into a new creature in Christ Jesus. This regenerated individual thus is made acceptable to God through Christ Jesus. To be able to appropriate a victorious Christian life, one must first be born again and willing to allow the new creature in Christ Jesus to become all that he can become in Christ.

The problem of appropriation is simple. Christians fail miserably when it comes to relinquishing their will to the will of God. The

¹Bill Gillam, Lifetime Guarantee (Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 1993), 10.

results is the holding on to the patterns learned while living in the old self. The manner which best describes this type of living is called living in the flesh.

Allowing one's habits or patterns of the old self of flesh (sin) to steal the joy of living in Christ, in a victorious Christian life, is a tragedy. Christians who live as if they are still controlled by sinful flesh is an incongruence. Flesh may be called any number of things. Gillam identifies flesh as three types; "yukky flesh," "plain vanilla flesh," or "USDA choice flesh."² No matter what it is called, "yukky flesh," "plain vanilla flesh," or "USDA choice flesh" it will always be living in the flesh.

After being saved, Satan tries to control men through their old patterning. Inculcated patterning was the way they lived in sin and coped with life. In coping with life and developing new patterns of living acceptable to Christ, the Christian is no longer wrestling against the flesh but against spiritual wickedness (Eph 6.12). Christians are to abandon the fleshly ways of old person and accept the new man in Christ (2 Cor 5.17).

Being a Christian means among other things to submit to God's authority over one's life (Heb 12.6). How unfortunate, many Christians cannot let go of the old self patterns and live the victorious life. This may be due to the way one perceives himself as a sinner, and not as a saint.

Being aware that God loves the performer not necessarily the performance is a good start to living in Christ. Christians should shout with joy that God's acceptance of man is not performance based acceptance (John 1.12). All Christians have been given the power to become (children of God), too bad they do not use that power to "become." Rhetorically the question is, to become what? The answer is, new creatures in Christ Jesus or Christians who have claimed a victorious Christian life.

Recognizing that God has already accepted the regenerated person completely should begin self-acceptance. Self-acceptance can start with making no provisions for the flesh (Rom 13.14). One needs to learn to let Christ live through him to overcome the flesh. One must learn to deal with the flesh (Phil 2.12,13).

Learning how to deal with the flesh starts by recognizing who one

²Ibid., 26-29.

is or what he is? The trichotomy view of man is that he is three parts. Man is spirit, soul, and body (1 Thess 5.23). A soul may be described as one's personality. The personality houses the mind, will, and emotions which are unique to each person. The body or earthly tent (2 Cor 5.1-8) contains the soul and spirit.

Born from above (John 3) permits one to worship God in spirit (John 4.24). Unregenerate man cannot worship in his spirit with God. The unsaved individual possesses a spirit that is dead to God (Eph 2.1-10). Worship of God is a good beginning to living a victorious Christian life. In worshiping God, one is able to take one's mind off old flesh patterns, and to place thoughts on that which is spiritual, and not of the flesh, mind or emotions.

Free will overrides mind and emotions. One may use the free will to control one's emotions. One should use the will to accept a life in Christ Jesus. The result will be a new life in exchange for the old life.

One can appropriate a victorious eternal new life in Christ (1 John 1.1,2). One must appropriate eternal life in Christ because without Christ one's spirit dies because of sin (Rom 5.12). If one is not in Christ he is in Satan (Eph 2.1,2). Then the mind is veiled (Eph 4.17,18), the will is self-centered, and emotion is a love of the world. One who has been made a new creature in Christ Jesus has exchanged his dead spirit for Christ's spirit in him (Eph 2.4-6).

When Christians begin to accept the fact that the old self is DEAD, victorious Christian living can begin. The old self is dead and buried. The old self died in Christ at Calvary. The new self was raised as a new spirit being in Christ. This fact needs to be appropriated as part of the Christians victorious life.

The Scripture is plain. One cannot be old and new at the same time. Consequently, one cannot put one's new spirit with a dead old spirit (Matt 6.24). Christians have only one spirit, the Holy Spirit, and must ignore the temptations of Satan who is no longer living in them. No room exist for Satan in the victorious life.

One's new nature or true identity can be found in an abundance of Scripture references (See Rom 3.24, 6.6, 8.1-2, 15.7; 1 Cor 1.2,30; 2 Cor 2.14, 3.14, 5.17, 21; Gal 2.4, 3.28, 4.7; Eph 1.3, 4, 7, 10, 11, 13, 2.5, 6, 10, 13, 3.6, 12, 5.8, 30; Phil 4.7, 19; Col 2.10, 3.1,3).³

³Ibid., 91-92.

One's new nature as a child of God leaves no room for dead flesh. Recognizing this fact is another step to claiming or appropriating a victorious Christian life.

Sinners are born, but saints are born again. Anyone who is born again is a saint. The old sin nature is dead, passed away, the new nature is in Christ. One is not expected to live the Christian life alone. One is to allow Christ to live through him to show the world how a Christian lives a victorious Christian life (Heb 10.14-17).

In summary, Christians need to accept the fact that they have died and that any life they now have is life in Christ. Christ's Spirit in you, and living His life through you, fulfills God's purpose for your life. Christians are to face each appearance of sin as an opportunity to be victorious over that sin, and over Satan's attempt at enslavement of them to their dead old man.

Victorious Christian living is guaranteed because God has already won any battle with sin one may face. David C. Needham says it this way, "eternally significant living. . . is found only as God's life is actually received and displayed through us."⁴ One's death and new life in Christ is a God given truth stated in His infallible, inerrant Word (Eph 2.4-6, Col 3.1-4). To appropriate a victorious Christian life one must accept that the old man is really dead and being dead to sin, sin has no control over the new creation. One no longer has to give the members of his body to the power of sin (Rom 6.13).

To maintain the appropriate victorious Christian life one may wish to learn,

be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God (Romans 12.2),

and use it as a weapon against every appearance of sin. The Word of God is sharp enough to separate the saint from sin and provide sufficient protection from Satan.

⁴David C. Needham, Alive for the First Time (Oregon: Multnomah Books, 1995), 190.

MY COMMITMENT

Right now, I claim a victorious life.

I will from this moment on claim the promises of God and not be conformed to this world and its sin.

I claim God's transforming power to help me renew my mind.

I truly, want to claim what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

I plan to memorize and use the scripture Romans 12.2 to help me appropriate a victorious Christian life.

(Signed)

(Dated)

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Other writings;

Discipleship: An Evangelistic Approach.

Sermons in Colossians.

Sermons for Sundays.

The Decree of God.

The Deity of Christ.

Biblical Inerrancy.

Personality of the Holy Spirit.

The Ministry of Angels.

The Creation and Fall of Man.

The Dilemma of Sin.

Salvation and Security.

The Church.

End Times or Last Things.

Systematic Theology Synopses.

Hosea (Comprehensive Outline).

The Birth of Christ.

Church History AD 31 to AD 1517.

Church History AD 1517 to 20th Century.

Evangelism Then and Now.

Expositions of Luke.

Selected Methods of Expository Preaching.

Personal Evangelism.

How to Claim a Victorious Christian Life.

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Brief Studies in the Old Testament.

The Old Man and Flesh.

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Evangelism Program: From Policy to Procedure.

Pastoral Placement Process.

A Study of Philippians.

A Pastor's Calendar.

The Sinless Christ.

Joshua – A Bible Study.