

HOW TO REALLY BE VICTORIOUS IN LIFE

Matthew 16:24-25

Introduction: There have been all kind of sermons preached and books written on "how to live the abundant life, how to have a victorious life, how to have a spirit-filled life," etc. Putting it simply, putting it in God's language, it is letting Jesus completely control one's life. That's it! It is the life Jesus came to bring to all who would accept it, but sadly, even many Christians don't really want that kind of life for they are afraid that they might be unhappy, even miserable. Just what all is involved for the Christian to really win out in living as Jesus wants?

I. THERE IS JOY TO BE FOUND IN PERFECT TRUST

1. Many are afraid that what Jesus wants is a life filled with crosses. It will always be don't, don't, don't. However this thought is never found anywhere in the bible.
 - Paul was always talking about joy, rejoicing, giving thanks, etc.
 - Crosses? We are the ones who "assign" crosses. Unhappy events in our lives are "crosses," an invalid at home, a mean husband, a spoiled child, etc., are self-appointed "crosses."
2. There can be no lasting disappointment in the life of a person who has surrendered his/her all to Jesus for Jesus controls his/her life and Jesus wants only happiness for us.
3. So then, just what is the cross the Christian is to take up?

II. THE CROSS OF THE CHRISTIAN

1. **Matthew 16:24-25; Luke 14:27** - There is A cross, not CROSSES that the Christian is to take up.
 - The cross meant DEATH for the one carrying it.
2. To follow Jesus Christ, one must be "crucified and buried" with Christ. **"...I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live, yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me..."**
3. It's one thing to be saved from the penalty of sin, to have eternal life, but it is another thing to follow Jesus, to live as Jesus wants the Christian to live.
4. Christian, know this: Jesus wants you to be full of joy, always, everywhere under all circumstances.
5. There are Christian "monstrosities!" Christians who are no more like Jesus 20 years after their conversion than the day they were saved. They have not taken up THE cross, they have not crucified SELF. They have their "self-appointed" crosses they think are the real thing.

III. WHAT REAL VICTORY IS

1. Satan wants us to accept a false victory, one attained by our own efforts.
 - A bad temper, irritable, controlled by our own efforts. Aren't we proud?

2. Victory like Jesus gives is not us restraining ourselves, but it is the fact that we no longer want to, we don't have to, we never even think about such things again.
 - All of us have been very angry at times but we "controlled" it, kept a smile on our face, acted as if nothing was wrong, but all the time we were boiling inside. That is not a real win over anger.
 - If we have to "control" our anger in the first place, then Jesus is not in control.

IV. HOW DOES REAL VICTORY HAPPEN?

1. Some Christians have tried very hard to live a full life, just like Jesus wants, but their temper was hard to control. They struggled with it constantly. Finally they found that they had not fully surrendered to Jesus yet so when they did fully surrender themselves to Jesus, He removed all desire to become angry. That is real victory!
2. It is not resolutions, not will power that can alter our likes and dislikes, but only God can do that. Only God can take away our desires to sin. Self-restrain just doesn't work.
3. The best test of living the life that Jesus wants us to live is LOVE.
 - What is our first feeling when someone hurts our feelings?
 - Do we "shoot up a quick prayer" to ask Jesus to help us keep our temper?
 - Do we easily and quickly forgive and forget hateful things done to us?
 - It is in these little "innocent" areas that real and not real victories can be revealed.

V. WHEN JESUS IS IN CONTROL YOU CAN DO UNUSUAL THINGS

1. We say, "well I've tried, but I just can't love.....so and so...." It is true, we cannot make ourselves love some people, some unloveable person.
 - However when Jesus is in control of us, we can love the unloveable, our enemies, for all unlove is removed. This is real victory.

VI. HELPFUL THOUGHTS TO HELP US LOVE

1. It is impossible to love some people! By ourselves, yes. But when we finally yield our entire self to Jesus and let Him love through us, nothing is impossible.
2. We say that our faith is too little. Jesus said that faith the size of a wee mustard seed is enough.
 - Jesus loves all people and loves the "unloveable" as much as He loves us. Look at the unloveable through Jesus' eyes.
 - Every one wants to be loved. Jesus loves them. Let Jesus love them through us.
 - Think of the most repulsive person you ever met. A miracle can take place in his/her heart. Whenever Jesus touches a life, it becomes changed, different, beautiful. What would happen to that person if Jesus touched him/her? Then let Him touch that person through YOU.

CONCLUSION:

1. Someone heard Michael Angelo say as he looked at a block of marble, "There's an angel in there, I must liberate him."
2. If only we could only have this attitude with every person we see. Jesus Christ can be in him/her.
3. Remember the fairytale of the prince and the frog? The prince kisses the ugly frog and suddenly the frog changes into a beautiful princess and they live happily ever after. When Jesus comes into a person's life it is totally changed into something beautiful and useful.
4. If we allow any "respectable" sin to linger in our lives, there can be no real victories, just false ones.
5. Let us all give ourselves entirely, totally to Jesus Christ for Him to make us into what we should be.