

God's Method of Deliverance

by Paul West

God's method of deliverance from sin is effortless and natural, requiring no willpower or struggle, but rather a reliance on the power of the Holy Spirit.

Scripture: 1 John 1:7

Topics: "Spiritual Victory", "Overcoming Sin"

Description

Paul West preaches on the unorthodox way God delivers a believer from sinful habits, contrasting man's laborious struggle with God's effortless method of overcoming lust through the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ. Walking in the Spirit brings victory as natural as breathing, where the presence of God saturates one's being, mortifying all carnal desires. The descent from this spiritual high is inevitable, but believers are encouraged to follow the example of Jesus in mortification and access the throne of grace for strength and victory over sin.

Transcript

The way God delivers a believer from sinful habits is quite unorthodox when compared to the logic and ways of man. Man's way is to grit his teeth and exercise willpower and keep a stiff upper lip in the midst of abstaining from a darling lust. He memorizes mantras of scripture to recite in the heat of battle, and although at the onset he may win a few skirmishes, he eventually caves back into the lust and indulges to his deep chagrin.

In comparison to man's laborious struggle, God's way to overcome lust requires no sweating, no fighting to maintain composure, no teeth-gritting or keeping a stiff upper lip in the heat of battle. God's method of deliverance from sin is as natural as breathing. When a man is walking in the order God has prescribed for victory, triumph over sin is as effortless as an eagle gliding over a canyon, and as totally pervasive as light banishing darkness. This is because the power to mortify flesh is governed by a divine law.

The law that overcomes the power of indwelling sin is called the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ (Romans 8:2). If you are a born-again believer, you may have walked in the Spirit's law before, and not even realized it. Think back to a time when you experienced the sudden power, the glorious transcending awareness of God's ineffable holiness and purity which flooded your being, causing instant demolition of any strongholds of corruption in your vessel. Perhaps it was after a blessed time of prayer, or while singing a hymn in corporate fellowship. You suddenly knew you were in the presence of God; His love and purity saturated your being in a very tangible way and you knew you had been made clean by the blood of Christ

and faith.

At that moment no allurements of Satan or the world held any power in your flesh. You were coasting like an eagle over any and all things carnal. No woman's beauty could dare divert your eyes from the majesty of Christ, and no amount of money or worldly recognition could sway your heart from God's embrace. You were apprehended of the Spirit of God and tasting but a miniscule portion of what awaits the Redeemed in Jesus Christ in eternity. Indeed, the thought of sinning against this light, against the Holy Spirit's glorious grace was utterly abhorrent and unfathomable. You tried to imagine how you could have ever yielded to such temptation before! You must have been blind!

Well, "being blind" is actually not too far off. Walking in the Spirit is akin to "walking in the light" (I John 1:7), and putting on the armor of God is akin to putting on the "armor of light" (Romans 13:12). As you basked in the presence of God, the powers of darkness had no hold upon you. The flesh lay crucified. You had the mind of Christ. Your heart sanctified God. Dear saint, do you recall gritting your teeth to keep the victory? Do you remember sweating and fighting and reciting scripture mantras? The victory at that moment was as effortless as breathing, because the love of God in Christ Jesus was shed abroad in your heart like a million suns. The light in the face of Christ instantly mortified all things unlike Him within you. As long as you could just figure out how to maintain this transcendental (because no other word describes it) estate of mortification, you would have unlocked the grand secret of abiding!

However, reality soon returns and the eagle begins its sad descent. You come down from the sky into the canyon. Shadows - ever so slightly - start creeping in from the corners and elongating. Light fades. Gravity increases its pull. The flesh begins stirring, and here, if not dealt with by the Spirit, it will ominously rise up once yet again to subjugate and strangle and the cycle will have started all over.

Dear Christian, please be not dismayed: the eagle must needs come down for testing, by God's own decree. Remember that God permitted His own Son to be tested in every point while on earth (Hebrews 4:15); He allowed His flesh to be assailed and tempted, His mind accosted with the pull of self-preservation as particularly evidenced in the garden of Gethsamane. But where the First Adam failed the test, the Second Adam passed with a perfect score. Hallelujah! This Second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, is now our test-taking example and our mentor in mortification. And much more than this: He is our very life. The very same resource he availed Himself to pass all tests and anoint His public ministry, His Father poured out also upon all His seed at Pentecost.

Enter now flesh mortification by the Holy Spirit. It is God's will that you and I soar like eagles high above the attraction of the world, the lusts of the flesh and all Satanic rule. And after proving this victory, to show other captives how they too can be set free from the power of the law of sin and death. The resource we have is bold access to the "throne of grace" (Hebrews 4:16), and our ministerial goal is to point others to this blessed place. It is opened to all believers who dare approach it by the blood, by faith, and with bold assurance. The Christian's heart must be confident in such an approach, so that we can receive the provision we need (I John 3:21, 22; 5:14, 15). Dear saint, a pure heart is a confident heart, and a confident heart receives the petitions of grace it comes to God for.

When the spirit's light ebbs low, the flesh takes flight, like a swarm of bats leaving a cave at nightfall. The flesh itself is not sinful, but like the mind and the affections of the soul it has been programmed by years of selfish sensuality and disobedience to God's law. The flesh therefore must be mortified, and the mind's contents subjected to the Lordship of Christ by the Spirit of God. Our minds must be renewed, girded-up,

fortified and occupied.

Satan's forces are outside the walls of the city, even now, planning a campaign to infiltrate the castle of your new heart via the mind and resurrect the flesh to defy God. God's armor is given to prevent this very thing from happening, and to preserving spiritual purity through the withstanding of the powers of hell. It cannot be emphasized how important this is to grasp. Once we understand the strategies of Satan, and how he moves by attacking and invading the mind, we will have discovered a crucial element in our successful resistance of him, through submission to God and having the renewed mind of Christ (James 4:7; Ephesians 4:23; Phillipans 2:5).

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