

# TO WALK BY FAITH IN CHRIST (THE DESIRE OF EVERY TRUE CHRISTIAN)

The First Century Gospel Church/Philadelphia

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The life of every true Christian should be inspired by an inward thirst to learn from God all about His Word, so it can be understood and applied in every part of one's life. When one's thirst for God's Truth is coupled by a sincere inward desire of the heart to want to follow God's Word, then we have opened the door for the Holy Spirit of God to come into our life. God's Spirit can help us to walk by faith to live an overcoming Christian life of faith each day and to receive spiritual blessing along with each victory received by faith on God. Jesus told those who thirst to overcome in faith, those who overcome are fit for His Kingdom (Rev.21:6) "And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the 'water of life' freely to him who thirsts."

God freely gives the Holy Spirit to those who thirst to know His Truth. He will enable them to understand so that they can believe and follow in overcoming faith to receive all things from Him. (Vs.7) promises overcomers in the faith, that they will also inherit all things in Eternity, "He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son." (That's quite a promise from God for anyone willing to put God's Will first and endure in faith to the end of their life). (Rev.2:10) "Be faithful to the End, even if you have to die, and then I will give you the victor's Wreath of Life."

Simply stated, Overcoming means a complete faith and trust on God for everything and in every circumstance in our life (and whatever we receive in God's will and in His way always carries a spiritual blessing). That enables us to have better knowledge of God's greatness, and so, a willingness to be an overcomer through obedient faith on His power, (and on the power of the Atonement Blood sacrifice His Son made on a Cross to cleanse, pardon, and redeem our life from sin's penalty. Jesus' Blood sacrifice is the only merit we have to make our claims for fulfillment of God's Promises and enables us to be an overcomer through obedient faith in this life and to receive His promised inheritance of "all things" in Eternity. Jesus promised us (Rev.2:26) "And to him who overcomes and obeys My commands to the very end, .. I will give authority over the nations of the earth."

A thirst to know God's Word; a heart that is willing to be corrected by God's Spirit; and to be willing to be led by Him to follow His Word; that is all that God is looking for in every person. God is waiting for us to come to Him in faith, instead of trusting on our own efforts of a self-life.

God just wants to see willingness in our heart to draw near to Him in faith and allow Him to direct our path. He instructed us (James 4:8) "Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and make your hearts pure, you who are

half-hearted toward God."

When it is our desire to draw near to God; be corrected by His Spirit; and be cleansed by Jesus' Blood through our faith, that opens the door for the Holy Spirit to enter our life and to direct us on the narrow pathway that Jesus told us we must follow to enter His Kingdom. (Luke 13:24) "Strain every nerve to force your way in through the narrow gate," (meaning, to be sincere in our commitment to trust in obedient faith on God's power, and He will keep us on that narrow path), "for multitudes, I tell you, will endeavor to find a way in and will not succeed." Jesus referred to those whose trust is on their outward religious efforts of a self-life to try to find a way in to His Kingdom (other than by that narrow gate of faith, by which Jesus said that we must "strain every nerve to force our way in (while at the same time they ignore why Jesus died on the Cross, so that they can believe on the power of His Atonement sacrifice), and receive His Holy Spirit,.. Who will lead them through that narrow gate.

Jesus encourages everyone (John 3:18), "He who trusts in Him does not come up for judgement." (and then reminds us) "He who does not trust has already received sentence, because he has not his trust resting on the Name of God's only Son." For a person not to come up for judgement because they trust on God's only Son, clearly emphasizes for all of us just how important a life of total faith and trust on God really is.

Jesus was not contradictory when He said to strain every nerve to force your way in because He was not telling us to do things in our own strength, rather, He is saying, strain every nerve to follow the narrow path of faith and trust that He, Himself set for us to follow. He told us (Luke 9:58) "but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." (In other words), I have no human place of trust to depend on, but by faith God supplied every daily need for Him, (and He will do the same for us today.)

Jesus said to another disciple (vs.59) "Follow me." He meant to stop trusting on efforts and manipulations of self or letting needs be known to others to try to get what you need in life. Jesus meant, 'think about the example of trust that I am setting for you to follow.'

After Jesus' Atonement sacrifice for us and His resurrection to Life, He could have said think about all that I have already done for you (even when you were still a sinner). He did say, however, (John 20:27) "Do not be ready to disbelieve, but to believe."

That's the same message Peter gave to Cornelius and his household; that is they were not to depend on their own efforts but just believe on what Jesus had already done to forgive them of their sins of unbelief (and then to act in faith on His Name and the power of His atoning sacrifice). (Acts 10:43) "To Him all the Prophets bear witness, and testify that through His Name all who believe in Him receive the forgiveness of their sins." (meaning, only those who believe on Jesus' Name, will 'receive the forgiveness of their sins'.)

(Acts 10:2) tells us that Cornelius was religious and God-fearing and so was every member of his household. So, (in essence), Peter was saying, you still lack something spiritually. Don't think that because you are religious and God-fearing (your outward acts of righteousness, he meant), that it will get you to heaven. You have to believe in Christ, be trusting in His Father through Him and in His Name (just like the Son of God did as an example for each one of us).

For that reason, it is so important for us to understand what it means to truly be a believer in Christ and on the power of His Blood.

Just saying Lord, Lord, but not doing God's will, (is the way most professed believers live their lives). But Jesus spoke very clearly on that issue of unbelief. "Not everyone who says to me, Master, Master,' will enter the Kingdom of the Heavens, but only those who are obedient to my Father who is in Heaven."

(Vs 22) "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' "And then I will declare to them 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

Jesus referred to their unbelief and disobedience to His Word as lawlessness because it is putting one's place of trust on someone or thing, instead of doing the will of God, by trusting on Him. "I never knew you; depart from Me", he said. [ Do we want to keep company with and be influenced by people whom Jesus never knew because they did not trust on Him and power of His Atonement Blood? Certainly not!!]

Apostle Paul explained that unbelief is idolatry (a wrong place of trust), and that we should not keep close fellowship with those whose place of trust is on other things instead of on God. (2 Cor.6:14-16) "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God."

Jesus said, "Trust in God: trust in Me also." (John 14:1). "Follow Me" He said. (vs.6) "No one comes to the Father, except through Me."

That is what Jesus told the wealthy young ruler (Matt.19:) who had said that he carefully kept all the commandments after Jesus had explained (Vs.17) that was what he must do if he desired to enter into Life. "What do I still lack?" the man asked. Jesus replied (vs.21), "if you desire to be perfect", (there is still one thing wanting in you) "go and sell all that you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have wealth in Heaven; and come, follow me." Jesus meant, it is good that you have kept the commandments (as you must do), but you have to trust Me financially. (Jesus did not separate faith and obedience, nor is it separated anywhere else in the Bible). Get rid of those things you are depending on instead of trusting my Heavenly Father, then.... come follow Me. The man went away sad because he didn't want to give up the things he was depending on. He was not ready to follow Christ.

It is apparent from this example that the devil had the young man convinced he could not live an overcoming life of faith and trust in God. However, Jesus was not asking him (and God is not asking us) to do that in our own strength (and our knowledge). God promised that His Holy Spirit would guide us into all Truth (John 16:13), along the narrow path to Heaven in an overcoming life of faith and trust (which He would have done for that young man if he would give up human trust.

By God's grace we can't let the devil deceive us with discouragement. We have to come through every trial or loss (by the grace of God and inspiration of His Spirit), with a stronger faith than we had before the temptation or trial. We must continue to have (and show) a thirst for His Word, and a willingness to follow the Savior's example of trust in His Father. Again, we know that Jesus promised (Rev.21:6-7), saying, "To those who are thirsty I will give the privilege of drinking from the well of the Water of Life (the Holy Spirit) without payment. All this shall be the heritage of him who overcomes, and I will be his God and he shall be one of My sons."

The writer to the Hebrews told us (Heb. 10:22) "Let us draw near with sincerity and unfaltering faith, having had our hearts sprinkled once for all, from consciences oppressed with sin and our bodies bathed in pure water." When we draw near to God in faith, we open the way for God to fulfill His promise, to send His Spirit, and guide us in living an overcoming 'Christian life'.

To be an overcomer in the Christian life, is something we must all strive to accomplish in our life on earth ("strain every nerve to force your way in" Jesus said). That is, to live a life of faith and trust in God for everything we need in our life, and for God to be in control of everything that touches our life. Everything has to pass through Him before it touches us when we place ourselves in real faith under the Atonement blood of His Son, and our desire is to do His Will. (John 15:10) "If you obey my commands, you will continue in My love, as I have obeyed My Father's commands and continue in His love."

Each of Jesus' seven letters to the Churches of Asia, emphasized the importance of living an overcoming Christian life. (Also made note of the results), (Rev. chapters 2-3 say) "He who overcomes, (or) to him who overcomes", Jesus said, "I will give the fruit of the Tree of Life, the hidden Manna, and shall be clothed in white garments. I will make him a pillar in the sanctuary of my God, or the privilege of sitting down with Me on My throne". And (Rev.2:26), "to him who overcomes and obeys My commands to the very end, I will give authority over nations of the earth."

We want to heed that advice to draw near with sincerity and unfaltering faith by trusting on God in every circumstance we face, and for every need or want in our life. (That is, for God's promised peace within ourselves, for Him to comfort (and keep us in comfort), also for His protection over us, and for Him to provide our needs as well as other scriptural requests we may have. Most importantly, for the presence of His Spirit within ourselves, to protect us from being

deceived by Satan to place our dependence on something else besides God or not have a forgiving heart when we are wronged as Jesus said that we must have if we want forgiveness for ourselves. (Matt.6:14-15).

We prepare for Eternal Life with Jesus through the application of His Word in our life, that is to have complete faith in His promises.

That is how our faith grows and is perfected as we come to know God better than we did before. Each temptation or trial that God brings us through in our life of faith and trust carries with it a blessing of spiritual advancement in our life. Believing in God and acting in real faith in Him, is counted unto us as righteousness. (James 2:22-23 explains) "You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. And the Scripture was fulfilled that says, " Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," (and, he was called 'God's friend'.)

Abraham advanced (or grew) spiritually through believing God's Word to him (as we all must grow spiritually. Abraham had to advance because God allowed further tests to be met right in his life (and to perfect his faith). Because of God's dealing with him (and resulting spiritual growth from each situation met by trusting God), he was enabled at age one hundred to believe God for the birth of his son Isaac. He was also enabled to trust God for protection of his nephew Lot and family (when God destroyed the towns of Sodom and Gomorrah).

Abraham's final test came when he was told by God to sacrifice his son on Mount Moriah. But God delivered him from that harrowing test of his faith when He saw that Abraham was sincere in faithful obedience, and He preserved the life of Abraham's son Isaac (through whom the Israelites descended).

Abraham drew near to God with sincerity and unfaltering faith, (as we are told to do Heb.10:22). His heart was sprinkled once for all, from a conscience oppressed with sin, as we are told we are to have that accomplished in our life. (Matt.5:48) Jesus said, "You however are to be complete in goodness as your Heavenly Father is complete."

As we advance in the faith and come to know God better than we did before, this (in turn) enables us to be more prepared for that 'next test'. God is no respecter of persons, and He will allow each one of us to be tested to prove our faithfulness to His Word.

We don't have to fear 'tests of our faith' that God will allow, any more than Abraham did. God allows the tests to perfect our spiritual growth, and our advancement in the true Christian life because He loves us, and He wants to save us from our sins.

(1 Cor.10:13) "No temptation has you in its power, but such as is common to human nature; and God is faithful and will not allow you to be tempted beyond your strength. But, when temptation comes, He will also provide the way of escape; so that you may be able to bear it."

When Israel was tempted by false prophets (who rose up from among them), Moses was inspired by God to tell them (Deut.13:3) "The LORD

