

~Other Speakers S-Z: Victory Over Sin:

13. Many people fail because they attempt to obey the indirect commands directly.

If a person tries to fulfill a command without first receiving the results of a promise they will fail. For example no person will ever choose to love God directly without receiving the results of the promise first. The indirect command will NEVER be fulfilled directly!

The promises are made available to everyone, if we will only comply with the simple condition of believing, and if we will plead them in the name and for the sake of Christ.

Do not forget that every command of God, when properly understood, is to be regarded as implying a promise. If God has required us to do anything whatever, we may always understand the very requirement as implying the promise of sufficient grace to assist us in the performance of the thing required. All needed strength and grace is pledged to us in Christ Jesus.

Exact quote from the 1851 version of Systematic Theology, Lecture 50, INABILITY.

It is true indeed that God requires of men, especially under the gospel, what they are unable to do directly in their own strength. Or more strictly speaking, he requires them to lay hold on his strength, or to avail themselves of his grace, as the condition of being what he requires them to be. With strict propriety, it cannot be said that in this, or in any case, he requires directly any more than we are able directly to do. The direct requirement in the case under consideration, is to avail ourselves of, or to lay hold upon his strength. This we have power to do. He requires us to lay hold upon his grace and strength, and thereby to rise to a higher knowledge of himself, and to a consequent higher state of holiness than would be otherwise possible to us. The direct requirement is to believe, or to lay hold upon his strength, or to receive the Holy Spirit, or Christ, who stands at the door, and knocks, and waits for admission. The indirect requirement is to rise to a degree of knowledge of God, and to spiritual attainments that are impossible to us in our own strength. We have ability to obey the direct command directly, and the indirect command indirectly. That is, we are able by virtue of our nature, together with the proffered grace of the Holy Spirit, to comply with all the requirements of God. So that in fact there is no proper inability about it.

14. Some see only part of their actual need.

They have only a partial view of their real need of such a Savior from sin as Christ is. They are so blind to their true condition that they do not lay hold of Christ with an active, earnest faith. They assume that they are already saved, and safe needing nothing more. By doing this, they entirely misjudge their own real case and remain deceived.

15. Others only see Christ in part.

They have only very vague ideas and concepts about His offices and character. It appears that the great mass of professed Christians are looking to Christ just to forgive their sins and secure their pardon; but this is all. They look for no sanctifying influence or agency from Jesus Christ. In place of this they resort to a false theory of Christ's imputed righteousness. It is remarkable that so many Christians have settled for this theory of an imputed rather than imparted righteousness. They base this on the idea that Christ, instead of imparting, imputes righteousness to His people. That Christ instead of begetting in them personal holiness, makes them holy on account of His own holiness, while they are yet unsanctified and still rebels and criminals at heart. This false theory instead of making them holy in fact, only accounts them holy in law, while they are really sinful. The Bible does not say, "He shall save them from the punishment of their sins", but that He shall save His people from their sins." Salvation from punishment is to them the essential thing in the gospel. They do not expect men to be saved from their sins at all but expect to be under the domain of sin until they die.

16. Many mistake entirely the nature of salvation, and so fail to embrace and secure its blessings.

They are looking for salvation from the punishment of hell. The reason for this is, the thing they have their eye upon is not a pure heart, but a hope to escape sin's penalty. They want to be rid of their fears. They would willingly accept a salvation from hell, but not true deliverance from their sins. They would willingly accept a

Savior, but not Jesus, for He saves men from their sins. They cannot get Him to do the thing they want done; for He will only save from hell those who will be first saved from sin. They fail because they are trying to make Jesus Christ serve them in their sins. Their effort is to induce Jesus to take them in their sins, and make them, in this state, His people, and give them heaven. Their essential mistake is that they seek salvation from punishment and not from sin.

17. The lack of confidence in the character of God.

Some think God is unwilling or unable to fulfill what he says.

18. The lack of understanding or not knowing the promises.

The fulfillment of a promise must depend on our knowing and believing the promise. How can we believe in something we do not understand or know?

19. No personal application of the promise.

A person will never apply a promise while he thinks it does not apply to him. An example is, a person will never take Christ unless he understands that Christ died personally for him.

20. The failure to ask God to fulfill the promise.

God wants us to ask and seek after Him. James 4:2b "Yet you have not, because you ask not."

When we ask, we do so for selfish gain and pleasure. The purpose of the promises is to mold one into the character of God. They are not designed to add to a person's selfishness. James 4:3 "You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts."

We often are waiting for right feelings or opinions. We are to take God at His word instantly without regard to any feelings. His truth is infallible. The result of our exercising faith will bring us the right feelings and ideas that we need. We must exercise faith now; no waiting is necessary.

21. We often take a promise independently of the grace of God and try to get it fulfilled.

Only God knows the promise that suits your need now. Trust in God; let Him direct you to His promise.

Psalm 37: 3-6 "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thy heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday."

This does not mean God fulfills your desires but that he freely gives you His desires. Phil. 2:13 "For it is God which works in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." This is the working of grace. God works within us two ways.

A. To will. He gives new desires. He brings them to birth within us by the working of His Spirit.

B. To do. He stimulates and excites that desire. The believer freely chooses to submit to that desire and God works out and accomplishes His desire.

When we do receive a desire from God, we often try to work it out in our own strength and energy. Col. 2:6-7 "As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk you in him: Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving."

We can never produce the results that God desires out of self. We must continue in faith and trust and let the grace produce the works. Any efforts made independent from the grace of God is sin.

22. We often try to prepare ourselves or make ourselves ready.

God is never pleased by selfish works. There is no preparation required. All these efforts are only selfish deeds tried to gain God's favor and grace. These only confirm our selfishness and sin. No amount of works will ever gain God's grace and favor. He freely gives it. All we need to do is place our confidence and trust in Him.

23. Our failures and weaknesses often discourage us.

We only act selfish if we get angry or ashamed by our own pride, anger and selfishness and then strongly decide not to repeat these again. When we condemn ourselves, it is simply because we expected something better of ourselves and we hope in the future not to be like this again. This is not the life of God but is only our own human effort. This activity only hinders the work of God.

We cannot ever conquer self or sin by self. This fact will bring us to an entire dependence in God and to simple faith through which the working of God's Spirit can proceed freely in us. We must stop looking at what we can see in our own heart. We must place our attention on what God is doing and waiting to do there. We must stop looking at ourselves and look at God's almighty power working in us.

If our spiritual darkness and selfishness overcome us, instead of getting depressed and removing ourselves from God, we should turn at once from self and trust God. It is our very unworthiness that God looks for and gives Him glory when He transforms it.

All true weakness, need and unworthiness are opportunities to receive God's transforming grace. Our weaknesses should never discourage us. They should only encourage us in the grace of God. Remember God freely gives grace, but not because we deserve it. We will never deserve it. Grace comes from God and does not depend on us at all. As a believer grows in grace, the awareness of the evil of his own selfishness grows. He needs this awareness so he will move forward in Christ by placing a deeper trust in God.

Eventually every believer must have the conviction that everything that proceeds from selfishness is evil. Everything of his flesh makes war with the Spirit and his selfishness resists all that God has to offer.

24. Some people think that when they are saved that their flesh is completely removed.

Please note carefully that though the flesh can be so put to death that it becomes totally "ineffective" (the real meaning of "destroy" in Rom. 6.6), it remains nonetheless. It is a great error to consider the flesh eradicated from you and to conclude that the nature of sin is completely annihilated. Such false teaching leads people astray. Regenerated life does not alter the flesh. The Christians death in Christ does not extinguish the flesh. The indwelling Holy Spirit does not make it impossible to walk by the flesh. The flesh with its fleshly nature abides perpetually in the believer. Whenever opportunity is provided for its operation, it at once will spring into action. If you do not follow the Holy Spirit but instead yield to the flesh, you certainly will be under the reins and control of the flesh.

You are not required to crucify your flesh for God has crucified it on the cross. Do you believe this is true? Do you desire to possess it in your life? If you believe and if you desire then you will cooperate with the Holy Spirit in obtaining rich experience.

Col. 3:1-5 "You have been raised to life with Christ, so set your hearts on the things that are in heaven, where Christ sits on his throne at the right side of God. Keep your minds fixed on things there, not on things here on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. Your real life is Christ and when he appears, then you too will appear with him and share his glory! You must put to death, then, the earthly desires at work in you, such as sexual immorality, indecency, lust, evil passions, and greed (for greed is a form of idolatry)."

You are required to put to death therefore what is earthly and fleshly in you. "You have died." The "You have died" is what God has achieved for you. Because "you have died," you can "put to death what is earthly and fleshly in you." The first mention of death here is your factual position in Christ; the second, your actual experience.

Many believers fail to enjoy true freedom from the flesh because they do not see the relationship between these two deaths. Some try to crucify their own flesh but this only makes their flesh grow stronger with each dealing! Others have acknowledged the truth that their flesh in fact was crucified with Christ on the cross; yet they do not seek the practical reality of it. Neither of these can ever appropriate experimentally the crucifixion of the flesh.

Your union with Christ in His death signifies that it is an accomplished fact in your spirit. What you must do now is to bring this sure death out of your spirit and apply it to your members each time your wicked lusts are aroused. Such spiritual death is not a once for all proposition. Heb. 10:38 "Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." You must always walk by the Spirit and should not gratify the desires of the flesh. Whenever you are not watchful or become weak in your faith, the flesh will

certainly go on a rampage. If you desire to be conformed completely to the Lord's death, you must unceasingly apply your death of your flesh on the cross so that what is real in the spirit may be executed in the body. If you fail to follow the Holy Spirit you will immediately revert to following the flesh.

Whatsoever has been begotten of God and is filled with God has no tendency towards sin. This does not mean there is absolutely no possibility of sinful desire. God has saved you to the extent of not having the tendency to sin, but He has not saved you to the extent of your being totally unable to sin. The Lord Jesus is able to bend you away from sin; but in addition you must be watchful. Under the influence of the world and the temptation of Satan the possibility of sinning stays with you. You should understand that in Christ you are a new creation. As such, the Holy Spirit indwells your spirit; and this, together with the death of Jesus actively working in your body, can equip you to live a holy life. Such a walk is only possible because the Holy Spirit administers the cross upon your flesh in putting to death the deeds of its members. It is then no longer active. This is not to imply, however, that you have no more flesh. For you will continue to possess a sinful flesh and will be conscious of its presence and defilement. Having the flesh present does not make your sanctification impossible. When you yield your body to the Lord (Rom 6:13) then it is possible for you to no longer be under the dominion of the flesh but under the dominion of the Lord. If you follow the Holy Spirit and maintain an attitude of not letting sin reign over the body (Rom. 6:12), then your feet are freed from stumbling and you experience sustained victory. Your body thus delivered becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit and is at liberty to do God's work. You must maintain throughout your life an affirmative attitude towards God and a negative response towards the flesh. No believer today can arrive at the point of being beyond temptation. How necessary it is to watch and pray and even to fast that one may know how to walk according to the Holy Spirit. You need to realize that the flesh is able to exercise its power over you again at any time. It has not been removed from the body.

In view of the fact that your flesh was crucified with Christ on the cross, you do not need today to be crucified once again. All that is required is to apply, by the Holy Spirit, the accomplished death of the Lord Jesus for you on the cross to any particular wicked deed of the body which now tries to rise up. It will then be put aside by the power of the Lord's death. The wicked works of the flesh could spring up at any time and at any place; accordingly, unless you by the Holy Spirit continually turn to account that power of the holy death of your Lord Jesus, he will not be able to triumph. But if in this way you lay the deeds of the body to rest, the Holy Spirit Who indwells you will ultimately realize God's purpose of putting the body of sin out of a job (Rom. 6:6). By thus appropriating the cross you will be liberated from the power of the flesh and will be united with the Lord Jesus in resurrection life.

25. Some make their own spiritual state or salvation the focal point of their life.

They make this their major concern and get caught up in a selfish realm blinded to the fact they are in a state of sin. They make salvation their chief aim. Salvation is not a goal or something for self to achieve and gain. It only comes because of having a relationship with Jesus Christ. Multitudes of people try to be spiritual and practice Christianity without a living love relationship with Christ. Many do not depend on Christ nor are submissive to His will. They just do their own thing and call themselves Christians. What horrible sin! Jesus Christ is the focal point. We are to make Him, King, Lord and Ruler over all aspects of our life. Matt. 6:31a "But you seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

Any person who tries to become spiritual or tries to gain salvation is still totally selfish and living in his corrupted sinful condition. How can a person have true faith when focusing on self? If this is you, stop looking at yourself and throw yourself totally into the arms of Christ.

26. Many serve other gods.

Many love the world and its pleasures. Some of these use Christianity only as a method to further their own selfish interests. Christ is not something for self to use to bring happiness or success.

If you have not totally surrendered your entire will to the control of Christ, then you are still selfish and a sinner.

27. Some who consider themselves Christian do not think that they need any further promise from God.

They feel self-sufficient in themselves and see no need to change. They believe they have salvation and need nothing further. They think they are safe from hell and will go to heaven without ever being free from all known sin, holy and perfect like God commands. These have blinded their own eyes and hardened their own heart against the truth of God. They are not Christians at all.

Personal holiness and entire sanctification are not optional commands for any believer. Salvation from hell can only take place for the believer who is saved from his sins. Salvation is a process that one grows in until death. The only guarantee of heaven is a continual walk by faith in the light of God's truth. The new birth is not the end of salvation but only the beginning. One needs to grow in grace and change from glory to glory. Salvation is never stagnant nor non-moving. If you are not moving closer and closer to God, then you are moving away from Him. There is no standing still. No person will ever reach a point where he will no longer need any further promise of God.

Look back at your life. Are you closer to God today than last year? How about last week? Are you moving toward God or away from Him? Do you think you are okay and need no further change? If this is you, then you are deceived. God has a promise for you, today. Are you willing to receive all that God has for you?

28. Idleness or spiritual laziness is one of the greatest of sins.

A farmer sat idly by and did nothing to prepare his field. He even did not even plant any seed. If then he said he believed and trusted in God for the harvest, everyone would know he was completely deceived.

Many so-called Christians completely neglect the truth and the methods that God has given them. They say they believe in and trust in God for salvation but do nothing. Only a few see that these are deceived as the farmer. True faith must always consist of the diligent use of all available methods.

29. Not moving from promise to promise.

Often a person takes a promise that is designed for a very weak Christian. He finds so much comfort and contentment that he does not move forward and upward. The promises are like steps. A person must always be moving and looking up or he will be in danger of falling into condemnation. If one is not growing in grace, he is growing in disgrace.

30. The lack of perseverance.

Heb. 6:12 "That you be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

Heb. 10:36 "For you have need of patience, that after you do the will of God, you might receive the promise."

Heb. 3:14 "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end."

Some people give up too easily before getting the results of the promise. They do not realize that perseverance is necessary. They think that the promise will come in its own due time without their own effort. This is not true, a person must often make long and agonizing effort before the obstacle is overcome. One must hold on in faith and refuse to let go until the fulfillment of the promise. Much prayer, supplication and spiritual warfare are necessary to receive the results of some promises.

31. A love for the world.

I John 2:15-17 "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passes away, and the lust thereof: but he that does the will of God abides for ever."

Many people get caught up in possessions that they own. Their whole world revolves around things they have. Other people hold on to the past by keeping and treasuring things from the past. This becomes a form of idolatry because they worship these rather than worshiping God. Remember, a true Christian's love for God must be supreme. If a person loves anything more than God then that is his god no matter what it is.

Matt. 6:19a,21 "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, For where you treasure is, there will be your heart also."

Luke 6:45a "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil."

What is the treasure of your heart? It does not matter what it is or how good it looks. It can be a hobby that fills your time and energy. It can even be a ministry or work that you do for God. Do not be deceived. If you have a supreme love for God, you will keep all God's commandments.

32. Many think they are safe and heaven bound.

Some professing Christians feel so safe and secure believing that they saved that they are content to remain in their sinful condition. Many of these are so deceived that they see no need at all for anything further that God has to offer them. The light they hold up is darkness. Their religion is rebellion against God. Many believe that they are free from any obligation to the law. The true gospel does not remove any obligation to the law. The gospel is designed to totally get rid of sin and produce the true obedience that is demanded. Examine yourself now. Do you now have the love that is required? Is your life one of obedience to the law? You have never embraced the gospel any further than you are under the practical influence of the law. Do not be deceived. This examination is not hard to do if you are willing to look at yourself honestly. Do not cover up any sins or make excuses. Please know that any doctrine or teaching that removes obligation the law, is absolutely false. The whole point of the gospel is to bring a person into obedience.

32. Some worship doctrine and truth and make it their god.

Christ Himself is truth. He is the embodiment and essence of truth. Words, doctrines, teachings and ideas are not truth. When the Holy Spirit reveals truth, He reveals Christ. When Christ reveals truth, He reveals Himself. Christ does not refer us to doctrines or to religious systems. He leads us only to Himself.

True doctrine is only a method of knowing Christ. We are to worship Christ, not the doctrine that reveals Him. We are to worship God, not the Bible. These only make us aware of the facts about Christ. They present Him for our acceptance. We are to receive the risen, living person of Christ. Christ is not an idea concept, mental image, thought, philosophy or doctrine. He is a real living being. No doctrine will ever save you. Some people make a fatal mistake of placing their trust and faith in some doctrine. Doctrine can never take the place of Christ. True doctrine only points the way to Christ.

The purpose and only aim of scripture, teaching and doctrine is to lead a person to the Triune God until he is fully joined to Him. God within us is our only source of divine life, light and love. Some have made the fatal mistake of making doctrine the focal point and god of their lives. A person should never make truth or doctrine into an idol. A person's learning and wisdom becomes alive and takes God's place. Instead of being in and experiencing the kingdom of God, he is living in and experiencing the kingdom of self. This consists in self-power of his own logic and learned reason.

Truth and guidance can never come from self; they only come through God. No man can bring himself into divine knowledge by the power of his own reason and imagination. Reasoning is nothing else but a full confidence and faith in oneself. When a person relies on himself he departs from God and falls under the rule and dominion of his own reason, and appetites. Some go on day after day defining and redefining religious teachings and doctrines. They are critical and full of judgment and they are dead to God.

Reasoning is from self and the work of the flesh. It is full of vain opinions, false judgments, errors and delusions. A person's ideas, opinions, and theories about scriptural doctrine have absolutely no effect in making him holy or removing his sin. No amount of reasoning by a sinner will make him a saint.

Proverbs 3:5 "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding."

A person can spend much time in the study of the Bible. The letter of the scripture kills when a person rests in it. The scripture has no goodness by itself. It will only bring death when built into systems, doctrines and opinions. The kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power. The kingdom of God is nothing else but the power and the presence of God, living, dwelling and ruling within the believer. All the outward works of religion can be done by an entirely selfish man. He can perform all church duties, know doctrine and appear to have every outward Christian virtue. No person can ever go higher than this legal outward formality of his selfishness until led and governed by the Holy Spirit. These outward acts have no spiritual value because God was not the initiator and doer of them.

No outward acts of religion can remove any evil out of a person or bring divine life into him. True religious works are only the result of the spiritual life of God willing and doing within the believer. The person who does

not have the Spirit of God continually inspiring and working in him, has a religion of his own making and is still selfish.

A person can read and study all about Christ without ever experiencing Christ's life and truth. Truth or life can only be found in a believer where the Spirit of God is in a reality born within him. We are all without real knowledge of Christ until He reveals Himself to us and quickens us. True knowledge is only possible and only exists in the Triune God. The point or goal of the gospel is to make a person holy as God is holy

33. Living for the thrill of excitement of truth rather than for Christ.

The problem can be that the truth excited them and they lived for the excitement and stimulation of the truth. They did not embrace the source of the truth, Christ Himself.

Many who consider themselves Christians live this way. They are full of excitement and joy when excitement is high. They get depressed and gloomy when the excitement dies. During this down period they consider themselves just backslidden. The real problem is they only embraced the truth and lived for the thrill it gave them without receiving Christ as the source of truth. One is to live in and for Christ, not for the thrill of excitement of truth.

The way to find out if any experience, feeling or emotion was really salvation is to wait until the feeling and thrill is gone, and then examine yourself to see if you really have Christ dwelling with in you or not.

34. Not using the promises effectively.

Eph 6:10-17 "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

Many do not know what the armor is or how to use it. They do not have the promises of God memorized so they can use them as necessary. Some think that Christianity is like a walk in a park, not a war where the devil is out to destroy their spiritual success.

35. Many grieve the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit can be and often is grieved by us.

The purpose of the Holy Spirit is to sanctify our souls.

2 Thess. 2:13 "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth".

The Holy Spirit can sanctify and save us only with the truth. The influence of truth by the Spirit is the only way to produce holiness and obedience. The Holy Spirit Himself has no other method of sanctifying a person but by truth. Each one of us, has the ability to consider and think about any subject we please. If we will not give attention to the truth, then sanctification and salvation are impossible.

Many spend all their time thinking and involving themselves in anything and everything else than the truth which is much more important to them and completely essential to their salvation. If you are spending a great deal of your time thinking, day dreaming or fantasizing rather than being in communion with God, you are grieving the Holy Spirit by neglecting the truth.

Some people spend hours and hours every day in the theater of their own mind watching scenes that bring them the most enjoyment and pleasure. Evil must be counteracted by truth and can be overcome in no other way. A person can resist any and every truth. Free will ends when force begins. A forced action has no moral virtue. Action must be free for sin or holiness to exist.

We can resist the maximum influence that truth can apply to us. We also can defeat the wisest, most loving and most powerful efforts which the Holy Spirit can make to bring about our sanctification. How can we ever expect

More reasons why so many fail to walk in true holiness.

to be holy if we ignore and neglect the truth?

Eph. 4:30 "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption."