

“Willing And Doing”

Temcat Study 2014

Today we are going to examine a most vital subject, the Victorious Christian Life; how to tune in to the mighty provisions of grace that heaven has provided to ransom and recreate us to be “without spot or wrinkle or any such thing”. Ephesians 5:27. First I wish to establish that heaven has already done its part, we need have no doubt as to what is the desire of the Godhead in regards to each one of us; it is that we should be saved and have Eternal Life!

“Say unto them, [As] I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live:” Ezekiel 33:11

We can rest assured that there is no failure on the part of God. God has made His choice and manifested it so clearly that no one in the universe can doubt it! That choice was sealed with the blood of Christ.

What has God Chosen? If you do a word search on ‘Choose’ and ‘Chosen’ in the Bible, you will find that most of the choosing is God’s and He has made it known very positively what His choice for us is. Here are a few of many examples:

“Blessed [is] the nation whose God [is] the LORD; [and] the people [whom] he hath chosen for his own inheritance.” Psalm 33:12

“For the LORD hath chosen Zion;” Psalm 132:13

“Thou [art] my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away.” Isaiah 41:9

We need have no doubt that God wants to save us. What more could He have done than He has already done to make this crystal clear to us? We are told that in the final accounting, no one will be able to say that God could have done more for him than He did! The Bible is clear that it is not God’s choice for any to perish. But does this only apply to certain people? Does God have a ‘favored few’? The Bible is very clear about this:

“Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:” Acts 10:34

There are also many texts that show us that God considers it a sin to show favoritism or partiality based on who or what a person is. In Ezekiel 18, we see God remonstrating with apostate Israel in regard to their false concepts of Him. They are accusing Him of partiality and He puts the blame right back where it belongs. Notice that this text is repeated in the same chapter. When God says something twice like that, it is to emphasize and establish it.

“Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal?” Ezekiel 18:25:

“Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?” 29:

We would say, “You are saying that I am not fair, isn’t it you that is not fair?” Then He goes on to explain His dealings in such a clear way that there can be no doubt about His fairness and His desire for our well-being.

So our question for today's study is why is it that some people seem to be able to tap into the mighty power of heaven and live a triumphant, victorious Christian life, and others seem to fall and fail and stumble around in darkness year after year? Look at addictions; some can walk away from them and never look back; for others the mournful lament is, "I've tried to stop, but I always go back to it." So if God is not choosing only to help certain people and not others, what is making the difference?

Science of Salvation: Is there really a 'science' to overcoming in the Lord? Is there some hidden 'secret' that the victorious have found? Well, yes, there is, however it is not hidden at all, it is just overlooked and misunderstood. In fact, this is probably the most overlooked and misunderstood concept in all Christianity, and no wonder, because Satan knows that once you really get a handle on this very 'science', he is defeated and will no longer be able to hold you in bondage and darkness. So he has a hundred false theories to confuse the mind and keep one from learning the truth about this 'science'.

"A knowledge of true science is power. . . .The science of salvation is the most important science to be learned in the preparatory school of earth." *The Faith I Live By*, pg. 321

Finding this 'Science': "In the Bible every vital principle is declared, every duty made plain, every obligation made evident... The gift of eternal life is promised on condition of saving faith in Christ. The drawing power of the Holy Spirit is pointed out as an agent in the work of man's salvation. The rewards of the faithful, the punishment of the guilty, are all laid out in clear lines. The Bible contains the science of salvation for all those who will hear and do the words of Christ." *Christian Education* pg. 84

It is very clear that the 'science' we need is not hidden; it is readily available to all who seek it. So why don't more have it? Well, it is Satan's greatest threat; it shows him to be just what he really is, a defeated foe, so he works in multitudes of ways to keep people from seeing it. He brings in false sciences and false doctrines! Notice this quote:

"Let the truths that are the foundation of our faith be kept before the people. Some will depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. They talk science, and the enemy comes in and gives them an abundance of science; but it is not the science of salvation. It is not the science of humility, of consecration, or of the sanctification of the Spirit. We are now to understand what the pillars of our faith are, the truths that have made us as a people what we are, leading us on step by step." *RH 05-25-05*

Notice what are the characteristics of this true science; humility, consecration, sanctification of the Spirit. In this next quote we see that there are some for whom Christ can do nothing unless something is changed, not in Christ, but in them.

"Christ can do nothing for those who are yoked up with the enemy. His invitation to us is, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." When in our daily experience we learn His meekness and lowliness, we find rest. There is then no necessity to search for some mysterious science to soothe the sick. We already have the science which gives them real rest--the science of salvation, the science of restoration, the science of a living faith in a living Saviour." *MS. 105, 1901.*

Here in the next quote we see that there is a work for us to do in taking hold of this true science. Just as it takes effort to master any science or skill in worldly things, so should we think that the greatest blessings of all will be ours with no effort on our part?

“Be in earnest in this matter. Seek God with all the heart. Men put earnestness and energy into temporal business. They know that if they do not, their efforts will not be crowned with success. With intense earnestness learn the science of seeking for the rich blessings promised in God's Word. Work with persevering effort, and you will receive light and truth and grace. These blessings are for all who serve God aright. We need to fear lest the promise being left us of victory through Christ, we should come short of it.” *The Signs of the Times 09-05-00*

So we have the promise of Victory through Christ; it is already promised to us, but we are told that we can come short of it, we can fail to have it.

We all know about people who do all kinds of painful penance and self humiliation or great works to please God, but we also know that this isn't what God has asked for. In Isaiah 1 God says He is fed up with their various 'works of merit'.

Reasons for Failure: So far we see that:

- 1: God has chosen us to be victorious and redeemed.
- 2: God has made all needful provisions for this to be so.
- 3: God has done His part in the deal already.

There must be something to be done on our part, or all this would happen automatically and we would all be victorious and saved. However, it isn't works of merit that are needed, or that we are some important person, because all this is meaningless to God. Is there something that God cannot do? Skeptics and scoffers have many scornful sayings about what God can or cannot do; but is there really something God won't do for us? Yes, there is, and it is in this that we find the key to our dilemma. Let's study a few interesting quotes:

“The Lord does not propose to perform for us either the willing or the doing. This is our proper work. As soon as we earnestly enter upon the work, God's grace is given to work in us to will and to do, but never as a substitute for our effort. Our souls are to be aroused to cooperate. The Holy Spirit works the human agent, to work out our own salvation. This is the practical lesson the Holy Spirit is striving to teach us. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, pg. 240.*

“Here are revealed the conditions of success. To make God's grace our own, we must act our part. The Lord does not propose to perform for us either the willing or the doing. His grace is given to work in us to will and to do, but never as a substitute for our effort. Our souls are to be aroused to co-operate. The Holy Spirit works in us, that we may work out our own salvation. This is the practical lesson the Holy Spirit is striving to teach us. "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." *Messages to Young People, pg. 147.*

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Here we have just what God won't do for us; just what we have to do for ourselves, the "willing and the doing". Well at first glance one might say: "Oh! I am left on my own!" NO! not at all! for notice the rest of the quote: "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." So the power of God is already pledged to accomplish the work in us.

Let's break it down; we know what 'doing' is, we're always trying that one and failing, so what is 'willing'? Well let's not guess; here is the inspired definition:

"The tempted one needs to understand the true force of the will. This is the governing power in the nature of man--the power of decision, of choice. Everything depends on the right action of the will. Desires for goodness and purity are right, so far as they go; but if we stop here, they avail nothing. Many will go down to ruin while hoping and desiring to overcome their evil propensities. They do not yield the will to God. They do not choose to serve Him." *The Ministry of Healing*, pg. 176

Here it is; the key to victory in one word; "CHOOSE"!

"Oh," you may say, "That's nothing, I always want to do what's right, I want to follow Jesus, I want to be like Him, I want to be saved, but it doesn't make any difference. I still fail."

Yes, but it doesn't say 'want to'; it says 'CHOOSE TO'! That is all the difference. That is what the 'willing' is that God won't do for us. Let's see what the Bible has to tell us about this.

"And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; ...but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." Joshua 24:15

Notice here both words: 'Choose' and 'Will'. What is needed is for us to say in the depths of our being: "I WILL do right! I CHOOSE to obey God!" See again:

"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, [that] I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:" Deuteronomy 30:19

"Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings." Isaiah 7:15, 16

"Let us choose to us judgment: let us know among ourselves what [is] good." Job 34:4

"For thus saith the LORD unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose [the things] that please me, and take hold of my covenant;" Isaiah 56:4

Choose the Right: Here we see over and over again, the 'informed choice'; putting our WILL on God's side of the battle. "Yes," you say, "But I'm not strong enough, I can't overcome." Of course you can't overcome; but you can CHOOSE! That's what God asks us to do; before He can do for us. Notice this encouraging instruction:

"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of [his] good pleasure." Philippians 2:12, 13

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." What! must man do this work of himself unaided? No, no. This is his part in the action, but hear the conclusion: "For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good-pleasure." Your will must blend with the divine will, and you

must submit to the divine working. Your energies are required to co-operate with God. Without this, if it were possible to force upon you with a hundred-fold greater intensity the influences of the Spirit of God, it would not make you a Christian, a fit subject for heaven. The stronghold of Satan would not be broken." *The Signs of the Times 12-28-91*

The CHOOSING must be done by you; and it must be a decided, definite choice! Continuing:

"There must be the willing and the doing on the part of the receiver. There must be an action, represented as coming out from the world and being separate. There must be a doing of the words of Christ. The soul must be emptied of self, that Christ may pour his Spirit into the vacuum. Christ must be chosen as the heavenly guest. The will must be placed on the side of God's will. Then there is a new heart, and new, holy resolves. It is Jesus enthroned in the soul that makes every action easy in his service. He is the fountain of all righteousness, the source of all happiness, the reservoir of all power. There must be a full trust in Christ's words, and Christ must be all in all to the receiver. Grace, truth, and joy will fill the soul." *The Signs of the Times 12-28-91*

Is it necessary to 'CHOOSE' the wrong to be under sin's power? No, if we don't positively choose God's side, we are automatically and already on the other side; there is no neutral ground in the Great Controversy.

"But unless we do yield ourselves to the control of Christ, we shall be dominated by the wicked one. We must inevitably be under the control of the one or the other of the two great powers that are contending for the supremacy of the world. It is not necessary for us deliberately to choose the service of the kingdom of darkness in order to come under its dominion. We have only to neglect to ally ourselves with the kingdom of light. If we do not co-operate with the heavenly agencies, Satan will take possession of the heart, and will make it his abiding place." *The Desire of Ages, pg. 324.*

Satan knows this and has multitudes of strategies to keep us from making that all important, positive CHOICE! Here are some texts where God is presenting to people the wrong choices they have made and the fact that their wrong choices are what stops Him from being able to work out for them the blessings He wants them to have.

"Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation." Judges 10:14

"For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD:" Proverbs 1:29

"Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations." Isaiah 66:3

"Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter: because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose [that] wherein I delighted not." Isaiah 65:12

You see, God respects our choices, right or wrong! Here are two examples, one a right choice and one a wrong choice, and how God holds us responsible for our own choices.

"And Joshua said unto the people, Ye [are] witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the LORD, to serve him. And they said, [We are] witnesses." Joshua 24:22

"And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the LORD will not hear you in that day." 1 Samuel 8:18

Here you see that Israel preferred to be led by the arm of flesh rather than by God. Often we look to lean on man and his theories rather than God also, and it is always a foolish choice!

Repentance is another form of 'Choosing'; you may not have thought of it in this way, but the repentance the Bible emphasizes as so important to our 'being born again', is not just that God wants His satisfaction in our admitting that we are wrong. No! Repentance is a powerful choice; we choose God's way when we admit our ways are wrong, we hate them, and we don't want them any more. When we say, "I'm sorry, I was wrong! I choose not to do that anymore." We are making a choice, and God honors it.

Willing (Choosing) and Doing: So how do we connect this 'doing' with the 'choosing'? Well, to put it as simply as it really is, you choose to do right and you ACT on that choice, and between your choosing and your acting, the mighty power of God connects, and you are empowered to carry out your choice. There are no 'maybes' about this; it's a divine guarantee; it will NEVER fail! God has placed the very dependability of His throne to back up His promise to us of complete and total victory. In this next quote we see some of the false theories Satan has given to people to keep them from the simple truth.

Divine Guarantee: "While our salvation is wholly dependent upon Jesus, we have a work to do in order that we may be saved. The apostle says, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." The work that we are to do is not independent of what God is to do, but a work of co-operation with God. The power and the grace of God are to be wrought into the heart by the divine worker; but some go astray here, claiming that man has a work to do that is wholly independent of any work of God. Another class take the other extreme, and say that man is free from all obligations because God does the whole work, both the willing and the doing. But the true ground to take is that the human will (choice) must be brought into subjection to the divine will. The will of man is not to be forced into co-operation with divine agencies, but must be voluntarily submitted. (Note: this is the 'choosing') Man has no power of himself to work out his own salvation. Salvation must be the result of co-operation with divine power, and God will not do that for man which he can do for himself. Man is wholly dependent upon the grace of Christ. He has no power to move one step in the direction of Christ only as the Spirit of God draws him. The Holy Spirit is continually drawing the soul, and will continue to draw, until by persistent refusal, the sinner grieves away the tender messenger of God." *Bible Echo and Signs of the Times, 11-01-93*

Satan's Strategy: Satan knows this 'science' of salvation; he knows that at all cost he must keep us from making this simple, positive choice and linking up with the divine powerhouse of salvation, so he has many inventions and ways to keep us from seeing the simple truth. In the previous quote we see his false theories; one group feeling they must do it all themselves, (some add 'Jesus will help ME to do it') and the other extreme is saying we don't have to do anything, God just automatically does what He wants with us. Both are lies, and both are deadly.

We will take a brief look at Satan's deadliest weapon, it's really the only one he can use against us and he uses it in all his temptations; it is 'FEELINGS and EMOTIONS'. Our feelings and emotions are connected with our 'self' and until we choose to surrender that 'self' it sits in the 'temple of our mind' which is meant to be the throne of the Holy Spirit, showing itself that 'it is god'. As long as 'self' is allowed to reign there, the Holy Spirit is not. Satan manipulates the 'self' through feelings.

Feelings vs. Principles: The difference between a converted person and an unconverted person is quite simple; the converted person's feelings are under the control of PRINCIPLE and the unconverted person's principles are controlled by his FEELINGS.

Let's think of a simple example; I know I should get up early and have prayer and Bible study, this is a right thing to do; but Satan plays upon my feelings, "You are too tired, you don't 'feel' like getting up yet." Now here we are; Feelings vs. Principle; There's a choice to be made! All too often we succumb to the 'feelings' Satan is laying on us. "Oh, I'm really sooo tired. I will sleep in today, but tomorrow, for sure, I'll get up early and worship properly."

Satan got us to 'put it off' and 'make an excuse'. Then later we will say, "I tried to get up, but I just couldn't do it." Here again 'self' our 'man of sin' is on the throne, God's Spirit is not in charge and we remain a captive.

But if we take the same example, "You are too tired, you don't 'feel' like getting up yet." And instead we say, "Yes, but it doesn't matter what I 'feel' like; the right thing to do is to get up and worship my God, and I WILL do it. I choose your way, Lord, please give me power." Then don't wait for the 'feelings' to change! Throw off those covers and act on your choice. The power will be there and you will carry out God's will through your choice combined with His power.

Notice there has to be the two things, first a positive choice: "I WILL; I CHOOSE"; then ACT ON THE CHOICE. The power is guaranteed. Remember that the sick man at Bethesda didn't wait to 'feel' better, he acted and the power was there.

It is ALWAYS God's will for us to do His will! So we never have to fear that if we choose to do His will, He will fail to empower us to do it. He has already made His choice.

Let's take another example; someone says or does something nasty to me. Satan is right there; "You feel offended. You feel like giving them a piece of your mind." He will manipulate your emotions.

Here we are; Feelings vs. Principle again; there's a choice to be made! We can act on the feelings and blow up, and then claim, "He had it coming to him! It was his fault." Again we see excuses and shifting the blame. Shifting the blame is a way of trying to make the other person the controller of your choice, but God doesn't buy it; He lays the responsibility right on us!

Or we can make the right choice; "It is wrong for me to blow up; I WON'T do it. I WILL be patient like Jesus. Lord, give me strength." Then ACT on the choice; perhaps by responding in a quiet way, or simply remaining peacefully silent. God will so empower you that you won't even 'feel' any bitterness, but instead have the 'peace that passeth understanding' in your heart.

CONfUsiOn: In order to make a clear and decided choice for right, one needs to see clearly what is 'right'. Many who are not experiencing victorious living are not 'feeding on the flesh and blood of the Lord'. They are not feasting on the Word of God, the Bible. The Bible is part of the 'eyesalve' that when 'applied' (studied) under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, allows us to see clearly what is right and what is wrong.

So, Satan seeks to get us to read anything and everything else. There are tons of books 'about' the Bible; there are books that have 'good' thoughts in them and there are devotional books with little snippets of Bible and piles of man's words; like trying to live on sawdust with a few breadcrumbs mixed in.

He does everything to cast doubt and confusion onto the Holy Word and the Spirit of Prophecy so that people read about them and don't actually read them. He inspired the dozens of versions and commentaries so that people are led to believe God's Word is hard to understand and they depend on learned men to tell them what is right and wrong; but there is no power in men's words. When God speaks, it is done; when man speaks, it is still waiting to be done.

Doctrinal confusion, talking theories that deviate from the plain truth, winds of doctrine, all confusion! It all keeps you from that clear choice between right and God's salvation and wrong and eternal death. When you can't see the issues clearly, you can't make the positive choice to plug into God's abundant power source for victory.

Friends, the Word of God and the inspired counsel of the Spirit of Prophecy is easy to understand, and with the Holy Spirit as your personal Teacher, you can have all the information you need to make that all important CHOICE to serve the Lord, act on that choice and experience His mighty saving power in your life!

In closing let's read this wonderful promise: "Has not God said He would give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him? and is not this spirit a real, true actual guide? Some men seem afraid to take God at His word as though it would be presumption in them. They pray for the Lord to teach us and yet are afraid to credit the pledged word of God and believe we have been taught of Him. So long as we come to our heavenly Father humbly and with a spirit to be taught, willing and anxious to learn, why should we doubt God's fulfillment of His own promise? You must not for a moment doubt Him and dishonor Him thereby. When you have sought to know His will, your part in the operation with God is to believe that you will be led and guided and blessed in the doing of His will. We may mistrust ourselves lest we misinterpret His teachings, but make even this a subject of prayer, and trust Him, still trust Him to the uttermost, that His Holy Spirit will lead you to interpret aright His plans and the working of His providence". (*Letter 35, 1893*).

May we choose for this to be our experience, because that IS God's choice for us all. Amen.