

Power in the Holy Spirit

7. EXPECTATIONS FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT



Introduction to expectations from the Holy Spirit

Now that we have accepted Christ, the promise from the Lord is we receive the Holy Spirit, who becomes our *Helper*. What then can we expect from the Christian walk at this point? Should we expect to live a sinless life? What expectations does God have for us?

One of the greatest problems for a believer is to understand the *changed life*. Learning how to struggle with the *old nature* and live the *new nature*. Paul pictures the Christian life like a race (Philippians 3:14), and in a race there is a method to winning.

The goal of the believer should be to win the race set before us. Anybody who runs knows there is a process to training the body to endure the trials of a race. Before race-day, the runner trains with the race in mind. The greater the training, preparation and planning, the more serious the runner is about the race. The writer of Hebrews uses the imagery of the race with spectators watching as the runners head toward the finish. Only here the spectators are those who have run before.

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, Hebrews 12:1

The writer in Hebrews instructs the runner (the believer) to cast off weight and sin, so we can endure the race. The Christian life is an endurance run; we must train and prepare ourselves for this contest. Examining the lives of many “successful” saints, both Old and New Testament, we will see they strived for personal holiness, they are not born with it; they choose to strive for holiness. Paul seeing Jesus on the road to Damascus did not just rest on seeing a vision, but battled his old nature, through discipline bringing it under subjection to the new nature.

24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. 25 And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.

26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air.

27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. I Corinthians 9:24-27

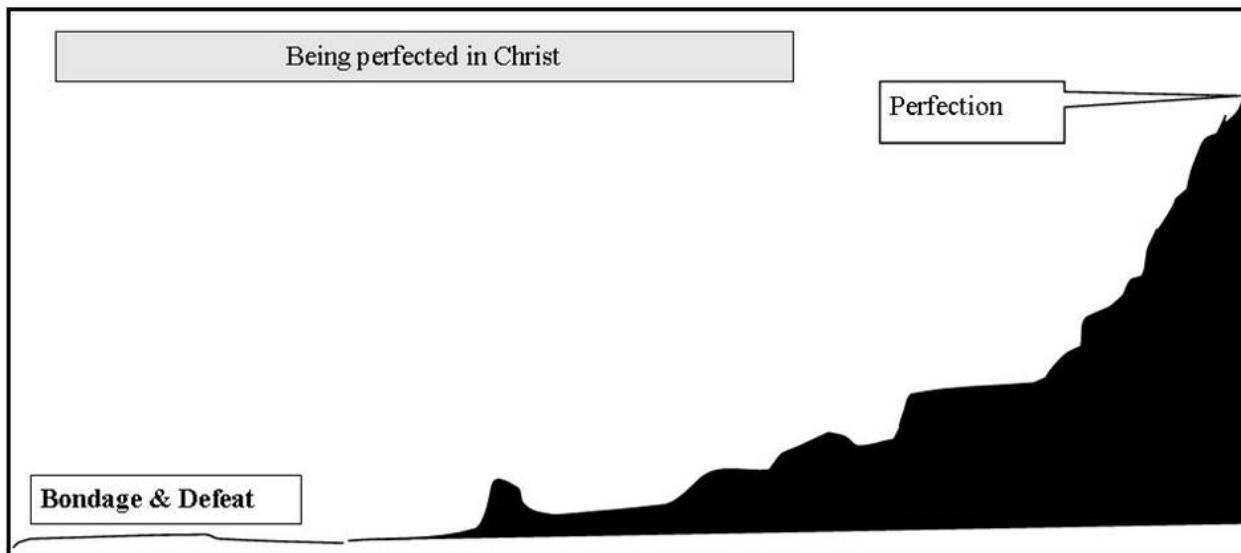
So even Paul had to struggle with his old nature, we like Paul need to be focused the prize. Let us ask ourselves, are we focused? If not, are we willing to focus on the prize of holiness, being like Christ?

What to expect from the Holy Spirit

Does God expect us to be perfect and sinless, now that the Holy Spirit is dwelling within? Scripture is clear God understands our frailties and our sin nature. This however is not an excuse for sin. Now that the Holy Spirit is dwelling within, we have power, which we did not have before. We should expect the Holy Spirit to move in our lives, to help us be like Christ. We in turn must allow God's Spirit to operate in our life, by submitting to His will. To know His will, we must approach the throne of God in prayer, seeking God's will. To know God's will means we need to read God's Word, which communicates His will.

The Christian walk is journey from the time of conversion until the time of perfection. Once we come to Christ, the Holy Spirit moves in our life, transforming us into the image of Christ. The extent of our transformation on this side of eternity depends on how willing we are for the spirit to work in our life.

18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Corinthians 3:18



First, we have to understand God does not require perfection for salvation, Paul like us did not attain perfection in this life, it was his goal. Perfection should be our goal, but we will only reach it at the resurrection. Therefore, in this life, we must always remember *sanctification*¹, is an ongoing process, lets not give up when we fail, but press on.

12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.

13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,

14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3:12-14

Therefore, our expectations should not be too high, that we become dejected and give up, we must understand we are in a process, and walk in the Spirit. When we do fall, we need to confess our sins, and not wallow in the mire. By confessing, we are cleansed from the sins, and restored by the blood of Christ.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

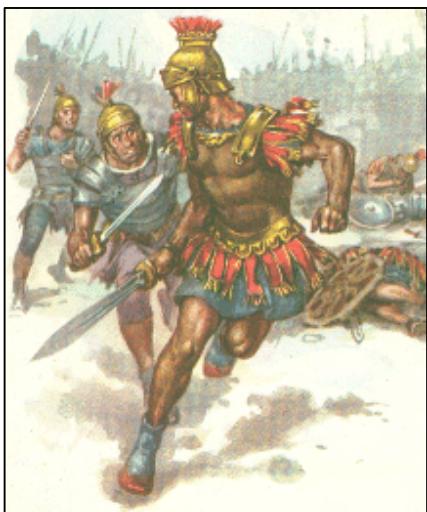
9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. I John 1:8-10

This is the difference between the victorious and defeated Christian walk. The victorious Christian understands their position in Christ, that they are being perfected, but not perfect. Therefore, they know they can fall, but when they do fall, they can confess their sins, and be restored and continue the journey. This does not give us license to sin, but mercy when we do. While the defeated Christian, refuses to move forward, wallowing in their sin, not understanding they have the power to move forward and upward in their

¹ Sanctification is the process of being made holy. Sanctify means to separate. When we come to Christ, we are separated from the world, because the Holy Spirit lives in us, the Spirit then begins to transform us into the image of Christ.

walk. They see their sins as evidence of being powerless, they give up, therefore they prevent God's Spirit from working in their life.



The defeated Christian, who walks in the flesh has decided God does not have the power to transform their life, therefore they live a life of *bondage and defeat*. Israel did not think God could lead them into the Promised Land; therefore, they spent 40-years wandering the wilderness of Sinai. We don't want to be like "faithless" Israel, who always questioned God's ability to deliver on his promise. We want to be like "faithful" Israel, Joshua and Caleb, we need to believe the Lord, and act on His word, moving forward with our lives.

Paul in describing the victorious Christian life uses military terms, because in many ways there is a battle. There is the personal battle within, as the *new man* wars against the *old man*. Secondly, there is a spiritual battle without, as Satan tries to prevent the advance of the Kingdom of God, by warring with the Lord's army, His people, the saints. We need to understand the battle at hand, our battle is a spiritual battle, but it's still a battle. For this reason, the Bible uses military images to help us understand, terms such as *conquer* and *triumph* help us to understand the war between the flesh and spirit.

37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. Romans 8:37

14 Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. 2 Corinthians 2:14

13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. Romans 8:13

One key to victory, is understanding the battle at hand, and being engaged in the conflict. We have the weapons to wage war; we need to learn how to use them. If we submit to our old nature the fleshes, then we die, we loose the victory made available to all who have the Spirit. This is not about salvation, but about victorious living.

1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.
Romans 8:1-2

What is our target?

Aiming too low

One temptation is to rest in our salvation, sometimes I hear an inner voice say, "Come on man your saved! God doesn't expect you to be perfect, just stop trying". Sometimes it's easier to stop trying and just give up, this is what my flesh tells me. If I listen to that inner voice, my *old man*, then what I am doing is open myself up to spiritual defeat.

In many ways, the world aids our old nature, when rejecting the concept of sin, and assigning the blame to those around us. Rather than look at our sin nature, we refuse to deal with our choices. Robertson McQuilken contrasts two models of the human condition, one biblical, the other secular.²

The idea of self-worth or self-esteem could be viewed in both a *secular view* or a *biblical view*. Our value according to the Bible is not because of who we think we are when compared to others, but who God says we are. We are made in the image of God, and God loved us enough to die for our sins. We can be restored to a relationship with God, we are highly valued, by God. This is the biblical way of viewing self-

² Life in the Spirit, Lifeway Press, Nashville Tennessee 1997, Pg. 121

worth. The secular way, looks for value as a result of self-effort, and personal accomplishment. For example, by reaching a certain level of success in world, I therefore have worth.

Biblical Model	Victim Model
Sin	Injury
Guilt	Damaged self-image/illness
Repentance/faith	Therapy
Forgiveness	Healing (restored self-image)
Growth	Freedom & Fulfillment
Restoration	
Freedom & Fulfillment	

Therefore, under these two models of self-worth, often times it's easy to excuse our sin. It's easy to say, "because I have suffered in the world, and have low self-esteem I can't stop sinning". While if we use the biblical model, we understand what sin is, and who we are in Christ. We know our eternal value and position in Christ, it does not

matter what happened to our old nature, we are a new creation. So we can say, "I am in the image of God, I can have victory over my sin through the power of the Spirit."

When we choose to live a defeated life, we get the results of our choosing. Satan is our enemy; Jesus called him a liar from the beginning. Satan wants us to wallow in our past, rather than to rejoice in our future. If he can keep us focused on our failings, so we don't try to advance in our spiritual walk, then he has removed us as a threat, to his kingdom. After all, scripture calls Satan the god of this age (2 Cor. 4:4).

44 "You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.
 45 "But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. John 8:44-45

Aiming too high

The other extreme of living in spiritual defeat, is the self-deception of perfection. Scripture makes it clear, we will not be perfect in this life (1 John 1:8). Perfection should be our goal, something we strive for but we are bound to fail occasionally, because we still have a fallen nature. If Paul, who wrote much of the New Testament through the power of the Spirit, did not attain perfection, then why will we?

On the contrary, those who claim spiritual perfection are according scripture deceived, even calling God a liar. Our goal should be to strive for perfection, moving closer and closer toward the mark. While at the same time, understanding if we fall we can confess our sins and be restored, but to keep moving forward and upward.

Our goal

Our goal should be to live the victorious life, whatever our circumstances. The Lord wants us to take our condition and submit it to Him. This life is not end, but only the beginning. In addition to Salvation, which is for all believers, the Bible speaks of rewards at the "Bema"³ seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10).

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. 2 Corinthians 5:10

When we are rewarded for a faithful life, when our works are tested. Our goal should be to live a life approved of by God. In the parables of the mina and talents the servants, present their work before the master who has returned. Two of the three servants assigned the task heard the words "Well done", as a result their master rewarded them. (see also Matthew 25:14-30)

12 Therefore He said: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return.
 13 "So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.'

³ **bhma Bema** the raised platform which a throne was placed, where the awards ceremony took place in ancient games. The Bema seat judgment is where Jesus Christ rewards the saints for faithful service, not salvation.

14 "But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.'

15 "And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

16 "Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.'

17 "And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.'

18 "And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.'

19 "Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.'

20 "Then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief.'

21 'For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.'

22 "And he said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow.'

23 'Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?'

24 "And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minas.'

25 ("But they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas.')

26 'For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. Luke 14:12-25

Based on our life on this earth, the Lord will reward his saints with responsibilities in the life to come. This is the point behind the parable of the Talents and the Mina, the nobleman represents Christ who went into a distant country (heaven), to claim a kingdom. His servants (believers) were assigned tasks in the master's absence, the servants responded to the commands in different ways. When the master returned (Christ return) he rewarded the servants based on their obedience.

The job assigned was test for reward when the master received his kingdom. We are part of this very same promise, Jesus has promised to reward us for a faithful life, this in addition to our salvation.

12 "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.

13 "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last."

14 Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. Revelation 22:12-14

What does this mean? We are not sure of what all these rewards are. Some involve positions of responsibility others notoriety. The exact rewards are not entirely spelled out, because there is an expectation and excitement in the world to come, the mystery yet to be revealed, God just gives us a glimpse. Just as people in this world seek the rewards of this world, the Lord want His saints to seek the world to come.

People work tirelessly night and day, earning degrees or making sales to reap the reward in this life, this reward is temporary and passing. On the other hand, Christ promises eternal reward to those who are willing to live victoriously.