

Unmasking the Supernatural 07

“And (Jesus) said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven!” Luke 10:18

Essential Factors for Victorious Living:

Today we will look at 9 essential factors behind successful, victorious, Christian living. When through the Holy Spirit we possess them, we can then ask God that the same blessings may crown the lives of those we pray for.

Factor 1: Divine Compassionate Love:

This factor is the very foundation of God's government. In fact, divine compassionate love flows directly from the heart of God. It is a love for others that knows no bounds.

Human love is wrapped up in selfishness and produces results that are at best shaky and short-lived; divine compassionate love is a force that never fails. There is great comfort in the fact that the "Father of infinite pity" so loved humanity that "he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

We need to hunger and thirst for God to impart that divine force to us. In talking about the love of Christ and our great need of it, Ellen White observed that "the completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within" Christ's Object Lessons, p. 384.

The reason that Christian homes are breaking up as they are today, devastating the lives of men, women, and children, is that our Christian hearts lack that divine compassionate love. We may not admit it, but our actions are speaking louder than words.

Factor 2: Heavenly Joy.

The next factor is often greatly misunderstood because of a powerful counterfeit. That valuable element is heavenly joy. Through the ages Satan has misled humans by causing them to believe that they will find joy in self-pleasing and self-serving, without any consideration for others. But such a lifestyle leads only to disappointment and often great unhappiness.

On the other hand, in Christ, we will find a joy that never fails. "Those who abide in Jesus will be happy, cheerful, and joyful in God" (Testimonies, vol. 4, p. 626).

Romans 15:3 says that "Christ pleased not himself." He found great joy in blessing the lives of others. "Not for Himself, but for others, He lived and thought and prayed" (Christ's Object Lessons, p. 139).

The Bible declares about the early disciples, "And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 13:52).

Today we need to pray for heavenly joy with great intensity and desire. Only then can we work to pass the same blessing to others.

Factor 3: Heavenly Peace.

Both the rich and the poor, and the strong and the weak, seek peace. There are various degrees of peace, but let's reach out for the very best, that is, heavenly peace. That kind of peace brings pleasant relaxation by imparting a mental or spiritual state of mind that frees us from disquieting and perturbing fears. We think of Jesus, who slept in a boat during a storm; or of Peter, who slept soundly the night before his scheduled execution.

We today need that same freedom from fear. How can a person acquire such a state of mind? When the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, the representative of Christ on earth, imparts heavenly peace to someone, He completely delivers that person's mind from any fears that would make him or her anxious or restless.

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Factor 4: Longsuffering.

To appreciate this factor, one has to remember the cruel world that we live in. Distresses and perplexities come in many forms, but the most difficult ones are the injustices and unkindness inflicted upon us by others. Sometimes it amounts to harsh and even cruel treatment by individuals who have no control of their tongues.

James 3 compares the tongue to a little fire that turns into a blaze doing vast damage. To survive such experiences one has to receive special help in the form of longsuffering, another divine attribute of our Redeemer. God declared Himself to be "the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth" Exodus 34:6.

If we seek a fresh baptism of this heavenly grace on a daily basis, we will be able to patiently bear with the shortcomings of others, and sincerely pray for a divine blessing on their lives also. Like Paul we will be able to say, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" Philippians 4:13.

Factor 5: Gentleness.

This is an element of great value in the field of communication. Be it in the business world or in working directly with people who need help, a most valuable asset is gentleness.

"True gentleness is a gem of great value in the sight of God. A meek and quiet spirit will not be ever looking out for happiness for itself, but will seek for self-forgetfulness and find sweet content and true satisfaction in making others happy." Testimonies, vol. 3, p. 536. Jesus beautifully illustrated it during His ministry on earth, and He always accompanied it with the element of tact.

Webster's Dictionary defines tact as "that delicate perception of the right thing to say or do without offending." "The truth should be presented with divine tact, gentleness, and tenderness. It should come from a heart that has been softened and made sympathetic." Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 400.

"When in faith we take hold of His strength, He will change, wonderfully change, the most hopeless, discouraging outlook. He will do this for the glory of His name" Testimonies, vol. 8, p. 12.

Factor 6: Goodness.

Again we find an attribute of God, one that might frustrate us at first since the Bible clearly says that we do not have it. It is the element of goodness.

The prophet Jeremiah wrote that the human heart is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" Jeremiah 17:9. The ancient Hebrews failed God miserably because of their lack of goodness. Their unconsecrated lives led to their ruin. Ezekiel 36 describes the situation this way.

"Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own way and by their doings And I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries And when they entered unto the heathen, thither they went, they profaned my holy name, when they said to them, These are the, people of the Lord But I had pity for mine holy name Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake. ... I will sanctify my great name and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you [will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them" Ezekiel 36:17-27.

It is a great encouragement to know that the Lord is more than eager to provide us with His goodness, and to enable us to experience successful, victorious, Christian living through the indwelling of His Holy Spirit if only we take the time daily to ask for it.

Factor 7: Living Faith.

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This factor is so vital to one's Christian experience that if we lack it, it spiritual growth will not take place. In fact, the Bible tells us that without it, one cannot please God. That most important factor is a living faith. "Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Hebrews 11:6.

A living faith increases our spiritual strength, enabling us to develop an unfaltering trust in our heavenly Father, and in the power of His Holy Spirit. "Faith is inspired by the Holy Spirit, and will flourish only as it is cherished." *The Great Controversy*, p. 527.

When we pray for it, we might as well seek the highest degree of faith available; genuine biblical faith. It will impart great belief in God, great trust in Him, and above all, a loyalty to Him that will be immovable; like we read about in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews.

Factor 8: Meekness.

In a world that promotes self-esteem and self-exaltation on every side, God's people need as never before, a precious heavenly trait that adorns the character of Christ. That valuable factor is the meekness of Christ.

To be modest, humble, and submissive to God's will is of great value in God's sight. "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" Isaiah 57:15.

Factor 9: Self Control Imparted by the Holy Spirit.

About a hundred years ago, Mrs. White, through divine inspiration, was told that at the very close of earth's history, immorality would abound everywhere, and licentiousness would be the special sin of the age. Jesus declared that "as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." We read in Genesis 6:5 that "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

Only by following Jesus' way, can we expect to live a successful, victorious Christian life when we find ourselves surrounded with evil. "Christ came to this world to show that by receiving power from on high, man can live an unsullied [undefiled, pure] life" *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 25.

"Not even by a thought did he yield to temptation" *Desire of Ages*, p. 123. The special power that we need so greatly, is self-control imparted by the Spirit of God.

An old dictionary defines self-control as "the ability to check or regulate, to restrain, and to govern self in all aspects of life." We can possess purity of thought, purity of heart, and purity of life, even in this day and age by controlling our thoughts with the power of the Spirit of God blessing our minds. Romans 12:21 tells us to "overcome evil with good."

Keeping the mind busy with thoughts that will elevate and ennoble one's character is the formula to success. An excellent way to do that is to memorize God's Holy Word. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Psalm 119:11.

Failure to control one's thoughts can be disastrous. Writing about Samson, Ellen White said, "Physically, Samson was the strongest man upon the earth; but in self-control, integrity, and firmness, he was one of the weakest of men." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 567. The real greatness of a man is "measured by the power of the feelings that he controls."

The Word of God says of man, "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he." Proverbs 23:7. "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart" Psalm 24:3, 4.

"Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church." The Desire of Ages, p. 671.

Victory through Christ; what a majestic experience! Prayers that will produce high dividends for the kingdom of God are ours to experience and enjoy now.

Plan of Action

Here is a plan of action to find freedom from any type of demonic oppression or enslavement to sin or destructive habits. Whatever the problem that may be afflicting your life or the lives of those you care about; you can be confident that the answer is to be found in the superior power of our great Redeemer.

This power is available only through the merits of the divine blood of Christ shed on Calvary for our salvation. We need to have a clear picture of that great sacrifice in our minds. One way is to read the account in Matthew 27:24-54; or the crucifixion scenes in the other gospels. Also a careful reading of the chapter "Calvary" in the Desire of Ages is well worth while to deepen our understanding and appreciation of this unspeakable gift of love that has made it possible for us to be saved.

Then plead with our Heavenly Father for the merits of that great sacrifice to be appropriated to you personally; and ask that the Holy Spirit be given to fight your spiritual battles for you, and overthrow the forces of evil. If you are praying for someone else, you can ask the same things for them; having first asked them for yourself.

"Earnest, persevering supplication to God in faith--faith that leads to entire dependence upon God, and unreserved consecration to His work--can alone avail to bring men the Holy Spirit's aid in the battle against principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, and wicked spirits in high places." Desire of Ages 431.

"In describing to His disciples the office work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus sought to inspire them with the joy and hope that inspired His own heart. He rejoiced because of the abundant help He had provided for His church. The Holy Spirit was the highest of all gifts that He could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church." Desire of Ages 671.

So you can see why it is so important that we ask the Father, in the name of Jesus, claiming only the merits of His blood, for the Holy Spirit daily, for whatever we are doing. We need His power to overcome sin; to break from evil habits; to escape demonic oppression; and to rightly comprehend the Word of God when we read or study.

We must have the way wide open between us and our Creator at all times. First thing in the morning, as soon as one returns to wakefulness, direct your mind to the Most Holy Place of the heavenly Sanctuary, where Jesus is ministering the merits of His shed blood before the Mercy Seat on behalf of His people. This needs to be the first thing you think of; don't get out of bed, talk to anyone or anything else, until you address the Lord Jesus. Do it silently if it's not possible to speak out loud; but thank Him for His loving care over you and for appropriating to you the merits of His sacred blood that He shed on Calvary for your salvation. Dedicate your life to Him for that day and ask for cleansing by His blood and forgiveness of sin; and His guidance and protection over you for the day. Your words may differ but the principles must remain the same.

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We need to strengthen our confidence in Christ's power to save, and one mighty way to do this is by reading and memorizing precious Promises from the scriptures that build our faith. Some examples include:

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:" Colossians 1:14.

That is where the power is; through the Blood of the Lamb that was shed for us on Calvary!

"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:" Colossians 1:16.

Jesus even created the fallen angels and their master; although they were not fallen when He made them. In reality their very existence depends on Him who will someday take the element of life from them and they will cease to exist. We need to build our faith on these things because there is nothing or no one in the universe more powerful than our Lord Jesus Christ! Notice:

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Matthew 28:18.

So if ALL power is given to Him; how much is left for Satan and his bunch? None, really; the only way that he can gain any power in our lives is by luring us to desire things that separate us from God; or getting us to lose faith in God's Word and the power of Jesus and fall into doubt and discouragement; or by getting us to think we have to be so busy that we don't have time for personal devotions and feeding our souls. Then we lose our connection with the throne of God and fade away spiritually. Always remember that God has given us all the good things; all that Satan and the world have to offer will not provide to us anything good; but only take us away from good and into evil.

Notice this warning: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. 9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. 10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:" Colossians 2:8-10.

The Lord Jesus is God in the fullest sense of the word, and we are complete in Him; we lack nothing for our salvation because He is the head of all principalities and powers. Read often this declaration by the Apostle Paul:

"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:38, 39.

A few words of warning; have no contact with hypnotists; fortunetellers, even those who do it 'just for fun'; astrologers, reading horoscopes; palm readers; or psychics of any kind. Do not associate with professed Christians who converse with demon spirits when they claim to drive them out; as in deliverance ministries. Do not affiliate yourself with anyone who claims to talk with spirits of the dead. Because we know that the Bible assures us that the dead "know not anything." Ecclesiastes 9:5. So it is only the fallen angels that they are talking with. People like these, are used by Satan to break through the walls of God's protection around His people. Never accept any gift from these people, as that can allow the dark angels to have access to your home.

Also avoid any of these things in stories; movies; games or any entertainment for yourself or your children. It is strange that God's people, who know the truth about these things, are often found watching or reading entertainment that upholds them. Strange indeed, and very foolish indeed!

Again let us repeat; if we want power from on high as we intercede in prayer for ourselves or others, we must go where this power is found; infinite power is found in the merits of the divine blood of Christ. The more we become acquainted with that infinite sacrifice of Calvary, the stronger we become with the enlightenment of

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the Holy Spirit and Christ's power to save. Keep in mind that the Holy Spirit is the only means to resist and overcome sin. Only through Him we can live victorious and successful Christian lives. It is vital that we daily ask the heavenly Father in the name of Jesus for His Holy Spirit to fight our spiritual battles against self, sin and the world; and above all, against the power of the fallen angels! By praying in this manner for those we want to see saved, the Holy Spirit can work miracles of redemption such as we read about in Acts 19.

We need to keep the sense of God's presence with us as we go through our days; often turning our thoughts to thanking Him for appropriating the Blood of Christ to us and those we are praying for. The Spirit of God can and will transform lives; remedy desperate conditions and provide victory for the hopeless. Gather up precious gems of encouragement and store them in memory for times of need; notice this promise:

"Grace is an attribute of God exercised toward undeserving human beings. We did not seek for it, but it was sent in search of us. God rejoices to bestow His grace upon us, not because we are worthy, but because we are so utterly unworthy. Our only claim to His mercy is our great need.

"The Lord God through Jesus Christ holds out His hand all the day long in invitation to the sinful and fallen. He will receive all. He welcomes all. It is His glory to pardon the chief of sinners. He will take the prey from the mighty, He will deliver the captive, He will pluck the brand from the burning. He will lower the golden chain of His mercy to the lowest depths of human wretchedness, and lift up the debased soul contaminated with sin." Ministry of Healing 161.

Living in the land of the enemy in these closing days of earth's history is not easy; but we have the assurance that Jesus will see us through it all, and one day we will stand with the overcomers and receive the promised rewards.

It is vital to realize that it is important to place complete faith in the Father's perfect plan of Salvation. Some folk fall into the error of confessing their old sins over and over again, repeatedly asking for forgiveness. One person said that they often thought about how evil they were before they came to accept Jesus as their Lord, and about all the wicked things that they did. This person said they had a hard time believing that God had forgiven them all those sins, and would confess them again. They said they felt better when they did this. However, we have to realize that by doing this, the person was actually insulting God, and showing a lack of faith that would leave the door open for the harassment of evil angels.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:" Ephesians 2:8.

This faith needs to be exercised and strengthened. Notice the promise; "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9.

Demonic spirits are delighted to cause individuals to 'feel unforgiven'. They know that the Bible described the person's unstable state of mind and lack of faith as having no value before God in obtaining anything. If we ask anything of God it has to be in faith. Notice:

"But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. 7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord." James 1:6

"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Hebrews 11:6.

Remember also we can always use the prayer, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief."

Feelings and Forgiveness.

There is a story of a little girl, told by Hannah Smith, about this subject of forgiveness.

"One of my children came to me evidently in great perplexity and said, "Mother, how long does it take God to forgive you when you have been naughty?"

"It does not take Him a minute," I replied.

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"Oh," she said, "I can't believe that. I think you have to feel sorry first for a good many days, and then you have to ask Him in a very pretty and nice way, and then perhaps He can forgive you."

"But," I said, "daughter, the Bible says that if we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us right straight off."

"Well," she said, "I wouldn't believe that if fifty Bibles said it, because I know that you have got to feel sorry for quite a good while, and then you have got to ask God in a very pretty way, and then you have got to wait till He is ready to forgive you."

"I found the case was really serious, so, taking the child on my lap, I opened the Bible and made her read out loud the verse I had quoted, and then explained to her that God loved us so much that He sent His Son to die for us, and that, because of His love, He was always ready to forgive us the minute we asked Him, just as mothers were always ready to forgive their children as soon as the children wanted to be forgiven. At last the child was convinced, and putting her little hands together she said in a reverent little voice, "Dear Lord Jesus, I want you to forgive me this very minute for all my naughty, and I am certain sure you will, because you love me." And then she jumped down off my lap and ran away shouting merrily in childish glee.

"My little girl was happy because she had found out a happy fact and believed it. But in her first way of looking at the matter she was only voicing the natural idea of the human heart. We all feel, as she did, that we must come to God with great doubt and timidity, as to a Being of whom we know but little, and whom we fear much; and that His favour depends altogether upon the beauty and suitableness of our emotions, and the ceremonious order of our approach. To come "boldly to the throne of grace to find mercy and obtain help in the time of need" is only possible to the soul that has been brought into a real acquaintance with the goodness of God."

So for those people who find themselves feeling doubtful that they are forgiven, we need to realize that Satan and his angels have the ability to flash thoughts into our minds and we think these are our own thoughts. This is why it is so important to rely on faith in the Word of God and not on our fickle feelings.

"I like so much that story of Luther when the devil said to him: "Luther, do you feel that you are a child of God?" and Luther replied, "No, I do not *feel* it at all, but I *know* it. Get thee behind me, Satan." Hannah Smith

Persons having these thoughts popped into their minds can defeat the purpose of the enemy by praising God that he *has* forgiven them and read or repeat from memory some of the precious promises.

"Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. 2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: 3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; 4 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;" Psalm 103:1-4.

"He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. 11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. 12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. 13 Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. 14 For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." Psalm 103:10-14

Humming or singing precious hymns is another effective way to dispel these doubtful thoughts. It is important to be joyful in the Lord and praise Him often for having forgiven our sins and for the Holy Spirit successfully fighting our spiritual battles because of the precious blood of Jesus applied to us. This builds and strengthens our faith. Discouraging thought flee when we think of our Savior in the heavenly sanctuary interceding for us and we dart up a prayer to Him, "Jesus, please help!" then the Holy Spirit will bring to our mind a verse of Scripture or precious hymn that lifts us up. Remember though, we need to store these things in memory so that He can do this for us!

What Motivated Jesus?

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Ellen White has revealed the all-powerful element that compelled Christ to go to Calvary: "Love for God, zeal for His glory, and love for fallen humanity, brought Jesus to earth to suffer and to die. This was the controlling power in His life. This principle He bids us adopt" Desire of Ages, p. 330.

Our Lord tried constantly to impress the minds of His disciples with His divine compassionate love for fallen mortals. He spent much time in prayer, giving them an example to follow so that they also could become mighty intercessors for others.

When He ascended to heaven He had no fear that His disciples would fail Him as they worked for the salvation of others. He would send them the One who would teach them how to live in such a way as not to fail their Redeemer. That Precious One was not given only for the disciples back then; He did not leave the earth when the last of them died. Oh no! He is available to us today, and His power is no less than it was back in the early days of the church. The mighty power of the Third Person of the Godhead is available to us today for the asking, to fight our spiritual battles and to overcome sin.

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Hebrews 4:16