

“I Can Do All Things Through Christ”

27

From Glory to Glory



Character development is said to be the most important work ever entrusted to human beings. During the next hour, we will explore both our privilege and our responsibility to become Christ-like in character. Join us now for this powerful time of personal renewal as Pastor Stephen Wallace takes us "From Glory to Glory."

Welcome back, friends. I appreciate so much the privilege of continuing in this study on the central role of the will in character development. We are on page 59 in our printout, Lesson 27. Title: **"I Can Do All Things Through Christ."** I love that verse; I love that verse. It goes on to say, **I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. {Phil 4:13}** I want to, by God's grace, make it very, very clear how it is we can succeed, not only in our quest to overcome the opposition factor of the flesh with all of its lusts, but succeed in our quest for a Christ-like character. I want to make it very clear that the secret of success is the union, the union, of divine power with human effort. Oh, friends, very important study at hand, and remember, **spiritual things are only, what? ...spiritually discerned. {1 Cor 2:13-14}**

I hope you don't resent me for telling you that over and over again. But you know, we are so prone to be self-sufficient when it comes to the study of God's Word. Will you admit that with me? God forgive us. But I'm here to tell you, my friends, we don't have what it takes. We just don't have what it takes... to have a life-changing experience in the study of God's Word, anyway. Oh, yes, we can intellectualize and theologize and you know debate, have an intellectual exercise in the study of God's Word, but my dear friends, I hope that you want more than that from the study of God's Word. You do, don't you? {Amen} You want to be more like Jesus for having studied His Word, don't you? If that's going to be our experience, we have to study His Word under the influence of Jesus' Spirit, the Spirit of Truth. Only the Spirit of Truth can really reveal God's glory to us as we study the Word, and certainly only the Spirit of Truth can restore God's glory in us. So both in order to behold the glory and to be restored into His likeness, we are dependant upon the Holy Spirit. So let's pray for it. Let's pray for each other as we pray for ourselves, once again for the outpouring of God's Spirit upon us.

Father God, again, in the quietness of this evening, in this lovely place, we praise You for the privilege of opening Your Word, for the purpose of studying the truth as it is in Jesus. But Father, because we want this to be more than just a... just an intellectual exercise, because we want this to be a life-changing experience, we begin by opening our hearts, and by inviting Your Spirit, the Spirit of Truth to come in, so that our study of the truth might enable us to experience more fully than ever before its liberating, sanctifying power in our lives. Father, I have the undeserved privilege of leading out in this study. I freely acknowledge to You that I am not up to task. But I am so grateful that You condescend to use earthen, sin-damaged mortals as channels of the blessing of truth. I pray that through what the apostle Paul refers to as the foolishness of preaching, the Holy Spirit might be able to communicate life-changing truth to each heart and mind, through this poor, earthen vessel. Please, Lord, work that miracle and should anyone receive a blessing, we will all know who alone gets the credit. It's You, and not the poor earthen vessel You condescended to use. Please Father, grant this prayer, for I ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. {Phil. 4:13} We are looking at the role of the will, the governing power in the nature of man, and we've come to recognize that its role is absolutely central, it's crucial. Indeed, everything depends upon the right action of the will. Why?

Because the will is the governing power in the nature of man, the power of decision, the power of choice; and as inspiration says, **"In every experience of life, God's word to us is,"** what? **"Choose you this day whom you will serve."** {Ed 289.1} Why? Because in every experience of life, we are confronted with two opposite sets of desires as to how to respond to that experience: **the lusts of the flesh and the lust of the Spirit.** {Gal 5:17} Yes, that word lust can be used in reference to the Spirit, because in the Greek it simply means strong desires. Does the Spirit have strong desires? Yes, and these desires are radically, diametrically opposed. Therefore **no man can serve two masters** {Mat 6:24}; we've got to make a choice. **In every experience, God's word to us is, "Choose you this day,"** choose you this moment, **"whom you will serve."** {Josh 24:15} Choose, choose, choose, choose.

It's only... with a will that has been submitted to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, responding to the redemptive price paid to set it free from its natural **bondage to sin, self, and Satan** {AA 558.1}, we can submit our will to the Lordship of Jesus Christ; and when He takes our will, what does He do? Does He exercise it for us? No, my dear friends. He empowers it that we might exercise it ourselves in harmony with His. In harmony with His...

And the reason this is so very important to understand is because not only of the central role of the will in character development and in overcoming temptation, but it is especially important to understand in light of this false teaching, that is very popular amongst us as a people, that has misled many. I have a burden to counter that with the truth, and as I've considered this false teaching, I've asked myself, *"why?"* ...and I've come to the conclusion that, as we noted in passing earlier, it is an overreaction to legalism; it's an overreaction to legalism. It's an overreaction to human effort. It's an erroneous conclusion that all human effort is legalism, which is simply not the case. But my dear friends, it's also taking a very important truth to an imbalanced extreme.

Now, let me explain something here to you about heresy. Heresy is never just blatant error. Satan knows better than to try to pawn off blatant error, doesn't he? So what is he a master at? Mixing truth with error, or taking truth to an extreme, to the point where it becomes imbalanced. Now typically it's a gradual process. First of all, someone perceives that there is a certain imbalance here, and they want to throw their weight in the opposite direction to try to maintain a balance; and so they start hammering on a very important balancing truth. But if they're not careful, they can hammer so hard that it becomes over-emphasized. And first of all, it neglects a balancing truth, and then it - when it becomes a full-fledged heresy - it denies a balancing truth.

Now this false doctrine that I'm trying to warn you of here, what is the truth that it has taken to an extreme? **"Without me, you can do nothing."** Is that truth? Absolutely that's truth. That's the first text here, **John 15:5, "Without Me you can do nothing."** Jesus said that, of course that's true. No one can deny that. But my dear friends, we get into trouble if we take that truth to an extreme. What do I mean? Yes, it is true, that without Him we can do nothing. But don't take that too far. Don't conclude that *"with Him we have nothing to do"*. Are you with me? **"Without Him we can do nothing."** Yes. With Him we have nothing to do? No. No, no, no. What is the balancing truth? **"Without Him we can do nothing."** But, **"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."** {Phil 4:13} Amen? Yes, of course, without the strength of Jesus Christ we can do nothing. But that doesn't mean that we should expect Jesus Christ to do it all for us. Sit back and let go and let God.

By the way, I worry about that expression, *"Let go and let God."* I will acknowledge that there are certain contexts in which it might be appropriate. But it causes me a good deal of concern because it sounds like we expect to just be passive and indolent, and God will do whatever needs to be done. Is that the way it works in the Christian experience? No, my brother, my sister. It's hang on for dear life and in His strength, will and do His good pleasure. That's what it is; and as you do that, **"we can do"**, what? **"...all things through Christ who,"** what? **"...strengthens us."** Please understand that.

Youth's Instructor, September 20, 1894: "God has given you moral powers, and has made you susceptible to religious influences; He has provided opportunities and facilities that are favorable to the development of a Christ-like character; and it now remains with you as to whether or not you will cooperate with divine agencies, and make your calling and election sure. Will you not seize, appreciate, and appropriate every help that has been provided? You must pray, believe, and obey. In your own strength you can do nothing; but in the grace of Jesus Christ, you can employ your powers in such a way as to bring the greatest good to your own soul and the greatest blessing to the souls of others. Lay hold of Jesus, and you will diligently work the works of Christ, and will finally receive the eternal reward. Be faithful in that which is least." Do you see the protective balance here? It acknowledges the truth that, "Without Him we can do," what? "...nothing" But it doesn't take it to the extreme where with Him we have, what? ...nothing to do... quite the contrary. We are to, what? "...lay hold of Jesus, and you will diligently work the works of Christ." That's just about as opposite as "Let go, let God" as you can get. Are we all together on this?

Now, why am I so determined that this be clear, my dear friends? Well, precisely because of the next statement, **Patriarchs and Prophets, page 509: "The secret of success is the union of divine power with human effort."** Are we talking about something that's just incidental here? Something that's not important? No, brother, sister, we are talking about the secret of success in our quest for a Christ-like character. In our quest for fitness for heaven. In our efforts to overcome the opposition factor of the flesh and all the lusts of the flesh. "The secret of success is the union of divine power with," what? "...human effort."

By the way, who do you suppose knows full well that **the union of divine power with human effort is the secret of success?** - Satan, Satan. Now, if knowing that, and you were Satan, what do you suppose you would be very anxious to get people to do? Drop out either one or the other of those two essential components in the success equation. Wouldn't you? Why, of course you would. If the only way someone's going to succeed is by **the union of divine power with human effort**, then you're going to do your very best to get people to believe that either one or the other is not necessary.

What do we call dropping out divine power? The divine power component in the success equation? We call it humanism, humanism, where man is supposedly inherently good. He just needs some opportunities and some encouragement and a good government subsidy will help, and educational program, he'll make good; he'll become a good person. No, no. "Without Him we can do," what? "nothing" {Jn 15:5} that is good. Sure, we can get good at being swindlers and crooks, but I'm talking about being someone that's really good in the sense of Christian values. You can't do that without the help of the Holy Spirit. I don't care how much education you get. That takes supernatural power. Amen? Supernatural power.

But there's another way that the devil might get us to fail, by getting us to drop the human effort component in the success equation. Are you following this? How might he do that? Well, he might come up with a theory that would get us all to believe that human effort is categorically legalism; and whoever buys into that, of course, they wouldn't want to be a legalist, so they wouldn't want to put forth any, what? ...any effort, and they would be doomed to what? ...failure. Do you see that, my dear friends? And Satan would be just thrilled, just thrilled.

You know, as I travel, and as I've worked with this beloved church of ours, I've had the opportunity to counsel with, and listen to the testimony of numerous Seventh-day Adventist believers. There have been occasions when I have had people share with me their inability to overcome some serious problem in their life, some besetting sin, and as I discuss with them how they might be able to do that, do you know what often surfaces? When I ask them for instance, what they are doing to

cooperate with the Lord in gaining victory, they say, *"What do you mean? I don't want to be a legalist;"* and immediately I know that they have been indoctrinated by this dangerous false teaching.

My dear friends, please, the success equation must have both what? **Divine power and human effort.** Listen to this remarkable statement. **Testimonies, Volume 7, page 239: "Our success is wrought out by ourselves..."** Now if I stop there, what would that be? Humanism. But that's not the end of the sentence, is it? **"Our success is wrought out by ourselves through the grace of Christ."** There you have it; that's the success equation. **Human effort with what? ...divine power.** In the words of Paul: **"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."** {Phil 4:13} There you have it; there you have it.

You know, I... I'm going to make a radical statement here. Some of you might find it hard to accept, but I'm going to make it anyway, because I want to drive this point home. **"Without Him, we can do nothing"** in our own personal salvation experience. But it is also true that without us, He can do nothing in our own personal salvation experience. Now, please note, I qualified it, *"in our own,"* what? *"...personal salvation experience."* Did He need our help when it came to working out the provisions of salvation? Oh, no. No, no, no, no, no. I'm not saying that. But I am saying when it comes to the personal application of those provisions and the experience of their efficacy, He has to have our cooperation. He has to.

Listen, I wouldn't make such a radical statement without inspired support. **Amazing Grace, page 319: "Man can accomplish nothing without God,"** Are we all clear? **"Man can accomplish nothing without God, and God has arranged His plans so as to accomplish nothing in the restoration of the human race without the cooperation of the human with the divine."** Remarkable. Now before, bless your heart, before you get too impressed with your absolutely essential contribution, please, please, please read this next sentence: **"The part man is required to sustain is immeasurably small."** Humbling, isn't it? **"The part man is required to sustain is,"** what? **"...immeasurably small,"** but listen, **"yet in the plan of God it is just that part that is needed to make the work a success."** Immeasurably small, but absolutely, what? Essential. Absolutely essential. Please understand the absolute necessity of human effort if divine power is going to be a success.

Ministry of Healing, page 130: I want to work with this remarkable statement. First sentence: **"Apart from divine power, no genuine reform can be effected."** Pause. **"Apart from divine power, no,"** what kind of reform? **"...genuine reform can be effected."** Please note that qualifier. Is it possible to effect significant reform without divine power though? Yes, behavior modification is possible, remarkably possible, if you have sufficient ego-motivation. Follow me now, please. What did I just say? Behavior modification is possible if you have sufficient, what? ...ego-motivation. And I would suggest to you, bless your hearts, that modern psychiatry and psychology, if it is not Christ-centered, is exclusively dependant upon ego-motivation to bring about behavior modification. But it can be done; it can be done. But is that genuine reform? No, that's just putting on **whitewash on the sepulcher.** {Mat 23:27} Are you with me? That's really hypocrisy. See, genuine reform has to spring from a converted intellect, a change of heart. But ego-motivation through behavior modification is simply gritting your teeth and making yourself behave in this given area because there are sufficient perks and advantages to make it pay off. Are you following this?

Let me illustrate. A remarkable reform that took place, although it's dwindling even now, took place in this nation some years back in the area of sexual relations, a good deal of abstinence. Why? Was it a genuine reform? No, fear of AIDS is what caused it. Not a genuine reform, is it?

Let's go back to our statement. **"Apart from divine power, no genuine reform can be effected."** Why is this the case? Reading on: **"Human barriers against natural and cultivated tendencies are but as the sandbank against the torrent."** I like that. Human barriers are but as the

what? **"...the sandbank against the torrent."** **"Not until the life of Christ becomes a vitalizing power in our lives can we resist the temptations that assail us from within and from without."** You see, my dear friends, if we're really going to get true victory and have genuine reform, we have got to learn to overcome temptation. But **"human barriers against natural and cultivated tendencies are but as,"** what? **"...the sandbank against the torrent."**

Let's develop that a little bit. Back several years ago now, before **we saw the light {CL 12.5}** and moved to Montana, we used to live in Michigan, not all that far from the shore of Lake Michigan. And our children were small then, and they used to love to have mommy and daddy take them to the beach. Now, it wasn't a real beach, as in seashore, but the shore of Lake Michigan is sandy and Lake Michigan is so big you can't see the other side, and if the wind's blowing you actually have waves, so you can make yourself think you're at the seashore. There's not the smell of salt water, which you miss, but everything else is pretty good. And the children used to love to have us go with them, and every time they would want daddy to help them build a sand castle. And I remember this one particular Sunday, I had come fully equipped. I had shovels, and I had all sorts of different shapes of Tupperware that you can put the sand in and, you know... and it was a fun project; I really outdid myself. It must have been about 20 feet long, this sand castle; and it had... and it had turrets and it had moles and it had bridges and it had towers... and it had a bridge or two; it was really a masterpiece... stairs. The kids were having so much fun. They brought their little plastic toys, little plastic people, and they were playing.

I was enjoying them, enjoying the sandcastle, and as I was standing there, I noticed that the waves were getting a little larger, and quicker; and I don't remember what it was, whether a ship went by or the wind was coming up, but they were threatening the sandcastle. Because of course to build a sand castle, you have to be right down next to the water. That's the only place the sand is wet enough to pack. Dry sand you can't... you understand... Anyway, the sand castle was in big trouble if daddy didn't do something and do it quick. Daddy to the rescue. I got down on my knees and I pushed, and I shoved, and I worked, and I perspired; in fact it was just dropping off my brow; and I built this marvelous sand bank to protect the castle from the waves, and when I got up, I looked at my knees and they were actually bleeding. I'd rubbed them raw working so hard to save the castle, save the day! I got up and I thought that's worth it, that's worth it. I've saved the castle.

Had I saved the castle? Have you ever watched what waves do to a sand bank? It's remarkable; I was amazed. Every wave that came took this huge bite out of my sand bank, and spread it smoothly down the beach. I didn't count how many waves it took, but it wasn't long before the massive sand barrier that I built was gone; and then the waves started to destroy the sand castle, and the tears started to fall - the kids' not mine, you understand.

My dear friends, that's a parable. **Human barriers are but as,** what? **The sand bank against the torrent.** But that's not the end of the statement. What does it go on to say? **"Not until the life of Christ becomes a vitalizing power in our lives can we resist the temptations that assail us from within and from without."** Is there a power that can enable us to resist the waves of hereditary and cultivated temptations that come pounding in on the castle of the soul? Is there a power that will enable us to resist it? What is it? It's the vitalizing power of Christ's Spirit, my dear friends.

Back to the beach. What if daddy had had a vitalizing power known as cement? What happens when you mix sand and cement together? With enough water and enough time, what do you end up with? ...concrete, and concrete is what they make those jetties out of. Concrete is what protects the boats in even hurricane weather, most of the time. Concrete is what those massive waves come crashing into and are transformed into a billion droplets of sparkling, harmless water. That's what concrete will do for you. Do I hear an "amen"? My dear friends, please make application. We have the sand; He has the cement. What do you say we give Him our sand so that He can give us His cement?

...and make of the castle of our soul an impregnable fortress. Amen? We have the will; He has the power. When we give Him our will, He gives us willpower. Amen? He gives us willpower. And is there any limit, I ask you, my dear friends, to the divine power that is available to us when we give Him our will? Is there any limit? No!

Listen to this remarkable statement. Bless his heart, this was one of my grandpa's favorites. He loved the Spirit of Prophecy, and he used to share this with me. I can hear him now, quoting it. **Christ's Object Lessons, page 333: "As the will of man co-operates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent."** Do you hear that? **"Whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings."** Oh, dear friends, when we give Him our will, is there any limit to the power He will give us? No, no. But please note, it is **"AS..." "AS the will of man cooperates with the will of God"** that **"it becomes omnipotent."** What's the secret of success? **"The union of divine power with human effort."** {PP 509.1} When our will is united to His power, my dear friends, **all His biddings are enablings. "All His biddings are enablings."** Do you believe it? {Yes. Amen} Oh, I pray that you do; I pray that you do. Please understand that though the part man is required to sustain is immeasurably small, the part God plays is immeasurably large. Amen? Indeed it is infinite; it is omnipotent power that He offers.

I love this statement; **Desire of Ages, page 323-324: "When the soul surrenders itself to Christ, a new power takes possession of the new heart. A change is wrought which man can never accomplish for himself. It is a supernatural work, bringing a supernatural element into human nature. The soul that is yielded to Christ, becomes His own fortress."** Pause; what's it made out of? ...concrete. **"The soul that is yielded to Christ, becomes His own fortress, which He holds in a revolted world, and He intends that no authority shall be known in it but His own. A soul thus kept in possession by the heavenly agencies, is,"** what? **"...impregnable to the assaults of Satan."** Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} My dear friends, do you want such a soul? A soul that's impregnable to the assaults of Satan. If you do, give your sand to Jesus. Please, give your will to Jesus, and He will give you His power.

By the way, please recognize that in order to have good cement and good concrete, you not only need cement, you need, what? ...sand... you need sand. Don't expect God to make you an impregnable fortress if you haven't given Him your sand. Don't expect willpower unless you've given Him your will. We have the will; He has the power. When we give Him our will, He gives us willpower.

And regarding the goal that is before us, in our quest for a Christ-like character, what is it again, my friends? We are to learn to **keep the heart with all diligence {Prov 4:23}** to the point of what? **"...bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."** {2 Cor 10:5} That's His bidding, and I'm here to assure you that in His grace and by His strength, we can do that. **His biddings are what? Enablings. His biddings are enablings.** Please don't doubt His power. **2 Corinthians 10:5, "...casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing,"** what? **"...every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."**

It's not going to be easy. It's not going to be easy to learn to govern the activity of the mind to that extent. But my dear friends, with persevering effort, combined with divine power, we can do that; and I plead with you, for your own sake and for Christ's sake, determine that in His strength you will learn to do that. **Christ's Object Lessons, page 331: "Christ has given us no assurance that to attain perfection of character is an easy matter. A noble, all-round character is not inherited. It does not come to us by accident. A noble character is earned by individual effort through the merits and grace of Christ. God gives the talents, the powers of the mind; we form the character. It is formed by hard, stern battles with self."** Are you hearing this? **"Conflict after conflict must be waged against hereditary tendencies. We shall have to criticize ourselves closely, and allow**

not one unfavorable trait to remain uncorrected. Let no one say, I cannot remedy my defects of character." Brother, sister, underline that. **"Let no one say, I cannot remedy my defects of character. If you come to this decision, you will certainly fail of obtaining everlasting life. The impossibility lies in your own will. If you will not, then you can not overcome."** Please notice, if you, what? **"If you will not, then you cannot overcome. The real difficulty arises from the corruption of an unsanctified heart, and an unwillingness to submit to the control of God."** Please, let's all admit that; can we? **"The real difficulty arises from the corruption of an unsanctified heart, and an unwillingness to submit to the control of God."** You see, if we submit to the control of God, my dear friends, **all His biddings are enablings**, and we will gain the victory. I don't care what the inherited or cultivated tendency is. His grace is sufficient; we can overcome in His strength. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen}

Education, page 289; I love this: "Everyone may place his will on the side of the will of God, may choose to obey Him, and by thus linking himself with divine agencies, he may stand where nothing can force him to do evil." That ought to thrill us. Do you want to stand where nothing can force you to do evil? I pray that you do. You can, you can. But what must you do? You must place your will on the side of the will of God.

Here's another one; **Testimonies, Volume 4, page 32-33: "God cannot save man against his will from the power of Satan's artifices. Man must work with his human power, aided by the divine power of Christ, to resist and to conquer at any cost to himself... Man must do his part; he must be victor on his own account, through the strength and grace that Christ gives him. Man must be a co-worker with Christ in the labor of overcoming, and then he will be partaker with Christ of His glory."** And what's glory class? Character, character.

Brother, sister, I pray that this essential success equation is oh so clear in your minds tonight. What is the secret of success? **"The union of,"** what? **"...divine power with human effort."** **"The union of divine power with human effort."**

Towards the very beginning of this seminar, and I have reiterated what I shared there at various times in the course of our studies. Perhaps you remember that I said, to know the truth to the point of experiencing its liberating power, requires three steps. Do any of you remember that? Jesus says in **John 8:32, "And you shall know the truth and the truth shall..."** what? **"...make you free."** Is there a difference between knowing the truth intellectually and knowing it to the point of experiencing its liberating power? Is there a difference? You know there is, bless your hearts. It's quite possible to have an intellectual assent to the truth and have no experience of its liberating power. To be in bondage to sin, self and Satan. You know that. So because that is the case, then obviously knowing the truth, as Christ refers to it here, involves more than just grasping it with the intellect, doesn't it? Do you remember the three steps? What are they? If we are to know the truth to the point of experiencing its liberating power, we must, what? ...grasp it with the intellect, number one. Number two, embrace it with the affections; and what did I say from the very beginning? ...and most importantly, what? ...submit to it with the will. What is so essential if we are going to experience the liberating power of the truth? It's that third step. We must submit to the truth with our what? Our wills. My dear friends, if we haven't done that, we will not experience the liberating power of the truth! You see, it's not enough to have the truth! We must let the truth have US. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} It's not enough to possess the truth. We must let the truth take possession of our wills. Then and only then, after we take that third step, will we experience its liberating power and ultimately, of course, who is the truth? It's Jesus, it's Jesus.

Youth's Instructor, September 20, 1900: "When man surrenders to Christ, the mind is brought under the control of the law." Pause: Why is the mind brought under the control of the law? Well, what is the governing power in the nature of man? What is it that even governs what goes on in

the mind? It is the will; and if we submit the governor of the mind, indeed, of the whole man, to the governance of God, then the whole man comes under the governance of God and we are under the control of the law. But what kind of a law is it? Listen. Please get this point; this is crucial: **"When man surrenders to Christ, the mind is brought under the control of the law, but it is the royal law, which proclaims,"** what? **"...liberty to every captive. Only by becoming one with Christ can men be made free."** Did you hear that? **"Subjection to the will of Christ means restoration to perfect manhood. Sin can triumph only by enfeebling the mind and destroying the liberty of the soul."** You see, my dear friends, what we must all recognize, is that when we submit our will to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, we aren't just moving from the tyranny of sin, self, and Satan, to be subjected to the tyranny of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit. We are not just moving out from under one bondage to be subjected to another. We are indeed moving from bondage to freedom. Amen? {Amen} Total, complete freedom.

Why? Because **the law** that we submit the will to, **is written**, where? **...on our hearts {Rom 2:15}**, and **it is the law of**, what? **...love. {Rom 13:8-10}** It's **the law of love**, which alone can enable us to be set free from the tyranny of selfishness. But my friends, those who are governed, who are subject to the law of love, are totally free because they are obeying, why? Because they have to? No, because they, what? **...want to.** Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} They want to... **They love God supremely and they love others unselfishly {DA 607.2}**, and therefore obedience to the law is no big hassle. It's not a grit your teeth and make yourself do it program. It's not even thought of as a duty. Indeed, motivated by love, it is a delight. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} Please don't lose sight of that!

Please don't lose sight of that, and notice something else: **"Subjection to the will of Christ means restoration to perfect manhood."** Now, sisters, I don't know how you're going to relate to that, but let me talk to my brothers here. Men, it is hard to describe the joy that this man has experienced when through submission of my will to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, I have been set free from old habits and hereditary tendencies that had a tyrannical control on me for so many years. You see, brothers, **we have within us a God-given desire to have dominion. {Gen 1:26-28}** Wasn't that what we were created to have? He gave us what? **...dominion.** And follow me, brothers: First and foremost we are to have dominion over, who? Ourselves. Amen? **...and by the way**, if we don't have dominion over ourselves, we can't possibly exercise authority aright over anyone else. But do you know what we inevitably do, my brothers? If we fail to exercise dominion over ourselves, then to compensate, we will, typically, exercise it over everyone else, and we become tyrants; we become tyrants.

I can't tell you the joy that this man, by God's grace, has experienced by being set free from the tyrannical bondage of sin, self, and Satan. It is so wonderful, by God's grace, to be restored to manhood. To be able to say no to my inherited and cultivated tendencies, and refuse to be controlled by them any longer. It is so wonderful... to be a man again. It's tremendous joy in it.

You know, we have such a... we have such a distorted concept of what constitutes a real man these days. You know, we have this phony macho image, where a man is at least six feet tall, he's broad at the shoulder, narrow at the hip, got hair all over him, you know and... nonsense. A man can be seven feet tall and be a total wimp, if he can't **control his appetites and passions. {PP 567.3}** Do I hear an "amen" brothers? Little quiet out there. What makes a man a man is the ability to govern his appetites and passions, and to keep the lid on his temper, and to **keep control of his tongue. {2MCP 520.3}** I'm here to tell you there is tremendous joy in restoration to manhood. This isn't a miserable thing, being set free from the tyranny of sin, self, and Satan. This is a wonderful thing! This is a liberating thing! This is a delight! This restores dignity, self-worth, respect, self-respect. It's a wonderful thing. Praise God that we can experience it. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} Praise God we can experience it.

In wrapping this all up, I've got to share with you some words of Christ again. You see, Christ taught, my dear friends, the necessity of human effort. This is not something that has not been clearly declared by Jesus Himself. There's more than one occasion, but note this one, **Luke 13:24**. What did He say? What did He exhort us to do? **"Strive to enter through the narrow gate."** "Strive," that word strive - that means put forth diligent, persevering, all-out efforts. Notice how inspiration speaks to this and amplifies it for us. I love this passage. By the way, the book Mount of Blessings is a favorite of mine - along with Steps to Christ, and Desire of Ages, and Ministry of Healing, and Patriarchs and Prophets, and Great Controversy, and... but Mount of Blessings is right up there towards the top. **Mount of Blessings, page 141-143**, some excerpts; listen: **"The belated traveler, hurrying to reach the city gate by the going down of the sun, could not turn aside for any attractions by the way. His whole mind was bent on the one purpose of entering the gate. The same intensity of purpose, said Jesus, is required in the Christian life. I have opened to you the glory of character, which is the true glory of My kingdom."** Very interesting. What is this gate that we are striving to enter? **"I have opened to you the glory of character, which is the true glory of My kingdom. It offers you no promise of earthly dominion; yet it is worthy of your supreme desire and effort. I do not call you to battle for the supremacy of the world's great empire, but do not therefore conclude that there is no battle to be fought nor victories to be won. I bid you strive, agonize, to enter into My spiritual kingdom."** Reading on: **"The Christian life is a battle and a march. But the victory to be gained is not won by human power. The field of conflict is the domain of the heart."**

Pause. What is the dominion that we are being restored to first of all? It's dominion over the domain of the heart. And my dear friends, we cannot be entrusted with dominion over the earth-made-new until we gain dominion over our hearts. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} The field of conflict is the domain of the heart. **"The battle which we have to fight - the greatest battle that was ever fought by man - is the surrender of self to the will of God. The yielding of the heart to the sovereignty of love."** I love that: **"The yielding of the heart to the,"** what? **"...the sovereignty of love."** **"The old nature, born of blood and of the will of the flesh, cannot inherit the kingdom of God. The hereditary tendencies, the former habits, must be given up... The divine Spirit works through the faculties and powers given to man. Our energies are required to cooperate with God... The will must be placed on the side of God's will... THEN, then you will '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.'" {Phil 2:12-13}**

Oh, brother, sister I plead with you for your sake and for Christ's sake, give your wills without reservation to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and He will give you power, unlimited power, to regain dominion first and foremost over your heart, to the point, indeed, of learning, for the love of Christ and in the strength of the Holy Spirit, to **bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.** **{2 Cor 10:5}** That's the goal; don't stop short. Shall we stand for prayer?

Father God, thank You so much that all Your biddings are enablings. If we will give you our wills, You will give us Your power, and that is unlimited power; and in Your strength we can do whatever You ask us to do, and You have asked us to "keep the heart with all diligence." You asked us to "be transformed by the renewing of our minds." You have asked us to be "bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." In Your strength we can. In Your strength we will. In Jesus' name. Amen. God bless you, brother, sister. Thank you so much.