

WILLPOWER

The Power over Temptation

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The Power to Surrender?

Growing up in a Christian home, I have always believed that God exists and is the all-powerful ruler of the universe. I realized that Jesus was my Savior, my only hope of salvation. I believed in the Bible as the Holy word of God. I faithfully attended church every week. I even preached a few sermons. In nearly all areas of my life, I lived by good Biblical principles. Yet, I had one cherished sin. I wanted to stop, but I couldn't. It was an addiction that I practiced for 25 years. I felt like [the man of Romans 7](#).

[Romans 7:18](#) For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not. [19](#) For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. [20](#) Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. [21](#) I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. [22](#) For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: [23](#) But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. [24](#) O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

I'd like to share with you how the power of God has worked, and is still working in my life to break the chains of addiction and give me a freedom that I never before realized was possible. In 1994, I was encouraged by some Biblical lessons I learned from the book, "Ministry of Healing"(MH), which I will be quoting throughout my testimony.

"God has not left us to battle with evil in our own finite strength. Whatever may be our inherited or cultivated tendencies to wrong, we can overcome through the power that He is ready to impart. **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.**" -Ministry of Healing, page 176

The key that set me free from bondage was the understanding of the true force of the will. The proper use of my God-given will power has brought me from the depths of addiction to the joy of freedom in Jesus Christ my Savior!

As a child, I was taught that the way to overcome temptation was to first try harder, then ask God for more strength so that I could try even harder. This worked for some things some of the time. But it didn't work for all temptations all the time. And it hardly ever worked for my cherished sin.

"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." -ibid

My desire was for "goodness and purity", but try as hard as I might, I was still going "down to ruin while hoping and desiring to overcome" my addictive behavior.

- [Matthew 26:41](#) Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: **the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.** -Jesus
- [John 5:30](#) **I can of mine own self do nothing:** as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. -Jesus
- [John 15:5](#) I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for **without me ye can do nothing.** -Jesus
- [Romans 9:16](#) So then **it is not of him that willeth,** nor of him that runneth, **but of God that sheweth mercy.**

After 25 years of failure, I finally came to realize that **I was powerless over my thoughts, my impulses, and my affections.** My spirit was willing, but my flesh was weak. I used to think that I could resist temptation with my own will power. But if Jesus said "[I can of mine own self do nothing](#)", then who am I that I should think that I can? In fact, He also said, "[without Me, ye can do nothing](#)". So then, paraphrasing [Romans 9:16](#), I must conclude that victory over sin does not come by my will power, but by God's power -- who has mercy on me. So, what *can* I do? What is my part in this so that God will use His power to overcome my sin?

God has given us the power of choice; it is ours to exercise. **We cannot change our hearts, we cannot control our thoughts, our impulses, our affections. We cannot make ourselves pure, fit for God's service. But we can choose to serve God, we can give Him our will; then He will work in us to will and to do according to His good pleasure. Thus our whole nature will be brought under the control of Christ.** -ibid

- [Joshua 24:15](#) And if it seem evil unto you to serve Jehovah, **choose you this day whom ye will serve;** whether the gods which your fathers served... but as for me and my house, **we will serve Jehovah.**
- [Deuteronomy 30:19](#) ... I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore **choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:**
- [1 Kings 19:12](#) and after the earthquake a fire; but Jehovah was not in the fire: and after the fire **a still small voice.**
- [Isaiah 30:21](#) and **thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it;** when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.

I began to discover [the divine principle of co-operation](#). I discovered that **I could choose to serve God.** The Bible says, "[choose you this day whom ye will serve](#)" and "[choose life that both thou and thy seed may live](#)". Since I believe that God's biddings are His enablings (Christ Object Lessons, page 333), I must conclude that He has given me the power of choice. So, now I must start my day by choosing to follow Jesus. Then, throughout the day, I must continue to choose to serve God by obeying that "[still small voice](#)" behind me saying "[This is the way, walk ye in it.](#)" If I don't, I make mistakes. I am deceived by the promptings of satan's evil angels.

Sometimes, God's promptings convict me against my natural inclinations. It goes against my will. When that happens, **I must choose to give Him my will** because "[Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father...](#)"(Matthew 7:21). When He calls for my will I must choose to say, as did Saul on the road to Damascus, "[Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?](#)"(Acts 9:6) "[Not as I will, but as thou wilt ... thy will be done](#)."(Matthew 26:39-42) As I die to self by submitting my will to God's will, I begin to understand why King David said "[I delight to do thy will, O my God...](#)"(Psalm 40:8) It's because God doesn't make mistakes. He sees the end from the beginning, when I can't see anything -- even though I may think I can! He has never failed me. He knows what is best for me.

- [Philippians 2:13](#) For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his good pleasure*.
- [2 Timothy 1:9](#) ... not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus...

As I turn my will and life over to Him, God works in me "to will and to do of His good pleasure" not as I would do, "but according to His own purpose..." He promises to instruct me and teach me in the way that I should go (Psalm32:8), and I know that He will never leave me nor forsake me(Hebrews13:5) because, Jesus said "I am with you always, even unto the end of the world ." (Matthew28:20)

- [2 Corinthians 10:5](#) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and **bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ**;
- [John 15:4](#) Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except **ye abide in me**.

In Ezekiel36:26, God promises to give me a new heart and a new spirit as I allow Him to captivate my thoughts. Jesus brings forth good fruit from me as I abide in Him -- even as the branch abides in the vine.

Through the right exercise of the will, an entire change may be made in the life. By yielding up the will to Christ, we **ally ourselves with divine power. We receive strength** from above to hold us steadfast. A pure and noble life, a life of victory over appetite and lust, is possible to everyone who will unite his weak, wavering human will to the omnipotent, unwavering will of God. -ibid

- [2 Corinthians 3:5](#) Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but **our sufficiency is of God**;
- [Ephesians 3:16](#) That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be **strengthened with might by his Spirit** in the inner man;
- [Ephesians 3:19](#) And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be **filled with all the fulness of God**.
- [Hebrews 7:25](#) Wherefore **he is able** also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.
- [2 Peter 3:9](#) The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, **not willing that any should perish**, but that all should come to repentance.
- [Ephesians 3:20](#) Now unto him that is **able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think**, according to the power that worketh in us,
- [2 Peter 1:4](#) Whereby are given unto us **exceeding great and precious promises**: that **by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

It is my privilege to ally myself with divine power as I yield my will to Christ. My "sufficiency is of God ", and God alone. He promises to strengthen me "with might by His Spirit " that I "might be filled with all the fullness of God" because He is able, and willing to "do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think ." I thank God that by these promises, we may be "partakers of the divine nature," escaping the corruptions of this planet.

- [Matthew 1:21](#) ... thou shalt call his name JESUS: for **he shall save his people from their sins**.
- [1 Corinthians 10:13](#) There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but **God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape**, that ye may be able to bear *it*.
- [Philippians 4:13](#) **I can do all things through Christ** which strengtheneth me.
- [Hebrews 13:21](#) Make you **perfect in every good work** to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.
- [1 Corinthians 15:57](#) ... thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the **victory through our Lord Jesus Christ**.

The most exciting part of this experience with Christ is that **a life of victory** over every temptation, every sin, and every addiction **is possible for me and for you**. The **secret** is in uniting our weak, faltering will to the all-powerful will of the King of the Universe. [Jesus came to save us from our sins](#). God says that [all our temptations are common to all humanity and that He will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we can bear by His grace](#) and that we "[can do all things through Christ](#)", who strengthens us. Jesus even says that He will make us "[perfect in every good work to do His will](#)". Thanks be to God, who gives us the "[victory through our Lord Jesus Christ](#)."

As the will of man co-operates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent. Whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. **All His biddings are enablings**. -Christ's Object Lessons, page 333

In summary and conclusion I would like to make several points as clear as possible.

1. My will power, and yours, is not, and never will be strong enough to successfully resist every evil temptation that comes our way.
2. Our human will power is **always** strong enough to surrender our will to Christ -- saying, "[Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?](#)" "[Thy will be done](#)."(Acts 9:6; Matthew26:42) This is the power of choice that God will not allow taken away.
3. In this surrendered condition the power of **God will always**, and forever, successfully thwart the powers of evil that are constantly seeking to destroy us. God will deal with the tempter as we absolutely surrender to Him.
4. This is **NOT a one-time surrender**. **Temptations will come again**, and again... **Surrender to Jesus must be a continual way of life** in order to experience ongoing victory over sin. This is what it means to die to self and to live by the Grace of Christ. This is what Paul meant when he said, "[I am crucified with Christ](#)." "[I die daily](#)."(Galatians 2:20; 1Corinthians15:31)
5. I know for a fact that **this works**, because whenever I follow this formula by surrendering my will to Christ, He gives me the victory -- **every time!**

[Ellen G. White](#) said it this way: "Everything good in men and women is the fruit of the working of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit teaches us to reveal righteousness in our lives. **The greatest work that can be done in our world is to glorify God by living the character of Christ**. God will make perfect **only those who will die to self**. Those who are willing to do this can say, "[I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me](#)" (MS 16,1900).

Friend, Jesus is calling for your heart now. Wouldn't you like to have [a new heart](#)(Ezekiel36:26)? Wouldn't you like to have the [mind of Christ](#)(Philippians2:5)? Jesus will give you the victory over every sin, every temptation, every addiction, and every regret that you have ever had. It matters not how low you have sunk in the mire of sin. Jesus loves you with an infinite love. He is the answer to all of your troubles and mine. Clasp the hand of Jesus and He will lift you up. He may not speak to you in [a loud voice and with a blinding light](#)(Acts9:3) as He did with Saul of Tarsus. More likely, He is speaking to you now in a [still small voice](#)(1Kings19:12) saying, "[come to me ... and I will give you rest](#)." "[I will also save you from all your uncleannesses](#)."(Matthew11:28; Ezekiel36:29) You can trust Jesus. Just say "Yes [Lord, what would you have me to do?](#)"(Acts 9:6)

"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen" ([Jude 1:24, 25](#)).

This study was written and compiled by [Sid Nash](#) in the late 1990s and updated in September of 2022.