

1 John 5: 1-5

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

VICTORY AFTER DEFEAT

One of the most crushing experiences a Christian faces is falling into sin and so disappointing the Lord who died for those very sins. Michel Quoist stated “It is not only temptation that tries the generous Christian, but at times sin also; he may have a heavy fall, one that he had thought impossible, so deep and strong had seemed his love for the Lord. And having fallen, he is likely to become discouraged. Never before has he understood to such an extent the ugliness of sin—because he has now a greater understanding of the love of God. All is grace. This fall will make him realize that he cannot rely on himself at all. It will put him in his place at the bottom. But with this mistrust of himself must go a greater confidence in God, the Father.” Often that restored confidence is delayed by a sense of defeat, even after forgiveness is sought and fellowship is restored. In such situations the believer is urged to focus on the restorative ministry of God.

After the defeat of Ai because of the sin of Achan, the nation Israel regained victory. The story in Joshua 8 outlines the restorative ministry of God and the believer’s needed focus for finding victory after defeat: Hear the encouragement from God -v.1, Claim the promises from God – v.1, Follow the direction from God – v.2, Rise to the challenge from God to be committed (join the battle), to be vulnerable (flee before them), to be patient (wait in ambush). The result is sharing the blessing from God in gaining the victory and enjoying the spoil.

Phillip Brooks said “We never become truly spiritual by sitting down and wishing to become so. You must undertake something so great that you cannot accomplish it unaided.” Stepping back into the arena of ministry after defeat is just such an undertaking. The following Principles of Restoring Victory are evident in this text and aid the Christian in regaining confidence: 1. Dealing with sin God’s way restores full relationship with its promises and responsibilities, 2. Victory must be claimed in battle not assumed from the sidelines, 3. Faith will always be the steps to restored victory, 4. The faith of restored victory is a call to courage, obedience, vulnerability, and patience, 5. God rewards faith with blessings.

“It is not the critic who counts, not the person who points out where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the person who is actually in the arena; whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs and comes up short again and again; who knows the great enthusiasms, the devotions, and spends himself or herself in a worthy cause; who at best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement; and at the worst, at least fails while daring greatly; so that his or her place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory or defeat.” (Theodore Roosevelt). Christian friend, are you claiming the victory?

What is my response:
