

## Living About Self

When we were children, we were taught to follow the rules of the world, and the rules of our parent's households. We learned how to behave in class, read our books and even stand in an organized line as we headed out to lunch. We even went to church, but most of us were too young and not interested in what the Pastor was saying; therefore, we would use church as an opportunity to take our daily naps. At school, we weren't allowed to doze off, but at church, you will find sleeping children strewn about the pews.

As we grew older, our choices bore witness to our lack of knowledge. We were educated by man and his ideas, but we were not knowledgeable about the Word of God, and our lives began to reflect this. Then, one day we decided to change. That voice from within sounded so friendly, loving and inviting. We wanted to get to know Him better; we wanted to experience this love that Christians talked about, so we gave our lives to Christ.

This is the story of many-a-Christians. Many people see church as the airport to heaven. We simply come into the building with all of our issues, listen to the directions that tell us how to get to the Pearly Gates of Heaven and then we wait on Jesus to load us up and take us to Paradise. That's it, right? We've confessed Jesus as our Lord and Savior and now we want to go back to being ourselves. But this just does not work. Why is that? Because once we come into the knowledge of the Truth, we can never go back and reconcile with the lies we once loved so much. When we try to go back to our old ways, we lose our peace trying to find our old selves. Think about a blind man. A man who has been blind since he was born, or a man who has been blind for years is comfortable being blind. He's used to it; therefore, he has found peace in his condition. Nevertheless, a man who has just lost his sight will panic and stumble across everything in front of him. He's not used to being blind, and it'll take some time for him to adjust to it. It works the same way once we've been born again. Since we have received our sight, we can never go back to being blind without losing our peace. As believers, we like walking in the light; but to totally walk in the light of God, we must forsake the darkness we've grown so accustomed to. Change is always a challenge that many don't want to embrace because it's like running over a hill blindfolded. We don't see what's ahead of us, but we are not blind. We are called to walk by faith and not by sight...but since we have sight, we want to take that blindfold off and walk the way we are accustomed to walking....by sight!

The greatest challenge you and I will ever face is not against Satan. Satan only has the power in which we give him. Christ Jesus stripped Satan of his power; therefore, nowadays all Satan has the power of influence. He tries to make up trip ourselves up by offering us an alternative to God's Word. God said we are healed by the stripes of Jesus, but the enemy will try to convince you to believe the doctor's report over God's report. God said you are more than a conqueror through Christ Jesus, but the enemy will always try to attach fear to you by seducing you to believe that you have lost or are going to lose

something. As you can see, the enemy simply wages war against the mind by introducing a report to it that opposes the Word of God. He does this because he wants us to be as he was and is....selfish. When we are struck by problems and worried about the future, we'll spend more time begging God to deliver us than we do interceding for others or helping others. Satan wants you to focus on you...you...and you!

But how do you live above yourself, and claim the victory that has been afforded to you through Christ Jesus? There are so many smart-sounding answers that one can give you, but the most powerful answer to date has been around for more than two thousand years and it's called the Holy Bible. Read it; meditate on it and teach it. But wait...that's the obvious answer, right? You came here looking for a more elaborate answer; an idea that you haven't tried yet. You've tried praying; you've tried praising the Lord; you've even tried fasting, but nothing seems to work for you. Now, you'd like to find another strategy that you can apply to your life. The issue is not that prayer does not work, because it does when you apply faith to it. The issue is not that praising the Lord doesn't work, because it does when it's done in spirit and in truth. The issue is not that fasting does not work, because it does but you have to understand that fasting tears down the issue layer by layer. Oftentimes, people leave the fast before all of the layers have been fully peeled away, and before the issue has been exposed. The most common issue is oftentimes lack of faith. You simply don't believe God, but you do believe in your own efforts. You think you need to find the right words to pray with, when all you needed was to just believe God. You think that you need to fast when you only needed to believe God. You think that you need to have others to pray for you because obviously your prayer is not reaching the throne room in your own mind. You have tried everything, but you haven't tried Jesus.

Most believers believe that they have and are currently in a relationship with Jesus. After all, they go to church and some even tithe of their increase; yet still this is not enough for God. He still requires us to have a personal and intimate relationship with Him. Praying is not enough; fasting is not enough. Do you have the Word of God in you? The Bible tells us that Jesus is the living Word, and faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Have you received Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior? Again, most believers would say that they have because they quoted some words in church and even got baptized in His Name. But to receive means to believe. Receiving is not just religious chanting followed by a religious act; to receive something means to believe. Do you believe Christ? If not, you haven't truly received Him for He is the Living Word of God. Christ is the Word of God.....made alive! To receive Him, you must believe Him. To believe Him, you must first get to know Him. To know Him, you must learn about Him, pray to Him and wholeheartedly seek His face. You have to have a personal and intimate relationship with Him; nevertheless, most people depend on other people's relationship with Him to get by.

To live above yourself means to live in Christ Jesus. This is no easy task when you don't have the knowledge necessary. Let's review some truths.

- Jesus Christ is the living Word of God.
- Jesus Christ is Truth.
- Jesus Christ is the Way.
- Jesus Christ is the Light of the world.
- The Holy Spirit is God's active force in the earth.
- The Holy Spirit is our comforter.

God said we that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth! Worship Him in spirit for He gave us the Holy Spirit. Our spirit makes intercession for us to the Holy Spirit.

God said we must worship Him in truth. As the scriptures tell us, Jesus Christ is the Truth. Jesus is our intercessor, and we are now wearing His righteousness; therefore, when we worship in accordance with the Word, we worship in Truth!

If Jesus is the way (which we know that He is), we must follow Him. If Jesus is the Truth (which we know that He is), we must believe and trust Him. If Jesus is the Light of the world (which we know He is), we have no more reason to walk in darkness and we can't call it an attack when we stumble across the obstacles that Satan is littered our paths with. If the Holy Spirit is God's active force in the earth (which we know that He is), we have no more reason to try to do things of our own efforts. God's got it! If the Holy Spirit is our Comforter (which we know that He is), why isn't your peace being still? To live above yourself, you have to relocate your mind to live in His Word. There are no alternate routes to get you to the blessings of God. The problem with the saints of today is that many are seeking the hand of God, but not His face. People want the blessings, but not the One who gives the blessings. People chase prophesy, but they run from obedience and correction. People want the holy things, but they shun holiness. There is no way to separate God's love from Him, for He is love. This means you can't have a part of God; it's all of Him or none of Him. To have all of Him, you have to reject all of yourself. This is not an easy task, but Jesus will intercede for you when you pray; the Holy Spirit will comfort you and quicken you as your flesh dies and the process of receiving the Truth will be made so much easier when the father of lies (Satan) has been evicted from your heart. You are having to make a trade-off. You are trading the lies for the Truth. You are trading the flesh for the Spirit. You are giving up your will to do His will. This is how you learn to live above you.

1. Study the Holy Bible every day; even on days when you don't feel like studying. Do it anyway.
2. Put away foul speech from you, and learn to guard your heart.
3. Don't bow down to condemnation or feelings of guilt when you miss the mark. Remember Romans 8:1- "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."
4. Don't depend on yourself. It is not your works that will justify you nor condemn you. Ephesians 2:8-9 reads: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."
5. Always do opposite of what you want to do in the flesh. Listen to your spirit man. "For if you live after the flesh, you shall die: but if you through the Spirit do put to death the deeds of the

body, you shall live” (Romans 8:13).

To live above yourself and your understanding, you must embrace God and a whole new understanding. Repent of your sins, ask the Lord for understanding and commit to reading your Bible daily. Be sure to talk to the Lord every day, and make your decisions based on His Word, and not your flesh. It'll take time, but it'll happen if you really want it. God said that everyone that seeks Him will find Him. “For every one that asks receives; and he that seeks finds; and to him that knocks it shall be opened” (Matthew 7:8).