

THE HOPE WITHIN YOU

21/5/23

The following thoughts help us shape ourselves so we can be more effective and recover more quickly from disappointments. God has called us to be a positive testimony of his blessings to humanity; this cannot be done if we misunderstand what is actually being offered to us as Spirit Filled people.

1PET 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be **ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness** (*humbleness of soul*) and **fear** (*reverence*):

16 Having a **good conscience**; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

17 For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.

First Priority is to make good scriptural choices.

The first step is to deal with your own fears and failings.

**Lack of lasting motivation... start off with zeal and hope, but it doesn't last...*

**My guilt vanishes only to return later worse than before...*

**I don't feel fit to be a Christian, nor do I feel worthy to be a testimony for God...*

**All my friends seem to cope better than me.*

Many Christians make the mistake of believing that everyone else is stronger or more spiritual than them... based on the fact that they struggle more frequently than what they consider is normal. It might come as a surprise, but those who are mature in the Lord also struggle, but they have adjusted to the reality of human nature. No, they don't justify sin and excuse it away... but they face the reality of the pressure of sin in everyday life. John wrote a fair bit about this topic in his first epistle, because many people were also feeling the pressure of not measuring up to the perceived ideals of a Christian. Some were also being badly advised.

God treats us like adult children.

There is an erroneous attitude that Christians don't sin... John corrected that error... **1JOH 1:8** If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

John was well aware of his shortcomings and the shortcomings of other 'bible heroes'. Paul also identified our natural failings when he penned this verse... **ROM 7:19** 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. Not only did he reveal the potential torment that affects us all... he revealed why... the sin dwells in all of us.

The scriptural method brings the promised results.

Thus the way to manage our lives is not based on the denial of sin, nor the false assumption of weakness... but the revelation that sin is ever present and needs to be dealt with accordingly. Our strength is not that we don't sin, but rests in the truth that despite our sin, God forgives us... and this is a daily requirement... **ROM 7:24** O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? **25** I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. Acceptance of our true state and an understanding of God's mercy goes a long way to setting us free from the many burdens that face us on a daily basis. We are not free to sin, but rather free from the power of sin.

These promises are not only valuable for spirit filled people, but they offer a pathway of hope and overcoming for the unsaved.

Paul makes a God revealed summary of this ongoing conflict... **ROM 8:1** There is **therefore** now no **condemnation** (*destruction or lessening of hope*) to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. **2** For the **law** of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

This is why the balance of Peter's opening statement on the top of this page makes so much sense...

1PET 3:16 Having a **good conscience** (*Paul's and John's letters have given us further instruction about the reality and hope of dealing with shortcomings*); that, whereas they speak evil of you (*not your own conscience speaking evil*), as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

17 For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.

We usually suffer at the hands of those we speak to, not from strangers.

Go ye into all the world because God is not limited by our failings and our fears. **MAR 16:15** And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. **16** He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. **17** And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; **18** They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

Our hope is in God, not in ourselves.