

Lesson 13 | February 27, 2022

Victory in Jesus

Study Text: 2 Corinthians 10:1–6; Colossians 2:9–15; James 4:4–10; 1 Peter 5:6–10

Central Truth: Christians are set free from the power of Satan through victory in Jesus Christ.

Key Verse: James 4:7

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you (KJV).

So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you (NLT).

Learning Objectives

- Students should find comfort in the promise of Scripture that Jesus is mightier than all evil powers.
- Students should recognize that evil powers are defeated only through Christ.
- Students should give glory to God for the victory they have in Christ.

Introducing the Lesson

Say: Whether it's the Olympics or a local high school sporting event, victory is seldom, if ever, assured. During the course of a competition, circumstances can change that would cause even the most skilled athlete or team to fall behind the competitors. In the Christian life, however, we can be assured of spiritual victory if we walk close to Jesus and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. In this lesson, we will learn how to do that.

Opening Activity—And the Winner Is . . .

Ask: Have you ever won a trophy, or ribbon, or another award? What did you do to earn it?

What is the value of this lesson? **The devil is focused on our spiritual destruction. Intentionally pursuing spiritual growth is an active pursuit. We must stand firm for God, resolved to walk with Him. We need to disarm the enemy. We will remember together how to disarm him. Worldly victory does not compare to Spiritual Victory.**

Say: Just about everyone has won some kind of trophy or ribbon at some point in life. It might have been for a project or athletic event in high school or elementary school. Sometimes we also win certificates or plaques at work for a job well done. These are enjoyable moments in our lives. However, in most cases, the victory is not life changing. We maintain the memory, but the course of our lives probably stayed largely the same.

This is not true, however, regarding the spiritual victory we find in Christ. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

When we are saved, everything changes. However, everything does not change immediately; some things change in due course, amid inevitable challenges. Certainly, Christians are new creatures in Christ. The Holy Spirit creates a new nature in us when we are born again.

One result of this new creation is the inevitable conflict that exists between our new nature and our old one. Such conflicts will exist throughout our lives. But we will emerge victorious as we are careful to satisfy the desires of the new and refuse the desires of the old.

Part 1—Utilize Spiritual Weapons

Mighty Through God

2 Corinthians 10:1–4

[2Co 10:1-6 KJV] 1 Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence [am] base among you, but being absent am bold toward you: 2 But I beseech [you], that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, wherewith I think to be bold against some, which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh. 3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: 4 (For the weapons of our warfare [are] not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

Say: Living the Christian life is not something we can do in our own strength. No matter how many promises we make or how hard we try, we will always fall short because the fallen nature of humanity is unable to rise to the standards of God. But God provides victory in our spiritual battles through the Holy Spirit. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

As a matter of background, Paul began 2 Corinthians 10 by communicating on a personal level. **His appearance of meekness (rooted in following Christ) led his enemies to accuse him of being weak and lacking boldness in his communication** (see 2 Corinthians 10:1). Note how Paul corrected this notion: **His tone and approach in their presence reflected the meekness and humility of Christ, not the attitudes of the world. Paul made it clear that he preferred meekness over boldness.**

One definition of meekness is strength under control. In meekness, Paul strongly urged them to correct their ways. Otherwise, he would demonstrate boldness in

his next visit. His attention to proper responses offers a good example of how Christians should interact in conflict.

Paul used the military to illustrate the importance of his meek approach. Believers have spiritual battles in this world, but **they must not fight those battles using worldly tactics and worldly weapons, but spiritual tactics and spiritual weapons.**

There is an important observation to be made from verses 3–4. We must recognize, as Paul stated, that the weapons of spiritual battle are unique. **We do not gain spiritual victory by asserting our own bold declarations or actions. Such victory is not a matter of winning arguments by human reasoning, nor does it come through personal charm. We are, in fact then, rather passive in the matter of winning. The victory comes from the Lord, for the battle is won through “God’s mighty weapons”** (verse 4, NLT).

Resource Packet Item 1: The Purposes of Spiritual Weapons

Distribute the work sheet and read the introductory paragraph aloud. Then divide into small groups and assign one section to each group to answer the questions, then share with the class.

Discuss

? Why do you think Christians can be taken captive by human philosophies, even when such philosophies stand in opposition to the gospel?

? How can Paul’s words in 2 Corinthians 10:3–4 shape the way we respond to people who mock us or bring our beliefs into question by attacking us?

A Spiritual Battle

2 Corinthians 10:5–6

[2Co 10:5-6 KJV] 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; 6 And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

Say: We are in a spiritual battle, and spiritual battles cannot be won with earthly weapons. The greatest minds in the world cannot match wits with the enemy of our souls, and no army on earth can overpower him. Yet, when believers are empowered by the Holy Spirit and use the weapons God provides, victory is assured. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

While Paul does not specifically identify the weapons of spiritual warfare in 2 Corinthians 10:5–6, he does address them elsewhere in his Corinthian epistles (1

Corinthians 1:17–25; 2:1–5; 2 Corinthians 4:1–6). **Spiritual weapons find their foundation in the message of the gospel.**

The gospel has power to destroy worldly arguments against the knowledge of God (that is, the gospel). **Human philosophy and reason cannot stand against divine truth.** Such philosophies appeal to the flesh, and are limited by the imagination and abilities of the flesh, for they are human creations. Godly truth pulls down these obstacles to truth. Furthermore, such teaching is rooted in human pride, which is utterly at odds with the humble, selfless submission to God that ought to characterize believers. This is why God’s people must view the proclamation of the Word as a spiritual battle. Rebellion must be replaced by obedience to Christ, and such life change only comes through spiritual transformation.

At the root of Paul’s argument, then, there is much more than philosophical debates and arguments. **Paul was intent on defeating all ungodly teaching (verse 6), and would enact discipline upon those who put forth such teachings. Once the Corinthians showed themselves willing to hear truth, Paul would deal strongly with the false teachers.**

Discuss

? Do you think it is important for Christians to respond strongly to false teachings? Explain. How do you define a strong response?

? How do you think false teaching is defeated?

Part 2—Authority and Power of Christ

Complete in Christ

Colossians 2:9–10

[Col 2:9-10 KJV] 9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. 10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

Say: Living in this world comes with difficulties that can easily become discouraging unless we remember that Jesus Christ lives within us. He is the “head over every ruler and authority” (Colossians 2:10). We need not cower to the enemy, because we have the authority of Christ. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

There are many philosophies in the world today that are very contrary to Christianity. A number of these are similar to—or even had roots in—false teachings of New Testament times. One such philosophy was known as Gnosticism, and an early form of this was confronted by Paul in Colossians.

This false teaching promised special, secret spiritual knowledge to those who would be “enlightened,” supposedly by God. Note Paul’s statement, in Colossians 1:9: “We ask God to give you complete knowledge of his will and to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding” (NLT). In response to human philosophies (2:8), God gives us all we need in Christ.

The false teachings confronting the Colossians (as well as many believers today) depend upon human ideas and philosophies rather than upon the revelation of Scripture—even as these false teachings sometimes twist Scripture. Simply put, we will find all we need for our new lives in Christ within the teachings of and about Christ—the reality of His life, death, resurrection, and ascension.

Since Jesus Christ is all the fullness of the Godhead in bodily form (verse 9), He is the source of everything the believer requires. Believers are “complete in him” (verse 10, KJV). The word “complete” is rooted in a nautical term. It can embody the idea of a ship fully rigged and equipped for a voyage. This applies to Christians who are ready for the voyage of life. **We find everything we need in Christ, our Captain. We can rest in Him as our Source of life and Sovereign Lord. No power can snatch us from His hand.**

Paul continued on with a marvelous description of what it means to have this fullness or completeness in Christ (verse 10). **We have experienced the breaking of the power of the sinful nature. As a result, while we struggle with temptation, and will on occasion fall into sin, we are no longer slaves to the power of sin. Through the Spirit we can live in victory. To further bring light to this, Paul referred to spiritual circumcision and water baptism (see verses 11–12). Through salvation, his readers had discarded their old, sinful lifestyles. Furthermore, sin had been removed from their lives, a blessing which was depicted in the outward sign of baptism.**

Resource Packet Item 2: Complete in Christ

Distribute the work sheet and assign each Scripture passage to a small group. Have them report their findings and discuss them as a class

Discuss

? What are some common ways people might be tempted to feel they need something other than Christ to complete their lives?

? How does your life demonstrate that you are no longer in bondage to the sinful nature, even though you are an imperfect person?

Evil Spiritual Powers Disarmed

Colossians 2:11–15

[Col 2:11-15 KJV] 11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: 12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with [him] through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. 13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; 15 [And] having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

Say: One key to winning a battle is to disarm the enemy. **When we identify with Christ and seek to obey Him in all we do, our enemy is disarmed.** (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Beginning with Abraham, we see circumcision to be a sign of God's covenant with His people (see Genesis 17:13), and this continued in the Law (see Leviticus 12:3). **Circumcision spoke to Israel's relationship with God and their holy status as a separate people who forsook the sins of the surrounding peoples. Now, as New Testament Christians, Paul said that we have undergone spiritual circumcision of the heart (see Romans 2:25–29).**

[Rom 2:25-29 NKJV] 25 For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law; but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. 26 Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision? 27 And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, judge you who, [even] with [your] written [code] and circumcision, [are] a transgressor of the law? 28 For he is not a Jew who [is one] outwardly, nor [is] circumcision that which [is] outward in the flesh; 29 but [he is] a Jew who [is one] inwardly; and circumcision [is that] of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise [is] not from men but from God.

Christians are a holy people, called to put off the sinful nature and live in full obedience to the Lord. This can only happen by the power of God who lives within them. It is the work of the Spirit, but it requires the cooperation of believers. Water baptism, as it is mentioned in Colossians 2:12, is a public declaration of the believer's having identified himself or herself with Jesus as the One who cleanses and saves. It is an outward declaration of the inner work of the Spirit. Christians declare that they have died, have been buried, and are now raised with Jesus Christ to a new way of living.

We, as Christians, must see ourselves as having a new spiritual identity as we seek to live out that identity. Water baptism does two important things. It is a physical reminder of what it means to be a new creation in Christ, and it is a public affirmation of our desire to make Him the Lord of our lives. **The Cross is the means by which God triumphed over all powers and authorities (verses 13–15). Through the sacrifice of Christ, the guilt of our sins was removed and we can stand clean before God. Furthermore, the powers of darkness that seek to deceive us and derail our spiritual journey have been defeated. Jesus has triumphed over them.**

Discuss

? Why should we see baptism as an important part of the Christian life?

? How would you describe what it means to have a new identity in Christ?

Part 3—Submit to God; Resist the Devil

Humble Yourselves Before God

James 4:4–10

[Jas 4:4-10 KJV] 4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. 5 Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? 6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. 7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse [your] hands, [ye] sinners; and purify [your] hearts, [ye] double minded. 9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and [your] joy to heaviness. 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

Say: We cannot win a spiritual battle when our loyalties are divided. We must recognize that our victory will come from God himself and not from anything we can do on our own. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Resource Packet Item 3: Keys to Alignment with God

Distribute the work sheet and encourage students to take it home and apply the keys in their lives during the week.

Throughout the Old Testament, prophets confronted God's people with their spiritual adultery (Deuteronomy 31:16; Jeremiah 3:20). The people attempted to divide their

affections between the one true God and pagan gods. **James made it clear that a person cannot be friends with the world as well as friends with God (James 4:4). A Christian cannot live a double life. Either he will find contentment in God, or he will be dissatisfied with what God provides and seek fulfillment elsewhere.**

God does not tolerate divided hearts that crave carnal desires (verse 5). Instead, He expects our total commitment, and He will pursue a spiritual adulterer so that he or she might return. But He will not dwell in them if they choose to pursue another source of satisfaction.

People who commit themselves to God will not immediately be free from the desire to find satisfaction in other arenas. But God will give us the strength to stay committed to Him. **James went on to provide seven keys to aligning oneself with God and finding genuine, godly personal fulfillment.** The **first key is to humble, or submit, oneself to God** (verse 7). As Christians, we are to willfully submit to God, humbling ourselves before Him, recognizing His sovereign authority, and choosing to live according to His will and purpose for our lives.

The second key is to resist the devil (verse 7). Throughout our lives, the devil will try to draw us back into his grasp. He will often tempt us in areas of personal weakness—an activity, thought, or ambition where we have an especially strong desire. Resisting temptation can be difficult. But **it is easier to resist if we have submitted those areas to God and recognized that a relationship with God is more important than temporary personal fulfillment that is sought for the wrong purpose.**

The third key is to draw near to God (verse 8). God promises to never leave or forsake believers (see Hebrews 13:5). If wayward believers will lay aside their desires and seek God, He will be there and readily receive them back into a right relationship.

Fourth, Christians are to “cleanse (KJV; or “wash,” NLT) [their] hands” (verse 8). One might imagine a farmer in a field, with dirt sticking to his hands. They will need cleansing. In the same way, when people seek fulfillment through worldly means, some of that worldliness attaches to them. A follower of God must forsake sinful things, as well as surrender to God the good things that have taken on an improperly high level of significance in their lives.

The fifth key is to purify one’s heart—the seat of our affections (verse 8). We cannot be double-minded when it comes to our loyalties. God does not allow us to share our affections. We must follow Him only.

The sixth key is to grieve over sin (verse 9). James indicated that **Christians must recognize how double-minded ways impact their relationship with God. No one who truly loves God can come to the recognition of how their acts of worldliness affect their relationship with Him and not have sorrow.**

The final key is to humble oneself (verse 10). Humility leads to submission. Believers often feel that they know what is best for them. But humility acknowledges that God is wiser than us. Sincere humility demands genuine trust in God.

Discuss

? What is wrong with attempting to serve God while also seeking undue satisfaction in relationships, status, or material objects?

? Do you think true humility is difficult? Explain.

Resist the Devil

1 Peter 5:6–10

[1Pe 5:6-10 KJV] 6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: 7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. 8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: 9 Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. 10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle [you].

Say: We have discussed many of the ways God will help us be victorious in our Christian walk. **We must, however, apply these principles to resist the enemy and actively live for God.** (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Peter also addressed the issue of finding victory in our spiritual walk. He urged Christians to humble themselves before God, reminding them that God would “exalt” them in “due time” (verse 6, KJV). Note the contrast. Humans seek exaltation; God calls us to humility. Humans tend to want to see immediate results. But spiritual growth takes time. God will indeed exalt us—lift us up—in His timing.

Growth may produce challenges, but we must not allow these challenges to turn us aside from the pursuit of Him. **Rather, we must let go of worries, concerns, and problems that hold us back, placing them in God’s hands, for He calls us to spiritual growth—part of which is the realization that we are under His care (verse 7).**

As we live in submission to God, we must, through the power of the Spirit, resist the devil (verses 8–9). Why? Because the devil is focused on our

spiritual destruction. Intentionally pursuing spiritual growth is an active pursuit. We must stand firm for God, resolved to walk with Him. Through it all, we find comfort in knowing that others have successfully pursued the goal of spiritual growth as they faced the same challenges we face. We have the assurance that our pursuit will be rewarded by God, who will make us strong and steadfast in Him (verse 10).

Discuss

? What does it mean to submit to God?

? What is the biggest challenge to spiritual growth that you are now facing?

What Is God Saying to Us?

Say: Victory is possible, not because of our strength and ingenuity, but because we serve a God who provides the weapons and power we need through the Holy Spirit to successfully fight the enemy of our souls.

Living It Out

Ministry in Action

- Find a fellow believer who is facing a spiritual battle, and commit to supporting that person as he or she moves forward in Christ.
- Take the initiative to tell a trusted Christian friend about your spiritual battles, and ask him or her to pray for and with you.
- Pray that God will prepare you to face struggles in the future so that you might experience victory in Christ.

Daily Bible Readings

Monday:

Craftiness of the Serpent.
Genesis 3:1–7

[Gen 3:1-7 NLT] 1 The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the LORD God had made. One day he asked the woman, "Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?" 2 "Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden," the woman replied. 3 "It's only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, 'You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.'" 4 "You won't die!" the serpent replied to the woman. 5 "God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil." 6 The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. 7 At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.

Tuesday:

Satan Permitted To Afflict.

Job 2:1–7

[Job 2:1-7 NLT] 1 One day the members of the heavenly court came again to present themselves before the LORD, and the Accuser, Satan, came with them. 2 "Where have you come from?" the LORD asked Satan. Satan answered the LORD, "I have been patrolling the earth, watching everything that's going on." 3 Then the LORD asked Satan, "Have you noticed my servant Job? He is the finest man in all the earth. He is blameless--a man of complete integrity. He fears God and stays away from evil. And he has maintained his integrity, even though you urged me to harm him without cause." 4 Satan replied to the LORD, "Skin for skin! A man will give up everything he has to save his life. 5 But reach out and take away his health, and he will surely curse you to your face!" 6 "All right, do with him as you please," the LORD said to Satan. "But spare his life." 7 So Satan left the LORD's presence, and he struck Job with terrible boils from head to foot.

Wednesday:

Satan Accuses.

Zechariah 3:1–4

[Zec 3:1-4 NLT] 1 Then the angel showed me Jeshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD. The Accuser, Satan, was there at the angel's right hand, making accusations against Jeshua. 2 And the LORD said to Satan, "I, the LORD, reject your accusations, Satan. Yes, the LORD, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebukes you. This man is like a burning stick that has been snatched from the fire." 3 Jeshua's clothing was filthy as he stood there before the angel. 4 So the angel said to the others standing there, "Take off his filthy clothes." And turning to Jeshua he said, "See, I have taken away your sins, and now I am giving you these fine new clothes."

Thursday:

Jesus Withstands Satan.

Matthew 4:1–11

[Mat 4:1-11 KJV] 1 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. 2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. 3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. 4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. 5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, 6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in [their] hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. 7 Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. 8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; 9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if

thou wilt fall down and worship me. 10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. 11 Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

Friday:

Jesus' Supremacy Over Satan.
Luke 10:17–20

[Luk 10:17-20 KJV] 17 And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. 18 And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. 19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. 20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

Saturday:

The Triumph of the Cross.
Colossians 2:13–15

[Col 2:13-15 KJV] 13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; 15 [And] having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.