

A person is seen from behind, standing with their arms raised in a gesture of praise or triumph. They are wearing a light-colored t-shirt and a dark cap. The background is a bright, blue sky with a sunburst effect, where rays of light radiate from the top right corner, creating a sense of hope and inspiration. The overall tone is positive and uplifting.

You Can Be On Top Of Your Problems

Discipleship Course

200

Twelve principles in your everyday walk that are consistent with the teachings of the Word of God and produced a life-style that is supernatural.

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Some years ago I began to wonder about myself. The problem? I felt happy and contented. *All the time*. I was never depressed; always on top. Even on Mondays, when some of my pastor friends were so tired from Sundays that they wanted to resign, I wanted to sign up all over again. It wasn't normal.

So one day I said in prayer to the Lord, "What's the matter with me? Everyone else has good days and bad days - why do I have to be different? Is there something wrong? Do I have a chemical imbalance? If people should find out how I really feel, they'll think I'm strange!"

The Lord's reply was surprising. "Karl," he said, "what in the world are you talking about? Why would you want to be like everyone else? Can't you be content just to be content?"

I was ashamed. "Forgive me, Lord. It was stupid even to bring up the subject. From now on I'm going to be happy being happy!"

The Christian psychologist is right when he says it's natural to be depressed on occasion. But who said Christians are to be natural? You won't find that in the Bible.

The Word says, "**Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place**" (2 Corinthians 2:14).

The Word says, "**Rejoice evermore**" (1 Thessalonians 5:16).

The Word says, "**My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing**" (James 1:2-4).

The Word says, "**Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong**" (2 Corinthians 12: 10).

As I understand the Scriptures, Christians aren't supposed to be natural. They're supposed to live supernatural lives. They're to be on top of the mountain even when they're walking through the valley!

I see nothing in the Bible that says any of us, even in the midst of heavy problems, is to be blue, discouraged, down or defeated. Jesus Christ never was. So why should we? Aren't we to follow in His steps?

I can hear your reply. "But Jesus was '**a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.**'" That's right! He was. But He wasn't a man of sadness and acquainted with despair.

So what's the key to walking in joy as He walked? What do I do that others aren't doing to produce victory all the time?

That question made me begin to analyze my life for clues. It was then I found 12 principles at work in my everyday walk that were consistent with the teachings of the Word of God and produced a life-style that was supernatural - to the glory of God. I didn't learn these principles in seminary. I stumbled over them as I sought God through His Word and by His Spirit. But you can learn them now. As you read, keep the words of the psalmist in mind:

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish"
(Psalm 1: 1-6).

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

"And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18: 1).

The Swains, missionaries to the Far East, had just returned from Korea. They stopped by our church and were telling me how the Koreans got up every morning at 4:00 to pray before breakfast. And they were having revival.

I said to myself, "If those Koreans can do it, I can too." And I did. The alarm went off the next morning. I prayed a couple of hours, showered, ate breakfast and had a good day.

The next day it was a little tougher, but I made it.

The third day I couldn't find the alarm. I swatted away and finally knocked it to the floor.

You see, I'm a Pentecostal preacher. Pentecostal preachers who are doing things for the Lord don't go to bed until 11 p.m. - and sometimes midnight. So I was getting groggy.

The first week I developed bags under my eyes.

The second week dark circles appeared around my eyes.

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The third week I dozed during a counseling session.

The sixth week the climax came. While I was standing, holding a cup of punch at a wedding reception, and listening to one of our deacon's wives talk, I fell asleep-standing up. Just like a horse!

"Karl Strader," the lady said, "are you listening to me? "

"Yes, ma'am!" I answered. "I mean, no, ma'am. I mean, I should have been!"

That did it. No way could I get up every morning at 4:00 to pray, and get to bed at midnight.

A few weeks later the Swains came back through. I told them my dilemma, and they began to laugh. They laughed until they cried. But I saw nothing funny in the situation. "What are you laughing about?" I demanded.

"Henry," Lydia said, "you'd better tell him."

"Tell me what?"

"They take a nap in the afternoon!"

A nap in the afternoon! If I could take a nap in the afternoon, I could get up at 4:00 in the morning to pray. But with my schedule, how could I afford a nap?

Sometime later I was in Korea. I took one of the Korean pastors off to the side and asked, "Do you folks really get up at 4:00 in the morning to pray?"

"Oh, yes-yes. "

"But you take a nap in the afternoon, right?"

"Oh, no! The missionary takes a nap!"

"Wait a minute," I insisted. "When do you go to bed?"

"Nine o'clock."

Aha! No wonder they were early risers. If I could get to bed at a decent hour, I could get up like the Koreans and pray too. So what was I to do?

After all else fails, read the directions. I got out my instruction manual. **"Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice."** (Psalm 55:17). And again: **"Seven times a day do I praise thee, because of thy righteous judgments."** (Psalm 119:164).

And that's exactly what I began to do. I set a goal: three times a day, just for a few minutes, I would ask God for things. Seven times a day, just for a few minutes, I would praise God for things. Ever since then, in those few minutes, I attempt to give God my undivided attention. Then, during the rest of the day, I practice the presence of God, talking with Him and praising Him as I go about my routine.

It works. It's scriptural. And when I pray all day this way, there's no way I can be depressed or blue.

"Pray without ceasing." (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." (1 John 5:14,15).

"Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." (John 16:24).

STUDY GOD'S WORD

"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." (Acts 17:11).

When I was in college, I used to work at a Christian radio station. The commercial manager there was a splendid Christian, and I had great respect for him.

One day after I finished a spot announcement, he came into the studio and sat down on the other side of the microphone. "Strader!" he said.

"Yes, sir. "

"If you'd start reading 15 chapters out of the Bible every day, it would change the look on your face!"

I've always been interested in anything that would change the look on my face. So without even thinking, I shot back: "I'll do it! I'm going to start reading 15 chapters out of the Bible every day!"

I thought it was going to kill me once I first started. It took 45 minutes out of my day-and I was taking hours of classes. I was getting up early to deliver papers, working at a clothing store on Saturdays, working at the radio station two hours a day, and even singing in the school chorus and acting in a few plays. I was loaded.

Nevertheless, I persisted. And amazingly enough, my grades went up instead of down. There was no time to date or hang around the snack bar. But I had time to do everything I was supposed to do.

The greatest miracle of all, of course, was that reading those 15 chapters a day actually changed the look on my face! You may say, "I don't see that it helped you all that much." But you should have seen me before! Seriously, it can change our countenance when we take a fresh look at the Book - every single day.

Since that time in college, I've taken up spending that same amount of time each day - at least 45 minutes - memorizing God's Word: first key verses, then chapters, then whole books. What a satisfaction! What a delight!

How then could I be down or defeated? The Word says, "**These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.**" (1 John 1:4). And I've found that promise to be true.

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." (Colossians 3:16).

"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15).

REJOICE CONTINUALLY

"Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." (Psalm 37:4).

The Scripture says emphatically, "Rejoice!" Can a person rejoice and be sad at the same time? It's true that the Bible says, "**As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.**" (2 Corinthians 6:10). But it doesn't say, "As sad, yet alway rejoicing"

You can smile with tears in your eyes. That's beautiful. It's godly. Even in your toughest situation, like looking into the face of a loved one in a casket, you can have victory. You can have a smile playing about your lips. That's not disrespectful - it's Christlike.

I remember once when a church across town was going through a split. People were at odds with one another. One of the strife-torn families frequented our church - they would go to their church one time and ours the next.

One Sunday afternoon their little girl looked up to her mother and asked, "Mommie, are we going to the 'happy' church tonight?" Thank God she was talking about our church.

Her question should be a reminder to us that churches ought to be the happiest, most joyful places on earth - filled with victorious, content Christians. For that to be true, we must learn to rejoice in every circumstance.

"Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice." (Philippians 4:4).

"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." (John 15:11).

FIGHT CONSTANTLY

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." (James 4:7).

How could you ever have victory if you were never in a battle? There's no way. You must be in a fight if you are to be victorious.

Some time ago in Detroit at a Full Gospel Businessmen's convention, I was praying for the sick. Now sometimes when I pray for folks, they fall; and sometimes they don't. (When people fall under the power, that's what the Bible calls a "wonder." You wonder if they were pushed!) Sometimes when I pray for the sick, they're healed - and sometimes they die! (I might just as well be honest about it.) Whatever the results, I try to leave the manifestations and the healings to God. My responsibility is to pray the prayer of faith.

In any case, a tall, lanky fellow at this meeting came up to be prayed for. I already knew from the gift of discerning of spirits what his problem was: he was homosexual. So when he started to tell me aloud, I stopped him. Several people were standing close by, and it wasn't necessary to broadcast his past.

I used to think that people like him were wired up wrong. Now I know that as a general rule, they have an unclean spirit which needs to be cast out. So I laid hands on him, and in other tongues I rebuked the spirit and commanded it to leave.

To my astonishment, the power of God fell on him, knocking him backwards - without any "catchers"! He reeled back through tables and chairs in the restaurant where we were meeting, and fell flat on his back about 15 or 20 feet away.

Immediately a tall, lanky woman rushed up to me and screamed, "What did you do to him?"

"Ma'am," I answered, "I just prayed for him, and the power of God fell on him."

"I saw you. You pushed him over!"

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"Please, ma'am. I didn't push him - not that far. That was the power of God."

We were walking toward him as we talked, and by this time we had worked our way through unturned tables and chairs to where he lay. He was trembling all over, and his eyelids were twitching. But he also had a silly grin all over his face.

The woman was beside herself with worry. Then it finally dawned on me that she was his mother. "Ma'am," I assured her, "he'll be alright."

"Get him up from there!"

"Let's let the Lord operate on him. There's no cause for alarm."

"Then I'm going to help him up."

"Please - let him alone. He'll be all right. Look - the Holy Ghost is all over him.

Then she got scared. "Well then, you get him up!"

"What church do you belong to, ma'am?"

"Lutheran."

"Why did you come here? Is this the first meeting like this you've ever been in?"

"Yes - my son made me come. Now please get him up from there."

About that time the boy got up on his own. He had a big smile, tears were streaming down his face. Then he said, "Mom, leave the preacher alone. I'm free! Thank God, I'm free!"

And he was free. The power of God had moved on him, and the unclean spirit had left. As I prayed for others, I saw out of the corner of my eye those two Lutherans in each other's arms, praying and rejoicing that this homosexual son, because of the supernatural work of God, would now be victorious for the glory of God.

Several years ago at a Catholic Charismatic regional conference in Augusta, Georgia, a prophecy came forth from a beautiful sister. In typical Catholic Charismatic uninhibited frankness it said: "If any brother or sister doesn't believe there is a formidable foe in the person of Satan, he is like a person being in the ring with Mohammed Ali and not recognizing the fact that he is there!" Only in a Catholic Charismatic conference could you hear a prophecy like that. But how true it was!

It's no wonder that God's children are beaten down discouraged, defeated and blue. They're not fighting. Satan is a coward, and he'll run from us if we'll fight him. But if we don't, we'll get mauled. He'll blast us right out of the saddle, and we'll get shot full of holes.

For that reason, the first thing we ought to teach new converts and small children is to pray to God and to command the devil. The most frequent cause for depression is fighting others or fighting ourselves, So we need to learn that our real battle is with Satan, not with people.

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, and against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Ephesians 6:12)

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses." (1 Timothy 6:12)

WORK HARD

"This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works, These things are good and profitable unto men." (Titus 3:8)

To get depressed, all you have to do is stop preaching for awhile, or resign from your Sunday school class, or simply retire without anything to do. Inactivity, even on a prolonged vacation, can have a devastating effect on your emotions and attitudes.

Very few people become depressed when they stay busy day and night. I've always worked 70 to 80 hours a week. That contributes greatly to my happiness, for I was taught as a child to love work. Though I enjoy playing occasionally, I feel better when I'm working. It doesn't leave me much time for depression.

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 15:58).

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2: 10).

THINK VICTORIOUSLY

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report: if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8).

Let me tell you a secret that I stumbled across a number of years ago. It has helped me tremendously.

When I was seeking God for the infilling of the Holy Spirit, I was instructed by Pentecostals in a variety of ways. Some told me to raise my hands. Some would stand in front of me, some in back, laying hands on me. Sometimes they would touch my throat and tell me, "Speak it

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out!" I sought the infilling flat on my back, prostrate on my front - in every imaginable position. But no matter who instructed me, or what they expected me to do, they all agreed on one thing: I needed to praise God.

And they were right. When we praise God, the Holy Spirit is drawn to us like a magnet. **"But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel"** (Psalm 22:3). God inhabits the praises of His people.

But the opposite is also true. When we complain, all the unholy spirits of hell are drawn to us. And that's an important secret every Christian should know.

One day I was out in my backyard walking on what we call our "seawall," next to the lake we live beside. It's a concrete slab about a foot and a half wide that runs the length of the yard, separating it from the water. I like to get out there occasionally and walk back and forth, memorizing Scripture and talking in my prayer language.

This particular day I heard a sound behind me like the brush of angels' wings. Turning about, I saw a long line of wild ducks behind me on the seawall: a mother duck and a dozen teenage ducks, waiting for a handout.

They were there because my wife had been feeding them in our backyard. But I'd been somewhat perturbed that she did. As you can imagine, whoever feeds wild ducks in his backyard will have a messy backyard!

Since I had no intentions of feeding them myself, I ambled on up from the seawall to my lawn chair, close to the house. But the ducks waddled right behind me, following me to my chair.

Sitting down, I began to read my Bible. So they just stood there watching me-the mother duck and all her teenagers, waiting for a handout. I timed them as they stood there like little duck statues: one minute ... two minutes.

Two minutes and 15 seconds later, the mama duck with a very dejected look on her face - turned slowly and waddled back down to the water. All 12 of her teenage ducks followed, and into the lake they swam.

What's the significance of the story? Simply this: when we complain, we feed the wild ducks of hell - the unholy spirits. And they are certain to mess up our backyards.

Just like those ducks, however, unholy spirits can be gotten rid of in a number of ways. One approach is simply to resist them. I could have turned around on the seawall and said, "Shoo!" Those birds would have flown off into the wild blue yonder.

Another way is to pray that God would dispatch angels to war against them, putting them to flight. I could have run up to the house, opened the glass doors and hissed to our two poodles, Candy and Muffin, "Git 'em!" The fur and feathers would have flown!

But still another way is to do just what I did: refrain from feeding them. When we don't complain, we starve out the evil spirits, and they slink away to bother someone else. So it's important to praise God instead of complaining.

To think victoriously, our thinking must be in accord with the promises of God's Word. Keep these verses in mind:

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Philippians 4:13).

"I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears." (Psalm 34:4).

"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." (2 Corinthians 9:8).

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31).

"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." (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Don't get me wrong - I'm not talking about "positive thinking": no sin, no devil, no hell. I'm talking about scriptural thinking. Our mind must be totally in accord with the Word if we're to stay on top 24 hours a day to be the head instead of the tail!

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." (Romans 12:1,2).

"And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." (Ephesians 4:23,24).

STAY FILLED

"And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." (Ephesians 3:19).

How important it is not just to have received an experience with the Holy Spirit in the past but to be filled with the Holy Spirit every day of our lives! There's no way we'll be depressed or down if we're continually filled with God's Spirit.

Back in 1954 I was filled to overflowing with God's Spirit as I knelt with the pastor in a church in Greenville, South Carolina. That day I spoke in tongues for an hour and a half.

Practically every day since then, I've yielded myself again and again to be renewed and refreshed by the blessed Spirit of God through my prayer language. What a rich, beautiful experience!

God wants us to be thoroughly Pentecostal - but not in name only. We must be Pentecostal in daily experience as well. A non-Pentecostal who has kept up his prayer life has a greater measure of the Holy Spirit in his life than a Pentecostal who doesn't maintain his experience.

When we live in the power of the Spirit, all the fruit of the Spirit is in evidence, including total victory. There is no defeat ever for a Spirit-filled Christian who maintains his experience.

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit."
(Ephesians 5:18).

"And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." (Luke 24:49).

LOVE FREELY

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."
(John 13:35).

My parents were respectable Methodists. But I'm ashamed to say that they belonged to a secret organization with strong prejudice against blacks, Catholics and Jews. I held on to those feelings myself until an old-fashioned Methodist evangelist from Wilmore, Kentucky, came to our church in Homestead, Oklahoma.

He preached about the sanctification experience. So I went forward to receive it. The minister told us that from that moment on, we could expect to have perfect love for everybody. And that's what happened to me.

Ever since that day, I've felt love and respect for everyone - black or white, Catholic, Jew or Protestant. It was because of that experience that I could stand in a big auditorium several years ago on the Notre Dame campus, with 10,000 Charismatic Catholics. When I looked up at the huge lettering above the platform "JESUS IS LORD"; when I saw on either side of me so many with their hands raised up in worship of Jesus, tears of joy and submission streaming down their cheeks; I glorified God for what He had wrought - not only in the hearts of those dear brothers and sisters in the Lord, but in my own heart as well.

A spiritual heaviness will prevail in our lives if we have prejudice or ill feeling toward anyone. But if the love of Jesus has preeminence, we'll have a sweet spirit and a victorious outlook that is simply electrifying.

"And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." (Romans 5:5).

Divorce has become more than a sickness in this country - it's an epidemic. So many times these days, men and especially women will tell me during a counseling session, "I just don't love him/her any more." And that is the attitude which defeats a marriage.

I see no scriptural reason for two practicing Christians to get a divorce. If people could just allow the love of God to flow through their lives, broken relationships could easily be mended. Marriages would be salvaged, and God would be glorified.

A lack of love defeats not just a marriage, but our whole walk with God. To love our family; to love our brothers and sisters in the Lord; to love our fellow man; to love even our enemies; to love the Lord with all that is within us - such love is essential to a sunshiny walk with Jesus.

"And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." (1 John 4:16).

"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." (1 John 4:7).

GROW CONSISTENTLY

"Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more." (1 Thessalonians 4:1).

We used to live about three blocks from our church. I enjoyed walking the short distance back and forth to the office and services because there were many orange trees that lined the sidewalk.

One thing I noticed while I walked: as a rule, orange trees don't get defeated or depressed. In fact, I have yet to see a fruitful orange tree groan and complain while it's growing and producing. They always have a good attitude - and I think we could learn from them.

They sink their roots deep into the sandy Florida soil, as we should sink our roots into God's holy Word. They lift their leafy arms to pray, just as we should reach up to God, looking to Him for our strength. And they drink in the beautiful light of the sun, as we should drink in the presence of God. The Scripture says that we too are to be trees of righteousness, producing fruit, a planting of the Lord for His glory.

God once gave me an insight into the lives of many senior citizens. He said that often they don't get sick or diseased because of age. Instead, it's because they stop growing. The tragic attitude that defeats many people is, "I guess I'll let somebody younger take over now. "

God doesn't want us to get old - just older. When we stop growing, depression usually sets in. We begin to feel sorry for ourselves.

One lady in our church recently went home to be with the Lord at 100 years young. Everyone loved her. She never stopped growing in her thinking, never stopped producing fruit. Consequently, I can't ever remember her being sad or dejected or left out of the blessings of God.

"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen." (2 Peter 3:18).

"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." (Ephesians 4:15).

FORGIVE

"And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." (Ephesians 4:32).

The Bible tells us in Matthew 18:23-34 about a lord whose servant owed him a great deal of money. When he couldn't pay, the lord decided to take civil action. The servant quickly began to beseech his creditor to give him time to take care of the debt. So the lord not only gave him time, but showed mercy as well by forgiving him the debt.

Meanwhile, that servant's fellow-servant owed him a few dollars. So the first servant took the other by the throat and threatened him. **"Pay me what thou owest!"**

The other man also begged for more time. **"Have patience with me,"** he pleaded, **"and I will pay thee all."** But the first servant wouldn't listen and had him thrown in prison.

When the lord heard about this, he was terribly angry with the first servant. He said, **"O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on the fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?"**

Then the lord delivered him to the tormentors till he should pay all that was due him.

After this parable Jesus adds a very sobering comment in verse 35: **"So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye, from your hearts, forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."**

Who are the tormentors to which the Lord will deliver us? They're not other people. They're tormenting spirits - demons. And it's not in the next life that we'll be tormented, but in this one. Sickness, financial reverses, hindrances and harassment of all sorts happen to believers when they carry a grudge.

We must forgive everybody. We may not be able to have a restored relationship or close fellowship with believers who continue to sin - but we must forgive them. Having our hearts clean of resentment leads to joy and great blessing and a surge of divine energy in our lives.

"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."
(Matthew 6:14,15).

"Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door." (James 5:9).

GIVE FREELY

"Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." (Proverbs 3:9,10).

If you want some fun - I mean real fun - start tithing on what you'd like to be making. That may seem a bit far-fetched. But some time ago I challenged our young couples to do just that.

At the time, one fine couple in our church was having a rough time financially. They had five children. The wife was a legal secretary. The husband was studying for the ministry. He was a cabinet maker by trade but had no cabinets to make. So on her salary, with him in school, they were eating mostly oranges.

The wheels in her brain started turning when I gave the challenge. She took her pencil out and began to figure up how much it would take to feed her family. When she arrived at the figure, she whipped out her checkbook and by faith wrote out a tithe on the amount her family needed to survive.

You can believe this or not, but within days her husband got several orders - enough to keep him busy with his finished carpentry skills. Then she got a raise, then a bonus, then another raise plus another bonus. And on top of that, their German Shepherd had pups, which they sold for \$150 apiece! Now if that isn't God's work, what is it?

Such blessing, such joy comes from giving, whether tithes, offerings or alms.

Tithing is giving 10 percent of our gross salary or our net profit on sales, pensions, gifts, allotments, grants and appreciation on properties. It goes for the operational budget of the church we attend. Tithes should be given first when you're paid or receive your profit. Appreciation can be tithed when you realize it, or stipulated in your will.

Offerings are to be given for buildings or for tools to place in the hands of ministers to spread the gospel. Alms are for the poor at home and abroad. Offerings and alms are to be given at the end of the pay period and shared as God has prospered you from your abundance.

A curse comes on us if we don't tithe and give offerings (Malachi 3:9). And if we don't give alms to the poor who cry out for help, God won't hear us when we cry out to Him (Proverbs 21:13). That will certainly lead to depression, heaviness, oppression, harassment and torment!

On the other hand, if we learn to give; if we begin to be generous; if we give with the right motives because we love God and because it's right to give - all heaven comes down. God causes other people to give it back to us, **"good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over"** (Luke 6:38). How could we have anything else but victory in Jesus as these blessings flood our lives?

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." (Malachi 3: 10).

"But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: as it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever." (2 Corinthians 9:6-9).

WITNESS TO EVERYONE

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 5:16).

Ninety-five percent of all our witnessing should be with our lives. How we act at home, on the job, at school, in the car, at the mall, is terribly important. For that reason, I especially thank God for godly public school teachers who many times cannot say a word, but who can live the life of witness. What an impression they can make on young lives! And it's beautiful when popular sports people live for God on the playing field as well as in their private lives.

Certainly, all of us must win our right to be heard by showing everyone what a genuine

200 You Can Be On Top Of Your Problems

Christian is. But we can't stop there. We've got to confess Christ with our mouth, too!

When I was a youngster, there was a mentally retarded teenager in our church. His name was Jesse. To give you an idea of his handicap, I should tell you about the time Jesse was out in the field with his big, burly brother, hauling a load of logs with a wagon and a team of mules.

His brother thought Jesse could handle driving the mules out of the pasture. So while the brother steadied the logs, Jesse drove the mules.

Unfortunately, Jesse drove that team right astride a tree, just as pretty as you please! Of course, the tree hit the leather straps between the two mules, and the load of logs stopped - except for the one on the top, along with the big, burly brother. They kept on going until they hit the ground.

Jesse's brother wasn't all that hurt, but he picked himself off the ground and screamed at the top of his voice (he wasn't a very godly man): "Jesse, why in the blankety-blank did you drive astride that blankety-blank tree? "

Jesse, his face tilted down, looked up over his eyebrows as he always did when he was speaking. He retorted, "Well, how me know that tree was there? Me never been here before!"

And that was the way Jesse operated.

The night I went to the altar to get saved at a revival, Jesse also went to the altar to get saved. Although the young man was in his late teens at the time, he had the mind of a five-year-old. But he knelt as I did.

The following Sunday, the evangelists had all those who had gotten saved during the revival to give their testimonies in the afternoon service. Several stood up and testified to the saving grace of God. I gave a brief testimony, the kind an eight-year-old boy would give.

Finally, it was Jesse's turn. The whole congregation was as quiet as a church mouse. They waited anxiously to see what a retarded boy would say.

Jesse looked up over his eyebrows, as he always did. Then he said softly, "Jesus ... saved ... me." And he sat down.

I think that testimony of three words - "Jesus...saved...me" rang just as clear in heaven's corridors as any eloquent testimony you or I or anyone else has ever given. And if Jesse could witness to Jesus, so can we.

When we do testify to Him in our everyday lives, speaking a clear witness from our mouths, we have a supernatural exhilaration that's evident both to us and to the one who's listening. It's exciting. It's thrilling. It's happiness and joy. God's glory rests upon the person who lets everyone know who Jesus is. What an antidote to depression!

DON'T JUST SIT THERE

So there they are - 12 principles from the Bible that can put you on top of your problems. There is no way we can be sad or depressed or down when we:

1. pray without ceasing
2. study God's Word
3. rejoice continually
4. fight constantly
5. work hard
6. think victoriously
7. stay filled
8. love freely
9. grow consistently
10. forgive
11. give freely
12. witness to everyone

These principles are guaranteed by God's Word to produce results. So don't just sit there reading about them. Put them into action. Now! They'll help you to come out of all darkness into His marvelous light!

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