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THE CHRISTIAN'S SOURCE OF POWER

In Mathew 5:20 Jesus said, "For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven." What type of righteousness was he talking about? Can we really obey on our own? What about our personal struggles with sin?

Jesus was the epitome of righteousness on this earth. He lived a perfect life for you and me. If we want to discover what Jesus meant by this we must first study how Jesus lived His life. What was the source of His power?

1. Was Jesus made to be like one of us in every way? Hebrews 2:14-18; 10:5

Note: Jesus was made like us in every way. He became just like one of us. He had struggles and temptations. He got hungry and thirsty and tired. He had to become like us so that He could qualify to become the second Adam, our Savior. He became an example for us in every way.

2. If Jesus was like us in every way how did He perform the miracles He did and live obediently in every way? John 5:19; 6:57; 8:28; 14:8-11; 10:30-33

Note: The Son was in close connection with His Father and it was through this close union that the Father was able to work through Jesus. Jesus was completely dependent upon His Father in all things. The miracles, the healings, the teachings were all through the Father. Jesus became totally human and dependent upon heaven for His strength.

3. How does this principle of union with the Father apply to us? John 15:1-8

Note: An apple tree bears fruit because it is an apple tree, never in order to become one. The same is true in the Christian life. A Christian does good because he is a Christian, never in order to become one. If we abide in Christ then Christ lives within us. "Sinful men can become righteous only as they have faith in God and maintain a vital connection with Him."

Desire of Ages, p. 309

4. How did Jesus maintain a vital connection with the Father? Mark 1:35

5. What type of prayers did Jesus pray? Mathew 26:39; John 6:38

Note: Jesus is to be our example in all things. Just as Jesus was surrendered to the Father, so are we to be surrendered to Jesus. "The proud heart strives to earn salvation; but both our title to heaven and our fitness for it are found in the righteousness of Christ. The Lord can do nothing toward the recovery of man until, convinced of his own weakness and stripped of all self-sufficiency, he yields himself to the control of God. Then he can receive the gift that God is waiting to bestow."

Desire of Ages, p. 300

Practical Prayer Principles

6. A Time of Prayer Mark 1:35; Psalms 5:3 _____

Note: God enjoys having communion with us throughout the day. However, if we do not turn to God in the beginning of our day for grace and strength we will often find ourselves on our knees in the evening asking for forgiveness for the mistakes we made because we neglected the great opportunity.

7. A Place of Prayer Mark 1:35; Matthew 6:6 _____

Note: It is important to find a special place where you will not be disturbed in your time with God. It may be a special chair by your bed or it may be somewhere in your back yard. My prayer life was re-charged when I decided to go outdoors in nature like Jesus did. Whether out on the deck in the morning or under the stars at night, I feel His presence more fully.

8. A Method of Prayer Matthew 6:7, 8 _____

Note: Prayer is the opening up of your heart to God like a friend and is appropriate at any time, at any place, in any form. Yet in those special moments of aloneness, in intimate communion with His Father, Jesus knelt and prayed aloud.

To Abide In Jesus Is To Allow His Words To Abide In You

In His analysis of how to live as a Christian, Jesus makes abundantly clear what it really means to be united with Him. "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you." John 15:7

To abide in Christ means that His words, His teachings, His life-giving principles fill your mind and transform your life. God's words contain life-giving power. This is the connection to the source of power in your life.

9. Some read God's word and receive little benefit. Why? Hebrews 4:2

Note: There are over 3,000 promises in the Bible. They are assurances from a loving heavenly Father of His care and concern. Accepting them by faith brings a peace and a calm assurance of His love and power in our lives. "It is faith that connects us with heaven, and brings us strength for coping with the powers of darkness. In Christ, God has provided means for subduing every sinful trait, and resisting every temptation, however strong. But many feel that they lack faith, and therefore they remain away from Christ. Let these souls, in their helpless unworthiness, cast themselves upon the mercy of their compassionate Savior. Look not to self, but to Christ. He who healed the sick and cast out demons when He walked among men is the same mighty Redeemer today. Faith comes by the word of God. Then grasp His promise, "Whoever comes to Me I will never drive away." John 6:37. Cast yourself at His feet with the cry, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief." You can never perish while you do this—never!"
Desire of Ages, p. 429

10. Without Christ what can we do on our own? John 15:5 _____

11. With Christ what can we do? Philippians 4:13 _____

12. What is the purpose of Christ's righteousness in us?

John 15:8; Psalms 23:3; Isaiah 61:3; Philippians 1:11

Note: The glory that God is speaking of is not a self-centered egotistical kind of glory but rather one that results in blessings to others. Jesus said in John 12: 32, "But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." It is not until God is lifted up and glorified that He can bring men to Himself for the purpose of salvation to mankind. His glory brings blessings to the world.

Conclusion: Just as a baby must receive nourishment through the umbilical cord in the womb of the mother, so we, too, receive nourishment through our vital connection with God. Without it we are powerless in our battle against evil. Without it we are helpless in our struggle against temptations and sin. Our works do not save us but they are the evidence of genuine faith in God in our lives. And they are instrumental in leading others to Christ and salvation.