

Are Your Expectations Realistic?

Bill Loveless

I ask this question because I received a call recently from a friend who told me that even though he has known the Christ-life truths for a year, he is not “experientially” free from a particular sin pattern. He can’t understand why he continually fails in this one area. As he was talking a thought came to my mind: “I have known these truths for over seven years, and I am **still** failing in certain areas of my life!” I think that you can agree with me that we all struggle with this situation. Paul expressed our dilemma so well in Romans 7:15, “I am doing what I don’t want to do and I am not doing what I would like.” I can only imagine the frustration with which he wrote this passage. Wouldn’t you agree that we are all in the same boat as Paul? We all want to be free of some recurring sin pattern/stronghold.

What do we know to be true? Galatians 5:1 tells us, “It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery”. The truth is that in our spirit union with Christ, we have been set free. The problem is that we are not experiencing freedom in a particular area “soulically.” In other words, we are not fully convinced in our soul that we are free. Therefore, we continue to repeat sinful attitudes and behavior. What should be our realistic expectations as we cooperate with God by faith to let God transform our soul? My friend has an expectation that he would be free of his sin pattern after one year of walking in dependence on God and drawing from Him as the Source. Is this a realistic expectation? If not, then what can we expect?

Since our point of reference has been our “human-ness” or “soulical-ness”, experiencing victory seems to be our objective. Is there anything wrong with wanting to experience victory? Absolutely not! Can God give us that experiential victory? Absolutely! But, what happens when God doesn’t give us victory according to our timetable or in the manner in which we desire that victory? Potentially, what can arise within us in those moments is frustration, condemnation, anger, resentment, disappointment, etc. Combine those thoughts with the flesh and Satan, and you could conclude that: “God doesn’t care. His promises won’t ever become a reality in my life. He really isn’t willing to give me victory. I don’t know why I even trust God for anything”. The lies can go on and on.

What is the truth? His promise of victory relates to faith when He says in 1 John 5:4 that faith itself is the victory. It is not that God doesn’t give us experiential victory because He can and does. What I believe that God wants us to focus on is the “faith” victory which we have in the moment as we draw on Christ as our Source. You may fail in an area this moment but rather than allowing the lying, frustrating, and condemning thoughts to take control, you can, in the next moment, choose to trust Christ as the “I AM” for your victory. Thus, you can know by faith that His victory is yours.

I will be honest with you. I am a human, soulical being learning to live as a spirit being. (Remember that you are not a human being having a spiritual experience. Rather, you are a spirit being having a human experience.) As such, I find it much easier to write what I have just written than to accept it as true. The truth is that we are all “learning” how to be spirit beings living in the realm of faith. It is a process. We are all at different stages of our journey. I, like you, would like for the Lord to “accelerate” the learning process. In closing, I will pray for you

and me what a friend told me recently: “I am asking the Lord to make the reality of faith a greater reality to me than the soulical experience.” This is where I believe that the Lord is taking us, and it is a realistic expectation.

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Christ Is Life Ministries
10 Texas Laurel
San Antonio, Texas 78256
210-698-1139
www.christislifeministries.com