

### **Lesson 6 – Obedience Instead of Victory (Chapter 8)**

God has made provision for our holiness and He has also given us a responsibility for it. As we have studied in chapters 5, 6 and 7, by tapping into the power of the Holy Spirit to live according to our new nature and reckoning our death to sin's reign, we are to put to death the misdeeds of the body (Romans 8:13). It is clear from this passage that God puts responsibility for live a holy life squarely on us. Paul repeats this in Colossians 3:5. The writer of Hebrews exhorts us to "throw off everything that hinders us and the sin that so easily entangles us" (Hebrews 12:1). We are to *throw off* and we are *to run*.

Even though we have learned that is the Holy Spirit that gives us the power to live a holy life – and that power is accessed through prayer and the Word – it would be foolish to misconstrue dependence on the Holy Spirit to mean that we were to make no effort at all.

- We cannot lull ourselves into a mindset that the Holy Spirit will make my choices for me or will choose obedience over disobedience. He will certainly make provision for our holiness, but He gives us the responsibility for choosing to use those provisions.
- We need to realize that our reliance on the Spirit is not intended to foster an attitude of "I just can't do it", but rather one of "I can do it through Him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). Again, the Christian should never complain for want of ability and power.
- If we sin, it is because we choose to sin, not because we lack the ability (power, strength, resources) to say no to temptation.

It is time for us Christians to face up to our responsibility for holiness. Too often we say we are "defeated" by this sin or that sin. The fact is we are not defeated...we are simply disobedient. When I say that I am defeated by some sin, I am unconsciously slipping out from under my responsibility. I am, in effect, saying that something *outside* of me has defeated me. But, when I say (admit) that I am disobedient, that places the responsibility on me. We may, in fact, be defeated, but the reason we are defeated is because we have chosen to disobey.

The Old Testament clearly emphasizes God's holiness and His requirement that we be holy as well (Leviticus 11:44-45, 20:7; Isaiah 6:1-3). The New Testament leaves no doubt that holiness is our responsibility. If we are to pursue holiness, we must take some decisive action.

Consider this scenario: Someone might say, *"I want to live a holy life, but I know there are still sins in my life that defeat me [and displease Him]. But, I've been praying that God would motivate me to stop."* Motivate them to stop? What they are saying in effect is that God has not done enough. It is so easy to ask God to do something more because that postpones facing up to our own responsibility.

We need to come to the hard realization that we are responsible for our thoughts, attitudes and actions. We need to *reckon* (determine to be absolutely true) on the fact that we are dead to sin's reign, that it no longer has any dominion over us, that God has united us with the risen Christ in all His power, and has given us the Holy Spirit to work in us.