

Part 3 – Choosing Victory

Everyman's Battle by Stephen Arterburn and Fred Stoeker

When is the time to decide (on victory or loss)? In the spiritual war, decision is not a moment or event, but is a continuum of maturity and growth. This war is not about human will alone or the self-driven “energy” to overcome but must embrace God in sweet surrender. Yes, to be a victor, you must surrender; not to the temptations that forever face you, but to God who will forever save you.

Understand that as long as you live in the flesh, you will have to face the temptations of the flesh; not just sexual in nature but also the other basic temptations of pride, power and prosperity. The understanding and experience of the temptation is enough to suggest *throwing in the towel* or *raising the white flag* as a implicit or expressed admission of concession. But an action of this kind is premature because it considers only our human capacity or desire – and does not factor in the supernatural work of God and his desire for his children.

In the process of decision come several possible questions:

- How long do I intend to be ensnared (by recurring or besetting sin)?
- How long must my family wait?
- How long before I can look God in the eye?

Though the questions seem simple in composition, the fact is that the questions are deep; deep to our very soul and essence of who we are as children of God. But God is aware and conscience of your present answers or responses to these questions. God knows your humanity – which is why he sent Christ and the Holy Spirit. In our weakness (or weaknesses), He is made strong.

Don't forget that all mankind suffers from sin...

The present culture is entrenched in sex; but this direction or disposition is not new to mankind. Historical records show that Rome became indulged in sex as recorded in art and other evidence of the time; and reached a high point during the days leading up to the fall. Other communities in New Testament period worshiped sex in one form or another. Today, media inundates the viewing or listening audience with endless messages and attractions. The challenges have never been greater for the young man in particular.

The writer's remind us that “God's will” is still relevant:

God's will is for you to have sexual purity, though you may not think so since that has not been your constant experience. But He has made a provision for that purity.

We are told to *not let sin reign in your mortal body...that you obey its evil desires.*

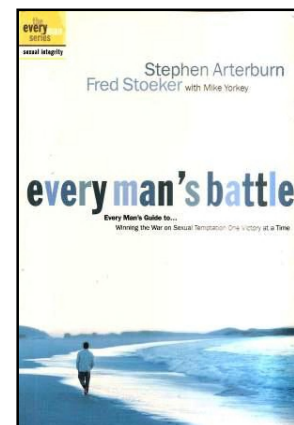
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Holiness should be our pursuit – not because of some self-proclaimed victory but because of what Christ did for us in the Cross. Paul of the New Testament tells the reader that when we sin against our own body (as a believer in Christ), we sin against the body of Christ and his friends within the body. In the body of Christ, our friends trust us to be pure. A failure or breach of trust can crush their spirits...

This breach of trust is also generational; that is, the conduct of a man can affect his children...and their children...and so on. The sins of the past can be broken so that besetting sin is not passed; but God must be center to end such a legacy....

A battle within us; yes, as Paul describes the battle for our soul (or heart) is where conflict and sin begins...with our desires: Paul discusses the “war waging within him” where he knows what he should do but, in his flesh, there is opposition that leads to conflict, sin and even self-loathing. These desires will manifest in our relationships and, in that, affects other people. For example, we may be unhappy or greatly disturbed in the depth of our soul; but we are inclined to blame others for our condition – as though they are responsible for our happiness or other needs. So, our internal struggles can *go a long way* in affecting our external relationships for now and for future generations.



Understanding the roots of this conflict is essential to treating and winning over sin. When we embrace our own fallen condition of depravity, we may accept that our weaknesses enable our nature and desire to sin at any level; thus, we are each and all capable of thinking, speaking and doing the most vile of things.

In our understanding is the result of humility; that is, the realization that we need God so as to deal and win in the battles that begin within us. That our desires may, with God's help and supernatural work, become God's desires; or that we may be ever increasing in the likeness, the thinking, of Christ.

Our mind is a battlefield as well: the heart and head have a relationship. Some have said that *as a man thinks, so he is....* But our mind and our heart have a connection for which the one, when undergoing a change in God's lordship, will affect the other. Our heart must be for God's lordship; then the mind and all manifestations of sin will follow....

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