

GRAPHIC w/email

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Victory for the Christ-follower is purchased, promised and provided ...

I Corinthians 15:57

But thanks be to God, who gives us **the victory** through our Lord Jesus Christ!

Romans 8:37

... in all these things we are **more than conquerors** through Him who loved us.

Victory for the Christ-follower is purchased, promised and provided ... but must be **pursued.**

I John 5:4

... everyone who has been born of God conquers the world. This is **the victory** that has conquered the world: **our faith**.

In Christianity, victory does not always **feel or seem or look like victory.**

I Samuel 7:1-2

So the people of Kiriath-jearim came for the ark of the Lord and took it to Abinadab's house on the hill. They **consecrated** his son Eleazar to take care of it. Time went by **until twenty years** had passed since the ark had been taken to Kiriath-jearim. Then the whole house of Israel **longed for the Lord** // *began to seek the Lord*.

{bring up the sentence and then the bullet point one at a time; keep on same slide.}

We are capable of settling for less and receiving less than God has won for us.

- **Status quo Christian**
- **Nominal Christian**
- **Ornamental Christian**
- **Sentimental Christian**

I Samuel 7:3a

Samuel told them, "**If** you are **returning** to the Lord with **all** your heart ...

1) Victory does not require **perfection** but rather **earnestness**.

2 Chronicles 16:9a

For the eyes of the Lord roam throughout the earth to show Himself strong for those who are **wholeheartedly devoted** to Him.

1 Samuel 7:3-4

Samuel told them, "If you are returning to the Lord with all your heart, **get rid** of the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths that are among you, **set your hearts** on the Lord, and worship **only** Him. Then he will rescue you from the Philistines." So the Israelites **removed** the Baals and the Ashtoreths and only worshiped the Lord.

God/Christ + _____ = Happiness; Security; Identity

{same slide; come up one at a time}

Successful seeking is unconditional seeking.

Successful seeking goes beyond devotional moments.

Christianity is not for reinforcing our **lifestyles (economics, politics, pleasures) but for pursuing the **Person and path** of the Cross.**

2) Victory is for the **repentant**.

1 Samuel 7:5-6

Samuel said, "Gather all Israel at Mizpah, and I will pray to the Lord on your behalf." When they gathered at Mizpah, they drew water and poured it out in the Lord's presence. They fasted that day, and there they **confessed**, "**We** have sinned **against** the Lord." And Samuel **judged** the Israelites at Mizpah.

Repentance eventually becomes less about the specific sin(s) and the associated guilt, shame and consequences and more about returning to God as our "first" love and highest Treasure.

God/Christ + _____ = Happiness; Security; Identity

Everyone wants victory through affirmation;

God offers it through rebuke and correction that leads to repentance.

3) Victory comes through, in, and with **spiritual community**.

Matthew 16:18

... I will build **My church**, and the gates of Hades will **not** overpower it.

Ephesians 4:12, 16 (NLT)

Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do His work and **build up the church**, the body of Christ ...He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the **whole body is healthy and growing and full of love**.

ME → WE

ALL IN SLIDE

1 Samuel 7:7-8

When the Philistines heard that the Israelites had gathered at Mizpah, their rulers marched up toward Israel. When the Israelites heard about it, they were **afraid** because of the **Philistines**. The Israelites said to Samuel, "**Don't stop crying out** to the Lord our God for us, so that **He will save us** from the Philistines."

{come up one at a time}

2 Cautions:

Don't blame the Philistines.

Don't fixate on the Philistines.

4) Victory comes through **desperate dependence**.

1 Samuel 7:9-12

Then Samuel took a **young lamb** and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the Lord. He cried out to the Lord on behalf of Israel, and the Lord answered him. Samuel was offering the burnt offering as the Philistines approached to fight against Israel. The Lord thundered loudly against the Philistines that day and threw them into such confusion that they were **defeated** by Israel. Then the men of Israel charged out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines striking them down all the way to a place below Beth-car. Afterward, Samuel took a stone and set it upright between Mizpah and Shen. He named it **Ebenezer**, explaining, "The Lord has helped us **to this point**."

{come up one at a time}

Desperate Dependence:

- The blood of Another
- The doors opened by desperate prayer
- The ongoing faithfulness of God

I Samuel 7:13-14

So the Philistines were subdued and did not invade Israel's territory again. The Lord's hand was against the Philistines **all of Samuel's life**. The cities from Ekron to Gath, which they had taken from Israel, were **restored**; Israel **even rescued** their surrounding territories from Philistine control. There was also **peace** between Israel and the Amorites.

I Samuel 7:15-17

Samuel **judged** Israel throughout his life. Every year he would go on a circuit to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah and would **judge** Israel at all these locations. Then he would return to Ramah because his home was there, he **judged** Israel there, and he built **an altar** to the Lord there.

5) Victory is maintained, protected and maximized by the **ongoing pursuit.**

{One at a time}

Check your present pursuit...

Put the presence of God first ...

Give Him permission ...

Step on the path of victory ...