

The Enemy of Self

Few of us really believe the words of Jesus in *John 15:5*, "...without me ye can do nothing." We know that we need God's help for the big things—raising children, overcoming temptation, winning people to Christ. But we do not recognize that we need His help for even the most simple and seemingly mundane tasks. We cannot do everything without Christ, but surely we can do some things. Right?

What we must realize to have victory against the Enemy of Self:

1. Pleasing _____

John 8:29, "And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him." "Please Him," I believe we could reduce the Christian life to those two words. Our purpose, our thoughts, and our behaviors should be to please God. But *Romans 8:8* tells us "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." Our flesh—our old self-dependent nature—can't do it.

We understand that unsaved people cannot please God. *Proverbs 21:4* tells us that even "...the plowing of the wicked is sin." We must understand that Christians who do not spend time with God and do not live godly cannot please Him.

I am not naturally spiritual or good. When my children disobey, I don't always stop and ask the Lord to guide my words. Sometimes I just wanted to give them a piece of my mind. Maybe you are not like me. Maybe, when you have a disagreement with a co-worker, your first thought is, "Lord, help me to be a testimony for You or respond right. My main responsibility is to represent You, not defend myself." Maybe. but I suspect we both have a strong tendency towards self-reliance.

2. I AM _____ - Matthew 6:19-21,24

Galatians 5:17 tells us of the struggle between our two natures. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." The fact is that part of us wants to do right and part of us wants to do wrong. We must recognize that we are simultaneously indwelt by the Spirit of God and influenced by the flesh. This is why the Lord Jesus clearly told us that without Him we could do nothing. In every situation we are either relying on God or relying on ourselves. When we rely on God, He will accomplish amazing things in our lives.

3. PLUGGED IN & _____

Philippians 2:13 says, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." I imagine that a person is trying to vacuum your living room, but the vacuum is not plugged in. He pushes the vacuum vigorously back and forth and works hard to get the carpet clean, but there is no power. So you speak to the person and say, "All your pushing is useless. You need to plug the vacuum in." He plugs the vacuum in, turns the switch on, and lets it sit there. Again, you speak to him, "Hey, you're never going to get the floor clean that way. You have to push the vacuum!"

So it is in our Christian life. We must be yielded to God, but it is an active yielding. We must be active in our service, but only "plugged in," Spirit-empowered activity will accomplish God's work. The answer to the argument as to whether we should trust or obey is that we must trust and obey. Or better yet, we must trust to obey.