

## *Empowering Our Will through Relationship with the Father – Dan Hitz*

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In the last few months we've looked at acknowledging the deeper needs of our hearts that we are trying to fulfill through sinful ways. We've also begun to look at some of the voids in our hearts that came through wounds inflicted upon us by our parents – parents who may have sincerely tried to do their best, or parents who were given over to addiction and abusive behaviors. Regardless of how the wounds got there, Jesus Christ made provision for our healing through His death on the cross and the resurrection power He makes available to us. God has the answer for the deep needs in our hearts.



**2 Corinthians 5:17 reads, “Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” [NKJV]** Realizing that when we have surrendered our lives to Christ we are new creations begs the question, “If I am a new creation, why do I still go on sinning and struggling with sin?” Many of us have confessed the same sins time and time again, yet we continue to struggle with them. What’s with that? Since God doesn’t want us to sin, why doesn’t He just change us all at once?

God’s deeper goal in our journey to overcome sin is that we grow deeper in our relationship with Him. He could change our desires instantly when we come to Him, yet that would require no trust on our parts. Many of us have “trained” our hearts to respond to sin for years and years. Some of those sins have become a “sinful security blanket” to us in our time of need. The Lord wants us to grow in love with Him and trust that He can give us a better answer for our needs than the sinful comforts we’ve grown to love.

**Rather than giving us an automatic download of new thought processes, the Lord allows us to be tempted and tested along the way so that we can realize what is in our hearts. We can then bring those thoughts and temptations to Him and ask for help.** In Judges Chapter Three we see that the Lord left certain enemies of Israel in the Promised Land specifically so that He could test His people and show them what was in their hearts. Most importantly, He can then teach them how to fight a holy battle against their enemies and win. We are dependent upon our relationship with the Lord to show us how to overcome our sin and to replace the former sinful activities with healthy ones. **We aren’t called to serve Him as preprogramed robots. We are called to serve Him in relationship as a son or daughter serves his or her loving Father.** He empowers us. As we yield our fallen will to Him, He transforms our will to line up with His. He strengthens our desire and ability to love and obey. Through the transformation of our hearts in relationship with God, the hands that once typed sinful internet addresses are now lifted in holy praise to Him. Our feet that once walked into unholy places, now walk to the altar where our lips that once spoke unholy things offer up praises to Him. This is the fruit of a loving, compassionate God teaching us to overcome our sin through a relationship with Him.

So why do we need to have a relationship with God in order to learn how to overcome our sin? A better question is, “Why were we serving our sin in the first place?” When we engage in habitual sin, we are actually serving an idol. Anything that we love and obey more than God is an idol. Why do we serve idols? It’s pretty much the same reason that a child may go on a ride with dad to the hardware store when he has no real interest in the project the dad is currently working on. Sure, he may want to spend time with dad, but what he really wants is the cherry Slurpee or that Happy Meal dad will get him on the way back from the store. The kid goes to the hardware store with dad because he wants something from him. That’s the reason we serve our idols – we want something from them. We may want the intimacy that pornography pretends to offer. We may want the peace that drugs or alcohol pretend to offer. **Anytime we violate our own conscience to get what our idols pretend to offer we are actually surrendering to that idol. In a great act of false advertising, idols offer us many things; acceptance, freedom, power, peace... In reality idols rob us of the very things they pretend to offer. Our own will becomes powerless as we are overcome by the power of our idol.**

That’s where the loving relationship with our Heavenly Father comes in. In the *Living Waters* guidebook Andrew Comiskey writes, “In order to walk out of life-dominating sin, we need His greater power to break into our lives. We need a will greater than our own.” [p. 48] It is in relationship with a loving, compassionate, redemptive God that He begins to show us the bait that our idol dangles before us. He then begins to empower us to see that bait for what it truly is. Most importantly, He begins to show us how His love can provide that which we’ve been truly wanting all along. He begins to empower our will that has been surrendered to idols to fully renounce those idols, and to walk with Him in life-giving relationship.

**As we realize the power of the sinful idols in our lives we need to bow before our holy God and repent. We need the greater redemptive power of the cross and resurrection to break the lesser power of our idols. We need to trust that a holy God can actually give us something better than our unholy idols pretend to offer.** It is through relationship with our Savior that He empowers us to begin trusting the Father for the more intimate needs of our hearts. As we reach out to the



Father in vulnerability, we see that He really does care about the deeper needs of our hearts. As we learn to trust Him, we realize that our repentance is not met with angry glares. We see that He is a loving father who loves to heal the deep wounds of our hearts. We learn more of His heavenly “Dadness” that mercifully confronts us about our sin, walks us through the redemption process, and empowers us to enter into all that He has planned for our lives. There is no shame involved in learning to walk in his holy “Dadness”. Only love, grace, and redemption.

**Our lives are a journey through the wilderness. Freedom comes when we share our hearts with our loving Father so that He can provide for our deeper needs and desires in a way that strengthens us. As He empowers our will to live for Him, we find the true acceptance, freedom, power, and peace that we were trying to get from our idols.**