

3 Steps to Being Victorious

One of the darkest periods in our country's history was when we divided over the issue of slavery. The Civil War divided us as a nation, divided families, and cost 620,000 lives. It ended when Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox Courthouse on April 9, 1865. The Union walked away with victory.

But the war wasn't over.

General Edmund Kirby Smith led the Confederate forces west of the Mississippi River. For eight more weeks, he led his troops in minor skirmishes, raids, and guerrilla tactics. Federal troops knew the war was over, but those out west continued to face attack from Smith and his troops. It wasn't until June 2, 1865 that General Smith finally surrendered to Major General Edward Canby of the United States.



Now the war was over.

I picture a bunch of young men in blue uniforms, barely out of adolescence. When word came from the east that Lee surrendered, surely they were elated. They weren't regular army, so the end of the war meant going home to mom ... to girlfriends ... to rest. Only problem was a bunch of pesky Confederates who keep firing at them. These guys were trying to pack their gear for the trek home, but they had to stay on the alert, occasionally fire back, and shout, "ENOUGH ALREADY! THE WAR IS OVER!"

There are days I feel like shouting to Satan, "ENOUGH ALREADY! THE WAR IS OVER!"

As a follower of Christ, I know my sin problem was dealt with at the cross. I am no longer a slave to sin; I have been set free by the love and grace of Christ. My victory is secure.

"Who can separate us from the love of Christ? Can affliction or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: Because of you we are being put to death all day long; we are counted as sheep to be slaughtered. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to

separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:35-39).

How's that for a picture of complete victory? Christ has won for me, and I am secure in Him, **but Satan still keeps taking shots at me.** He knows Christ has won my victory, but he doesn't want to admit defeat. So using guerrilla tactics, he tries to catch me unaware. He hides, then surprises me. He catches me off guard with a temptation.

The war is over, but I still face battles.

Thankfully, I don't face those battles alone.

- **God walks with me.** "I say, then, walk by the Spirit and you will certainly not carry out the desire of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16).
- **God equips me.** "Finally, be strengthened by the Lord and by his vast strength. Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the schemes of the devil" (Eph. 6:10-11).
- **God provides a way out. Every time.** "No temptation has come upon you except what is common to humanity. But God is faithful; he will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13).

God provides His presence, power, and strength, but it still falls on me to be vigilant.

1. **Walk in the faith God has given me.** "Everyone who has been born of God conquers the world. This is the victory that has conquered the world: our faith. Who is the one who conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John 5:4-5).
2. **Stay surrendered to the lordship of Christ.** "Therefore, submit to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (Jas. 4:7).
3. **Stay alert and watchful.** "Be sober-minded, be alert. Your adversary the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour. Resist him, firm in the faith, knowing that the same kind of sufferings are being experienced by your fellow believers throughout the world" (1 Pet. 5:8-9).

One day, every knee will bow before Christ acknowledging He is the victorious Lord, but until then **keep fighting. In Christ, we've got this.**