

Do you ever feel like you are spinning your wheels, moving constantly but never making progress? Are you always taking two steps forward but three steps back? Instead of living like an overcomer you are constantly being overcome?

Whatever your battle—whether lust, anger, anxiety, jealousy, envy, coveting, selfishness, pride, rejection, or low self-esteem—you get momentary victory followed by resounding defeat.

Most likely, you have a traction problem.

Just like a car stuck in the sand spins its wheels and goes nowhere, you aren't making spiritual progress because you lack inward traction.

The Stuck Road

This reminds me of an incident that my family calls *The Stuck Road*. When my daughter Anna was four, we were headed to a mountain cabin for a short vacation. About 15 minutes away, we stopped for dinner. As we were eating, Angie kept warning that we needed to leave quickly so we could drive up the mountain while there was still daylight. But I shrugged off her advice and told her to relax. Everything will be fine. I have it covered.

An hour later I really wished I had listened to her counsel.

The hill to the cabin was steep. The darkness of night didn't help.

All of a sudden, we hit a steep incline and our car lost traction. The wheels kept spinning, going nowhere. I tried everything but couldn't move the car an inch.

Thankfully, someone who knew the terrain well drove by and helped us out, driving our car to the cabin.

When we arrived safely, we all had a good laugh. But Anna was somewhat traumatized by the incident. In her cute 4-year-old voice, she kept referring to the steep hill as *The Stuck Road*. She insisted her daddy could not drive up *The Stuck Road* for the rest of the trip. To this day, seven-years later, if we say the phrase *Stuck Road*, you can almost sense Anna's heart racing and palms sweating.

Gaining Spiritual Traction

Spiritually speaking, many believers are on *The Stuck Road*. They are spinning their wheels constantly but going nowhere. The lust problem they had 10 years ago is the lust problem they have today. The anger issue they battled in their twenties lingers with them in their fifties. Their selfish tendencies to control and manipulate have cost them precious relationships.

If you want to get off the treadmill and make spiritual progress, you need traction. And the good news is you already have what you need. Better stated, you already have Who you need within you.

Paul said, "If Christ is in you . . . [your] spirit is alive because of righteousness" (Rom. 8:10, emphasis mine).

If Christ is in you, as I mentioned in my last message, one-third of you is already righteous, holy, and complete. Knowing this and meditating on this gives you spiritual traction so that you can make progress.

Before I knew how Christ had transformed my spirit, my life was like a roller coaster. One day I was peaceful, joyful, and confident. The next day I was anxious, mopey, and insecure. One week I lived like an overcomer. The next week I was overcome.

My problem was I didn't know Christ dwelled in me. Nor did I realize how He had transformed my spirit when I was born again. Without this knowledge, I lacked spiritual traction and went nowhere.

In my last message, I talked about three truths about your born-again spirit. In this message, I will detail three more. If you want to get off the spiritual treadmill and begin to make progress in the Lord, meditate on these truths often.

4. Your Spirit Is Christ-like.

Looking once again at Ephesians 4:24, Paul said your new spirit has been created “in the likeness of God.” Once again, this is in the past tense. The work in your spirit is already finished.

The Father’s great eternal plan, to conform us into the image of Christ, is one-third complete (Rom. 8:29). Your spirit has already been conformed into the image and likeness of Christ.

Pause for a second and ponder this reality. *I am one-third of the way toward Christlikeness.*

It’s so helpful to see what Christ has already done in you. This gives you the traction to go forward rather than stay where you are, spinning your wheels in constant frustration.

By God’s doing, He has already conformed your spirit into the image of His Son. John said, “As He is, so also are we in this world” (1 John 4:17). He didn’t say *so also will we be in heaven*. He said *so also are we in this world*. John described our current condition because of Christ in us and the transformative work He has completed in our spirits.

This is not something we confess until we become Christlike. This is not a “fake it until you make it” self-help technique. It’s the absolute truth because Christ dwells within you and He has transformed your spirit entirely. You are a new creation. The work in your spirit has already been completed. Your spirit is already Christlike because Christ dwells within you.

I can hear the protests now. *But you don’t know my struggle with sin and selfishness. You don’t know my intense battle with lust. You don’t know my internal conflict with rage and anger.*

That’s true. I don’t know your battles and struggles. But I know this. Your conflicts don’t define you. Christ in you defines you. Christ in you is your identity. And when you realize your spirit is already Christlike, it gives you the traction to put sin and selfishness under your wheels, to overcome it, and to go forward in the Lord.

If you struggle believing one-third of you is already Christlike, spend more time looking in the spiritual mirror of God’s Word and renewing your mind. Don’t allow what you can see with your natural eyes to trump what you see in the spiritual mirror of God’s Word.

Don’t be like the overweight person who looks in the mirror and denies what they see. *Surely, it’s not this bad. I can’t be this overweight.*

A physical mirror can’t lie. Neither can a spiritual mirror.

5. Your Spirit Already Has Everything You Need.

Peter said, “His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness” (2 Pet. 1:3). Notice carefully the phrase *has granted*. This describes a once and for all, never to be repeated completed work.

The moment Christ came to dwell within you, He gave you *everything* you need for life and godliness. Like Ira Yates, you already are a spiritual multimillionaire whether or not you know it.

What, exactly, do we already have? In Peter’s own words, *everything pertaining to life and godliness*.

Because Christ dwells within you, you already have everything you need to live by His life. You already have everything you need to be fully conformed into His nature. The problem is, like Ira Yates, you don’t know how rich you already are. So, you live in spiritual poverty.

Since you already have everything pertaining to Christ's nature, you already have Christ's love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, and self-control within you (Gal. 5:22-23). You already have access to Christ's infinite mind and transcendent wisdom (1 Cor. 2:16). And you already have His mountain-moving, miracle-working faith (2 Pet. 1:1).

The problem is we are either ignorant of this or we quickly forget who we are in Christ.

Take a good look at yourself in the spiritual mirror of God's Word. Your spirit already has *everything* you need for life and godliness because Christ dwells there.

I want to ask an honest question. What if the church spent less time begging God for a revival and spent more time meditating on what we already have—everything pertaining to life and godliness? I'm not saying we shouldn't pray for revival. I'm emphasizing the need to meditate on and to then live by Christ's indwelling life—His life that we already have within us.

Imagine Ira Yates pleading with God for provision for 11 years. The entire time he prays, there is untold wealth underneath his feet.

If the church spent less time praying for revival and more time meditating on what we already have because Christ dwells within us, we might have the revival we've been praying for.

If you want to get off the spiritual treadmill and start making progress in the Lord, begin meditating on the good things within your spirit because Christ dwells there.

6. Your Spirit Is One with Christ.

Do you struggle to connect with the Lord? Do you strive to be intimate with Him without success? Do you ever feel dead, dry, and disconnected? And then, you are pummeled with doubt and condemnation because intimacy with Christ seems like a pipe dream.

I have and still do from time to time. But I am learning something revolutionary. These are just feelings. When I *feel* dead, dry, and disconnected, it's a clear indication I'm living from my soul rather than my spirit. When I *feel* a million miles away, it doesn't mean I am a million miles away.

If you ever feel this way, don't feel discouraged. These feelings mean your soul is presently leading your life rather than your spirit. These feelings are like your car's dashboard. They indicate what's happening with the things you can't see, such as the condition of your engine and whether you need more gas.

Your feelings are like a dashboard that indicate your life source—whether you are living from your self-life in your soul or Christ's indwelling life in your spirit.

You may feel dead and dry. But the truth is your spirit is a pipeline to Christ's uncreated, indestructible life.

Whenever we say things like, "I feel a million miles from the Lord" or "I feel dead and dry," we are basically saying, "My soul presently has dominion over my spirit. My feelings are trumping the truth of my spiritual union with Christ."

Whether or not you feel connected to Christ, the truth remains: You are one spirit with Him (1 Cor. 6:17). Stop allowing your soulful emotions to muddy the clear water of truth—your spirit is fastened together with the Spirit of Christ.

Let these feelings lead you to renew your mind. Let these feelings be erased by meditating on the good things within you because of Christ. When you do this, you will shift from the soul to the spirit.

Since I'm an avid coffee drinker, I always bring a package of Starbucks Via Instant Coffee whenever we travel to Africa on mission trips. I normally don't care for Starbucks, but you never know where you might be

staying. So, Via is a safe bet for decent coffee when your options are limited. I also bring Coffee mate creamer just in case I can't drink the milk or half-and-half.

Making a cup of Via reminds me of my spiritual union with Christ. I take four separate ingredients—boiling water, Via, Coffee mate, and sugar—and mix these together in my cup. After stirring, you can't separate the four individual ingredients because they are now one.

This is like your spiritual union with Christ. Your spirit and the Spirit of Jesus Christ are joined together as one. Your spirit can't be separated from Christ's Spirit.

Paul said, "The one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him" (1 Cor. 6:17). The word *joins* means *to glue*. If you look at the previous verse, Paul quoted the most famous marriage Scripture in the Bible—Genesis 2:24. Paul also quoted this verse in Ephesians 5:31, stating, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh" (Eph. 5:31). The word *joined* in this passage also means *to glue*.

Marriage glues a man and a woman together for life. New birth also glues our spirit to the Spirit of Christ. Like a husband and wife are joined together in marriage, we are joined to Christ when we were born again.

Imagine two separate pieces of construction paper. One of the pieces has a liberal amount of glue smothered on every square inch. When the two pieces are glued together, you can't separate them without tearing both pieces. This is what marriage is like when a man and a woman are glued together. This is also what it looks like when your spirit and the indwelling Spirit of Christ are glued together at new birth. The two can't be separated.

Think about the implications of this for a minute. Your spirit is literally joined together with the Spirit of Christ. The same Spirit who created the universe at God's command. The same Spirit who impregnated the virgin Mary. The same Spirit who raised Jesus Christ from the dead.

Your spirit and the indwelling Spirit of Christ are glued together, cemented and fastened together as one. Just as a husband and wife leave their father and mother and cleave to each other in an inseparable bond, you have left your former life and are now cleaving to Christ inwardly.

I don't know about you, but this is incredible news! This is the gospel. You and the indwelling Spirit of Christ are already one. This has to be why Jesus said, "It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper [the Holy Spirit] will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you" (John 16:7, emphasis mine).

In Romans 7:1-6, Paul used the analogy of a husband and wife to illustrate our death to the Law and our spiritual union with Christ. Paul said the Law has jurisdiction over the woman until her husband dies. But after his death, Paul wrote, the woman is free to be joined in marriage to another man without committing adultery. He summarized his main point in verse 4: "Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God."

You died to the Law through the body of Christ and are now "joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead." The NKJV translates this as "that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead." We are not married to Christ yet, for that awaits the future Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:9). But our spiritual union with Him is similar to the joining of a husband to his wife.

What does this mean for you? It means you no longer have to struggle and strive to experience deep intimacy and communion with Christ. You no longer have to go through dry spells where you feel disconnected from Him. You no longer have to feel a million miles away from Him.

Don't let your feelings dictate your relationship with the indwelling Christ. All you need to do is remember the truth. You are already one with Him. Don't have spiritual amnesia and forget the finished work of your union with Christ. Meditate on the truth of your spirit glued together with the Spirit of Christ often.