

2019: Year for Overcoming Stubborn Strongholds

For many who feel they go one step forward in the Lord and then two steps backward, be encouraged. I sense the Lord saying, "I count the one foot forward and two steps backward as forward progress."

In football, when the team needs one yard for a first down and the player carries the ball forward one yard yet gets pushed back two yards, it's still marked as a first down. They call this forward progress and so does the Lord. He counts your one step forward, not your steps back.

I'm convinced that many who feel like quitting are actually making progress.

"Brothers, I do not count myself to have attained, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal to the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13-14).

The Lord Sees Your Victory Before You See Your Struggle

"You are my King, O God; command deliverances for Jacob" (Ps. 44:4).

Many years ago at a Russ Bixler miracle meeting in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, I stood in proxy for my father, who for 25 years, couldn't stop smoking cigarettes. When I arrived home, my father was in the living room watching television. I whispered to my mother in the kitchen what I had done for my dad so he would stop smoking. I didn't know he overheard me telling mom. He walked into our kitchen and said, "Maybe that's the reason when I lit up a cigarette about 8 this evening it didn't taste right, so I put it out." Dad never

smoked another cigarette the rest of his life! It was the same time I stood in proxy for him that evening 60 miles away.

On the other hand my mother, who was bound by cigarettes, fought the craving for 16 years. Each time she was tempted, she would go down to the basement of our home to an old box of jars and would kneel down, crying out to the Lord for deliverance. Finally after 16 years, the craving left her. I believe now that God wasn't counting the years she couldn't stop smoking but only the 16th year when she overcame it. The Lord for some reason knew something good was happening in her as a result of persevering. During this time, my mother learned compassion for people who struggled in their weaknesses, and many were delivered before she was, for she knew how to pray for them as one of them.

He Is Weaning Many From Their Struggles

I believe this coming year will be a landmark for many who will break free from their struggles. Those who have cried out to the Lord for many years and yet are still bound will discover deliverance just because they didn't quit trusting the Lord for their victory. Although some will have instant deliverance, others will know they were being weaned from their bondage. Remember in our struggles we, as Believers, are not sinners struggling to become saints, we are saints struggling against sin.

My mother had major heart bypass surgery in her 70s. The doctors came to us in the waiting area and told us these words: "Because of what your mother has just been through, she's not going to look very good to you, but she looks great to us because of what she's been through." I sense many reading this article feel like they are not doing well at all in their own eyes and also as a result of what the enemy and what other people are saying to them. But I hear the Father saying, "Because of what you've been through, you look great to Me." Many who feel like fainting are

actually doing well from what God sees.

The Lord takes in to account what we have been through and what we are presently battling. He understands why we are struggling. He remembers all of our struggles from the womb to the present day. The One who numbers the hairs on our head and knows our every weakness knows us best and loves us most. When everything is against us, He isn't.

Amazing Grace Is When We Think We Have Blown It

"Since then we have a great High Priest who has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who was in every sense tempted like we are, yet without sin. Let us then come with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:14-16).

Are you still struggling against sin? If so be encouraged, because that means you haven't quit. When you quit is when you are in trouble.

You Are Crucified With Christ

Remember, you've been crucified with Christ. You were nailed to the cross with Him. No matter how much your old nature acts like it's still alive, it's dead. You are dead, dead to sin but alive unto God. You are free before you are free because of Calvary. You are free indeed. Go ahead and live unto God.

"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20) {eo}

Bill Yount has been a member of Bridge of Life Church in Hagerstown, Maryland, for the past 40 years and is in leadership. He faithfully served in prison ministry at Mount

Hope Inc. for 23 years and now travels full time, ministering in churches and Aglow circles. He is currently an adviser at large for Aglow International. Bill has authored several prophetic books. His latest book is Handfuls of Purpose. His prophetic email list is: @. Visit Bill's website at .