

Joyce Meyer: How to Make God's Plans Your Reality

As believers in Jesus Christ, we are joint heirs with Him. This means that everything that is His also belongs to us, and every promise God gives in His Word is for us (Rom. 8:17). But I've learned that it's one thing to take God's promises by faith and another to actually experience them.

The story of the Israelites in the wilderness is a good example for us regarding this principle. They were slaves in Egypt when God sent Moses to deliver them from Pharaoh and lead them to the promised land He had for them. They had to go through a wilderness to get there, and Deuteronomy 1:2 (AMP) says, "It is [only] eleven days' journey from Kadesh-barnea [on Canaan's border; yet Israel wandered in the wilderness for forty years before crossing the border and entering Canaan, the promised land]."

It's tragic that it took the Israelites 40 long, miserable years to reach their destination, and even sadder that in the end, only a small number entered in to the land, along with Joshua and Caleb.

It's easy to shake our heads and wonder how it could have taken them so long to get to their desired destination. But the truth is many of us have wandered around in our own wilderness, going around the same mountains over and over for far too long.

Just like the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, we were slaves to sin before we accepted Christ as our Savior. And just like the Israelites were stuck in the wilderness after they were delivered from slavery, many Christians are still living as if they've not been delivered from their sin, even though Christ has done everything that was needed to set them free from it

once and for all (2 Cor. 5:17-21).

Now the Israelites had enemies—the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hivites and the Jebusites—and they thought they were the problem. But we see in Scripture that in reality, it was not the Israelites' enemies that kept them from the promised land because God was on their side.

The problem was their wrong mindsets and attitudes. They were often negative and complained, and they focused on their circumstances instead of God.

The same principle is true for us. We can't have victory over sin while we think we are still in bondage to it. No matter what our "bondage" may be—an addiction, insecurity, fear, overeating and so forth—Jesus' blood cleanses us and sets us free from it all. That doesn't mean we won't have to walk through a process to experience total deliverance, but it does mean that in Christ, we have everything we need to do our part to walk it out.

Romans 6:2b (ESV) says, "How can we who died to sin still live in it?" This verse is talking about how through faith in Christ, we become dead to sin and alive to God's righteousness.

The key to this process is found in Romans 6:11 (AMP), which says, "Consider yourselves to be dead to sin [and your relationship to it broken], but alive to God [in unbroken fellowship with Him] in Christ Jesus."

I love that this says "consider," because this term indicates a process of your mind. We must see ourselves as dead to sin and believe it, not because of what we've done or can do but because of who Jesus is and what He has done for us!

We tend to be afraid of sin or just think that it's too hard to overcome it, so we stay trapped in it. But through Christ, we *can* control our thinking and shake off the "wilderness

mindsets" that hold us back from the promised land God has for us.

Start by taking an inventory of your thoughts. Think about what you're thinking about, because where the mind goes, the man follows (Prov. 23:7). Pray and ask God to help you identify thoughts that don't line up with His Word. Then study scriptures that will refute them and renew your mind with Truth.

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 (ESV) says, "The weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ." And Romans 12:2a says we are "transformed by the renewal of [our] mind."

The battle to live the life God created you to live is fought in your mind, through arguments and lofty opinions that don't agree with Him. But if you will be a diligent student of God's Word, studying and meditating on the truth it reveals, you'll begin to think a completely different way. And you'll make progress little by little each day that gets you closer to your promised land.