

God's Path To Victory

By: Pastor David Holt and Barbara Sivertson

Introduction

Life is full of challenges and problems. Even Jesus said it would be this way: *"In this world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."* (John 16:33) This is what this pamphlet is all about-overcoming life's difficulties with Jesus! Is it possible? It sure is. No matter what you are going through, there is hope, for **God is bigger than any problem we face!** Genesis 18:14 says *"Is anything too hard for the Lord?"*

Life's challenges come in many shapes, sizes and types. Everywhere we turn there is the unexpected. It could be that you are going through some physical problem. Perhaps you or someone you love was just diagnosed with a serious physical illness. Maybe pain from the recent loss of a loved one seems more than you can bear. Or perhaps you are in the middle of a deeply troubling relational problem. It could be your marriage or a rebellious child or a very difficult boss. It could be that you have been enslaved to a particular sin and have been so discouraged over the lack of victory in your life. Many people today struggle with emotional problems like stress, fear, anger, worry, anxiety, panic attacks, and depression. Drugs are being prescribed in record numbers for these kinds of challenges. Are drugs the answer or can they tend to camouflage the real issues? In addition to the physical, relational, and emotional problems we face, there is also the spiritual. Perhaps you are feeling very distant from God and so alone. Like the psalmist you might be crying, *"How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me?"* (Psalm 13:1-2).

Source of Problems

Our problems can come from a number of different sources. Some challenges are due to the sin of others that affect us. There are serious consequences to sin. *"The wages of sin is death."* (Romans 6:23). When someone sins against us, it can cause death to our relationship with that person. It can also cause death to areas of our life. At least that is what Satan would want to do with that sin. But God has a better way for us to handle that person's sin. More on that later.

Speaking of Satan, he can be the source of our problems, also. Satan is not only a liar, but the father of lies (John 8:44). Satan comes to *"steal, kill and destroy"* (John 10:10). He is our enemy and prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may destroy (1 Peter 5:8). We must be informed about the ways Satan works. We must be sober and vigilant to resist the attacks of Satan. More on that later, too.

Problems in life can also be the result of God pruning and refining us. In John 15 Jesus tells us that it is the fruitful tree that God prunes, *"so that it might bear more fruit."* I know you probably don't want to hear that, but it is true. Some of your challenges right now might be due to the fact that God is wanting to refine you so that you will be even closer to Him and more fruitful in service for Him. *"Count it all joy when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance and let endurance have its*

perfect result, that you might be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing" (James 1:2-4). *"The sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives ... God comforts us so that we can comfort others"* (2 Corinthians 1).

Another big source of our problems is our own sin and weaknesses. Someone once said, *"Most of my problems are my own making."* We bring so much hardship to our own lives through our sin, unbelief, disobedience, rebellion, lack of closeness with God, stupid mistakes, addictions, selfishness, hurtful words to others, etc. *"What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?"* (James 4:1).

Regardless of whether our challenges and problems are due to God's pruning, Satan, our own sin, or the sin of others, there is one thing that is certain: **We can be confident that no matter what is going on in our lives, God is sovereign and can be fully trusted! He is able and willing to give us victory.** Be encouraged that God says: *"In this world you will have tribulation but take heart, I have overcome the world"* (John 16:33); *"We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us"* (Romans 8:37); *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"* (Philippians 4:13); *"God is a very present help in time of need"* (Psalm 46:1). **Victory is possible because God is able and willing to help us live above our circumstances and problems!**

What is Victory?

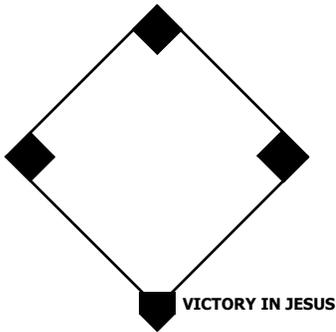
In this pamphlet we will be talking about getting victory in Jesus. Therefore, it is important that we define what we mean by victory in Jesus. Victory can be seeing the problem go away, especially if it is a clear sin area like lying or stealing or sexual immorality-victory here would equal not doing those sins any more. Victory may be that the marriage is healed. Victory may be that the desire for pornography goes away, not that you will never be tempted, but you don't do it. Victory may be the elimination of anger. Or victory may be the supernatural peace and presence of God amidst the difficulty not going away. Perhaps your spouse never changes and there are still major marital struggles, but **you** are changing and becoming a more loving person. God is meeting with you in a new way, even though your spouse doesn't change. Perhaps the physical disease is not healed but in the midst of the sickness you are drawing closer to God, maturing in your faith and gaining more inward peace. This is victory! In baseball, this would be a homerun!

Speaking of baseball, we want to present you with a simple, yet not so easy, approach to overcoming any problem you face in your life. You must be willing to travel around the entire base path. You cannot skip bases. You must listen to your base coach (God through His Word). You must be willing to come to each base with a humble and obedient heart. Are you ready? Do you want victory?

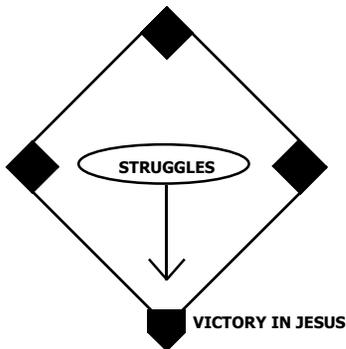
THE BASEBALL DIAMOND

The baseball diamond starts with the pitcher's mound. The mound represents the sin, problems, and struggles that life throws at us, as well as the things we bring on ourselves. It is here that life throws us many different pitches: curve balls, fast balls, and even knuckle balls.

he pitch is coming and the challenge is: **will you step up to the plate and face the problem?** Choose today to get in the batter's box in the power of Christ and deal with whatever you are struggling with. Our ultimate goal is to have love, joy, and peace in life, no matter what comes our way.



Home plate represents our victory in Jesus and glorifying Him with our lives! This is what we are after, and in order to get there, you must come up to the plate. You cannot sit back any longer and just settle for spiritual mediocrity or think it is just always going to be this way; it's time to come up to the plate. Like baseball players, as you come up to the plate you look around at some things:



1. **Look at the players who went before you** and were faithful - retired numbers across the stadium. For us, this would be the saints who have gone before us and made it! Those who went from sin to victory, from despair to triumph, from the flesh to the Spirit. People like David, Peter, Moses, Noah, and Joseph. Hebrews 12:1 says:

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us."

2. **Look to the coach** down the baseline for instructions and encouragement. For us this might be our pastor, mentor, counselor, or author that we trust. Those who have insight that we need. Pride keeps us from victory. Pride says I can do it on my own and I don't need anyone's help. We all need help!
3. **Look to your teammates**-others in the journey with us. We need friends and support from those who are spiritual peers. Hebrews 3:13 says to *"encourage one another daily."* You will never make it around the base path without the help of others. The base path represents our need for others, our need for fellowship, accountability, and support. Do you have this? If not, take the initiative to get this going in your journey toward victory.

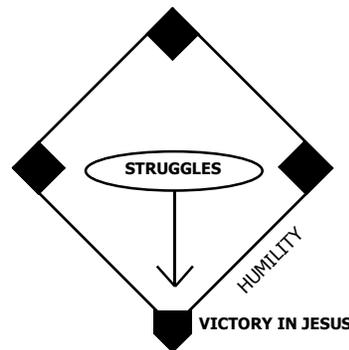
In baseball, when you run too far outside the base path you get called out. We need to stay on the base path of fellowship in order to get victory. Logs close together in a fire burn brightly but when a log falls away from the others, the isolated log's flame soon dwindles down to nothing. We need each other for encouragement, support, love, and accountability. Staying in that base path represents the need for regular and meaningful connection with other Christians. A small group of some kind is one of the best ways to get fellowship. Hebrews 10:24-25 says, *"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-and all the more as you see the Day approaching."* Proverbs 27:17 says, *"As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another."*

4. **Look within.** Humble yourself and admit you have a need and can't do it on your own. *"God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble"* (1 Peter 5:5). You will never get out of the batter's box and on your way to 1st base without humility. As long as you try to be strong and have it all together and hide your sin and pretend, then you will never get healed and never get victory. Until we are broken there is not much hope for victory. Brokenness is a deep realization of my need for God.

First Base – Submit to God

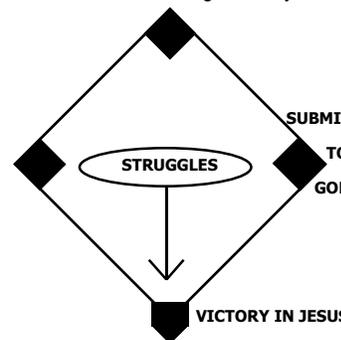
As we get pitched something in life that is not easy, in order to get to first base we must *"submit to God"* (James 4:7). This is the very first thing we should do whenever times are hard. As in baseball, 1st base is the most-touched base. You must go to 1st before getting to any other base. Be sure you touch this base a lot in your journey toward victory. Since it is such an important base, let's explore what is involved in submitting to God. To submit to God means at least three things:

1. First of all, it means that I say to God, **"Search me O God and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting"** (Psalm 139:23-24). We come before God with a totally open heart and mind to see whatever God needs to show us.



Oh, how much would be solved if we just did this first step. Think of how many marital problems would be solved if each spouse would do this. Jesus said, *"Don't look at the splinter in your brother's eye, when you have a log in your own eye. First remove the log that is in your own eye"* (Matthew 7:3). Take an extended period of time to ask God to show you your sin.

Have a notebook in front of you and write down whatever He shows you. Be broken and humble before God. You might even consider fasting when you do this. We must get serious about



being totally right with God! We need to face whatever part we might be playing in our problems. It may be helpful to involve the help of a friend, pastor or counselor that could ask you some probing questions in order to be sure you are right with God.

2. **Confess your sins** to God and receive His forgiveness a cleansing. *"If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness"* (1 John 1:9). To confess our sins means that we agree with God about our sin and present it to God for cleansing. It also means that we repent of (turn from) our sin. An example of a prayer of confession is; *"Lord, I acknowledge and renounce my sinful involvement in (name specific sin) and ask you to break that stronghold in my life. I ask you, Lord Jesus, to take back ground given to the enemy through my involvement and I yield that ground to your control."* We ask God for the power to not sin in that area again. We may need to confess our sin to those we have hurt as well. We make restitution if necessary and possible. As

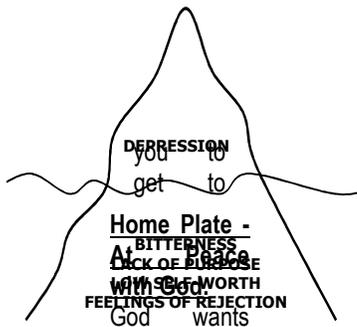
you can see, getting victory over our problems is not easy. It requires a fierce moral and spiritual inventory of our lives, but it will be worth it if you are willing to go the distance.

3. Submission means that you are willing to **explore the roots** of your problem. Many of the weeds in our lives need to be pulled up by the roots. We often treat our problems with band-aid solutions instead of getting down to the real source. Perhaps depression is the tip of the iceberg (what we and others see), but underneath this could be bitterness, feelings of rejection, low self-worth, and lack of purpose.

Once again, help from another will probably be needed in order to get to the root issues of our problems.

One more thing about submitting to God—this is so important lest you focus more on the sin or problem than on God: be seeking God and pursuing God and getting to know His wonderful personhood, such that He becomes so much your desire that the desire for sin almost vanishes. I know of many who, upon doing this, have seen their sins almost go away without much attention being given to them. **Pursue Jesus with such intensity that you don't have time to sin!**

Second Base— Resist the Devil

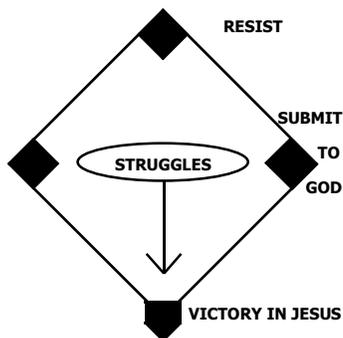


Once we have submitted to God, we are now in a position and place of authority to go to 2nd base, which is to "resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). Even though not all problems are directly from Satan, this is a base we must cover. Remember Satan comes to steal, kill, and destroy your life.

The main areas where he gains ground in our lives are:

1. Bitterness (unforgiveness toward those who have hurt us)
2. Rebellion (defiance toward authority)
3. Pride (self-sufficiency, self-focus, controlling others)
4. Moral failure (pornography, lust, homosexuality, adultery, etc.)
5. Negative thoughts (anxiety/worry, fear, self-pity, discouragement, depression, etc.)
6. Occult (witchcraft, magic spells, Satan worship, drugs, etc.)
7. Temporal values (putting higher value on possessions, position, power, or personal goals than on relationships with God and others)
8. Hypocrisy (pretending on the outside what is not real on the inside, mask wearing)
9. Sinful habits (stealing, lying, alcohol, gossip, etc.)
10. Generational sins (we often struggle in the same areas in which our parents and grandparents struggled) ¹

We need to look at these areas and acknowledge and renounce any sin revealed to us. Pray and ask God to reveal your blind spots or areas that you may not be aware of. We need to remember that our "struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Ephesians 6:12).



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Remember, Satan is the father of lies. He will tempt us to meet our needs illegitimately and then justify the sin. He is also the accuser of the brethren (Revelation 12:10). He will do all he can to attack your identity in Christ.

Prayer and Scripture (truth) are the weapons to defeat the enemy and his lies. 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 says, "The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of this world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." The battle is in the **mind**. Romans 12:2 says to "be transformed by the renewing of your **mind**." Colossians 3:2 says to "Set your **mind** on things above, not on earthly things." Romans 8:6 says "The **mind** of sinful man is death, but the **mind** controlled by the Spirit is life and peace."

To help you resist the devil, be sure you have submitted to God and to confess your sin. Now, pray this: "I command any demonic spirits that are at work here to be gone and to go where Jesus sends you. You are not welcome here. I belong to Jesus Christ." God allows Satan to work on a legal system, and until he is commanded to leave, he does not have to.

Third Base – Follow God's Leading

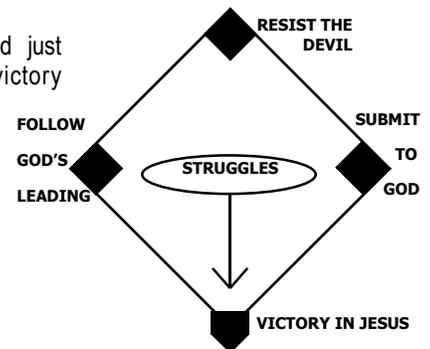
Once we have fully submitted to God and resisted the devil, if the problem is not gone, then a number of different options can be explored. Life is complicated and there are no easy 1,2,3 formulas. I call 3rd base "Follow God's Leading." This is where we seek the Lord as to what we should do next to gain victory.

At this base, God may direct you to:

1. Get help from a godly person. "In the abundance of counsel there is wisdom."
2. See a doctor for physical help.
3. Explore your past. There may be some issues in your past that are causing your problems.
4. Get prayer from others. Walls can be torn down over time by persistent and biblical prayers.
5. Find a passage in God's Word that relates to your issue and pray it until you see results. Keep asking, keep knocking, and keep seeking (Matthew 7:7).
6. Forgive those who have hurt you. As an obedient act of your will, make the decision to choose to forgive as the Lord has forgiven you.

"Lord, I choose to forgive (name of person who hurt you) for (how they hurt you) causing me to feel (emotional pain). I ask You Jesus to take back the ground I gave the enemy through my bitterness, and yield that ground to your control." Then allow Jesus to heal your pain. Ask Him to speak peace to your pain and wait quietly as the Holy Spirit, who lives in you, prompts you with a verse of Scripture, a word picture, or a thought. ²

7. Stay the course and just persevere until victory comes.



Whatever you do, never give up! Persistence will pay off.

home plate. Home plate is deep, abiding trust in God no matter what! Here lies the deepest level of faith-to trust in God and hold fast to God and not let go of God regardless of the circumstances. God is worthy of trust, period! He is in control. We may not always understand what is going on. Some things will have to wait for eternity to get the "why?" question answered. Many things will have to be filed in the 29:29 file: *"The secret things belong to the Lord, but the things revealed belong to man"* (Deuteronomy 29:29). There will be some things that God chooses not to reveal to us this side of heaven. We must trust Him even though we may not ever know why it happened. A friend of mine calls this the "There is a heaven and this ain't it" file. So as you come home, the big question is: Will you trust Him?

The Ultimate Home Base

This side of heaven we will never experience total victory. However, we can look forward to a place where *"there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away"* (Revelation 21:4). The ultimate home for the follower of Jesus is heaven, where there will be eternal fellowship with God. Knowing this should motivate us to live fully devoted to Jesus while on earth.



Are you certain that you will spend eternity with God? You must have Jesus in your life in order to have eternal life (see 1 John 5:11-14). If you do not have Christ in your life, then that is your **biggest** problem, and none of your other problems will get solved without Jesus! If you want Christ in your life, you must repent of your sin, trust in Him alone for your forgiveness and invite Him to take control of your life. You can do that right now by praying this prayer:

"Lord Jesus, I need You. I admit that I am a sinner and have been going my own way. Thank You for dying for my sins and shedding Your blood so that I might be forgiven. I accept Your payment for my sins. I trust in You to save me. Come into my life and take control. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit. Thank You for doing this just now."



If this pamphlet has been helpful, we would love to hear from you. Please write or email us (davidholt@firstfree.org). May God bless you greatly as you hold fast to Him regardless of what comes your way. He is sovereign and is worthy of trust. He loves you and wants to help you gain victory.

Taken from Biblical Concepts In Counseling Workbook by John Regier.

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