

## WILL POWER

In 1943, an Army Air Force's B-24 bomber, called the Green Hornet, was on a search and rescue mission when its engine malfunctioned causing it to crash into the Pacific Ocean. 2nd Lieutenant Louie Zamperini survived the crash, but was lost at sea. For 47 days Louie survived on rainwater, raw fish and pure WILL POWER. The ocean currents carried his raft 2000 miles into Japanese-controlled waters, where he became a prisoner of war. While a prisoner of war Louie endured daily beatings with bamboo, 220 punches to the face, bitter cold and brutal heat, along with forced labor. Amazingly, Louie survived 47 days at sea and 2 years in a prison camp and then went on to live another 70 years after his rescue. How did he do it? The same way he trained for the 5000 meter race in the 1936 Berlin Olympics - pure WILL POWER!!

Welcome to our **FINAL WEEK** of **"Say It With Your Chest"** where we have been looking at **5 Virtues of Biblical Manhood**. If you have missed any of this series I encourage you to go back and view the messages online. Also make sure if you haven't picked up your magnet please do so at NEXT before you leave. These are virtues that we all should have as followers of Jesus but we have been focusing on men throughout this series because men are called to be the spiritual leaders of our families and we should be modeling these virtues for our wives and our children. In **Week 1** we looked at the **1st Virtue of Biblical Manhood and we said that a godly man should Have a CLEAR VISION for his LIFE**. We need to know WHO we are and WHY we are here. If not, when the difficulties and distractions of life hit us we will STEP BACK instead of STEP UP. In **Week 2** we looked at the **2nd Virtue of Biblical Manhood as we said that a godly man should maintain MORAL COURAGE in the face of an ever changing CULTURE**. We need to decide if we are going to work for the APPLAUSE of Men or for the APPLAUSE of Jesus. We need to make sure that God's word is shaping our heart or we will be conditioned by the world and culture around us. **Week 3** we looked at the **3rd Virtue of Biblical Manhood as we said that a godly man should demonstrate a LOVE that is as TOUGH as NAILS**. Tough love is far more difficult to exercise than physical toughness and it is also far more important. A true tough guy is someone who is WILLING to be nailed to a cross for the ones he loves. **Last Week** we looked at our **4th Virtue of Biblical Manhood and we said that a godly man should have a PASSION for LIFE that impacts his BODY, MIND, and SPIRIT!** When it comes to life we need to go all in. We need to go after the passions God has put in our heart. And that brings us to today and **Virtue #5** that we are going to look at in this series and that is: **a godly man has a WILL POWER that overcomes his CIRCUMSTANCES by CONTROLLING his REACTION to them.**

You see it's WILL POWER that allowed Louie to stay alive through the harsh circumstances he had to endure. And it was the same WILL POWER that kept Christ on the cross when he could have come down and showed His persecutors who was really in charge.

**Matthew 26:47-54 (NIV)** While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. **48** Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him." **49** Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him.

**50** Jesus replied, “Do what you came for, friend.”

Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him. **51** With that, one of Jesus’ companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. **52** “Put your sword back in its place,” Jesus said to him, “for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. **53** Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? **54** But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?”

No matter the circumstances Jesus would face while on the cross, He was committed to follow through with what His Father had given Him to do. It was not by the supernatural power He possessed and had used on many occasions before to heal others, would He accomplish such a feat. It was by mere WILL POWER! Jesus would endure to the end by willingly submitting His will to the Father’s as He had prayed in the garden prior to His arrest.

**Matthew 26:36-39 (NIV)** Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” **37** He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. **38** Then he said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.”

**39** Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

We find two Greek words used for POWER in scripture.

**“Dunamis”** which is the power to do things beyond our natural ability.

**“Exousia”** which is the power of choice, the liberty of doing as one pleases in a given situation.

Jesus used “*dunamis*” to walk on water, heal the sick and resurrect the dead. **But His greatest victory was won using “*exousia*.”** You see, here’s the thing. We have no control over our circumstances but we can control the way we responded to those circumstances. **Viktor Frankl**, who survived a Nazi death camp, said this in his book “Man’s Search for Meaning” when revealing the secret to his survival: **“Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last human freedom - to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances.”**

If we are going to follow Jesus, we have to exercise the same power that Christ exercised on the cross when He secured the victory of our salvation - He did so by WILL POWER! What do you do when your marriage is falling apart? What do you do when your work environment goes from bad to worse? Or when an addiction begins spinning out of control? Will you be able to exercise WILL POWER in those moments and make the choice to honor Christ? Or will you allow your circumstances to get the best of you? What does it take to exercise that kind of WILL POWER and to do so in such a way as to OVERCOME the circumstances of life?

Well as we close out our series today let me give THREE REACTIONS you need to exercise if you want a **WILL POWER that will overcome your CIRCUMSTANCES.**

## Reaction #1 - TAKE HEART AND TRUST JESUS

Whenever we feel the pressing heat of our circumstances beginning to overwhelm us we need to be reminded that not only is Jesus in control of our situation, but He has also overcome this world and all that is responsible for our difficulties.

**John 16:31-33(NIV) 31** “Do you now believe?” Jesus replied. **32** “A time is coming and in fact has come when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me. **33** “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

On this occasion Jesus is letting His disciples know that they will face harder times ahead as His disciples. But they don't need to be discouraged by this or become troubled by what is ahead because in Him is found peace and that peace is a product of understanding that Jesus has overcome this world. The world with all of its threats along with death and sin have been defeated and they have nothing to fear. And the same is true for us. We will face trials and difficulties but Jesus is always near and ready to give us His peace and to help us overcome all of it in the end. **TAKE HEART and TRUST JESUS!**

## Reaction #2 - RESIST FOLLOWING YOUR OWN HEART

In order for us to be successful in navigating the circumstances of life we must develop the “no” muscle that will help us keep our heart in check. One of the characteristics of the Fruit of the Spirit is SELF-CONTROL - the ability to say “no” or to place limits on things that in the end may not be good for you physically or spiritually.

**Galatians 5:22 -23 (NIV) 22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23** gentleness and SELF-CONTROL. Against such things there is no law.

It's the ability to say no to sleep when we need more time in prayer or in God's word. It is the ability to say no to sex when you are being tempted outside of the avenues God has given us for the exercise of it. It is the ability to say no when you have to make changes to your diet for a more healthy lifestyle. It is the most important muscle we could develop. First of all, we need to recognize that our heart is wicked when left unchecked and it will lead us to destructive behavior.

**Jeremiah 17:9 (NIV)** The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? Btw, the answer to this question is, GOD understands our heart! That should scare us and comfort us at the same time. He knows our wickedness and still will forgive us if we surrender to Him. Thank you Jesus!! He knows our heart better than we do.

**Psalm 44: 20-21 (NIV) 20** If we had forgotten the name of our God or spread out our hands to a foreign god, **21** would not God have discovered it, since he knows the secrets of the heart?

We need to understand that our heart can lead us to destructive behaviors that will seek to cast off restraint and lead us to places that undermine our well-being. Such as, over-eating when we are stressed out. Viewing pornography when we are feeling neglected by our wives. Excessive drinking when we just want to be numb to what is going on around us. We need to understand that our own heart can't be trusted and that we must make an effort to lead our heart not let our heart lead us.

Secondly, we need to deny our heart its own way.

**Matthew 16:24** Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

The key to a strong will power is to develop the ability to say no to the things that feed our selfish heart and lead to self-gratification. This includes delaying gratification, making decisions against yourself and learning to say no to things that undermine all that Jesus wants to accomplish in our lives. It is the ability to recognize that there are some things which are just not beneficial to us. As Paul says in his letter to the Corinthians.

**1 Corinthians 10:23-24 (NIV)** "I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but not everything is constructive. **24** No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.

Our heart needs to learn that it is not in charge and that the desires of our flesh do not get to dictate what we do. The "no" muscle allows you the opportunity to inform your heart that you are going to make the choice to submit yourself to the will of God and to His Holy Spirit. **Reaction #1 - TAKE HEART and TRUST JESUS! Reaction #2 - RESIST FOLLOWING YOUR OWN HEART**

### **Reaction #3 - GUARD YOURSELF AGAINST TEMPTATION**

None of us are immune to temptation! It doesn't matter how mature you become spiritually you are never out of reach regarding temptation. Even Jesus was tempted.

**Hebrews 4:15 (NIV)** For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.

We need to understand that it isn't a matter of IF it is a matter of WHEN! Temptation is coming for you so get ready and be prepared to guard yourself against it. We need to understand that it isn't a sin to be tempted, it is a sin to entertain it and a sin to not prepare for it. Temptation is really just an opportunity for us to grow in character as we prove our allegiance to Jesus. So how do we prepare so we can overcome it?

- 1) **Know your triggers.** We need to know our triggers and when it is that we are most vulnerable to giving in to temptation or are susceptible to its attack. For most men this is when we are

either TIRED, LONELY or BORED. You need to practice H.A.L.T. (don't make choices when you are hungry, angry, lonely, or tired!) David could have benefited from this when it came to Bathsheba.

**2 Samuel 11:1-3(NIV)** **1** In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem. **2** One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, **3** and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, "She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite."

Notice David was bored. He should have been off to war with his men but he was at home with too much time on his hands. He was lonely in an empty bed all by himself. He should have been with his men defending Israel. It was late at night when he should have been sleeping so he was in a prime position for temptation.

Another trigger is when we are in great NEED. Do you have a need that is not being met? That is a target for the enemy's aim.

**Luke 4:1-2 (NIV)** **1** Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, **2** where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.

Notice Jesus' greatest need was food so where does Satan attack Him? He attacks Him with an easy way to get food. Nine times out of ten we sin because we are trying to meet a legitimate need in an illegitimate way. We begin to rationalize sin instead of exercising a proper response and submitting our will to God's will and God's way. Know your triggers!!

- 2) **Avoid entertaining temptation.** Don't get near it! And if it comes near you, flee! This is what Joseph did when Potipher's wife had eyes for him.

**Genesis 39:10-12 (NIV)** **10** And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her. **11** One day he went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants was inside. **12** She caught him by his cloak and said, "Come to bed with me!" But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house.

David did the exact opposite. **2** One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, **3** and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, "She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite." Rather than flee he entertained it and pursued it further.

- 3) **You do have a choice**

**1 Corinthians 10:12-13 (NIV) 12** So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! **13** No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

It can feel like you don't have a choice sometimes. Or that temptation is too powerful to overcome on your own. But we need to know that it has no more power than what we give it in our lives. There is a way out and you do have a choice! I can't promise you that you will bat a thousand, but if you apply these principles you will win more than you lose. But you have to be prepared! To not be prepared is to be prepared to fail.

### **Invitation:**

When Jesus was in the garden praying I want you to notice his exchange with His disciples.

**Matthew 26:40-41 (NIV)** Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. **41** "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Jesus called his disciples to prepare themselves for the temptation that was coming. They were going to be tempted to deny Jesus when the moment got tough. He is urging them to stay awake and be ready! If these guys can fall asleep, so can we! **Will you prepare yourself?**

Take Heart TRUST JESUS  
RESIST your own HEART  
GUARD yourself against TEMPTATION

**If you have failed you can be restored 1 John 1:9 (NIV)** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

**1 John 2:1-2 (NIV)** "1 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. 2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world."

**One of our core values is PRAY NOW SPEAK LIFE. We want to do just that as we close out this series. So if all of our men will stand up we want to lay hands on you and speak life over you by asking God to help you develop the 5 virtues we have been talking about the last 5 weeks in your life.**

**Lord give these men a CLEAR VISION for their LIFE. Help them have great MORAL COURAGE in the face of an ever changing CULTURE. Empower them to Demonstrate a LOVE**

that is as TOUGH as NAILS. May You give them a PASSION for LIFE that impacts their BODY, MIND, and SPIRIT! May you grant them and may they make an effort to develop a WILL POWER that overcomes CIRCUMSTANCES by CONTROLLING their REACTION to them.