

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Yes, You Can

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At critical moments in a child's life, parents will offer the encouraging words, “Yes, you can.” It might be at the moment when the child is afraid to place their head in the water and swim to opened arms. The encouraging words can occur when the child is overwhelmed with new material and they do not believe they can pass a critical test. As the child grows and contemplates a challenging career their natural feeling of insecurity can be calmed with the exhortation, “Yes, you can; Yes, you can!”

The life of the Christian is challenging when you realize that you must put all of the Gospel into practice. When we have done all that God demands of us, we are still *“unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do.”* (Luke 17:10). We are not unprofitable in the sense we are not useful or pleasing to our Lord, but we realize that there are no extra credit points for doing what is demanded.

These words of the Lord came after the apostles heard demanding teachings from the Master. They asked the Lord,

“increase our faith” (Luke 17:5). Jesus perceived their problem was not a matter of faith, for he replied that faith as little as the grain of a mustard seed could move an apostle with miraculous powers to exercise that faith in uprooting a tree and planting it in the sea. (Lk. 17:6). The problem was a matter of the will.

The apostles had just heard Jesus demand of his followers that they were to forgive one who has repented, even if such occurred seven times in a day (Lk. 17:4). Oh lord, increase our faith? No, just do what God demands of you. Forgive! It is as if the Lord is saying, as any encouraging parent would, “Yes, you can.” But you do not know what horrible things they have done to me; I can't bring myself to forgive them. Do you expect God to forgive you when you repent, even when you come to Him to repent seven times in one day? Then you must forgive others (Matthew 6:15, 18:34-35). “Yes, you can.”

Jesus also said that occasions of stumbling would come. In fact, *“It is impossible but that occasions of stumbling should come; but woe unto him, through whom they come!”* (Luke 17:1). Lord,

you know I am not perfect; I am afraid that the woe of being a stumbling block will be my plight. Oh Lord, increase my faith? No, just make sure that you are not a stumbling block. Due to your love for brethren, you will continue to walk in the light. Doing so, *“there is no occasion of stumbling”* in you (I John 2:10). Refusing to complain about the demands of God as you live the life of a Christian will make you a harmless child of God and a source for light in a sin blackened world (Philippians 2:14-15). Following God's wisdom and cheerfully walking in His way, you can avoid being a stumbling block. “Yes, you can!”

The Lord does not demand of us that which we are incapable of delivering. The things we must do, we can do. This fact, coupled with the knowledge that Jesus paid the ultimate price to redeem us from sin, moves us to do His will. *“For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous”* (I John 5:3).