

Overcoming the Natural Man

Scripture reading: 1 Corinthians 6:13-20

We are supposed to be overcomers, and the first thing of all that we have to overcome is inside ourselves. If you do not overcome the man in you, you are not going to be an overcomer of anything else. I do not know if you understand. We have already talked about the sexual urge and the things, the burdens, that God put upon us as natural men. It said that Elijah was a man, a natural man, as we are. Paul said, "I am natural like any one of you. I could lead around a wife" (1 Corinthians 9:5). He had to tell them that, for some of the people were looking up to him as if he was not natural. But you have to overcome the natural man!

How do you learn to overcome the natural man? I can only tell you how God taught me. As a young fellow, I received the Lord. When I say "young," I mean in my 20's. The Lord taught me to fast and pray. He taught me to have food to eat, and not eat. To be hungry! To love what I am looking at and smelling, and yet not eat. I think the worst thing for a hungry man is a smell. Oh, it just kills you! Amen! The hunger you have when you are hungry and you smell fresh food (especially things that you like)—it is like a kind of madness that takes you! God wants you to be able to have food and not eat it.

Some of the brothers feel that, "Boy, I need a wife! I need a wife so badly. Oh, you know, I need a wife!" Let me tell you something. The person who hasn't got a wife has less problem of temptation than those who have a wife, for you have to lie down every night with a wife in the bed and you have to be spiritual. You have to control yourselves, and you have to put your desires and your wants away. So, therefore, you have to learn first by FASTING: To have food and not eat it—HUNGRY! To have water and not drink it—THIRSTY! Yes! I have gone through such thirst that my throat began to split and bleed. My lips would bleed because I was thirsty, there was water and I would not drink it because I was fasting a fast of THIRST!

Now, I am not telling you to do it. Your God must tell you what to do. As a brother shared with us one time, he said, "This is not my body. This is not my property." His body is the temple of the living God. So if God tells you, "Do not drink water," then you do not drink water. You see, when Jesus was in the wilderness for forty days, nobody can convince me that He carried a bottle of water with Him.

That was thirst; and thirst can become a kind of madness. When you are thirsty, you have hallucinations; but then that is where I was trained. I was trained at the point where we did not have breakfast, or lunch, or dinner, but we had to go to take the Word of God and preach. Amen! Our children were hungry but they learned not to even say, "I am hungry." They just played until they fell asleep. We learned how to control the body.

When we came into Miami with \$12 in our pocket, ready to do a missionary journey, we did not know anybody, any organization, or anything in America. Nothing! If we had gone to the Salvation Army, that would be a defeat of the faith that we had in God. So we stood and waited until God sent a raven (1 Kings 17:1-6). Oh, yes! But, you know, many would have said, "Get away from me, you dirty raven! I do not want your bread!" Do you think that is what Elijah would have said? Well, a drunken woman came and with all the liquor coming out of her breath fell on the shoulder of my wife, hugged her and said, "Let's go to Fort Lauderdale." From a drunken woman, we heard the voice of God. We didn't say, "Get away from me, you drunkard!" No! But we heard the voice of God speaking through her, and there our missionary journey started.

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Thought for today: God has a way for you to overcome the natural man. Listen to His Voice and hear what He is telling you to do so that you may succeed.