Living Victoriously

Have you ever watched a spider while in its web? It carefully and meticulously ensures that each strand is secure and in the proper place. He waits ever so patiently and astutely for his next meal to venture into his skillfully laid trap, never noticing that he chose a hibiscus tree in full bloom right at the edge of a stunningly beautiful waterfall as his home. He is no more aware of the beauty which surrounds him than he is to the passersby that frequent the path in front of his home. Every day he tends the web; repairs, rebuilds, expands, renews, all for the purpose of catching his next meal. How many of us go through life with this same mentality? We are so focused on providing, scraping, saving, paying, worrying, fretting for our next meal that we forget to look around and see that there is a much bigger world around us. There are people who need us, gifts, which only we possess, to be shared, hugs to be given, love and joy to be poured out. Whether rich or poor, the spider mentality is nonbiased and will creep in on anyone who keeps their eyes focused on themselves, forgetting to look around and see how they can bless the world and the people that are in it. I hope you see your life as a great blessing, full of laughter, love and great memories of generosity, and hope and that you will never fall victim to the spider mentality.

In order to live the victorious life that God has given to us, we must be present in the understanding of where our provision and help comes from. We have to be completely dependent upon the one who has called us, trusting that He has equipped us with every provision necessary to complete our assignments. He is Jehovah Jireh, the God who sees to it!

"For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life? And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith! Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Matthew 6:25-33

We must also, live as we have been created; stop trying to be someone else by conforming to an image you were never meant for. A sad example of how prevalent this is occurred during a Socratic seminar in my daughter's Sophomore Pre-AP English class. The majority of the class decided that it was easier to be who other people thought you should be, rather than just being yourself. It was only my daughter who spoke up to say that no one can ever truly live up to who others expect you to be and that, in fact, it was

easier to be yourself. This is not a revolutionary idea; the Bible has been telling us this for centuries. No one can be a better you than you and you will never be a better me than I will.

A lion never derives its identity from the opinions of sheep, nor should you. Be yourself.

Self-Awareness

Surrounding ourselves with an environment conducive to our growth and success is a fundamental necessity to ensure our survival. There is a frightening truth which shows that our current environment plays an enormous role in our behavior. If our environment is positive and encouraging, then there should not be a problem, however, if we fail to understand the gravity of this, we may find ourselves blindsided by the corrosion of negativity.

Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals." 1 Corinthians 15:33

Therefore, it is essential to your growth that you only surround yourself with those who are like-minded in sharing your same vision for transformation and territory conquest. Vigilance is the key to success; you cannot afford to let your guard down and allow anything contrary to reside near you. Self-awareness is a critical skill you must develop. You are your first line of defense, therefore, discerning what is allowed to penetrate your thinking and what must be eliminated is paramount to your success.

The Owner decided to clean his house and remove the troublesome clutter, which he continually tripped over, keeping him from moving freely about his life. Some items were easily thrown out, such as his old dilapidated chair of idleness, which he always meant to fix, but never got around to. His glasses of cynicism were quickly snapped in half and gladly tossed in the garbage. His bed of regret took a little more time and proved to be quite a chore for him to get rid of, but in the end, he was triumphant and successfully moved it to the growing trash pile. Most grateful to rid himself of that gaudy heirloom, which had been in his family for several generations, he picked up his mirror

of value, hurried outside, threw it to the ground and joyfully watched as it shattered into a thousand pieces. Only two items remained: his beautiful cup of revenge and his beloved beast of fury. He walked over to his cup, admiring the intricate craftsmanship, recalling how perfectly it fit in his hand, so much so, that he never spilled any of its liquid, thus consuming every last drop of what it had to offer. Admittedly, he cherished that cup and was deeply torn as to whether or not to throw it out with the others. He picked up the cup with both hands, hesitated for a moment, kissed it, then carefully placed it in the garbage. Lastly, he turned to his beloved beast of fury, who watched him in bewilderment. The Owner loved his loyal beast, who was with him wherever he went, but knew that his beast had to go. The Owner took his beast to the edge of his property and told him he must leave. The beast was confused and tried to go back to the place where he had called home for so many years. With tears in his eyes, the Owner refused to let the beast pass commanding him to stay. The beast obeyed and sat down as he watched his master walk away. A few days passed and the owner, in his newly cleaned house, would see the beast from time to time where he left him at the edge of his property. One day the Owner saw the beast, still at the edge of the property, but on the inside of his fence. The Owner did not mind because he was still far away from him and so continued to live peacefully in his lovely clean house. A great storm raged in the area and passed over where the Owner lived. While tending to the damage, the Owner noticed the beast of fury sleeping on his back porch. Though somewhat alarmed, the Owner left the beast alone and concentrated on fixing the broken window and leaking roof. One sunny day the Owner decided to go for a walk through his property. He stepped onto the porch and immediately felt the familiar soft fur of his beloved beast run along his fingers. Wagging his tail, his beast jumped up, licked his owner's face and waited to see what would happen. The Owner smiled, calling his friend to his side as he ventured forward. As they finished their walk, the Owner opened the door and invited his beast of fury to come back into the house and live with him once again; promising that he would never make his beloved friend leave again.

Not only do you need to rid your environment of anything that will hinder you from living in fullness, you must continually fill it with truth and possibilities. Only allow positive thoughts, declarations and people to speak into your life.

For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. Jeremiah 29:11

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works {purpose}, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. Ephesians 2:10

Do not get discouraged when you stumble or fall; it will happen. As hard as we try, we will encounter failure along the way, which is fine, as long as you do not allow it to keep you from advancing toward your goal.