

Call to Obedience #478  
PO Box 299 Kokomo, IN 46903 USA  
[www.schultze.org](http://www.schultze.org)

## Victorious Christian Living

Reimar A. C. Schultze

Moses was 120 years old when he gave his farewell address to his people. I am 85 and it is time for me to give my farewell address to you. As Moses spoke knowing he may not have another day to live, likewise will I do with this message. I shall not wait until my mind is too feeble to do this. Furthermore, I have never heard of anyone coming back from the grave to write their obituary. Today is the day for me to do it. Whatever number of days that I have yet to be with you is in the hands of God. Even Paul hinted to his people of his time of departure being at hand. Therefore, in this letter, I shall pass on to you five of the most important principles which, by the mercies of God, have allowed me to maintain my Christian life for 63 years. These insights are taken both from the Bible and from my personal experiences.

### **1. To live a victorious Christian life, you must never question God.**

I learned this from the beautiful example of my mother. When we were caught up in the whirlwind of the Holocaust, she did not question God. When her husband and her youngest child died in the midst of it, she did not question God. She always believed God had a reason for everything He did. There was within her a mindset of: *Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him...* (Job 13:15). And then as I came into the age of reason and scientific observation, I found more and more ample support for not questioning God. In fact, when I looked at and saw what God had created in 6 days, I felt a call to fall down and worship Him forever. Here we are on a planet which is suspended on nothing, spinning around the sun at 67,000 mph and around its own axis at 1,000 mph without us falling off. Then, in this amazing soup of flowing air, a Bar-tailed Godwit can fly nonstop from Alaska to New Zealand in 11 days, while a hummingbird can maneuver in the midst of it in all directions, putting the fanciest helicopter to shame, while a little boy is fishing on a pond that is as calm as molasses in a jar. All this and more is going on at the same time. Oh, my Lord and my God!

God is so smart! He knows what He is doing and He knows everything that is happening. Genesis 1 was not written for man to question God but for man to worship Him. So then, when God took me out of college as a young

man to spend 16 months in my pajamas with an infectious disease, I had no reason to question God. When my wife was run down by a truck a few weeks ago and spent many days recovering in ICU, I did not have any questions for God. I suggest you take all your questions and cast them into the sea of trust and leave them there, as the Apostle Paul nudges you to do by saying: *...all things work together for good to those who love God...* (Rom. 8:28). Yes, it says *all things work together for good*, even this. Why waste your energy questioning God when you can use that energy to help someone, to bless someone, to praise the One who made you, who keeps you and who prepares a place for you. Take a drink out of the river of life and get out of your pity party. You are heaven bound.

**2. To live a victorious Christian life, you must recognize neglect as the great spoiler of all good things.**

This is true in industry, sports, the military, economics, government and Christianity. Do not be fooled to think that you can be neglectful without paying a high price, up to losing your soul. Everybody, every institution, pays a penalty for neglect. Call it the law of consequences. It has no mercy on anyone. It was the first law whose full weight was first experienced by man. The devil denied it in his first contact with man by saying to Eve: *...Has God indeed said...* meaning *there will be no consequences*; you do not have to do that. The devil has come to me every day for the last 63 years with the same suggestions: *there will be no consequences*; you do not have to do that. Oh, *how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation...* (Heb. 2:3).

Paul's foundational treatise of Romans 1 mentions neglect as the fountainhead of all man's spiritual problems: There, he says that the absence of praising and glorifying God opens the heart and mind of man to darkness in these sobering words: *because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened* (Rom. 1:21). From this, I know that anyone who does not live a life of praise and giving glory to God, is neglecting man's first duty to God; and this neglect will lead to other areas of neglect in his life. Neglect of praise is the mother of all other neglects.

**3. To maintain a victorious Christian life, you must remain positive.**

God is positive. The Apostle John wrote: *This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all* (1 John 1:5). No darkness means that God is always completely positive. You should not allow any darkness to enter into your life. This means

that you are to make no allowance in your life for things like criticism, complaining, self-pity, prayerlessness, pride, lust, greed, selfishness, etc. All of these things bring darkness into your life. Instead, you should heed the words of Paul: *Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things* (Phil. 4:8).

We all live in two worlds, the perishable and the imperishable, the world of the outer man and that of the inner man. We take much care in feeding the outer man by shopping, cooking and eating, but how much time do we take to attend to feeding the inner man? And what are we feeding him? Is it the worries and troubles of the world or the things of God? You cannot control the outside world, but you can absolutely control the inside world as to what goes into your mind and heart. You may be cast into a dungeon like John Bunyan, but while the physical conditions may be horrible, you can have a sanctuary within as you offer the sacrifice of praise and as you gorge yourself on the things of eternity. That means you think upon them. The Bible says: as a man *...thinks in his heart, so is he...* (Prov. 23:7). What goes into your mind ends up in your heart.

When I raised my children, I would not allow them to watch more than one hour of television a week. I did not want the things of the world to clutter their minds, and then later to filter into their hearts. Oh, it has had wonderful effects even down to our great-grandchildren. Many parents take their children to church for one hour of the week, but they let them take in the things of the world for all of the rest of the week. Then they wonder what happened when their children go their own way later in life. Fill your life with praise—through it you cultivate a friendship with Jesus to an ever-higher level of trust and camaraderie with Him. Keep singing a song. As a 16-year-old new convert in devastated postwar Germany, I took my song to the factory and sang over the hum of the machines, all day every day. The factory soon arranged for me to talk to my fellow workers about the source of my joy. After my wife had been semi-comatose for 8 days, the Lord told me to sing to her. It woke her up. A song of praise reaches the sinners and raises the living dead.

#### **4. To live a victorious Christian life, beware of your attachments.**

The rich young ruler came to Jesus. He wanted eternal life, but he found he could not have it without following Jesus, a common misconception. You cannot have Jesus or the blessings of Jesus without following Him. You cannot attach to Him without detaching yourself from everything else. To some it is

their money, for others it is their home, their fishing nets, their oxen or their family. Yes, family too. That is what Jesus said: *And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life* (Matt. 19:29). Notice that Jesus lists here individual family members so that we really understand what is necessary to inherit eternal life. Your heart cannot be divided. Jesus must be first, always. Hold everything in open hands so that when Jesus asks you to leave it behind, you will not be jarred. Do not have children unless you plan to raise them to follow Jesus. The world does not need more rebels. It needs more saints. God would not give Hannah a child until He knew she would give him back to Him. God told Abraham to forsake his family. He did not know at the time that someday he would be tested on this by God asking him to take his only son and slay him on Mt. Moriah. It took that act of surrender by Abraham for God to fulfill His promise through Abraham. Is there any attachment in your life that prevents God from fulfilling His promises for you?

**5. To maintain a victorious Christian life, you must know God's definition of success.**

The world measures success by numbers and time. These questions are constantly being asked of you: "How much did you get done?" and "How long did it take?" God has no such questions for you. His definition of success is faithfulness. Have you done the will of God? Take Noah: he preached 75 years without a single convert. Was he a failure? No. He was obedient. Obedience is our job; the results are in God's hands. Jesus said: *...he who does the will of God abides forever* (1 John 2:17). If Noah had only lowered the standard a little bit, he could have had a mega-church. He was mocked and called a fool, but God was happy with him. He called him "perfect" (Gen. 6:9) and used him to save the world. Just be faithful and Jesus will say of you what He said of the woman with the ointment: *She has done what she could...* (Mark 14:8).

Keep me in your prayers. Keep dreaming and stay away from idols.

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