

arts and Transforms Lives!

intended me to do so.” The only person who has successfully lived the Christian Life is Jesus Christ. He set the standard for such a life during His days on earth as He lived as a man among men. All of His life, in both attitude and actions, He was totally pleasing to the Father (Matt. 3:17b, John 8:29b). He was totally free from sin (Heb. 4:15, 2 Cor. 5:21, 1 John 3:5). Though His conformity to the will of the Godhead was tested, He was victorious.

He’s in Me

Now we may be in full agreement about these facts with reference to Jesus Christ, but you may be thinking, “but I’m not Jesus.” That is obvious, but it is no the whole truth. This sinless, victorious, totally pleasing person has taken up residence in the believer. If you have received Him

as your Saviour, He actually lives in you (Gal. 2:20). His character is to be formed in each believer by the Holy Spirit (Gal. 4:19). Listed as the *fruit of the Spirit*, these virtues result from the filling of the Spirit (Eph. 5:18, Gal. 5:22-23). Jesus not only lives in you but He wants to live His life through you. The life that He lives in you is the same kind that He lived on earth and now lives in heaven — *victorious*.

Jesus not only lives in you but He wants to live His life through you.”

Do I Trust My Experience or His Word?

Perhaps we endorse the clear teaching of the Bible on the fact of His sinless, victorious life, and that it is this life which He now lives in the believer, but there is still a problem. Some must admit they are not experiencing that quality of life. Instead of victory over sin, self and circumstances, they are being repeatedly defeated. Their attempts to overcome behavioral and dispositional sins have been failures. In some cases, life-dominating sins and addictions seem to have retained their hold. Does the experience of failure and frustration mean that the biblical teaching concerning the indwelling life of Jesus is not true? If it is true, why isn’t it true for every believer?

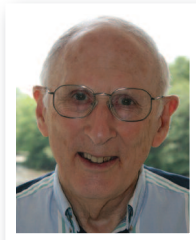
Our Desire

After considering this presentation of the Victorious Life message, someone might desire to know more about it and the distinctive conference ministry at America’s KESWICK. If so, contact can be made through the President & CEO, Bill Welte, either in person, by phone, or by mail. These truths continue to be life-transforming as they are appropriated by faith and applied to daily living.

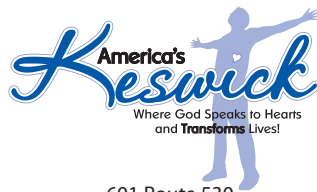


Rev. William A. Raws, Th. M.

The Rev. Williams A. Raws served for 55 years at America’s KESWICK in Whiting, New Jersey, a center founded by his grandfather in 1897. KESWICK is a combined ministry of an addiction recovery center, a resident program serving 200 men each year, and a Bible Conference and Retreat Center serving more than 11,000 guests per year. His training prior to undertaking this ministry included Wheaton College and Dallas Theological Seminary where he earned a Master of Theology degree. He has served on a number of boards, including Philadelphia Biblical University, and has been past President of the Christian Addiction Rehabilitation Association. Pastor Bill went home to be with the Lord on July 20, 2008.



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What’s the Difference?

The Message of the Victorious Christian Life

by Rev. Williams A. Raws, Th. M.



Addiction Recovery | Christian Events
Conference & Retreat Facilities | Training & Resources

America’s KESWICK

Where God Speaks to Hearts and Transforms Lives!

For more than three quarters of a century people have been heard to comment, “America’s KESWICK is different.” At times this statement has indicated a comparison with general Bible Conferences and on other occasions a comparison with the customary messages of their home churches. Perhaps the differences rest in the concerted effort made throughout its history to fulfill a purpose statement adopted by the Victorious Life Testimony, the founding agency of the America’s KESWICK conference ministry:

“The purpose of the Conference is to set forth the offer in God’s Word of a life sustained fellowship with God, victory over sin, and power in service through Christ as Saviour, Lord and Life, and God’s call to all as missionary Christians to share this with others to the uttermost part of the earth.”

Good musical programs, excellent Bible teaching, comfortable facilities, and fine food are very important and can be found elsewhere. But the special emphasis stated in the purpose is not readily available to most Christians.

Many Christians are battle weary. Uncomfortable with the trends in the culture around them, they feel that they are bucking a tide which seems increasingly overwhelming. In addition, they have developed a concept of biblical standards of behavior but have found it impossible to maintain. Some pursue strategies and programs which offer them hope of success. Such action programs may help to some extent, but there is a danger of these becoming a form of legalism in which works are predominant over faith.

I Can’t, But He Can

America’s KESWICK’s historic message as implied in its purpose statement is that the true Christian life is not *difficult* — it’s *impossible*. But the message doesn’t end with that discouraging note. More than one of our conference speakers has put it this way, “the most important thing I have learned about the Christian Life is that I cannot live it.” They then continue with this explanation, “but God never

His Part - My Part

In order to discover the answers to these questions, we must first distinguish the two areas of responsibility for a life of victory. As previously described, the first is **God's part**. The key element is *provision*. God has already made full provision for a life of fullness and victory for every true Christian. There is nothing more that He needs to do in securing such a life for you and me. The victorious One stands ready to demonstrate this life in our experience (John 10:10, Phil. 2:13, 2 Cor. 2:14, Rom. 8:37).

The second area of consideration is **our part**. The key element is *appropriation*, laying hold of what has been provided for us. How do we do this? The Apostle Paul gives the answer in Romans 6:1-13. The solution is built on three action words: *know*, *reckon* (count yourselves — NIV), and *yield*. Our responsibility is to *know* that we are identified in the death of Christ on the cross and in His resurrection. This means that His death for sin is credited to us, and we are dead to sin. We are therefore freed from sin as a ruling force in our lives. His resurrection is also credited to us, and we live with Him.

Knowing these facts will not automatically result in victorious living. We must count or *reckon* upon them to be personally true. Faith is an essential element, it rests on the facts.

The third critical responsibility is to *yield* or offer ourselves. This is closely associated with reckoning. Discovering that in God's sight we have died to the domination of sin, we must count it to be true and then yield ourselves in surrender to the One who transfers this provision into living reality. It often begins with a major transaction of yielding when a person turns over the life to the Lordship of Christ (Romans 12:1-2), but this must be continued in a life of submission to His will.

Hundreds of America's KESWICK guests, particularly young people, have faced the

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issue of total yieldedness and surrendered to the lordship of Christ. The whole pattern and direction of their lives was changed. In many cases this has resulted in a lifetime of vocational services to Him.

Can It Last?

The Bible describes in several ways what the purpose statement refers to as a "sustained life of fellowship." One of the clearest is our Lord's teaching on the vine and branches relationship (John 15:1-11). Using this metaphor, Jesus declared the basis of sustained fellowship between Himself and His disciple — the relationship between the vine and the branches, i.e. *union*. Stemming from this union is a continuing process — *communion*. Essential to the understanding of these truths is the realization that Jesus is the vine, not just the trunk. He's the whole thing. As His disciples, we attain significance through our continuance, abiding or remaining in vital union with the Lord. The evidence of this communion is the fruit produced. As the vine-life is permitted to have unrestricted flow in the branch, it produces fruit. The branch cannot produce the fruit — it bears it. Perhaps the most precise identification of the fruit is found in Gal. 5:22-23. As previously stated, this nine-flavored fruit is a concise description of the character of Jesus Christ.

Two things should be noted about this communion of fellowship: First, it is not totally passive. Jesus used the imperative form of the word *abide* or *remain* (John 15:4). This indicates our responsibility to do certain things in order to maintain communion. In this chapter and other portions of John's writings there is clarification as to what is required (v. 9 – obey, 1 John 1:7 – walk in the light, 1 John 1:9 – confess our sins). Second, the ultimate purpose of this spiritual fruit is not for our enjoyment but for God's glory (John 15:8). A sense of personal satisfaction will be a by-product.

God's Battle Plan

Both the Word of God and our experience tell us that the Christian's life involves a battle. It is therefore essential that the teaching in the Bible of God's provision for victory be made clear. Since this aspect of Christian living is so significant, the founders of America's KESWICK conference ministry chose the phrase, The Victorious Life, as its general description. They also incorporated this phrase into their organization title, *The Victorious Life Testimony*. Their commitment as indicated in the purposes statement was "to set forth the offer in God's Word of a life sustained... victory over sin."

Three enemies are arrayed against the Christian: the world system, the flesh nature, and the devil. Essentially, the devil's role is to orchestrate the tactics which are designed to lure the believer into disobedience to God. He works through the attractions and enticements of the world system (the culture – John 2:15) which stimulates the lusts of the flesh (Gal. 5:17). The genealogy of sin is traced by James as beginning with personal desire which is drawn away from God's will and enticed to be married to disobedience which produces sin (James 1:14-15).

It is God's purpose for every believer that he be an overcomer — a victor rather than a victim in this battle with sin (1 John 5:4-5, 2 Cor. 2:14). Since the Holy Spirit is present in the life of all believers, the overcoming power is resident and available. However, He does not force victory on anyone. It results from yielding to His lordship (2 Cor. 3:17, Rom. 8:13) and then appropriating His power. Paul terms this the filling of the Spirit (Eph. 5:18). This filling is not quantitative but qualitative. It refers to the Spirit possessing the control centers of our lives, just as wine affects the control centers of the body. In addition, this filling work of the Spirit is to be a continuing process. It is maintained in the believer as he meets the conditions set forth in the Bible — "Grieve not the Spirit" (Eph. 4:30), "Quench not the Spirit" (1 Thess. 5:19), and "Walk in the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16). The first has to do with the need for immediate confession of sin. The second pertains to yielding to the will of the Spirit. The third relates to walking by faith in dependence upon the Spirit. As these conditions are met, the Christian is Spirit-filled. When the

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conditions are violated, filling can only be restored by renewing the process of conforming to the conditions.

Is Personal Victory the Ultimate Purpose?

A life of overcoming must ultimately become a life of overflowing (John 4:14, 7:37-38). Obedience to the great commission of our Lord is a vital component of the truly victorious life. When believers surrender their lives to the lordship of Christ and submit to the Holy Spirit, service results. They become involved in one way or another with the program of God in reaching the lost. In recognition of this, America's KESWICK maintains a distinctive emphasis on missions.

Other Descriptive Terms

A number of other terms have been used to describe the life God provides for the believer. Some of these are: *the Normal Christian Life* (not average, but normal), *the Abundant Life*, *the Exchanged Life*, and *the Spirit-Filled Life*. Each of these emphasizes some aspect of the genuine Christian Life. America's KESWICK chose the term *the Victorious Life* because the struggle with sin is so pervasive, but the message of victory through Jesus Christ is so liberating.

...the victorious life message is first of all Christ centered and then about a life overflowing towards others

Disassociation

There have been attempts to link the position of America's KESWICK with some extreme or biblically unbalanced views of the Christian Life. However, careful examination of its doctrinal statement and the messages given by its speakers will reveal a consistent adherence to the Word of God and a balanced approach to the teaching of God's plan for holy living. By making a distinction between what the believer possess a by virtue of his position in Christ versus his progressive experience of the divine provision, the idea of present perfection is ruled out. The thought of passive rest is balanced by the biblical teachings of a working and growing faith. Instead of the supposed teachings of self-centered fulfillment, the victorious life message is first of all Christ-centered and then of a life overflowing toward others.

Our Aim

There is a recognized difference between the biblical emphasis at America's KESWICK and that found in most general Bible conferences and many churches. This will likely become increasingly apparent in this age of casual Christianity. The object of the Board of Trustees and the KEWSICK administration is to maintain the distinctions of our purpose statement in this application to the lives of Christians today.