

## Cannot or Will Not?

One of the attitudes that can be problematic is thinking we cannot do what we really can, we cannot do what is really needed or that we can do what we are not really able to do. For most people “I can’t” means that there is a legitimate reason that they cannot do what is at hand. For others, the words “I can’t and “need” have meanings different than the general population uses.

If we want to be in control of a conversation we may use ‘I can’t to mean I will not or don’t want to. If someone fears of getting caught, is afraid of trying, or fears they are not able to do something, it needs to be sorted out. Are we able to do it and need to examine and overcome fears? Then we need to take courage. “Courage is fear that has said it’s prayers.” Joshua was a prophet in the Bible who in Joshua 1:9 said, “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be discouraged or dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.” Jesus said, John 16:33 In this world you will have trouble and tribulation, but take courage, Do not be afraid, I have overcome the world.

Maybe we lack the ability or practice of apply ourselves consistently over time or just wanting something else like excitement. Keeping what we are doing secret takes a lot of time and energy and subjects us to illness we are not always aware of. There is a saying that we are only as sick as our secrets. Saying I can’t in order to do something else like satisfy unjust impulses, compulsion, or strong desire is really giving in to temptation. If we face temptation and say I am not going to do that, we will most likely give in eventually give in to it. It is much more beneficial and in the long run much more rewarding to focus on what is necessary to survive, be healthy or thrive. If we face God and pursue Him and good, then the temptations will fall off behind us. If we recognize we are really lacking in a certain skill, we can make that a goal to learn or work on that skill. It means that we have to humble ourselves to admit it, decide it is worth pursuing and work with others to learn.

Sometimes if we are trying to convince others that we are a victim or cannot do something, we may also convince ourselves. Think carefully about how you use these words in different situations.

Honesty is important here. Lies and untruths keep us trapped. In John 14:6 Jesus said, “I am the Way, The Truth and the Life. No man comes to The Father but by Me”. He himself is the truth – as you get to know Him you will encounter many truths. Growing in faith is learning to trust God and His people by replacing the lies that we believe will meet our needs with the truths that really will do so. Not only our needs but those of others also. Then lasting and satisfying relationships are formed both here on earth and in the life to come in heaven. One of the ways we can handle wanting the rush of getting by with something others do not know about it to do good deeds in secret. That is a challenge and can put some fun in our days.

The solutions to being a victim and not being capable presented to us in scripture is to are that God can save and heal and He gives power where we do not have it. There is only so much that we can do on our own and then we come to realize we cannot do on our own. Human nature is limited and God’s nature is, is strong and able, and giving.

The first public message Christ shared is recorded in Matthew 5. It tells us that our needs are fulfilled through Him. The ways of having those needs filled are different than the way the world tells us that we should meet them.

Matthew 5 tells us we are blessed – happy, fulfilled, satisfied if we do these things.

- Mourning allows us to be vulnerable and to share our sorrow with others, to lean on God and to learn to be receive. We need to recognize the pain we have encountered and grieve it, the losses we have suffered and grieve them. At a time, I felt completely empty had nothing left to give, much less being able to see what I needed, I read a line that helped me. “It is only empty vessels that God can fill. When we empty ourselves of our burdens, then we can be open to being filled with His comfort and other goodness.
- Being meek is not weakness but strength that is controlled and makes the connections we need. Meekness makes us honest with ourselves and with others. And allows us to do what we are capable of doing without pride or putting ourselves above others.
- Hungering and thirsting for righteousness changes everything. When we pursue that instead of false or desires, we will be rewarded with good results, growing relationships and the satisfaction that pursuing other endeavors will not bring.
- If we are merciful, then when we need it – and at different times we all do need it – we will receive it.
- We are not pure in heart to start with. Jeremiah 17:9 says, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick – beyond cure, who can understand it? But if we turn to Christ and ask Him for His

forgiveness and love He makes us pure in heart. He cleanses us when we first come to us and continues to cleanse us, meeting those needs by His love. It makes me want to pursue Him a pure heart and pure things and it is the way that we will begin to see God.

- Being a peacemaker is not easy. If others want to cooperate and have peace, then it goes well. If they are resistant it is harder. But bringing peace to a person or situation when we are upset can be hard work. Mostly it means turning to God, trusting and bringing His spirit and attitudes to the situation instead of selfish ones. Love is not what one person wants but is what is best for both or all concerned.
- Being persecuted means to drive away or to pursue. The idea is being against not being a peacemaker or building relationship but tearing it down. Again, we do this naturally, especially when we are upset. But asking God to help us have His love and response makes all the difference in our lives. His comfort, inheriting the earth, being filled, obtaining mercy, seeing God, being His children and inheriting the kingdom of heaven.

Paul talked about God's response to His asking for a weakness to be removed in 2 Corinthians 10 "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

### Questions

1. How do you use the words, "I can't"?
2. Do you allow that to defeat you or to motivate and challenge you to a good solution?
3. Fear hidden can make us fear ridden. Can you confess them to God and decide if you need to confess your fears to a person in confidence?
4. We all have fears, what are yours? Are they good ones? I.e. are you afraid of getting caught at something not so good or are you afraid of something you need to take courage over?
5. What areas do you want to be more consistent with and learn about?
6. Are you willing to take time to work on that or those areas?
7. Are you willing to set up some accountability to help you do so?
8. Have you convinced yourself you cannot do something you could really do if you put the learning pieces in place?
9. We want others to be honest with us. Ask yourself, "Am I being honest with others and in all situations?" If not, will you ask God to help you see the truth and the ways to be truthful?
10. What areas do you need more healing and more truth in?
11. Will you give yourself permission to mourn or grieve what you need to?
12. Does seeing that meekness is not weakness help you to understand the need for it and to let God work it into you.
13. What do you hunger and thirst for?
14. Are you willing to develop a hunger and thirst for righteousness?
15. Mercy – kindness in response to need – one part of it may be punishment is not given where it is deserved. Mercy is similar to grace which is undeserved favor. Part of that is forgiveness and help when we do not deserve it.
16. Is there a time you can share when you received mercy? How about one when you gave mercy?
17. How have you seen sickness in your heart? In others?
18. How have you seen pureness in heart? Will you ask God for it? Share about these times.
19. Jesus said that if we believe in the one God sent (Jesus) and receive His love we can become His children. (John 1:12) He also said that peacemakers are children of His and that is how we show it. (Matthew 5, 1 John 2, Romans 8 & 2 Corinthians 2:6) How does this differ from the idea we are all His children?
20. Some ways of becoming a peacemaker when you are in a situation where you are challenged to love instead of react negatively are to pray, to have empathy (understand the other person and where they are coming from), see uplifting humor. Can you think of any others?
21. To drive away or to pursue negatively "away from me or after someone" attitudes. What would be ways of encouraging or lifting up?