

**“Can’t” or “Won’t”?**  
**Matt. 7:24-27; Phil. 4:13**

Why do non-Christians, unbelievers, sin? While they \_\_\_\_\_ know better, the fact is they are simply \_\_\_\_\_ to choose righteous paths consistently. They \_\_\_\_\_ have the desire or the power to obey God. In a manner of speaking, they \_\_\_\_\_ choose for or obey God because they \_\_\_\_\_ know Him.

What about genuine Christians? We have the witness of the Spirit and the knowledge of truth, and we have the \_\_\_\_\_ to choose to walk with Christ in the Spirit. So, why do we sin?

Experience (even personal) has taught us that believers do not always choose for God. Why? It isn’t because we \_\_\_\_\_. It’s because we \_\_\_\_\_.

**I. What The Bible Has To Say About Our Choices In Life**

Consider the following verses: (2 Cor. 12:9; Eph. 3:14-16, 20; 2 Pet. 1:4; 1 Cor. 10:13; and Phil. 4:13). Each of these verses has something to say to the Christian. \_\_\_\_\_ has a special strength, power, and ability to make right or Christ-honoring choices; i.e. to “walk with Christ”.

**II. The Choices (And The Responsibility) Are Ultimately Ours To Make.**

When all is said, and all is done the life choices of the Christian really boils down to two common words: \_\_\_\_\_. Far more than we’re comfortable with admitting, we Christians prefer to use the word \_\_\_\_\_ when we should be honest and use language that expresses the reality of our situation – \_\_\_\_\_.

Any believer who takes seriously the Word of God must also take seriously the verses above; and in doing that you would have to admit that the word for us in many of our life choices is not \_\_\_\_\_.

**III. Our Struggle With The Presence Of Sin**

As believers we have the truth and know the truth through God’s Holy Spirit. We have been given a \_\_\_\_\_, but as Scripture warns us, we still have the \_\_\_\_\_... our \_\_\_\_\_ to contend with.

While in seminary we studied the excellent book, “Happiness Is A Choice” by Dr’s Minirth and Meier. Consider what they have to say on this subject: “As psychiatrists we cringe whenever [Christian] patients use the word *can’t*... Any good psychiatrist knows that ‘I can’t’ and ‘I’ve tried’ are merely lame excuses. We insist that our patients be honest with themselves and use language that expresses the reality of the situation. So we have our patients change their *can’t*s to *won’t*s... If an individual changes all his

*can'ts* to *won'ts*, he stops avoiding the truth, quits deceiving himself, and starts living in reality.” (pg. 132)

\_\_\_\_\_ can legitimately use the word “CAN’T”; they don’t because they “can’t” (Cf. Eph 2:1, 12; John 8:34). But, what about \_\_\_\_\_? When we don’t, it’s because we won’t. When we disobey, when we sin, it’s because we \_\_\_\_\_ disobey and sin. The great tragedy in this is that sin’s power \_\_\_\_\_ (Eph. 4:22-24; Rom. 12:2; John 8:32).

Only when we commit to facing up to our \_\_\_\_\_ and stop \_\_\_\_\_ or having \_\_\_\_\_ will we learn of and experience the grace and power of God in our lives and begin to see real change and genuine spiritual growth, only then will we know what real freedom is.

### **Conclusion and Application:**

Jesus may be your Savior, but is He your Lord? Is there a “WON’T” in your life that you are calling a “CAN’T”? It would be wise to talk to God about that right now. Here are some practical steps to do that:

- \_\_\_\_\_ that you have bought into the “can’t”, while the truth is you “won’t”.
- \_\_\_\_\_ God to help you see the reality of your situation, and to help you to overcome and be victorious over whatever problem, struggle, issue, or sin is in your life.
- \_\_\_\_\_ God to release His grace and power in your life as you choose to obey Him (no matter what).
- \_\_\_\_\_ that God has given you a new nature and the power through His Holy Spirit to overcome your flesh or sinful nature and its temptations.
- \_\_\_\_\_ your entire being to Christ (Rom 12:1-2).
- Make yourself \_\_\_\_\_ to a trusted friend, mentor, or spiritual authority.