

Being an Overcomer #1

Jn. 16:33 – These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

What does it mean to overcome?

1. It can mean to prevail in battle against an enemy, and get victory. “Their left flank was overcome by artillery followed by an infantry charge.”
2. To prevail over some weakness or disability. “He overcame a very difficult childhood.”
3. Also, to be overwhelmed in body or mind. “She was overcome by grief” 2 P.2:20 – we must not be overcome by the entanglements and pollution of the world.

It is interesting that most of the references to overcoming were written by John, in his gospel, in 1 John, and Revelation.

Jesus perfectly overcame the temptations and hardships of living in this world as a man, and in so doing overcame the devil. He was still to die (in Jn. 16), but his determination was firm, and he could say that even though the prince of this world (Satan) cometh, he “hath nothing in me”. (Jn. 14:30)

God does not want us to live in sadness or depression, living lives of defeat, being overcome by sin. 2 Cor. 2:14 – God makes us triumph in Christ so our lives will reveal Him wherever we are. He wants us to experience joy and real victory in this life, even in the midst of trials and tribulation.

So how can we overcome the world?

1. By believing on the Lord Jesus Christ

1 Jn. 5:5 - Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?”
Of course this means more than mere belief – even the devil believes that God exists (Jas. 2:19). We believe that Christ is all that the Bible shows him to be (the eternal Son of God, Creator and sustainer of all things, wholly man and wholly God in one nature, virgin-born, without sin, that he died as a perfect sacrifice for our sins but was resurrected to life, and now sits at the right hand of the Father in heaven until his return to a final judgment, and to rule over his kingdom forever). Is THIS what we believe, or do we see him as a baby in a manger, or a good teacher, or a mere example of morality? He isn’t just an inspiration for us to “try to be better”, but he is our very LIFE, and is our only hope.

2. By the new birth, as evidenced by loving God and the brethren, and keeping His commandments

1 Jn. 5:1-4. In the context of loving God and the brethren, and keeping God’s commandments, it says “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world”
See Jn. 1:12-13 and 3:5-6 with 16-18

3. By faith, and the Word of God abiding in us

1 Jn. 5:4 - and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.
1 Jn. 2:14 – I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

4. By overcoming the natural allurements and temptations of this present physical world

1 Jn. 2:15-17 – “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lusts of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.”

5. By recognizing and rejecting false prophets and false doctrine

1 Jn. 4:1-4 – ... believe not every spirit ... try the spirits whether they be of God ... many false prophets ... confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh ... this is that spirit of antichrist ... Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

6. By doing good, even to our opposers

Rom. 12:21 – Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

7. By the “crucified life”

Lk. 9:23-26 – deny self, take up cross daily, and follow Christ; unashamed
Lk. 14:26-33 – absolute loyalty to Christ, bearing our cross; counting the cost and forsaking all