

## We Can Be Overcomers

This world is a beautiful place, given to us by God. Unfortunately, because of sin it is also a hard place. There are many temptations that can draw us away from God. Too many of us, following the path of Adam and Eve give in to temptations, are overcome, and are thus entrapped by sin. We then develop the attitude that we cannot overcome. Why such an attitude? Satan has been very successful in convincing those of us he has trapped that we are where we want to be, sin is more beneficial than righteousness, and there is nothing to overcome, unless it is those pesky Christians. After all, you don't want to be the "odd ball," and it is easier to "fit in" than to "stand out". Understanding the pull of the world, and the desire to "fit in", we will consider the need, and the possibility, of being OVERCOMERS!

### Excuses, Excuses, Excuses. . .

We all make excuses for our failures. We determine we don't have enough time, we are not capable, or we, like the comedian Flip Wilson, declare, "The Devil Made Me Do It". Moses is a good example of one who was an excuse maker. God told him, "...I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt" (Exodus 3:10). He didn't want to do as God said, so he began making excuses!

*The "Who am I" excuse* - "And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" (3:11).

*The "I don't know what to say" excuse* - "And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, the God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? What shall I say unto them?" (3:13).

*The "They won't believe me" excuse* - "And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto

thee" (4:1).

*The "I am not capable" excuse* - "And Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue" (Exodus 4:10).

*The "Send someone more capable" plea* - With God not accepting any of his excuses, in desperation Moses almost begged him to send someone else, when he said, "O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand thou wilt send" (4:13).

God had heard enough excuses, "And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses..." (4:14), and He let him know without hesitation that he was responsible to do as he was told! He knew what Moses was capable of. He, thus, expected him to live up to his capabilities! From this we should recognize that God will not accept our excuses either! Why would any reasonable person think He would accept their excuses, when He clearly rejected Moses'? SIN ALWAYS CONDEMNS and no excuse will change that fact!

### Thankfully God Has Given Us the Ability to Overcome Too!

To do so, however, we must "work at it" as Moses did! Paul said, "...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12). If you or I are not willing to do so, rather than overcoming, we will be overcome by sin. This we need to avoid, "For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23)!

How can we work out our own salvation? We can do so by properly studying and making application of God's Word (2 Timothy 2:15)! It is only through its words that we are given "...all things that pertain to life and godliness" (1 Peter 1:3)! Through such study, AND APPLICATION to our own lives, we CAN BE OVERCOMERS of anything!

*We can be overcomers of self!* - Pride is one of the things Jesus says, in Mark 7:20-22: "...cometh out of the man, that defileth a man." "...from within, out of the heart." He then reemphasized its source by declaring again, "All

these things come from within, and defile a man" (v. 23).

Close kin to pride is arrogance. Even when other things are in order, this attitude will condemn its owner! If you doubt it, please consider the wisdom of Proverbs 8:13: "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the forward mouth, do I hate." If God hates something, we should hate it too! If you are prideful and arrogant you need to work very hard at humbling yourself in the sight of the Lord (James 4:10)!

When we overcome pride and arrogance, we will then be able to overcome our selfish will. We have the opportunity of salvation because Jesus was not self-willed. Although He went willingly, He went to the cross not by His own will, but by God's (Luke 22:42; John 4:34; Hebrews 10:9). If we are wise we will give our will over to Him instead of doing our own thing! As Paul said, "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:17). We surely cannot expect to have salvation if our selfish will ignores His directions for our lives. With this in mind, please consider these inspired words of Paul: Romans 13:11-14 "(11) ...knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. (12) The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. (13) Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. (14) But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof."

*We can be overcomers of family, friends, & unfaithful brethren!* - Family, friends, and brethren in Christ should rejoice in our desire to be righteous. Unfortunately this is not always the case. Too many are as the prodigal son, who involve themselves with "riotous living" (Luke 15:13). Pressure is put on us to do the same; "Wherein they think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you" (1 Peter 4:4). As much as we love

them, we must love Jesus more; "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26). To do so we must understand the great reward of heaven that can be ours, and thus seek the kingdom of God above all else (Matthew 6:33)!

*We can be overcomers of good intentions!* – The road to hell is paved with good intentions! Procrastination is a very dangerous habit that many have! Each of us is capable of doing as Christ directs, if only we will! What He commands we can do, and He commands that we, among other things, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you; for him hath God the Father sealed" (John 6:27).

*We can be overcomers of the wicked world!* – Sadly, many have fallen to never rise to righteousness again. We don't have to be among that number! Each of us can overcome if we make the proper effort.

This is true – even if you are young; "I write unto you, young men, because you have overcome the wicked one. ... I have written unto you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one" (1 John 2:13-14). Too many times the young are sold short concerning ability, and responsibility. All need to recognize those younger than themselves are very capable of learning, understanding, and obeying God's directions! If they are of the age of accountability, God requires it of them! Therefore, regardless of your age, you need to heed the warning, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world" (2:15).

Why such a warning? "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him (2:15). "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John

3:8). This warning and these verses apply, regardless of age, as long as the hearer is old enough to understand right and wrong!

God gave us this world and all that is in it, so, how is it that loving what He gave us causes us to not love Him? "For, all that is in the world, the lust 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..." (2:16-17).

So, what happens when I heed the warning, and thus overcome the allurements of the world? "...he that doeth the will of God abideth forever" (2:17)! "And this is the promise that He hath promised us, even eternal life (2: 25). "And now, little children, abide in Him; that when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming" (2:28).

#### **How Can I Be So Sure That I Can Be an Overcomer?**

I can be sure because of Paul's inspired question, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31), and the clearly implied answer, "None against us can win if God is with us"! I can be sure because those who war against the Lamb will lose! Revelation 17:14 "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful." Thus, those who faithfully fight alongside the Lamb WILL BE overcomers (Ephesians 6:10-13)!

This tract is condensed from a lesson presented at the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Mid-West Lectures, "God's Precious Promises." To hear or view the complete lesson go to [www.kc-cofc.org/2009Lectures.htm](http://www.kc-cofc.org/2009Lectures.htm) or contact the 39th Street Church of Christ 15331 East 39th Street Independence, MO 64055-4240 USA

*God's Precious Promises...*

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*International Bible Studies  
Tract Series*