

VICTORY OR DEFEAT?

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I John 5:1-5

1. The title of my message is in the form of a question.
2. I want us to think about the fact that as Christians our lives should be characterized by victory over our three enemies: the flesh, the world, and the devil.
3. Years ago I came across a little book titled "The Way of Victory."
4. It was copyrighted in 1928 by a man named James H. McConkey.
5. McConkey's teaching and writing ministry was what we would call a faith ministry.
6. He did not sell or allow any of his books to be sold. (How different from the popular Christian writers of our day.)
7. His books contained the following announcement:
"This book is not sold but a copy of it will be sent entirely free, postpaid, to anyone who will write the publishers for it, its circulation being sustained by the free will offerings of its readers. We cannot supply quantities for distribution, but will furnish extra copies as we are able."
8. The book spoke to me in such a wonderful way that I put together a series of messages using McConkey's insights.
9. I am going to edit and rewrite the messages and begin sharing them with you next week.
10. By way of introduction I want us to note two important points John made in the passage we are considering today.
11. The third point comes from the revelation Jesus gave to John that is recorded in Revelation.

I. Those who are born of God overcome the world.

- A. This is a statement of fact.
- B. John made a series of authoritative statements in this passage.
 1. Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.
 2. Whatever is born of God overcomes the world.
 3. Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?
- C. The word overcomes comes from a Greek word that can be interpreted conquer, prevail, get the victory.
- D. Jesus used the word in John 16:33 when He said, "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; **I have overcome the world.**"
- E. Paul declared, "But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifest through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place."
II Corinthians 2:14
- F. Is your life characterized by victory or defeat?
- G. Is God manifesting through you the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Jesus in every place?

II. Those who are born of God overcome the world because of their relationship with Jesus.

- A. John stressed our victory in other passages in I John.
 - 1. "I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you **have overcome** the evil one." 2:14
 - 2. "You are from God, little children, and **have overcome them** (false spirits and teachers); because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world." 4:4
- B. Those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God overcome the world.
- C. The victory that overcomes the world is through our faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord, Savior, and Provider.
- D. If we are being overcome it is because of our failure or inability to trust and obey Jesus.

III. Those who overcome the world because of their relationship with Jesus have a glorious future to look forward to.

- A. Notice the words of Jesus Christ to the seven representative churches found in the book of Revelation.
 - 1. To Ephesus: "**To him who overcomes**, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God." 2:7
 - 2. To Smyrna: "**He who overcomes** will not be hurt by the second death." 2:11
 - 3. To Pergamum: "**To him who overcomes**, to him I will give of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it." 2:17
 - 4. To Thyatira: "**He who overcomes**, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, as I also have received authority from My Father; and I will give him the morning star." 2:26-28
 - 5. To Sardis: "**He who overcomes** will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels." 3:5
 - 6. To Philadelphia: "**He who overcomes**, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name." 3:12-13
 - 7. To Laodicea: "**He who overcomes**, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne." 3:21
- B. These promises are not for those who say they are Christians but for those who are actually Christians and demonstrate the fact by being overcomers. Revelation 21:5-8
"And He who sits on the throne said, 'Behold, I am making all things new.' And he said, 'Write, for these words are faithful and true.' Then He said to me, 'It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. **He who overcomes will inherit these things**, and I will be his God and He will be My son. But the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.'"

APPLICATION

1. I may not be able to fully interpret all of the great promises Jesus made to those who overcome, but I do want to be a recipient of them all.
2. How about you?
3. John went on to declare, “God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.” I John 5:11-12
4. How do we know if we have the Son of God?
5. One of the ways we know is that our lives are characterized by the victory Christ gives us over the world.
6. John’s purpose for writing I John is clearly stated in 5:13
“These things I have written to you who (profess to) believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.”