

# MORE THAN CONQUERORS

By Dennis Corrigan

## VICTORY IN CHRIST

God has made it possible for you to have continual victory as a Christian leader. Because of what He's done for you, you can overcome anything *which* comes against you. But many Christians live on a level far below this possibility. Instead of victory, believers often suffer one defeat after another as they try to walk with the Lord.

This is because they often don't understand the nature of the victory Jesus has won for us. He has already won it! But you must enforce it in your own life.

Also, we often don't know our enemy as God wants us to. We don't know how Satan finds it so easy to defeat us when instead we should be defeating him. Jesus said, *'I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy'* (Luke 10:19), but they often walk all over us.

To live in victory is to overcome Satan. He *is* at war against God's people and we must learn how to overcome him. The battle *is* a simple one to win, although often a difficult and vicious one to fight. It will take determination and perseverance, but you can do it! The Bible and church history tells us of many who have done it. Many have overcome the devil with great victory. God wants you to be like that. You can be: Apply the principles of *this* article and *you will be!*

## WE SHARE IN CHRIST'S VICTORY

2 Corinthians 2:14 says, *"But thanks be to God, who always leads us in His triumph in Christ."* It was customary in Jesus' day for an ancient king, emperor, or general to return home victoriously from battle by entering his home city leading the procession of both his loyal army and also the defeated foe. The Romans called this parade a 'Triumph'.

It was this Roman Triumph *Paul* had in mind as he wrote this passage. To take part in such a triumphal parade was one of the highest honors given by the Roman Empire, or it was one of the most shaming humiliations possible for those defeated.

God leads His people as His loyal army in *His* triumph! It was not *our* battle we fought and won, but God's. As David approached Goliath to do battle with him, he said, "*The Lord does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the Lord's and He will give you (Goliath and the Philistines) into our hands*" (1 Sam. 17:47).

When threatened by a massive invasion of the sons of Ammon, Israel became terrified. But the Lord comforted Israel through a prophet who said, "*Do not fear or be dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours but God's. . . You need not fight in this battle; station yourselves, stand and see the salvation of the Lord on your behalf*" (2 Chron. 20:15-17).

God used these occasions to show Israel it is *He* who does the fighting and when we do fight, it is in *His* battle. Although Israel wielded the sword and spear and shield, it was God's victory. If it is God's fight, then it is also God's victory. *He* is the conquering King! He leads us in *His* triumph . . . *in Christ* as His army, we are the first to follow Him *in* His mighty celebration of victory, and we share in the spoils of battle.

## THE GREATEST VICTORY OF ALL!

The second group to follow the victor in his Triumph was the vanquished foe. They were led under guard in chains and dressed as slaves. This is what Jesus did to the satanic majesty and his hellish hordes: "*When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him*" (Col. 2:15).

Satan and his hordes sealed their own doom in what they thought was going to be *their* ultimate triumph. "Death has triumphed over life!" the diabolical legions cheered as they hurled Hell's worst upon the now deformed and lifeless body hung shamefully on that cruel Roman cross. They thought that by having killed God's son, they had secured their own malicious reign over Humankind. A recent gospel song tells what really happened:

*"His plan of battle fooled them all.  
They led Him off to prison, to die.*

*But as He entered Hades' Hall,  
He broke those Hellish chains with a cry.  
Listen to the demons screaming,  
See Him bruise the Serpent's head.  
The prisoners of Hell redeeming,  
All the power of death is dead.  
It is finished! He has done it!  
Life from the dead; Jesus Christ has won it!"*  
(From "The Victor" by Jamie Owens)

Jesus Christ used Satan's very own nature to seal his own doom in what proved to be the master-stroke of the universe. By surrendering to His Father's will, He put Himself in a position of apparent weakness Satan could not resist. Satan is "a murderer from the beginning." His own nature demanded that he murder God's Passover Lamb, and in so doing his own power over Mankind was broken and Satan was defeated.

As Jesus neared the point of this victory, He cried out, "It is finished!" The word He used was that used by a military commander when, from his vantage point overlooking the field of battle would see victory had been determined. He would shout out that word to encourage his troops to push to make that determined victory a reality, thus ultimately defeating their foes.

## **"OCCUPY TILL I COME"**

When Jesus charged his disciples to "occupy" until He returns, He wasn't saying "Defend the fort!" In warfare occupation is part of victory. A nation was conquered when the victor had possession of its capitol city. But there were still thousands of hostile troops within that nation's boundaries who needed to be captured and subdued.

Even the deposed king might be on the loose, although he had lost his power through defeat. This is how it is with Satan and his hellish hordes. Jesus defeated Satan in the cross, but he is still at large "*prowling about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour*" (1 Pet. 5:8).

Although victory has been won by our Commander, and its final outcome has been determined, *we are still at war!* That there is still war means it is possible for you to experience defeat at the hands of the enemy, conquered though he may be. Jesus' cry, "It is finished!" didn't say, "It's all over now. Sit down . . . take your ease for the enemy is undone!" No! Just as ancient troops would

see this as a signal for a harder push, we should hear Jesus saying, “It’s done! Satan’s defeat is determined! But *you* must enforce it! Take your swords in hand and carry out what I’ve already accomplished!”

## DON'T BE IGNORANT OF SATAN'S SCHEMES

Paul wrote the Corinthians and told them he was forgiving them so that Satan couldn't take advantage of the situation. This was because, he said, “*we are not ignorant of his schemes*” (2 Cor. 2:11). But today many of us *are* ignorant of Satan's schemes. Paul tells us that our spiritual weapons aren't of the flesh, but we often rely on our fleshly resources to bring about spiritual victory. Paul says that we aren't fighting against human agents but against demonic powers, but many of us still struggle against people, believers and unbelievers alike, not realizing they are but instruments in Satan's hand.

The famous British author, C.S. Lewis, says Satan tries to push us into one of two opposite errors about himself. He wants us to believe we don't need to take him seriously at all – many believers don't think there really is a personal devil – or he tries to cause us to take him far more seriously than we should, becoming obsessed by our fear of demons. However, he does it, he doesn't want men to know the truth about himself. He knows when you do, there is little he can do to thwart God's purposes in you.

The apostles and early Christians knew their enemy well, but through the years, much of the church has lost that knowledge and our ignorance of Satan's schemes has given him frequent opportunities to take serious advantage of God's people and do them much harm.

We don't need to stay ignorant of how the devil works to harm Christ's kingdom. God has revealed Satan's strategy *in* the Bible. By paying attention to this teaching and applying it to our daily life, we will see him flee from us over and over again. We will become part of the triumphant army of Christ.

Again, Satan's fight is not with you, it is with Jesus, God's Son. Isaiah 14 is the story of primeval spiritual history. Lucifer was the prime minister of heaven. He was second only to God. He was an astonishingly beautiful angelic being who, being covered with light, governed under God's authority alone. Somehow through the mystery of iniquity, pride crept in to Lucifer's heart. He began to covet God's place of preeminence. As a result, he eventually led a rebellion against Him, and was cast out of heaven with one-third of the angels. It was then his name became “Satan,” the Adversary (that

is the meaning of the Hebrew word). From that time until now, Satan's obsession has been to destroy whatever of God's works he can.

## **SATAN HAS NO POWER – BUT LOTS OF INFLUENCE**

But Jesus defeated Satan at Calvary and “*plundered his house*” (Mat. 12:29). He took away all of Satan's power and authority (Heb. 2:14,15). Although Satan has lost real power, he still has *influence!* Once you are in Christ, Satan is powerless to stop the flow of life God wants to come from you . . . unless you let him.

In the beginning, God had given to Adam dominion over the whole earth. But by cunning and deception, Satan enticed him and the woman to surrender that dominion to himself. Likewise, in Jesus we have all authority over Satan and the demonic realm, but we can fail to exercise that authority and thus give him the opportunity to usurp our authority and hurt us.

## **SATAN SEEKS TO INFLUENCE US FOUR WAYS**

God has given Satan four names in the Bible which picture the four ways he seeks to influence God's people. God's word calls Satan the *tempter* (Matt. 4:3; 1 Thess. 3:5), the *accuser* of the brethren (Rev. 12:10), the *deceiver* of the whole world (Rev. 12:9), and the *devourer* (1 Pet. 5:8).

Lacking any real power to hurt you, Satan seeks to influence you so you will eventually succumb to his pressure and choose things which will themselves trigger your downfall. Just as Adam surrendered dominion of the world to Satan in the Garden, so we often do the same thing in certain areas of our lives until we eventually find ourselves under his bondage once more.

### **1. Resisting the Tempter**

Every Christian faces temptation. Although the nature and intensity of the temptation may vary, there will never be a time in your life as a believer that you will be above temptation. Temptation is Satan's first line of attack. It is where he most viciously attacks new believers, and it is where he most consistently confronts mature believers.

The three areas in which Satan always tempts us are the *lust of the flesh* (sins of the body), the *lust of the eyes* (coveting those things that appeal to your

eyes), and the *boastful pride of life* (strife, vain glory, and carnal, selfish ambition) (1 John 2:16). Almost all leaders who fall into sin do so because, Satan tempts them in one or more of these three categories.

Satan's chief ally is your own sinful, fleshly nature. James tells us "*each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death*" (James 1:14, 15).

On one hand we are told that Satan tempts us, and on the other our own lust entices us and carries us away. But there is no inconsistency here. Both are true. Satan is the tempter, but unless we responded to his seductions, we would not fall. This is because he comes to us through our own fleshly lusts.

A helpful way to understand this is to consider the principle of *sympathetic vibration*. I recently read an interesting analogy that well illustrates this idea: Take the piano. If you open the lid, hold down the loud pedal and sing a loud note into the piano, you will hear the string that corresponds to the note you sang vibrate *in sympathy* with your voice. By slamming down the lid and taking your foot off the pedal, you will prevent this from happening.

Our sinful nature was the means by which Satan controlled our lives before we were saved. Although we now are a part of God's kingdom, our flesh nature still vibrates in sympathy with Satan's voice. The only way to prevent this is to turn a deaf ear to Satan's alluring voice. Paul puts it this way: "*Don't think about how to gratify the desires of your sinful nature*" (Rom. 13:14). He also tells us to continually *put to death* the deeds of the body (Rom 6; 8:13; Col. 3:5).

When Satan tempts you, he crawls up from behind. His device is to talk to you so it's hard for you to tell whether you are thinking your own thoughts, or thoughts he projects into your mind. He knows you think you should resist temptation and "be strong." So he keeps you looking at the thing with which he is tempting you. The more you try to resist it, the more easily you will be overcome by it. This is because you say, "I will not! I will not! I will not!" and the "I will" principle takes over. Being motivated by the seat of the "I will," your sinful nature, you will most likely yield to the temptation.

God's word doesn't tell us to resist temptation. It says to *flee from it* (1 Tim. 6: 11; 2 Tim. 2:22). To resist temptation, you must consider it. This is what Satan wants because as you consider it, your appetite for it will grow. No!

When you come up against temptation, *turn and flee!* When you turn to flee temptation, you will face the Tempter. This contradicts our tendency to run away from him. God doesn't tell you to flee from Satan. He tells you to resist him, and then *he will flee from you* (James 4:7). Satan tells you to turn away from him and face the temptation. This is because he knows when we turn away from it and face him, *he has to flee*. This is how you can enforce Jesus' victory over temptation.

## 2. Overcoming the Accuser of the Brethren

Revelation 12:10 says, *“Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night.”* Satan accuses you before God day and night. But how do you experience this?

You experience this in the form of condemnation. Condemnation is that undefinable sense of guilt you just can't seem to pin down. Have you ever gone to prayer and when you did you began to feel guilty in general. So you allow the Spirit to search your heart and confess all the sins you can think of – but you still feel guilty: “How do you think God will ever hear you, you hypocrite! You've just had some dirty thoughts!”

God never does this (Rom. 8:1). It is the work of the accuser. As you draw near to God, you can hear Satan trying to accuse you and condemn you. Until you recognize this condemnation as the work of Satan, you will begin to believe you aren't worthy to be in God's presence and your fellowship with God will become very weak. This is just what Satan wants!

Another time you can hear the accuser's voice is when you minister for the Lord. Suppose you want to teach your flock about the need for purity of heart in the believer. As you stand to minister, the thought occurs to you, “How dare I teach this? I've only recently had dirty thoughts myself.” If you don't know how to overcome the accuser, your preaching will eventually weaken and you will offer Satan's kingdom no threat at all. This is just what he wants.

Or perhaps you confront a person who has an unclean demon. As you attempt to cast out the spirit, a similar thought occurs to you: “How can I have the power to cast out this devil? I've been guilty of some of the same things this fellow has done!”

Here is how you can overcome the accuser when he attacks you with thoughts like these: **“They Overcame Him Because of the Blood of the Lamb!”**

Revelation 12:11 says, *“And they overcame him (the accuser of the brethren) because of the blood of the Lamb . . .”* 1 John 1:7-9 says, *“If we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

Here is the power of Jesus’ blood: When Jesus died on Calvary and shed His blood, He paid in full the penalty for all sin. To “walk in the light” and “confess your sins” involves *agreeing with God* that what you did (or failed to do) was wrong, and sin. Confessing sin isn’t telling God what you did. He already knows that. It is telling Him His judgment of that act is right and you were wrong. It is calling sin *sin* and not trying to rationalize it away. True confession also involves your decision to turn away from that sin. This is repentance. You *change your mind and heart* about that act. Finally, confession involves knowing that when you bring your sin to light, He forgives *totally* and cleanses *thoroughly*. He doesn’t even remember it anymore. Your conscience is clean and you are free to walk before God without guilt.

When the accuser of the brethren comes to you with his accusations, you can react two ways: you can deny his accusations or you can agree with them. We all tend to deny his accusations. Jesus’ teaching may surprise you: “Agree with your adversary quickly!” Satan is your adversary! When he comes to accuse you of sin, *agree with him*. He rarely accuses you of something which he fabricates. It usually has to do with something you in fact did do.

We usually respond, “I am not thinking unclean thoughts, devil. I’m righteous in Jesus!” That is the wrong answer because you did, in fact, have unclean thoughts. But you confessed them and were forgiven and cleansed from them. When you deny Satan’s accusations, *you are taking a stand on your own righteousness*. You don’t have any! Christ is your righteousness. He didn’t save you on the basis of your own righteousness, nor does He keep you on that basis: *“He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration*

*and renewing by the Holy Spirit” (Tit. 3:5). When you confessed your sins and received God’s forgiveness, the devil’s accusations won’t intimidate you! When he accuses you, say, “That’s right devil. I did have that dirty thought, and it was horrible. And I do worse things than that! You know my old man is capable of terrible evil. But God knows it too. And He saved me in spite of it, and cleansed me from that sin when I told Him about it. My authority isn’t in my own righteousness. It is in Jesus who loved me and died for me!”*

When you address the enemy like that, his accusations will fall to the ground. He will have lost all power to intimidate you and influence you

### **3. Overcoming the Deceiver**

Revelation 12:9 says, *“And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.”*

The “serpent of old” was Satan. He deviously made his way into Eden and deceived Eve. Along with the obvious temptations (See Gen. 3:6), the serpent’s main attack was on the Word of God: *“Has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?’”*

When Eve replied that they would die if they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the serpent replied, *“You surely shall not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good from evil” (Gen. 3:4,5).*

What began in the Garden has continued throughout history. Satan is the god of this world who has blinded the minds of those who don’t believe (2 Cor. 4:4). We live in a world of deception and lies. We are continually tricked with illusions and promises which can’t be fulfilled. People make promises they can’t keep. Advertisements promise results no product can deliver. The world around us – our culture – constantly tries to create images we feel we have to live up to be happy, but when we do, we end up empty and disillusioned. How can a Christian leader hope to provide truthful leadership in a world so full of this deceitful scheming?

Revelation 12: 11 says, *“they overcame him (the deceiving serpent) because of the word of their testimony.”*

Overcoming Satan because of the word of your testimony involves knowing the word of God. This means Bible study. You should spend time everyday reading the Bible and learning what God has taught you about Himself, about you, about the enemy, and about the world around you.

Concerning itself, the Bible says it is “God-breathed” (2 Tim. 3:16). Our Sovereign Lord made sure the Bible was accurately written and preserved. This is so you can have an authoritative source by which you can live out your life in a way pleasing to Him.

No wonder Satan’s attack after temptation is against the Word of God. Through persecution, he has tried to destroy it; through science and false theology, he has tried to attack its reliability; and through hypocritical religion, he has tried to give it a bad reputation. But, praise the Lord, it is still the main beacon light by which we can know God’s will and his ways.

By diligently studying the Bible, you will become familiar with the principles of godliness and truth. The Holy Spirit will help you understand these principles and God will allow them to be tested in your own experience. This will enable you to discern satanic deception from divine truth.

Overcoming Satan because of the word of your testimony involves not only knowing the *Bible*, but also being able to say you’ve proven it true in your own experience. Often the serpent will crawl into your circumstances and say, “Did God really say that? He certainly did not!” When he does, you can respond, “You are a liar, devil! God’s word says thus and so, and I’ve seen it work in my life!” That kind of testimony is a weapon Satan can’t resist.

#### **4. Overcoming the Devouring Lion**

Finally, Satan will try to influence you as a “devouring lion.” 1 Peter 5:8 says, *“Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”*

Jesus said, *“Do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell”* (Matt. 10:28). Satan cannot touch us without God’s permission. The story of Job is an example of this protection: Satan had to ask God’s permission before he did anything to Job. The same is true with us.

With most of us, God's purposes don't include our dying a violent, premature death. But for some, God may choose that they glorify Him with a martyr's death. If so, there is not fear in it because of the great grace that comes along with it.

Knowing this can increase your boldness in confronting Satan when he approaches you as a roaring lion. One of the reasons the prowling lion roars as he does is to strike fear into the hearts of those who hear him.

Satan does this. He breathes threats of physical harm and pain against those who follow Jesus. He will taunt you with thoughts of torture and mutilation at the hands of vicious persecutors.

But Jesus says, "Don't fear him!" Satan can't touch you without God's permission. And if it should be that God chooses you to glorify Him by your death, what greater calling could there be than to be numbered with God's apostles and prophets in the way you die.

But even if that were to be the case for you, *Satan can't touch your soul*. As you thus confront him, unafraid of his taunts and willing to pour *your* life out unto death, you will overcome Satan with still another irresistible weapon from your divine arsenal.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Revelations 12:9-11 says, *"And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth and his angels were thrown down with him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, 'Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night. And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even to death'"*

When Satan comes to you in any way he can, you can overcome him. God has fully equipped you to do so. There is no 'fiery dart' he can hurl at you that you cannot quench with the weapons God has put in your hands.

Remember, when he comes as the tempter, don't resist the temptation. Rather turn and flee from it. Resist Satan, *and he will have to flee from you*.

When he comes to accuse you, don't deny his accusations.

Remember: *Agree with your adversary quickly!* Quickly acknowledge your sins and shortcomings and affirm what Jesus had done with them. Thus you will throw down the accuser of the brethren because of the blood of Jesus, God's Lamb.

Whenever the serpent crawls in to deceive you, don't depend on your intellectual ability to reason with him. Proclaim the Word of God he tries to contradict. Say out loud how you have proven God's word in your life and put his darkness out with your light.

Finally, when the dragon comes against you and roars like a lion, don't fear him. The worst he can do is kill your body, but he can't do that without God's permission. If you are willing to lay your life down for the Lord – Jesus did it for you – then you will overcome Satan “because you did not love your life, even to death.”

The Bible says we *are* more than conquerors through Jesus who loves us and died for us. You can experience that as you use these mighty weapons God has put in *your* hands. These weapons don't depend at all on your fleshly resources. They are all-powerful and will bring down any attack Satan brings against your life. You will overcome him and he will be thrown down. Hallelujah!

Pray this prayer with me right now: “Heavenly Father, I thank you that you haven't left me without clear instructions on how you want me to *carry* out your victory and overcome your enemy. Thank you that through Your strength I can – and will – resist Satan and flee from temptation, quickly confess my sins and stand in the power of Jesus' cleansing blood. I will learn Your word and walk in its light, and be willing to give up even my own life for Your sake. Thank you for calling me to be a part of that company of men and women you call 'overcomers.' According to Your Word, I shall be more than a conqueror. Amen!”