

OVERCOMING

1 John 4:4 **4 You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.**

The World

What does John mean by the world? In 1 John, the world refers to the organized system in rebellion against God; with its lust of the flesh, the eyes, and the pride of life. It's important that we understand that we either have our allegiance to the world, or our allegiance to God, but we cannot have both. A person is either in the World or in Christ. We fight against the worldly system which is under the dominion of Satan and operating by the spirit of the antichrist. We who are from God must overcome. The World the worldly system that tries to convince you that it's trying to help you, when really it's deceiving you and trying to harm you. People are being deceived into thinking that whatever they crave is going to fulfill them, is going to satisfy them. So, as 2 Tim 3:13 says, **13 But evil people and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.** Impostors are fake Christians who have no personal relationship with the Lord, but know how to talk the talk. They are just fooling themselves. But they will not be able to fool Jesus, who will say "I never knew you". Evil people are described in 2 Tim 3:1-4 **But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. 2 For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, slanderers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, 4 treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 holding to a form of godliness although they have denied its power; avoid such people as these.** Don't listen to the lip-service--if they hate God, then they hate goodness. Nothing in this worldly system, its ideals, methods, or values originated with God, and we as Christians should stay well away from it and especially not love it. It is this evil system that Christ has overcome, and we as His followers must overcome.

Jesus came to give us a Way out, a way back to Truth, a Way back to God. According to Colossians 1:13 **13 For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.** It makes sense that since we've been redeemed, rescued from this evil domain of darkness, and are now transferred into Jesus' kingdom that we no longer of the world.

When James saw that Christians had been living according to worldly wisdom, just like the world, scratching and clawing to get ahead; doing whatever it takes to get what we want out of life, he reminded them that the wisdom of heaven calls us to a far different approach(see James 1:17). Because James' readers were unwilling to trust God, and instead were using worldly tactics to get ahead, James said in 4:4 **4:4 You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.** Because James's readers were unwilling to trust God, and instead were using worldly tactics to get ahead, He now calls them adulteresses. He equates their choice to continue following the wisdom of world with the sin of a wife who sleeps with another man. Spiritually speaking, these Christians are cheating on God with the world.

What is the world's relationship to Us?

And Jesus also lets us know that because of our relationship with Him, we are hated by the world. It hated Jesus and hates His followers. John 15:18-20 **18 "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.** The world hates us because we belong to Jesus, and we no longer belong to its corrupt system. And the closer that we get in our relationship with Jesus, the more the world recognizes that we are not participating in their worldly system, and so they resent and hate us.

Our Response to attack

Our enemy, the world attacks us with desires, love for it instead of God, lusts for things that God knows will harm us. The attack of the world is an attack on our priorities. It always seeks to pull us away from God with lies about what is important. So, how do we combat lies? With the belt of truth! The belt of Truth holds us together in our integrity, as we stand on the truth. And, that means that we stand on God's truth, and oppose anything that is contrary to it.

Overcoming

and have overcome them;

Walk by the Spirit

And, our life of victory is a walk by the Holy Spirit, our helper, comforter, and teacher. And, as we walk by the Spirit of God will not be deceived by false prophets and teachers. Those who are living their lives by the Spirit have overcome the teaching of the false teachers, and the evil spirits behind them that would teach them to live for the flesh, and not walk with Jesus by the Spirit of God—Greater is HE who is in US, the Holy Spirit, Christ in Us, than he that is in the world. Back in 1 John 2:13, John commended the young men of his congregation saying **I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one.** Their growth in spiritual maturity was evidenced by their victory over the world, and especially over the evil one and his minions, when they are tempted. It's their rejection of the world and commitment to Jesus that makes them pure. In Revelation 12:11 how do they overcome Satan, the accuser of the brethren? **11 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 when faced with death.** They overcame because of their faith in Jesus' atoning sacrifice on the cross to save them, and their committed life to Him, walking with Him by the Spirit. Their testimony of the truthfulness and faithfulness of God and His Power to overcome made denying Him impossible, even in the face of death. **because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.**

The reason that we, as believers have overcome the false spirits, who are more powerful than we are, is that God's Spirit in us is greater. John 16:33 says **33 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."** Christ has done the overcoming, and has given us the victory. It is precisely because we have tribulation and persecution in this world that we need to understand that it is through Christ that we overcome. The Bible says in Col 1:27, that **Christ in us is the hope of glory.** It's not our efforts on behalf of Christ, or our striving to do good that gives us victory. Instead, it is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, in intimate relationship with Christ NOW that gives us strength and power to overcome. Eph 3:16-17 **16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner self, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love,** Christ dwells in our hearts, He settles deep within us. And the work of the Holy Spirit is to form the living Christ within us, in the deepest depths of our being. This is why the Holy Spirit is sometimes called "the Spirit of Christ."

Remember that it is His victory that He shares with us, not our victory that we achieve!! And, lest we forget, God often leaves us with thorns in the flesh, and difficulties that force us to turn to Him. Even Paul had to be taken to task by Jesus, as He said to Paul 2 Cor 12:9-10 **9 And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness."** Who's power? God the Holy Spirit, provided by Christ's grace. Whose weakness? Paul's!...and yours, and mine! **Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. 10 Therefore I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in distresses, in persecutions, in difficulties, in behalf of Christ; for when I am weak, then I am strong.** If we will accept trials and inadequacies, and distressing situations, and persecutions, and difficulties as what it takes to turn us from the impossible task of imitating Christ in our own strength, and allow God's wisdom to teach us to let the Holy Spirit form Christ in us by His power, then we will have overcoming victory!