

FOLLOWING JESUS
A Disciple's Handbook

Lesson 9:
“Following Jesus in Resisting and Overcoming”

Resisting and Overcoming Introduction

Read Matthew 4:1-11

The Eternal Son of God became a man. He was fully God and *fully* man. As such, He lived a life of divinity and humanity producing victory. He won every battle against the temptations that the world's culture threw at Him. He won every battle against the weaknesses of His human flesh. He won every battle against the schemes and resistance of the devil. How did He do it? First, He understood He was in a war with the world, the flesh, and the devil. Jesus is the Commander of Heaven's armies. (Read Revelation 19:11-16.) Every day, Jesus rose up to join the fight. Second, He understood and embraced His limitations as a man. He put all His confidence in the will of His Heavenly Father and the work of the Holy Spirit. Christ's ability to walk in victory was found in His anointing with the Holy Spirit from God the Father. (Read Acts 10:38.) Finally, Jesus used the truth of God's Word and the power of God's authority as His weapons.

Jesus' disciples followed His example. They learned how to conquer a love for the world by doing the will of their Heavenly Father. (Read 1 John 2:15-17.) They learned how to conquer the lusts of their flesh by walking in the Spirit. (Read Galatians 5:16.) They learned how to conquer the devil's schemes by resisting him in faith, exercising Christ's authority, and speaking the Word of God in Spirit-led prayer. (Read Ephesians 6:10-18.) Resisting and overcoming is the call of every disciple. Christ Jesus, our Master, calls us to follow Him in resisting and overcoming unto total victory.

Resisting and Overcoming Defined

The Apostle James tells us that in our dealings with the enemy of our soul, the devil, we are to resist him steadfastly. (Read James 4:7.) The word *resist* in this verse means to vigorously oppose, bravely resist, stand face-to-face against an adversary, and stand your ground. As believers, we are in a war. It's not a physical war, but a spiritual war. In this spiritual war, there are three main enemies we fight: the world, the flesh, and the devil. (Read Ephesians 2:1-3.) The term *world* isn't a reference to the physical planet, but to the evil that is working in the world's systems and culture. The *flesh* refers to the law of sin and death in our physical bodies. The flesh can be tempted to sin, producing lusts (or desires) for things not of God. The *devil* refers to Satan, a fallen angel, and to the demons under his control and command.

When considering all the difficulties one might face in trying to live for God, the Apostle Paul assures us that by God's love and power complete victory is ours. (Read Romans 8:37.) In this verse, Paul refers to us as *more than conquerors*, which means to be super overcomers who overwhelmingly overpower an enemy and achieve abundant victory. The Bible tells us that we overcome the world through our faith in the person and power of Jesus Christ. (Read 1 John 5:4-5.) Overcoming is possible through complete confidence in Jesus. But, how do we know we have complete confidence (faith and belief) in Jesus? By saying what He said and doing what He did in resisting and overcoming.

Resisting and Overcoming in the Life of Jesus

The three greatest episodes where we see Jesus resisting and overcoming are His forty days in the wilderness (Read Luke 4:1-13), His prayers in the garden of Gethsemane (Read Matthew 26:36-46), and His suffering and death on the cross (Read Luke 23:39-49; John 19:25-30). While in the wilderness, Jesus fasted for forty days enduring every temptation that Satan presented to Him. He overcame the lust and pride of the world. He defeated the demands of His flesh and resisted every work of the devil by the power of the Holy Spirit. In the garden of Gethsemane, as the Lord's betrayal and suffering drew near, He prayed to the Father. Jesus, feeling the onset of unprecedented suffering, asked the Father if there was any other way for mankind to be redeemed, reconciled and restored. Being assured there wasn't, Jesus overcame His flesh and the temptation to save Himself, as He put His confidence in the Father's will and the Spirit's work. While on the cross, Jesus resisted every temptation to ease or escape His sufferings. He overcame all pain and humiliation by His passion for the Father's will, His joy for salvation's work, and His trust in the Spirit's provision and power. (Read Hebrews 12:2.)

Throughout Jesus' life, we see Him using the truth of God's Word as His primary weapon. In the wilderness, every temptation was met with the bold declaration of God's Word. In Gethsemane, Jesus armed Himself with faith in God's will as revealed in God's Word. On the cross, Jesus quoted Scripture and fought His way through the torment and temptation with truth. After He rose from the dead, He revealed to His disciples that every battle fought and victory won – the resisting and overcoming – had already been laid out in God's Word. (Read Luke 24:44-48.)

Resisting and Overcoming in the Lives of Jesus' Followers

The Lord's disciples experienced first-hand what it was like to dominate demons by His authority. (Read Luke 9:1-2.) Following the day of Pentecost, the early church used the authority of Jesus, the truth of God's Word, and faith in both to resist and overcome. Peter and John resisted and overcame the taunts and threats of the religious leaders by stating they would believe and obey God instead of the people who were denying and disobeying God. (Read Acts 4:18-20.) Peter and John's companions resisted and overcame discouragement and fear with the truth of God's Word, faith in Christ's work, and the power of the Holy Spirit. (Read Acts 4:23-33.) The early church resisted and overcame persecution from the world by declaring

and demonstrating the truth of the Word everywhere they went. (Read Acts 8:4-8.) The Apostle Peter resisted and overcame his prejudice and limited perspective concerning Gentiles by obeying the Holy Spirit and putting His faith in the commands he received from Jesus. (Read Acts 10:9-48.) The Apostle Paul and his companions resisted and overcame the world's evil systems through preaching the Word of God, walking in the power of the Holy Spirit, and keeping their confidence in Jesus. (Read Acts 14:21-22; 19:10-20.)

The Apostle Paul taught the churches that resisting and overcoming is the duty and privilege of all disciples. While the devil's schemes are many and powerful, the resources of the kingdom of God are greater in number and infinitely more powerful. (Read Ephesians 6:10-18; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5.) Jesus' disciples believed Him when He said that He had given them authority over all the power of the enemy. (Read Luke 10:18-20; Mark 16:15-20.)

Resisting and Overcoming in Our Lives

The enemies that the Lord and His followers faced – the world, the flesh, and the devil – are the same enemies all disciples face today. The enemies seeking our defeat haven't changed. The strategies for resisting and overcoming haven't changed either. We can't overcome what we don't resist. Disciples must unite together, anchored in the Word of God, confident in the Son of God, and led and empowered by the Spirit of God to resist and overcome just like their Master.

The Apostle John said that strength to resist and overcome was found in being rooted and remaining in the Word of God. (Read 1 John 2:14.) The Apostle Paul wrote that being clothed and covered in the armor of God would enable us to stand strong against every scheme of hell. (Read Ephesians 6:10-17.) Included in this is using the Word of God as the sword of the Spirit to cut through every lie and conquer through the light of divine revelation. Led by the Spirit, we must resist and overcome every enemy and temptation by speaking the truth of God's Word in faith-filled confidence and clarity.

Throughout the New Testament and all of church history Jesus' followers resisted and overcame the ways of the world, the work of the flesh, and the wiles of the devil by the truth of the Word and the person and power of the Holy Spirit. What was true for them is true for us as well. Victory and freedom are the promised possessions of all who choose to live in the liberating life of Jesus. (Read Revelation 12:11.)

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

KEY TRUTH: Disciples must unite together, anchored in the Word of God, confident in the Son of God, and led and empowered by the Spirit of God to resist and overcome just like their Master.

YOUR RESPONSE:

This is how you can respond in loving obedience to Jesus as you apply the truths from this lesson to your life.

- Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what represents resistance and temptation from the world, the flesh, and the devil in this season of your life.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to show you scriptures to memorize and with which to arm yourself.
- Led by the Spirit, pray these scriptures out in faith whenever faced with resistance and/or temptation.
- Find a group of disciples who will partner with you in resisting and overcoming together.

WRITTEN RESPONSE: Lesson Reinforcement

Review each section from the lesson on the previous pages to fill in each blank below. This will reinforce the truths from this lesson in your life.

1. The word _____ in this verse means to vigorously _____, bravely _____, _____ face-to-face _____ an _____, and _____ your _____.
2. The Bible tells us that we _____ the world through our _____ in the _____ and _____ of Jesus Christ. _____ is possible through _____ in Jesus.
3. Throughout Jesus' _____, we see Him using the _____ of God's _____ as His _____ weapon.
4. The Apostle Paul taught the churches that _____ and _____ is the _____ and _____ of all _____.
5. _____ must unite together, _____ in the _____ of God, _____ in the _____ of God, and _____ and _____ by the _____ of God to _____ and _____ just like their Master.

WRITTEN RESPONSE: Life Reflection

Using the journaling section on the pages at the end of this lesson, write in your own words your responses to the following questions.

1. What have you learned and what has impacted you personally from this lesson?
2. In reading the scripture references in this lesson, what are you sensing and seeing the Holy Spirit highlighting and revealing to you that will enable you to better follow Jesus?

3. As a disciple and follower of Jesus, what steps of loving obedience do you need to take to see what you have learned in this lesson become ongoing practices and patterns in your life?