

VICTORY OVER THE WORLD

“For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”

Albert Einstein didn't speak at all for the first three years of his life. Many of his teachers assumed he was lazy because he was always distracted by abstract concepts. Despite the lack of confidence that many showed towards Einstein, he rose above such obstacles and developed the theory of relativity. When Benjamin Franklin was ten years old, his parents could no longer afford to send him to school. However, this obstacle did not stop him. Through reading, he was able to educate himself, his knowledge then led to significant inventions including the lightning rod and bifocals. Throughout the history of the world stories of overcomers abound, the likes of General Dwight D. Eisenhower, or Demosthenes the Great Orator of Athens, many historical figures have overcome daunting obstacles to go down in history as men and women who have conquered difficulty. But these great endeavors of overcoming pale in comparison to the victory of overcoming the world.

The Apostle John writes of this far greater victory in the fifth chapter of his first epistle. He says that ***“everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world” (1 John 5:4a)***. When John mentions “the world” he is not speaking of worldly difficulty, poverty, or temporal hardship. John is highlighting the external opposition of the cursed and fallen world, a spiritual system of evil dominated by the devil that violently drags all men downward. Like a gravity of grief, it pulls men towards destruction and eternal death. John shows that only the holy helium of new life and the gift of faith can lift one above this damning force, ***“And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith” (1 John 5:4b)***.

All men face the impossible opposition of the world, the flesh, and the devil (**Ephesians 2:2-3**). However, by God's grace, the believer overcomes these fearsome foes. John MacArthur says, *“The word for overcomes or overcomer comes from a Greek word meaning to conquer, to have victory, to have superiority, or conquering power.”* The disciple whom Jesus loved (John) gives the antidote for the eternally fatal triad of evil. John says that believers in Jesus have overcome and continue to overcome (*as the tense indicates*) by being sovereignly born again (**John 3:3**) i.e. regenerated (**Titus 3:5**). Additionally, they have been given the gift of repentance and faith (**Philippians 1:29, 2 Tim. 2:25**).

This victory over the world is a reality by virtue of the believers union with Christ and this for our eternal gain, as John Calvin said, *“Having become with us the Son of Man, He has made us with Himself sons of God. By His own descent to the earth, He has prepared our ascent to heaven. Having received our mortality, He has bestowed on us His immortality. Having undertaken our weakness, He has made us strong in His strength. Having submitted to our poverty, He has transferred to us His riches. Having taken upon Himself the burden of unrighteousness with which we were oppressed, He has clothed us with His righteousness.”* Christ is our victory and we have overcome the world because Jesus has overcome the world, and we are in Him. The Apostle Paul said, ***“in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. (Romans 8:37)***.

How are you living your Christian life as one who has already overcome the world?

Why does Jesus' victory over the world impact your eternal state?

How confident are you that you have been born again and received the gift of repentance and faith?

Kevin Huggins