

OVERCOME

MAY 2021

ADULT
CONNECT CLASS
CURRICULUM



DONALD J. WILLS
SENIOR PASTOR

The purpose of First Baptist Church of Fort Worth is to **introduce** people into a loving relationship with Jesus, **instruct** them in spiritual growth through God's Word, **inspire** them to serve for God's kingdom, and **incorporate** them in authentic worship to glorify God.

A Note From Our Pastor

Dear FBC family and friends,

There are people in life that we have admiration for because of his or her successes and impact in their specific fields. It could be a parent, a sports figure, a school teacher, friend, minister, co-worker, or boss etc. Our admiration often stems from the impact they have had through their life's work in a particular area and/or their direct influence on us. Through examination of what made them a great parent, sports figure, spiritual leader, friend or employer we arrive at some specific characteristics that describe key elements in his or her approach to what made them, in our minds, special. The same can be said about those who overcome. There are specific characteristics that are apparent in the life of a believer that comes with the title overcomer. We see all these traits in Scripture as well as how they should be manifested in our own journey as a follower of Christ.

As a reminder, the layout of this Curriculum begins with a 7-day approach for both the teacher and the members to get the most from each study. We also acknowledge that teachers may have their own methods for preparing the lessons and we encourage them to prepare in the way that makes them most effective in presenting God's Word and the weekly lesson. We also encourage each teacher and member to use the suggested 7-day approach for their own personal study and encouragement.

Through the lessons this month, we will look at characteristics of an overcomer. We hope you will dive into these characteristics and allow them to be seen in your life through the application of God's Word.

-Blessings
Pastor Don



Suggested Plan for Using this Bible Study Guide Effectively

Introduce

Day 1: Read and meditate on the Scripture, asking God to guide you throughout the week as you study His Word and allowing Him to speak to you through the Spirit. Read the **INTRODUCE** portion of the lesson commentary.

Instruct

Day 2: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and read the **INSTRUCT** portion of the lesson commentary. Concentrate on memorizing the focal verse for that particular week.

Day 3: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and answer the focal questions in the **INSTRUCT** portion of the lesson commentary.

Inspire

Day 4: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and begin thinking about tangible ways you can incorporate the principles you learned in your daily life. Read the **INSPIRE** portion of the lesson commentary.

Incorporate

Day 5: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and apply the theological principle that you learned from this week in a tangible way. Use the **INCORPORATE** portion of the lesson commentary to guide you.

Day 6: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and in the journal section describe how God allowed you to apply this passage in a real and tangible way this week.

Day 7: Review the Scripture and share with others in your Connect Class on Sunday morning at 9:30am. Be ready to share your experience about how God allowed you to apply the lesson for that week.

Contents
May Lesson Plan

3



May 2, 2021

An Overcomer is Alert

[Revelation 3:1-6](#)

17

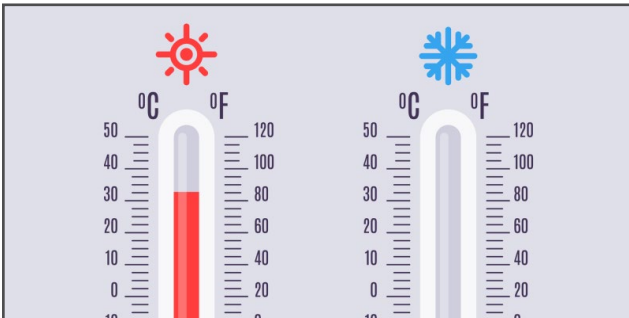


May 9, 2021

An Overcomer is Astute

[Proverbs 31:10-31](#)

31



May 16, 2021

An Overcomer is Ardent

[Revelation 3:14-22](#)

45



May 23, 2021

An Overcomer is Adamant

[Hebrews 10:19-25](#)

59



May 30, 2021

An Overcomer is Active

[Galatians 6:6-10](#)

May 2, 2021



An Overcomer is Alert

Revelation 3:1-6

Focal Verse:

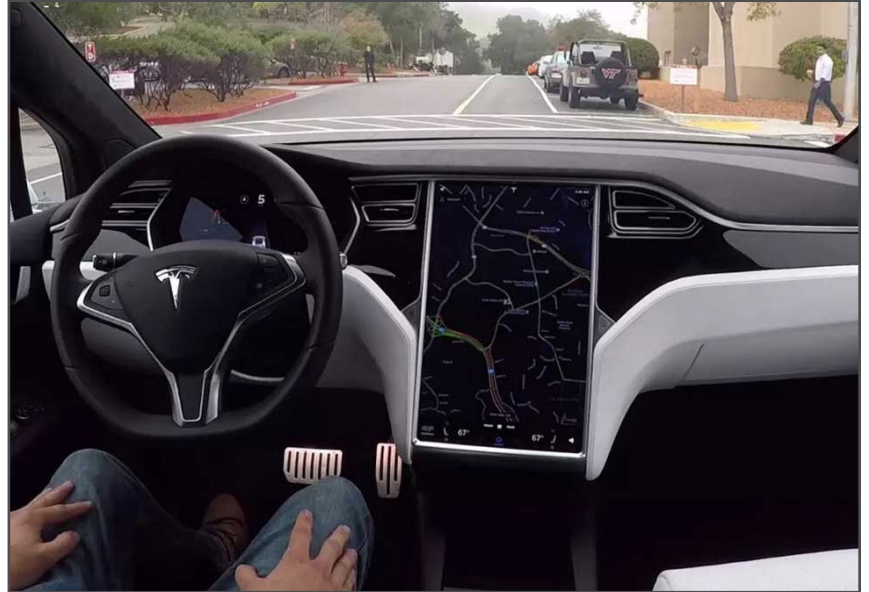
“Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God.”

back to
Table of
Contents

Revelation 3:2

Introduce

On the evening before I started composing this introduction, I had just arrived at home from the office and had started doing some necessary chores around the house when I received a phone call from an excited Bro. Dave Rutherford. As per his usual routine, he was sitting in bumper-to-bumper rush-hour traffic heading north on 35W, crawling at an average pace of ten miles per hour. When one of those self-driving cars passed him on the freeway, he had become enthused which prompted him to call. He shouted jubilantly into the phone, "I've got to get me one of these cars!" He explained how the driver was completely turned toward the backseat, fiddling with something not paying any attention to the operation of the vehicle while it drove in traffic moving anywhere from ten to forty miles per hour.



As Dave watched this gentleman, whose license plate read "futurnow," he began to ponder aloud all the possibilities for such a fantastic machine. He posited that one could lay back and sleep while the car trudged through traffic ever slowly forward. In fact, one could assemble an endless list of activities that drivers would most likely attempt: watching movies, working on a computer, and so forth. Unfortunately, many drivers attempt to do such things now without self-driving vehicles with devastating consequences not only for themselves, but also for the ones with whom they share the road. However, a self-driving car still doesn't give us the ability nor the right to focus our attention elsewhere. Even the company that produces these vehicles realizes their limitations! They remind drivers that they are ultimately responsible for the safe operation of the vehicle and must remain alert to their surroundings at all times. With some of the technological advancements that we have seen over the last few decades, we can easily become overconfident, deceived, and distracted in our endeavors. I hated to burst Dave's bubble, but I reflected, "If a computer can 'crash' at any time no matter how well we take care of it, couldn't a car controlled by a series of computers suffer the same fate and literally 'crash?'" We live in an imperfect and

Introduce

impermanent world where computers fail unexpectedly and mechanical failures occur with regularity without warning. So, we must be alert and ready to face whatever challenges may arise.

A self-driving car may have numerous safety features built-in, but no scientist or engineer could have ever anticipated or planned for everything that we would encounter on the roadway. If a sensor goes bad, it cannot detect an obstruction, or it cannot determine the path of a roadway in construction (as on 35W), we must be alert and ready to act at any moment. We cannot do this if we're turned to the backseat, asleep, watching a movie, or doing any other activity than paying attention to the road! Scripture warns us to be alert and stand ready to face the challenges that come our way. The world, at times, can lull us into a false sense of security when things appear to go right. We may also have false confidence in our ability to handle problems as they arise. Thus, we become distracted and careless; we lose focus and find ourselves operating according to the pattern of this world rather than that of Christ. In coping with our situation, we compromise when we become distracted. The church of Sardis in Asia Minor found themselves in such a position. They had fallen asleep and some found themselves in league with the world. This prompted Jesus to rebuke them and urge them to "wake up" and "watch out." As a church, let's not be asleep like Sardis. Let's be alert and focused on Christ so that we may effectively join Him in overcoming the world.

Key
Question

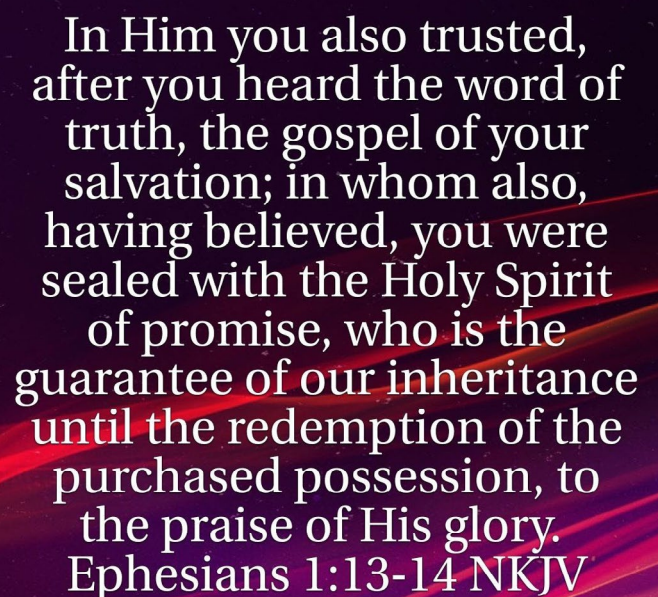
What are some of the distractions that you face most often in life?

Revelation 3:1

THE ILLUSION OF BEING ALIVE:

As He had with the six other churches in Revelation [chapters 2 and 3](#), Jesus communicates directly with **the church in Sardis** by sending a messenger (literally, **angel**) to show them the actions of which they must **repent** and the changes they must implement to overcome the culture (v. 1). Generally, Jesus paints a negative picture of this **church** which had become desensitized and indifferent to the ungodly practices of the culture and found itself vulnerable to compromise—save a few believers who remained faithful to the Lord. As a whole, the **church** had been caught off guard and was completely oblivious; they were unprepared to do battle because they let the culture penetrate their hearts and influence their beliefs and practices over that of Scripture. To other people, they may have looked like a vibrant and healthy **church** that was **alive**, but they were actually **dead** because they did not revere and practice the holy principles sanctioned by God. Jesus could see through their phony piety and religious rituals; He knew their **works**!

The introduction of Christ as author of this message contains an unusual description to our ears which identifies Him as the One **who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars**. The **seven stars**, as we know from [Revelation 1:20](#), refer to the angels sent to deliver these divine messages to each of the seven churches in Asia Minor. The verb **has**, therefore, implies to hold in one's hand which connotes Jesus' sovereignty over them. He has granted them authority to speak these divine messages on His behalf that they have received directly from Him. Thus, they are tasked with repeating these messages exactly! The phrase **seven Spirits of God** could cause us consternation if we don't rightly interpret the symbolism. The number **seven** signifies complete perfection. Consequently, it refers to the completed redemptive work of Christ among the churches—not **seven** literal



In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.
Ephesians 1:13-14 NKJV

Instruct

spirits. Thus, the Spirit of God and of Christ bring “peace” through the Lamb’s sacrificial death which removes His wrath against sin ([Rev 1:4](#); [Rom 5:1](#)). As a result, the Spirit works within the church to purify and cleanse the people, marking and identifying them as belonging to the Father ([Rev 4:5](#); [5:6](#); [Eph 1:13-14](#); [Zech 4:2, 10](#)). In the context of Revelation 3:1, the Spirit has the three additional tasks of convicting, calling to repentance, and judging the church based upon their **works**. Just as the Spirit knows the mind of God ([Rom 8:27](#); [1 Cor 2:11](#)), He also has complete knowledge of the hidden **works of the church in Sardis**. He knows everything because He sees the heart! All is plainly revealed to Him, so He knows that they **are alive in name** only!

How does knowing that God sees all, including the things which we think we have hidden, affect the way you live?

Question
1

Many “churches” may have the appearance of being **alive** and healthy today when in fact they **are** really **dead** because they do not teach the undiluted truth of Scripture and those who attend do not faithfully apply its truth in their lives. As humans, we tend to assess life and vitality based upon what we can observe with our own eyes which, in turn, is influenced by what the culture defines as success. Thousands of people may flood the doors of these churches every week. Yet, numerical size, whether large or small, doesn’t necessarily indicate the health of a church spiritually. How people respond to the gospel and yield their lives to the leadership of the Holy Spirit reveals much more about the health of a church!

Still, **dead** churches may have first-class facilities with the latest technology. They may have a phenomenal “worship” team which entertains and a dynamic speaker who claims to have a “relevant” message for today. They may have seemingly amazing programs for every stage of life, but in the end it’s all fluff. And many people may find themselves carried away by this pageantry—never having a true relationship with Christ. Although one’s external appearance does matter to the Lord and there will be visible evidence of life and transformation when one has a relationship with Christ, the inner condition of the heart matters much more to Him since He can discern our motives and see what is hidden ([Matt 15:16-20](#)).

What characteristics should a church exhibit to indicate that it is alive?

Question
2

Such churches which appear **alive**, but **are** actually **dead**, pander to the culture and placate people's desires rather than teach the truth in love. They tend to emphasize acting upon one's emotions and following one's heart as a guide to the tune of doing whatever makes one happy. These churches don't just tolerate or even ignore sin; they celebrate it as though God has sanctioned it ([1 Cor 5:2](#))! They are "Christian" in **name** only; they don't actually follow Christ because they don't obediently practice what He has commanded ([John 14:15](#))! The heart when left unguarded and unguided by the principles of the Lord will always lead us astray because we will succumb to our fleshly desires ([Jas 1:12-15](#)). When left to our own devices, we will not naturally seek the Lord ([Rom 3:11](#)). Rather than being God's agent of change within the secular culture, many churches allow the culture to change them!

We live in a world that has "exchanged the truth of God for a lie" ([Rom 1:25](#)). Truth has become subjective rather than the absolute truth God has decreed in Scripture! People wrongly speak of "my truth" which turns out only to be a euphemism for their "misguided opinion." With such an errant view, our culture redefines terms to fit their agenda. They dismiss proven scientific data to espouse a distorted view of life and reality. They view the world as a playground for pleasure rather than a sphere in which to serve the Lord. Such views stem from mankind elevating himself as the center of the universe in place of God (i.e., the philosophy of humanism). Thus, the sinful condition of the world is the result of an individual's self-centeredness and poor choices even though from time to time one may engage in activities that seem compassionate and good.

The teaching of these churches which mimics the culture may appeal to the masses, but it has no substance because it fails to proclaim the gospel ([2 Tim 4:2-4](#)). We should inspire people to live an abundant life and relate a message of hope as many of these churches proclaim they do. But we can only do that when we preach the whole truth of God! The gospel requires that we recognize we are sinners, repent of our sin, and surrender to Christ by accepting what He has accomplished through His death and resurrection.

2 Timothy 4:3-4

³For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; ⁴And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

Instruct

This message is unpopular with culture. Culture desperately wants to transform God into their image rather than conform themselves to His image through the power of Christ. Unfortunately, many churches surrender to this cultural compromise and their members look more like the world than Christ!

How has culture influenced and impacted the teaching of the church?

Question
3

The gospel must be central! It must be both proclaimed verbally and applied in the way we live. Therefore, children's ministries that focus on playtime and have the most fashionable toys, but never present the gospel of Christ, are worthless beyond babysitting. Youth ministries that have exciting camps, social gatherings, and use the latest technology without introducing teens into a relationship with Christ and teaching them to conform to His holy character are worthless beyond producing temporal relationships. Adult ministries that focus on fellowship, try to meet social, emotional, and physical needs, and teach tolerance and acceptance of unbiblical views and lifestyles **are dead** and devoid of any value.

We should use any and every avenue that does not conflict with Scripture or compromise the truth of its message to make the gospel known to the world and introduce people into a loving relationship with Christ. We should have exciting events, meet the needs of the community, and fellowship with one with another. We need first-class facilities and up-to-date technology. But the gospel must be the focus! A relationship with Christ must be proclaimed because only through Him can we have life ([John 14:6](#)). Only through Him can we overcome a sin and trespasses, moving from death to life ([Eph 2:1-4](#)). And visible evidence of that transformation must also exist in the righteous way we now live out our salvation in Christ! Let's not be a church **alive** in **name** only, but let us be a people who live in obedience to Christ and proclaim His gospel to all.

Revelation 3:2-3

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ALERT:

Jesus' instruction to the church in Sardis continues with an ominous warning to **be watchful** and **strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die** (v. 2). The word translated **be watchful** literally means "wake up!" This word would perk the ears

of every citizen **in Sardis**. An important city northeast of Ephesus, Sardis once served as the capital of the ancient civilization of Lydia and had become renowned for its wealth. After suffering catastrophic destruction from an earthquake, the city used its own wealth to rebuild during the reign of Tiberius in AD 17. For this reason, they regarded themselves as completely self-sufficient. Situated atop a steep plateau, Sardis also seemed secure and impregnable in the event of war. This gave the citizens a feeling of invincibility. Yet, at least twice in its illustrious history their false confidence led to their downfall.



Location of Sardis

History records that the city fell for the first time to the Persians under Cyrus the Great. Because the citizens felt secure due to the natural features of the land, they didn't fortify their city with a wall on the side with the sheer cliff. Surrounding Sardis, however, the Persians scouted for weaknesses in their defenses and waited for an opportune time to strike. That time came when a Persian observed a soldier from Sardis navigate the cliff to retrieve the helmet he had dropped. Later that evening, the Persian army utilized that same route to ascend into the city where they found everyone asleep. They took the city without a fight! The second time occurred during the reign of Antiochus III. Although Sardis had made improvements to its defenses and extended its wall, they did not post any guards in sections they considered impenetrable, displaying an air of arrogance and overconfidence. Consequently, the Seleucids simply placed ladders at these vulnerable points and their scouts scaled the walls at night. The next morning they let the rest of the Seleucid army enter via the main gate. The city once again fell without a fight!

The lesson we must learn from Sardis is that we must constantly be alert and ready to do battle with the culture around us. To do so, we must have the proper perspective. We can easily misjudge our abilities to make the right decisions apart from the guidance of the Holy Spirit. When we wrest control from the Holy Spirit, we tend to overestimate the willpower we have to resist the flesh and the strength of our own desires. We may even errantly believe that we can knowingly place ourselves in tempting situations without consequence! Technically, the culture hasn't deceived or

misled us; we have become arrogant and falsely confident like **the church in Sardis**. As such, we find ourselves in a vulnerable position susceptible to compromise. We placed ourselves in these situations. We have no one to blame except ourselves!

Why are we responsible for the influence culture has upon us? How do we lull ourselves to sleep with overconfidence?

Question
4

If we don't actively take steps to combat the sinful practices of culture, we will lull ourselves to sleep and become desensitized to God's Word. Culture stands in opposition to Scripture, bombarding us with philosophies, ideas, images, and lyrics.



They repeat these things over and over, believing the more they say or practice something the more influence it will have on people. And to some extent that is right! Culture also subtly tries to deceive us by making ideas and philosophies sound appealing. We cannot afford to disengage our minds and fail to think critically about these things;

we must always test them against Scripture thoroughly. Even beliefs that purport to be "spiritual" and claim to have an element of truth can be in error when we examine them closely with Scripture.

After Jesus tells them to wake up and pay attention, He commands them to **strengthen the things which remain and are ready to die**. He has found their **works** less than **perfect** due to their lack of spiritual discernment. For this reason, Jesus calls them to **remember** what they **have received and heard**, holding **fast** to the principles of the Lord and repenting for their indifference to worldly desires (v. 3). Commonsense tells us that we cannot **strengthen** something in our physical bodies if we are inactive and disengaged. One of the unintended side effects of the pandemic is the overall degradation of our physical health due to the lack of movement and the failure to exercise regularly. We had these problems well before the pandemic, but the isolation

of lockdown exacerbated them exponentially. Most of us have probably seen evidence of this inactivity in our lives as well as observed it in the lives of those close to us. As we became isolated in our own homes, our health and mobility deteriorated in general. Moving infrequently and severely reducing our number of steps caused our legs and muscles to become weak. The first time we had extended activity we undoubtedly paid for that lack of use. Moreover, the failure to engage in cardiovascular activities and exercise caused our hearts to grow weaker. If we're honest with ourselves, we know that we will lose the things we don't use when it comes to our physical health. And this shortens our lifespans. We may have retained some physical mobility, but the parts we don't use regularly are in the process of dying. Science and physiology, as well as nature itself, corroborate this fact! For this reason, Jesus employs such a picture here to describe **the church in Sardis**. Their lethargy and inactivity are leading to their death as a church!

How would you evaluate the amount of time you spend exercising the spiritual disciplines of prayer and Scripture reading daily?

Question
5

Just as our health depends upon us engaging in physical exercise, we must also engage in spiritual exercise in order to keep ourselves on the right path. Perhaps, the number one reason for failing to exercise physically is the lack of time or the tiredness we incur from our daily activities. In truth, however, it's usually a lack of motivation on our part! We cannot fail to be motivated to participate in spiritual exercise. We must make time for it. Our battle against culture requires us to have maximum spiritual training and conditioning! To **remember** God's Word, therefore, we must read it carefully. To recognize God's voice, we must spend time getting to know Him intimately. To reject the temptation to sin, we must know how to discern right from wrong by relying upon the Holy Spirit for guidance. Consequently, we must learn to control our fleshly desires and follow the directives of the Spirit. To respond to the challenges culture hurls at us, we must recall the pattern Christ Himself established for us to follow. We cannot know or do these things if we don't spend time participating or exercising them every day.

What areas do you need to strengthen spiritually in your life?

Question
6

Over twenty years ago now, I played the alto saxophone in high school and a couple of years in college. I still have the instrument, but I haven't picked it up in many years.

Instruct

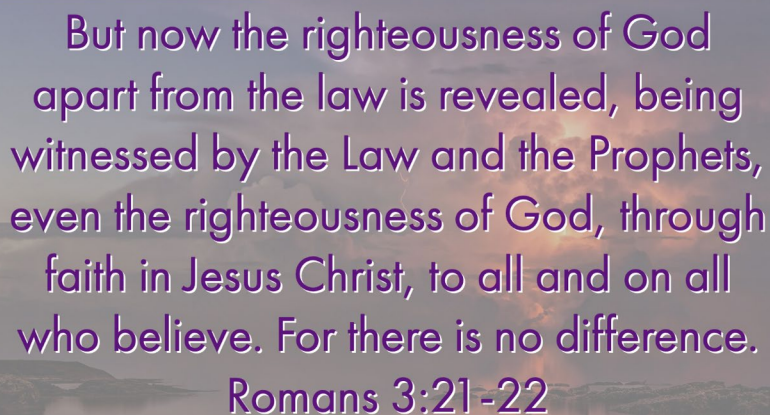
Although I could probably still remember how to play given some time, I would be sorely out of practice. It would take me a while to recall the notes, remember the keys, and rehearse the rhythms. If I would have faithfully practiced over those twenty years, however, I would have grown in my musical ability and following a musical score would come naturally to me rather than a struggle. Too often, we treat our relationship with the Lord in the same way. We find ourselves struggling to live by the Spirit and practice holy things which should come naturally to us when we spend time with the Lord.

Revelation 3:4-6

THE INCORRUPTIBILITY OF OUR APPAREL:

Those **in Sardis** who remained alert and strengthened their relationship with the Lord did **not** defile **their garments**; they walked with Him in purity (i.e., **white**) being found worthy (v. 4). Jesus uses **garments** as a metaphor for the way that people conduct themselves. Soiled or dirty **garments** reflect the unrighteous or sinful practices of the flesh and the world. **White** or unstained **garments**, in contrast, symbolize purity and practicing the holy principles by which God has decreed we should live. Responding to the gospel always produces transformation; it always conforms us to the Lord. If it doesn't, we have not truly responded and surrendered ourselves to the Lord. In Ephesians, Paul states this same concept by urging us to "put off" the old man and "put on" the new man in Christ ([Eph 4:20-24](#)). Sadly, however, only **a few** people in Sardis found themselves in such a position living righteously.

Therefore, to be **worthy** means that we are in right standing with Christ. The one who surrenders to Christ will overcome and will **be clothed in white garments; his name will not be blotted out from the Book of Life** (v. 5). We must be careful to understand what Jesus is saying here. [Revelation 21:27](#) calls this same book "the Lamb's Book of Life" which clearly links it with the Christ event—particularly Jesus' death. We can only attain life through Christ's sacrificial death! We ourselves are not



But now the righteousness of God
apart from the law is revealed, being
witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,
even the righteousness of God, through
faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all
who believe. For there is no difference.
Romans 3:21-22

worthy apart from Him; we can never earn this status from doing good works or acting righteously. Jesus gave us His own righteousness by dying in our place to make us worthy. He freely gave it to anyone who would accept it.

On the contrary, doing good works and living righteously identifies us as belonging to the Lord. Our purity in Christ, therefore, indicates that our names have been written in the **Book of Life** ([Rev 13:8; 17:8](#)). When we belong to Him, Christ will **confess** our names **before** the **Father** and **before His angels**. In other words, He will declare that we are His children based upon our relationship with Him. In [Matthew 7:21-23](#), Jesus underscores this same idea that good works and religious rituals cannot save us; it's a personal relationship with Him. For He will declare to such people who merely do good works, but have no relationship, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!"

So, what does it mean when Jesus says that He will **not blot out** or erase a **name from the Book of Life**? Jesus is asserting that God never makes a mistake. God will only write the names of those in **the Book of Life** who have a genuine relationship with His Son. Thus, the fact that no **name** will be removed from **the Book of Life** once it is written there shows the permanence of our salvation. Our salvation will prove genuine. We will show evidence that we belong to the Lord based upon how we live in righteousness; we will not habitually defile ourselves with the way of the world. Rather, we will persevere and remain holy in Christ to the very end. Through our opposition to the world and its principles, we will demonstrate that we belong to the Lord!

In what ways does culture pressure us to bend to its will? How can we keep ourselves from being defiled by its practices?

Question
7

With His typical refrain in these letters, Jesus implores the church to **hear what the Spirit says**. In other words, we need to apply what Jesus has just taught us. It's not mere physical hearing or cognitive recognition. We're to practice this teaching; we're to apply it in our lives. We're not to let it go in one ear and out the other! In this case, we must practice being alive in Christ which is characterized by our obedience and faithfulness. We are to be alert to the culture which is at war with us so that we can resist conforming to its pattern. When we have a relationship with Christ and belong to Him as His children, we will always overcome by remaining undefiled and incorruptible in our spiritual apparel. We will persevere in our obedience to God's Word and we will not find ourselves friends with the world habitually participating in our fleshly desires.

Fortunately, in the intervening days since Bro. Dave Rutherford witnessed the self-driving car with the inattentive driver completely oblivious to the roadway, he himself has remained alert while driving. He may have had to avoid accidents with other inattentive drivers, but he has paid particular attention to the road and remained accident-free at the time of writing this curriculum. But we must remind ourselves how a little distraction can cause a great disruption in our lives. While driving, it may be as little as glancing down to change a radio station. It may seem as innocuous as searching for a contact on our phone and pressing or even speaking commands for it to dial. Distraction can even come in the form of being too engrossed in a conversation! It takes very little distraction to cause a complete disaster. We must always be alert! When it comes to spiritual matters, we cannot afford to become distracted either. We must remain focused at all times. We must pay careful attention because worldly wisdom can seem right at times, but it often stands in opposition to the Lord. A little distraction or compromise can send us spiraling way off course. We need to wake up, watch out, and seek wisdom from the Lord so that we don't find ourselves in a precarious position. Let us fix our eyes on Christ and follow the pattern He set for us!

Incorporate

What evidence is there that our church is alive? What areas, perhaps, do we need to strengthen so that we can be even more effective?

As a church, how can we help one another remain alert? Why must this be a daily activity rather than a weekly activity for only a couple of hours?

In what areas do we as a church find the most temptation to compromise? How can we avoid becoming desensitized to the truth in Scripture and corrupted by the culture?

May 9, 2021



An Overcomer is Astute

Proverbs 31:10-31

Focal Verse:

"Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her."

[back to
Table of
Contents](#)

Proverbs 31:28

Introduce

This week we celebrate our mothers who have profoundly impacted our lives and played a vital role in shaping us as we matured. Through our mothers, we learned what it means to love sacrificially. While we were still infants, they sacrificed countless hours of sleep to ensure that we were well fed, had a clean diaper, and were held tightly in their arms when we just wanted attention.

As we grew older, our mothers continued to make tremendous sacrifices to transport us to school and extracurricular activities, to make our lunches and cook for us, and do our laundry so that we would have clean clothes. When



we became old enough, they invested time teaching us how to care for ourselves by giving us chores and instructing us in practical crafts like sewing, laundry, and cooking. Despite our complaints and mistakes, they demonstrated great patience and persistence in teaching us! Our mothers also made great sacrifices to their own wardrobes to ensure that we had clothes which fit during growth spurts. Likely, they also made tremendous sacrifices so that we could have the presents we wanted for our birthdays and at Christmas. We may never even know what all they gave up for us! Our mothers also taught us what it meant to overcome when the problems of life assailed and overwhelmed us. They offered us nurture and care, picking us up and dusting us off when we literally fell. A kiss from mom would usually make things alright! During our volatile teenage years, our mothers offered solace when friendships became strained and dating relationships ended. They comforted us when life disappointed us and things didn't go as planned. But even then they imparted wisdom and helped us maintain the right perspective so that we could properly evaluate the situation. Sometimes our wrong choices and misguided perspectives caused the friction or disappointment, but our mothers loved us enough to tell us in a caring way that we created the problem and then point us to Scripture! They also helped us to understand the lack of fairness in the world at times and pointed us to the Lord who enables us to respond with righteousness and integrity. Thus, our mothers not only

Introduce

offered nurture and care, but they also proffered discipline and punishment when we needed correction!

An astute or wise woman is certainly attentive to her family's needs, actively involved in her God-given role to provide for her family, and discerning in the way she conducts herself and the advice she gives her children. A truly astute woman, above all else, is attentive to God's Word and applies the plan He has so clearly specified. We find many such examples of godly women throughout the Bible who serve as good role models. Praise the Lord for godly wives and mothers who seek Him daily. Praise Him for the example they set and the values they taught us through their faithfulness to Scripture. May we follow their examples and be overcomers who are astute or wise in following the way of the Lord and faithfully practice all He has prescribed.

We don't have time or space to list all the positive qualities displayed in a mother's life who serves the Lord and studies His Word daily. We might fail to mention how such a woman would teach virtue, respect, service, self-control, hard work, productivity, preparation, prudence, resourcefulness, ingenuity, and righteousness! This list recounts many of the qualities that a virtuous woman should possess as defined by Scripture, but not all. A virtuous woman or wife has extraordinary value above any physical thing here on earth. In fact, [Proverbs 18:22](#) honors such a woman by declaring: "He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the Lord." Today, we will examine the biblical perspective of what it means to be such a virtuous woman in the sight of the Lord. The example set by this virtuous woman in [Proverbs 31](#) serves as a model that we all should emulate.

Key
Question

What did you learn from your mother?

Proverbs 31:10-12

AN OVERCOMER IS PRECIOUS:

The last section of Proverbs begins with a rhetorical question designed to show the value of a woman who fulfills her God-given responsibilities with faithful diligence. The writer ponders, “**Who can find a virtuous wife?**” The word translated **virtuous** actually comes from the root word which means valor, strength, or power. Scripture often uses it to describe those who valiantly serve in the military—such as Gideon who is described as “a mighty man of *valor*” ([Judges 6:12](#)). As such, this word refers not so much to the virtue of one’s character, but to his determination or courage. Thus, a valiant **wife**, or any person for that matter, is determined to follow the way of the Lord and live according to His commands. In the current context of Proverbs, this determination to follow the Lord then manifests itself visibly through one’s **virtuous** character. This stands in sharp contrast to the woman of loose morals who follows the pattern of the world and often entices others to reject the wisdom and counsel God has generously given ([Prov 6:20-35](#)).

Such a valiant person who is determined to follow the Lord is exceedingly rare and difficult to find! For this reason, the writer notes the **worth** of such a **wife far** exceeds the value of any gemstone, precious metal, or physical item here on earth. It even transcends the value of **rubies**. God has called every one of us to live with such determination to follow Him unwaveringly! We need to be wives, husbands, siblings, children, friends, neighbors, employers, employees, and citizens who are determined to follow the teaching and precepts of the Lord. We certainly must look for this quality in others with whom we relate—especially in the intimacy of marriage. But we must also evaluate ourselves to determine what kind of person we are and should be! For example, we tend to focus on the qualities that we seek or hope to find in a potential spouse when



dating. Certainly, we should evaluate a potential spouse according to the qualities and characteristics God specifies in Scripture. But it is equally as important that we evaluate what kind of spouse we should be. We must ask: Am I determined to follow Christ and how do I exhibit that determination in the way I live?

How does a determination to follow the Lord affect our relationships?

Question
1

With such dedication to the Lord, **the heart of her husband safely trusts her** (v. 11). From our modern perspective, the security of trust in this situation may not seem that unusual. But for Scripture, this statement describing trust directed toward another human being is unique. Outside of this passage, Scripture nowhere else refers to trust in association with any other human being in a positive sense (see [Judges 20:36](#)). Only God alone is the recipient of our trust! In fact, Proverbs 3:5-6 calls us to “trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.” This declaration of trust the **husband** has for his **wife** not only shows how sacred and intimate marriage is above any other relationship, but also the importance of being determined to follow the Lord. A **husband** can trust his valiant **wife** because she walks with the Lord. She can be trusted because she has fully surrendered to the Lord and is following the plan He designed! Likewise, we should ask this about ourselves: Do I exhibit such trustworthiness in my dedication to the Lord?

With such trust, the husband **will have no lack of gain**; he will have complete contentment in his life. This doesn't necessarily refer to financial or monetary enrichment or even a promise never to lack physically or be free from struggle. Rather, it reminds us of Genesis where God saw that man needed a helpmate or counterpart to provide companionship, working together to fulfill the responsibilities He had given them. As his companion, therefore, a valiant **wife** will do **good and not evil all the days of her life** (v. 12). A **wife** who seeks the Lord desires the best for **her husband**. Like he for her, she meets his needs as God leads and gives opportunity in this closest expression of companionship. The key to finding such satisfaction and contentment in marriage is that both must be unified as one, seeking the Lord together daily. Strife and sin, however, enter the picture when one spouse or the other becomes self-seeking rather than determined to follow the Lord; therefore, the focus of the relationship

must always be Christ in order to achieve contentment regardless of the external circumstances.

In marriage, how does a spouse provide godly companionship to the other?

Question
2

Proverbs 31:13-15

AN OVERCOMER IS PRODUCTIVE:

The middle portion of this proverb highlights the practical ways in which a valiant woman orders her life and applies the principles of the Lord. Her example serves as an exemplary pattern which we all would be wise to practice in our own journeys. We should take note of her productivity. Verse 13 describes how she obtains **wool and flax** and **willingly works with her hands**. The adverb **willingly** indicates that she does not view her work begrudgingly as a laborious chore. She sees it as an act of service—a task that adds value to **her household** which brings her delight. Regardless of the type of task or job we may have, we must regard it as an act of service. If honest, certain aspects of our jobs may grate against our nerves no matter how much we love what we do. At times, we may even feel certain tasks beneath us and resent doing them. This may lead us to complain and harbor bitterness.

But we need a change in perspective. Whether in the home, the office, or the church, everything we have been called to do is important and has tremendous value, so we must do it **willingly**. We must see them as acts of service. In fact, Paul urges us to view our service in the workplace “as to the Lord, and not to men” (Eph 6:7).

Whether chores at home that can seem as menial and repetitive as cleaning, taking out the trash, or sewing a button

Not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men.

*Ephesians
6:6-7*



on a shirt, we should do them diligently with joy as our service to the Lord. Such a willingness to serve productively must carry over into every area of our lives! Let us

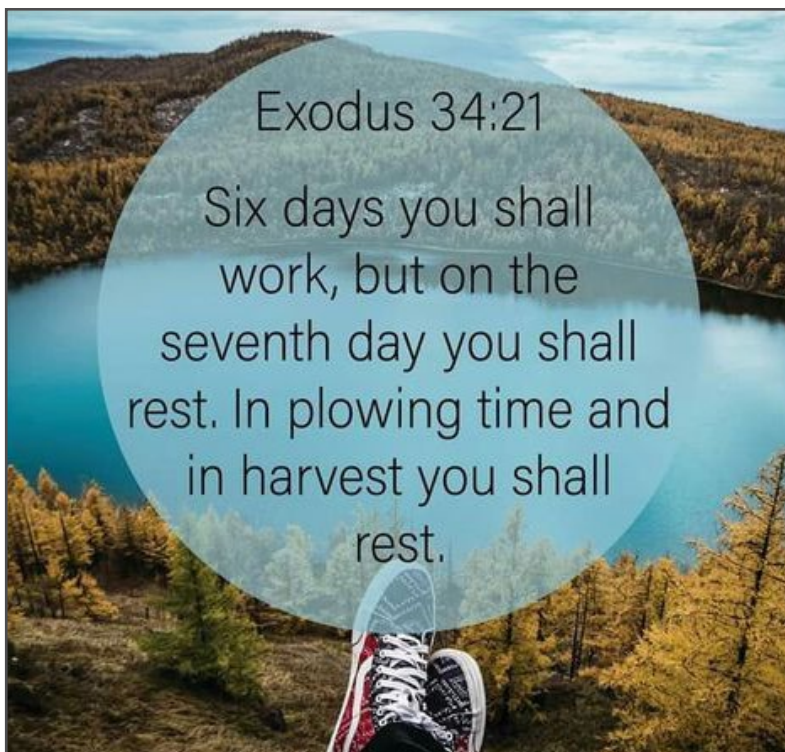
serve with such a willing spirit at home, in the office, and through the church.

What tasks—whether at home, in the office, or at church—can cause annoyance and frustration? Why should you view them as acts of service to the Lord?

Question
3

Through her productivity, we also see her industriousness. She goes to great lengths to provide for her family. Verse 14 compares her to **merchant ships** that bring exotic cargo from **afar**; the valiant woman exhibits the same diligence in providing **food** for her **household**. Merchants have a plan and purpose. They don't aimlessly wander around the globe. They know what their customers need and they know where to obtain it. Yet, they will do whatever it takes and go wherever necessary despite the risks to meet the needs of their customers. A valiant woman does the same for her **household**. Although she doesn't do it for a reward such as the merchants, she navigates any obstacle to provide for her family and makes tremendous sacrifice to attend to their well-being.

We also see her initiative in her productiveness when she **rises while it is yet night** to provide **food for her household** and **maidservants** (v. 15). We must first have a word of caution about this principle. It doesn't mean that we should deprive ourselves of the



proper rest. God Himself recognized we need rest, so He instituted the Sabbath for that very purpose ([Exod 20:9](#)). When we fail to rest properly, it hinders our productivity. We become both physically and mentally fatigued and less productive. To be productive and serve others well, we need to take care of ourselves as God intended. Still, we must take initiative to meet needs and fulfill our God-given responsibilities—being invested rather than idle and uninvolved. Consequently, we must determine

what is truly valuable in life and invest our efforts there.

The valiant **wife** had a purpose in rising early. God has given us a purpose as well; He has called us to be intimately involved with our families, providing for their physical needs as well as cultivating a spiritual environment which points every member to Christ and encourages maturation in Him. We have many activities that vie for our time. We fill our schedules in such a way that we hop from one activity to another. These events and activities may appear to add significance and value to our lives, but they can often distract us in our relationship with Christ which undermines our foundation for growth. We must determine what is of utmost importance for our families, so that we can invest in those areas. We must identify what our families truly need and focus our efforts there as God leads and grants wisdom!

Is earning money to have abundant material possessions more important than teaching our families the gospel? Is involvement in sports, hobbies, and extracurricular activities more important than having a daily devotion as a family? Is being educated in the secular fields in pursuit of a scholarship more important than a relationship with Christ? Unfortunately, many people often place more importance upon the pursuit of temporal things rather than investing in the eternal! Many can rise early to get to a sporting event or attend a marching band competition, but they hit the snooze button when it comes to rising to have a devotion with the Lord or fellowship with His people at church. Many people remind their children to do their homework and sometimes even help them with it, but they don't remind them to study God's Word and pray daily nor do they set an example to be followed. We must have balance in our lives, but Christ must always be the priority! Let us be a valiant person who takes initiative to point others into a relationship with the Lord. Let us lead by example.

Based on the amount of time, effort, and resources you spend on different activities in your life, what does that indicate about the activity most important to you?

Question
4

Proverbs 31:16-20

AN OVERCOMER IS PENSIVE:

We should observe how she is pensive or thoughtful in her decisions. In these verses, we see three specific ways in which she conducts her thoughts. First, she doesn't react on a whim or the spur of the moment, but she carefully **considers** her actions. The text relates how **she considers a field and buys it**; with the profits she earns from her work, **she plants a vineyard** (v. 16). She gives much thought about her purchases and

Instruct

views them as investments. With the advent of credit cards and a somewhat cashless society with the rise of Internet sales, we see many people making impulse buys. They don't consider their purchases; they simply buy them because of the way they look, how they make them feel, and what they desire at the moment. This can lead to a tremendous indebtedness which can enslave us. Instead, we ought to evaluate our purchases based on our available resources, the actual contribution they can make to our lives, and the way in which we can use them to glorify the Lord and accomplish the mission He has given us as His stewards.

To consider a purchase carefully also greatly reduces our chances of being swindled or defrauded. Although it doesn't directly indicate it in this passage, one would always be wise to inspect **a field** before purchasing it to ensure it is capable of actually producing crops. In modern terms, we must investigate both the products we buy and the companies from which we purchase. People constantly attempt to sell inferior products and companies often lack integrity to fulfill their promises. We must be wise in our purchases!

Second, she is concerned with the quality of work she herself produces and works hard in all her endeavors. Therefore, verse 17 describes how she puts on **strength** and **strengthens her arms**. She works hard and stays on task until the job is finished because **her lamp does not go out at night** (v. 18). She then takes the produce from her field and weaves them into textiles and clothing which can be sold or used by her family. In paying careful attention to her work, she makes sure that all her ventures are profitable (i.e., **merchandise is good**). Too often today, we have too many irons in the fire so to speak. In order to get everything done, we rush through jobs and often compromise the quality of our work. In our haste, we make many mistakes along the way. We may work hard, but the things we produce may be of low quality. We need to slow down and see our work as an investment which glorifies the Lord. Rather than focus on quantity, let us focus on quality. Unfortunately, we may not have this opportunity in the secular world which may continue to pile tasks upon us. But still, we need to exercise integrity, work hard, and do our best as unto the Lord.

How does the world often sacrifice quality for quantity? Why should we as believers always respond with integrity no matter what the world may hurl at us?

Question
5

Third, this valiant woman thinks about others. Verse 20 reveals that **she extends her hand to the poor** and **reaches out to the needy**. Through His example, Jesus taught us what it means to have compassion toward others in a biblical way. Compassion doesn't tolerate sin or enable people to continue making harmful and unwise decisions. Rather, it looks for opportunities to serve and meet the needs of others in a meaningful way that produces life-change. The woman here in [Proverbs 31](#) also reflects this same example set by Jesus. She could have easily become consumed with her own pursuits with the hectic schedule she kept. While tending to her own affairs, however, she made time to help others. She actively looked for opportunities to serve. No matter how busy we may find ourselves, we must always make time to serve the Lord by finding meaningful ways to impact the lives of others.

How do you make time to find meaningful ways to impact the lives of others around you?

Question
6

Proverbs 31:21-24

AN OVERCOMER IS PREPARED:

In addition to being pensive and having a plan, this valiant woman is always prepared and never caught off guard. The text recounts how she **is** unafraid **of the snow for her household** because she has already **clothed** them **with scarlet** (v. 21). She also **makes tapestry for herself** and **clothing of fine linen and purple** (v. 22). She has prepared both her herself and her household for the cold weather by supplying them with what they needed physically.



We must also prepare our families to weather the literal storms of life. Waiting until the danger is upon us is unwise and too late to start preparing. We learned this in our brutal Winter storm in February. We could rationalize that we have never faced anything like this in Texas and could have never foreseen such problems. But the fact remains that we should have anticipated and prepared for any circumstance. We don't need to worry about the things we cannot control; we need to prepare and plan for the

Instruct

things we can!

Moreover, this valiant **wife** prepares her household, particularly **her husband**, for success. Because she walks in righteousness with integrity with the Lord, **her husband is known in the gates** and **sits among the elders** (v. 23). He had a position of honor among the people, for the leaders would gather at **the gates** to make decisions and adjudicate cases for the community. Certainly, **the husband** must exercise the same sense of integrity and shoulder the responsibility for being considered for such an esteemed position, but **the wife** also participates in this endeavor by supporting him and showing him respect. In [Ephesians 5:33](#), Paul asserts, "Let the wife see that she respects her husband." We must remember, however, that in marriage two become one flesh with a single purpose of honoring Christ which means putting aside selfish ambitions for His glory. Even though God has designated specific roles for husbands and wives in marriage, they work as a single unit to honor the Lord by conducting themselves in a holy and Christ-like manner. In so doing, this brings honor to the Lord and their household.

Proverbs 31:25-27

AN OVERCOMER IS PRUDENT:

A valiant **wife** is also prudent; she always offers godly wisdom and instruction both verbally and visibly in the way that she lives. The writer, therefore, describes her as dressed in **strength** and **honor** which will enable her to **rejoice in a time to come** (v. 25). Scripture often uses the concept of **clothing** as a metaphor to depict one's true character. We see this in much the same way in [Ephesians 4:20-24](#) where believers are called to remove the old and put on Christ. As believers, we should display the character of Christ. Here in Proverbs the wife functions as a visible example of the character her household should emulate. She acts in such a way that brings dignity and honor to herself and her household because she follows the way of the Lord. We know this from reading the entire book of Proverbs which clearly differentiates the foolish way of man from the wise practice of God.

Just as she provides a visible example for her household to follow, she also speaks with **wisdom** and **kindness** (v. 26). She **watches over the ways of her household** and never grows weary or becomes idle in teaching the way of the Lord (v. 27). The world often equates **kindness** with being permissive, but such a view does great harm! The

word used here is often translated as lovingkindness in the Psalms and refers to the faithfulness the Lord has to His covenant. True wisdom, therefore, means that we are faithful in teaching our families the precepts of God found in Scripture ([Deut 6:4-9](#)). Wisdom should compel us to teach the truth and lovingly correct members of our household when they depart from the way of the Lord. We will never find such wisdom in secular education or cultural experiences. Furthermore, the church equips and encourages the nuclear family to live wisely, but it's the parents' primary responsibility to teach their children the right pattern by which to live. We should never grow weary or become idle in such instruction, but we should always live as a visible example paired with verbal instruction to communicate the way of the Lord.

How do you communicate the wisdom of the Lord in your family?

Question
7

Proverbs 31:28-31

AN OVERCOMER IS TO BE PRAISED:

The book of Proverbs ends by praising such a woman, and truly anyone who follows this pattern, for conducting herself with wisdom, honor, integrity, and righteousness. Because of her godly example, **her children call her blessed** and **her husband praises her** (v. 28). Her godly wisdom and character aren't something that can be faked; true godly character is always proven genuine through one's actions. Consequently, this proverb warns that people can fool others with their **charm** and their external **beauty** can quickly fade, but **a woman who fears the Lord shall be praised** (v. 3). Not only will those in her household take note, but her whole community will notice her **works** in the Lord and **praise her in the gates** (v. 31).

As we honor our mothers this Sunday, let us praise those who provided a good example to emulate and give thanks to the Lord because they were determined to follow the pattern He has established in His Word. The woman in this passage established a lofty goal that we should all seek to attain. **Fear of the Lord** will produce within us a virtuous character that proves genuine before all in the way we conduct ourselves before all. Therefore, let us seek to be mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, children, and grandparents who live wisely by being determined to follow the Lord in every area of our lives. Although we may not think about it frequently, our mothers likely taught us many valuable lessons in life and many of them set godly examples which we would do well to follow. Because we live in a world dominated by sin, some

mothers may not have always set the perfect example and erred at times. Every one of us falls short of God's standard, but that doesn't excuse us from striving for perfection so that others may see Christ in us. When we surrender to Christ, He can overcome these deficiencies and transform us into the men and women that we ought to be. Through Proverbs 31, we see the value of a valiant woman who fears the Lord. It paints a picture which we should aspire to follow in every area of our lives. Let us be astute, or wise, in our practices so that we imitate God in what we do, say, and think so that we may reflect His holy character—bringing honor and glory to Him and our households in His name.

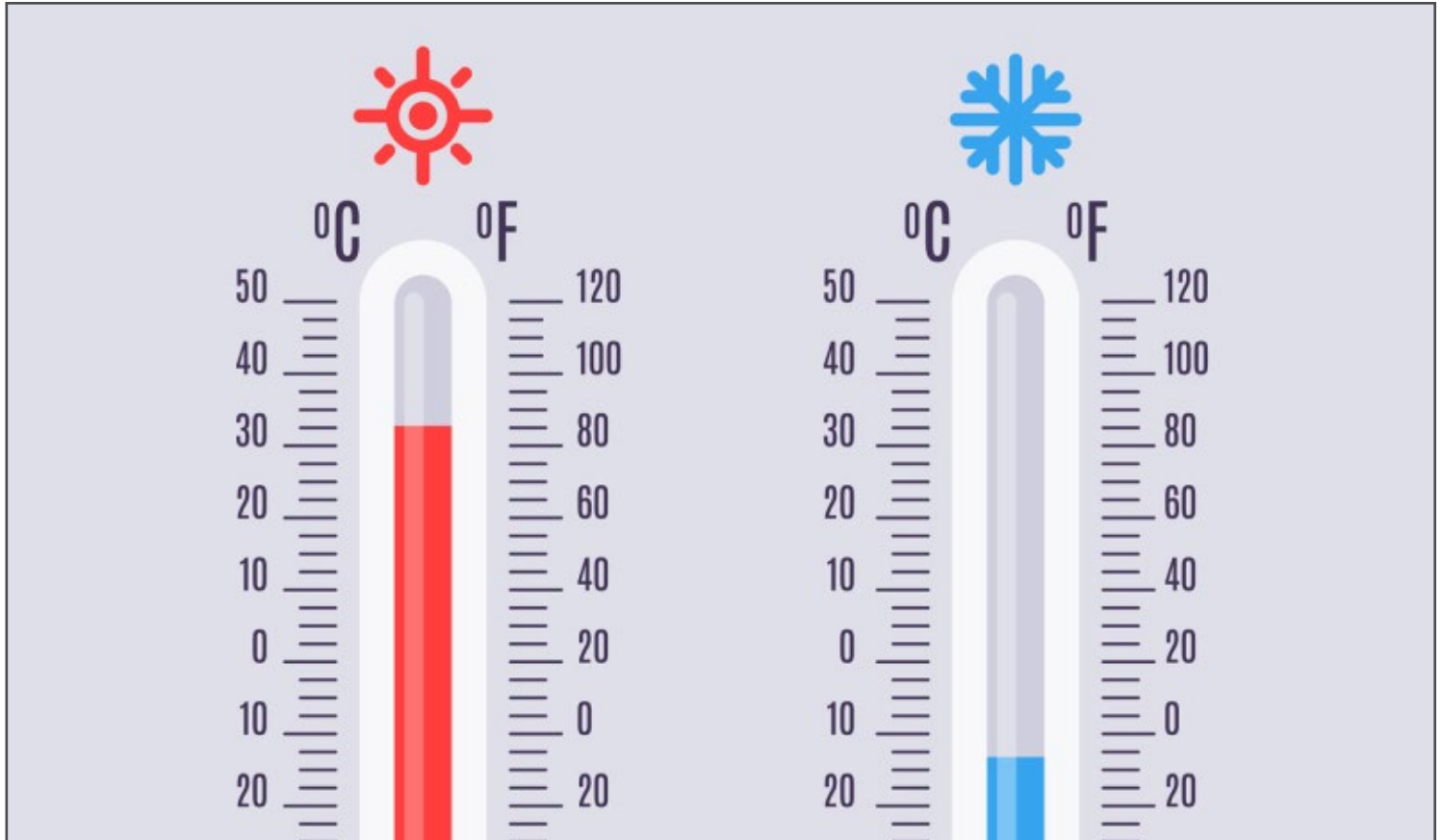
Incorporate

What practical ways can you increase (or maintain) your productivity without becoming overwhelmed or losing focus? Why must we view the appropriate amount of rest as productive?

How do you communicate godly wisdom: 1) in the way you live, 2) in how you speak, and 3) how you teach your children or conduct yourself as a model for others?

How can and should the church assist us with growing in godly wisdom? At the same time, why must we take personal responsibility for such growth?

May 16, 2021



An Overcomer is Ardent

Revelation 3:14-22

Focal Verse:

"I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot."

back to
Table of
Contents

Revelation 3:15

Introduce

Sitting behind a cherry-wood executive desk in a windowless office, Burton Greene worked diligently at his job which exhausted him both mentally and emotionally. Most of his day was filled with meetings or dealing with clients as they poured into his office in succession one after another. When he wasn't entertaining clients, he stared at a computer screen for hours on end to file reports and send emails. His paperwork often compelled him to work after hours. Upon arriving home in the evening, he just wanted to sit in his recliner and relax. If he ate anything at all for dinner, he would pick up fast food on his way home. But he frequently didn't even do that because he wanted to get home rather than wait in line. If he could muster the energy to pass by the pantry or raid the refrigerator on his way to the living room, he would eat whatever he could find which was mostly junk food.

Generally, Burton headed straight for his recliner. He tried to keep the remote controls to the electronics close so he didn't have to lean too far to retrieve them. In fact, anything that he may need for the evening he assembled within a reachable distance before reclining; only one thing could pry him from that chair! He repeated this exact routine every evening. He even got into the habit of a similar routine on weekends with the only difference being that he would answer the door when his food arrived by delivery. As soon as he received the food, he would return to his still-warm chair where he had a folding table upon which to place his meal. After



eating, he would often find himself peacefully dozing and would only extract himself from his recliner at night when he would walk the short stint to his bedroom.

One day, Burton Greene was scheduled to have a physical with his doctor at the behest of his company which had adopted a new approach to preventative diagnosis in hopes of maintaining a healthier workforce. After performing a thorough physical, the doctor spoke frankly with Burton about his health and the dire circumstances he would face if he did not change his sedentary lifestyle. As he sat there on the examination table, Burton heard the doctor warn of the stress that his lethargy and lack of activity placed

Introduce

upon his body. The doctor bluntly explained that excessive inactivity could lead to a condition known as deep vein thrombosis where blood clots develop in the legs. If not caught and they begin to move, these blood clots then have a potential to cause major problems that could result in death! The doctor concluded by chiding him about his poor diet and urged him to eat balanced, healthy meals. Burton needed to act swiftly to prevent greater health problems from befalling him.

However, Burton paid little attention to the doctor's advice. He had become apathetic and indifferent because he didn't see the urgency. Perhaps, he thought the doctor's grim prognostication would never happen to him or maybe he just didn't care. For whatever reason, Burton continued to behave the same way he always had and ignored the doctor's sage advice. A couple of years later, his family discovered him in his recliner with a Coke Zero in one hand and a Twinkie in the other. At first, his family didn't think much about it because Burton often fell asleep in such a manner. Yet, the din of the day couldn't even rouse him! He had suffered complications from deep vein thrombosis—a preventable condition—if only he would have taken steps to change his lifestyle.

Apathy or indifference is odious to the Lord! In his communication with the church at Laodicea, Jesus chastises them for their indifference which he identifies as being "lukewarm." When we become apathetic toward life and the things of the world, it leads to deception and desensitization to the truth of God's Word. Such a cavalier attitude will always lead to compromise of which we must repent like the Laodiceans. Let us, however, be a church that stands on God's Word by faithfully teaching, proclaiming, and practicing it daily! Let's not allow ourselves to become indifferent to the culture around us. Instead, may we set ourselves apart in holy obedience the way Christ has commanded us. May we be wholly surrendered to Him!

Key
Question

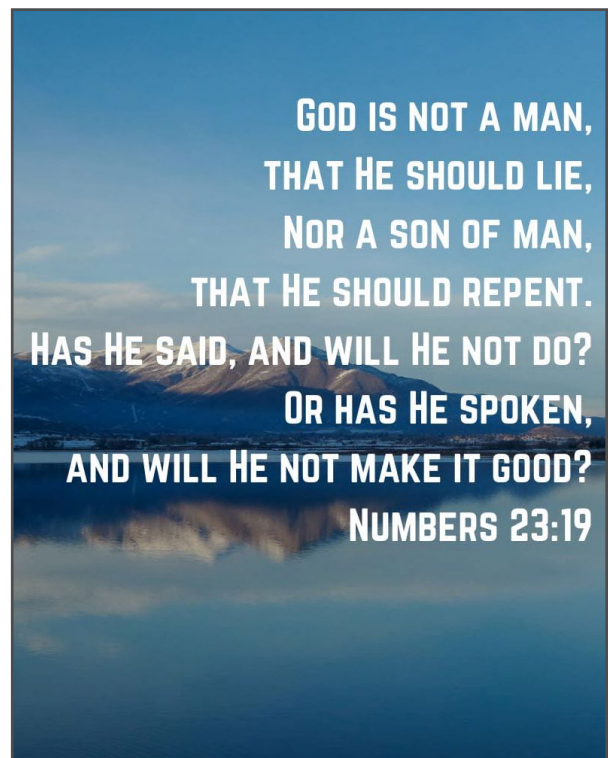
Toward what things might you have become indifferent in life?

Revelation 3:14-16

THE DISPLEASURE WITH APATHY:

Jesus dispatches an **angel** with His seventh and final letter to the churches of Asia Minor **to the church of the Laodiceans** (v. 14). As He had with the church of Sardis ([Rev 3:1-6](#)), He finds nothing commendable and commences with a blistering condemnation of their apathy or indifference. Jesus' title—**the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God**—reflects His unique authority to pronounce such judgment upon them. Jesus has the ability and authority to judge based upon His character and His status. First, His holy and righteous character compels Him to speak the truth and act faithfully in accordance with His Word ([Psalm 33:4](#); [Heb 6:18](#)). The word **Amen**, used here as a title, attests to the validity or truthfulness of a statement. Jesus frequently used two amens to signify the absolute truthfulness of what He said: "Most assuredly (*amen, amen*), I say to you" ([John 5:24](#)). Other translations read, "Truly, truly, I say to you." Here in Revelation, the word **Amen** also refers to the certainty and truthfulness of **the things** He **says**. Jesus speaks directly and truthfully about the **works** of **the Laodiceans** (v. 15) and the judgment He issues is certain (vv. 19-21)!

Moreover, the title **Faithful and True Witness** reinforces this meaning of **Amen** by identifying Jesus as an impeccable **Witness par excellence**. As God, His omniscience and omnipresence allow Him to be an eyewitness to both our actions and our thoughts. Therefore, He can judge without error because He can see our hearts, know our thoughts, and discern our motives. We can hide nothing from Him. Because He knows everything about us, Jesus can judge accurately with impartiality based upon first-hand evidence. Whereas man has the tendency to judge arbitrarily and show favoritism, God judges by the Book so to speak. He always remains **faithful** to what He has said in Scripture which He employs as a canon or a bar with which to



measure us.

Second, Jesus has the authority to issue judgment based upon His status as Creator. In this title, Jesus refers to Himself as **the Beginning of the creation of God**. The term **Beginning** identifies Him as the Agent of creation; in other words, He is the source of everything that has been created ([John 1:3-4](#); [Col 1:16](#)). As the One who created all things, He has the sovereign right to judge the universe. In a slightly different context that explains how God brought salvation to the whole world—not just Israel—through Christ, Paul asks, “Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor” ([Rom 9:21](#))? Although different in context, the same principle behind the question applies here in Revelation. Jesus has the authority and right to judge His creation in the way He has chosen and decreed.

In what ways will we be judge by Christ as believers? What Scriptures refer to these judgments?

Question
1

Having given His qualifications for passing judgment on **the Laodiceans**, Jesus now confronts them about their apathy by chastising them for being **lukewarm** (v. 16). He finds their **works** detestable because they **are neither cold nor hot** (v. 15). The citizens of Laodicea would have vividly understood such a comparison. This ancient city



Remnants of Laodicean Aqueduct

achieved an engineering marvel which allowed them to pipe both **cold** and **hot** water from separate springs just outside of town. The **hot**-water aqueduct supplied the bath houses while the **cold**-water aqueduct supplied the wealthy with potable water for drinking. Although both aqueducts were separate at first, they eventually combined into one single system before reaching the public

fountains in the middle of town where both man and animals could drink. By the time the water arrived there, it had become tepid or **lukewarm**. It no longer had any

beneficial use whatsoever.

Consuming such **lukewarm** water would undoubtedly bring about displeasing thoughts and make one queasy to his stomach. Jesus, therefore, depicts His distaste for such water—which He uses as a metaphor for their indifference—by noting He would **vomit** them **out of His mouth** (v. 16). With summer rapidly approaching in North Texas, we can relate to Jesus' illustration after having been outside in near 100-degree weather when we stop to get a drink. We want something **cold**, preferably that has ice or has been placed in ice. We don't want a plastic bottle of water sitting in the sun. Even putting such a vile drink to our lips would be highly distasteful.

Jesus laments the Laodiceans' apathy and wishes that they **were** either **cold or hot** (v. 15). Through this comparison, Jesus indicates His desire for them to be completely surrendered and faithful in serving Him with passion and perseverance. Today, we would use phrases like "sold out," "all in," or "on fire" to illustrate this concept. Thus, Jesus wants them to give their best and remain wholly committed to His Word. Some people, however, tend to misunderstand this passage. Jesus is not telling the church to be either completely devoted (i.e., **hot**) or completely uninvolved and uncaring (i.e., **cold**). This kind of interpretation would contradict Jesus' call for repentance and it would make Jesus Himself inconsistent! On the contrary, Jesus wants the church in Laodicea to be involved and concerned in a way that motivates them to act to impact the world around them with the gospel.

To help us understand, let's consider the many uses for both **cold** and **hot** water. On one hand, we use **cold** water to drink, brush our teeth, and clean fruit or vegetables before eating. On the other hand, we use **hot** water to cook, wash dishes, do laundry, and bathe. Both cold and hot water have purposes for which we use them. In the same way, God has identified our purpose for living in Scripture. Therefore, we should be completely devoted to that purpose for which God has called us to live out the gospel, grow in it, and share it. We must be involved, fulfilling our purpose!



We have some professional sports teams in our area which have had success in the

past, but most have fallen on hard times recently. Yet, aside from last year, many fans continue to pack their stadiums, yelling and cheering for their team in even in games which they lose. However, there are a few spectators that are always uninvolved and disinterested. They're on their phones, talking to their friends seated next to them, or eating. They're not paying attention to the game; they're indifferent to the score and the outcome. Unfortunately, we have more apathetic and indifferent people in the church than in the stands of a losing sports team. As believers, this should never happen! If people can get excited even in a losing effort for a sports team, how much more excited should we be that victory has already been procured by Christ? Let us be actively involved in service and completely devoted to the Lord.

What is our God-given purpose as defined by Scripture? How are you devoted to that purpose?

Question
2

Indifference has gripped many churches today because “church” has become something we “do” instead of who we “are.” We attend church for a brief time, if at all, during the week and then simply return to “life” after we’re done. This leads us to have a disconnect first with the Lord and His Word and then with other godly individuals who can encourage us and keep us accountable. When we don’t spend quality time with the Lord or His people, we can easily become desensitized to sin and distracted by culture. We become blinded by the pattern of the world around us rather than invested in the holy precepts of God. We can equate our lives to a glass; technically a glass is never truly empty. Without liquid, it’s filled with air. But when liquid is added, the air is displaced or forced out. If we aren’t actively filling our lives with the spiritual principles of God’s Word and cultivating our relationship with Him, then we’re filling our lives with something else—namely the culture around us. In this sense, the Holy Spirit doesn’t abandon us, but we push Him out of our lives; we seize control from Him.

Apathy is rarely intentional; it slowly creeps into our lives as we become secure in our positions and satisfied in our endeavors. We may even encounter apathy and never even realize it! We see it often in groups where an emergency has occurred and very few people take the time to stop and help (i.e., the Good Samaritan). It infiltrates our thinking when we question, “It won’t do me any good to speak out against this, so why should I even bother? What can I do to change it?” Yet, Scripture has called us to speak

the truth in boldness with love. The danger of ignoring sin is that it becomes easier to participate in that same sin when we are indifferent to it in the lives of others! At other times, people may see a need, but they do nothing about it because they believe, "It's not my job or responsibility." Rather than lift a hand to resolve the issue, they lift their voices in a chorus of complaints.

How do you see apathy in the world and in the church today?

Question
3

Unfortunately, we see apathy most frequently in the failure to share the gospel. People are dying without a relationship with Christ and spending eternity separated from Him in hell. Many believers are content with their own salvation, but not motivated enough to share the gospel. They give a litany of excuses to placate their consciences. They justify their failure to share the gospel by surmising they have not been called or gifted with evangelism. The fact that they lament not having the training or the ability to answer questions actually shows their own lack of diligence and unconcern to prepare themselves by studying God's Word. In addition, people often think that someone else will share with that person if they don't. Even worse, they may forget the grace they themselves have received and think that people should get what they deserve! God hasn't called us to be indifferent, unconcerned, and uninvolved; He has called us to go and make disciples in the whole world ([Matt 28:19-20](#))!

How motivated are you to share the gospel?

Question
4

Revelation 3:17-18

THE DANGER OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY:

Their apathy most likely resulted from their perceived self-sufficiency. Jesus repeats their very thoughts and words to them; they arrogantly and errantly **say, "I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing"** (v. 17). The Laodiceans had become extremely prosperous through the trade of unique goods like black wool used to make designer clothing at the time as well as **eye salve** used to cure a number of ocular ailments. In AD 60, the city experienced a devastating earthquake, but they rebuilt an even grander city with state-of-the-art buildings with their own funds without any aid from the Roman Empire. The people of Laodicea lived an ostentatious lifestyle with a high standard of living incomparable to other cities at the time. The

Instruct

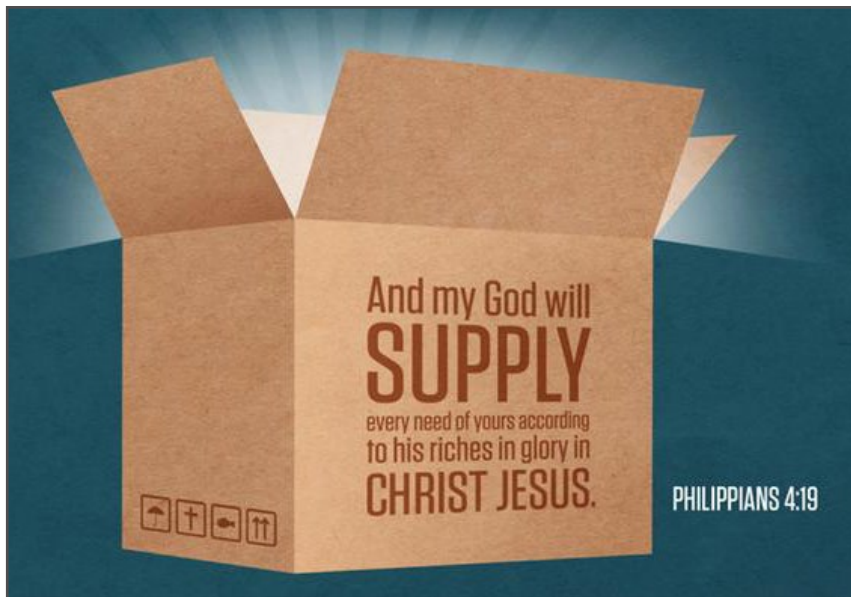
haughty, independent spirit of the Laodiceans truly sounds like the nation the United States has become.

The Laodicean church claimed to have it all together. In addition to being rich and independent, they saw themselves as well-informed and gifted with spiritual insight. Ironically, however, the town which had become rich by selling medicinal **eye salve** to help people see was itself spiritually **blind** because they couldn't discern their own true condition! Indeed, Jesus criticizes them because they could not see they were actually **wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked**. Even though they had abundant physical wealth and needed **nothing**, the church was spiritually bankrupt and destitute because of their apathy.

How do you see this spirit of independence and self-sufficiency today? How can we help others see the danger?

Question
5

Although they could supply **gold** to rebuild their own city, wool to produce the finest of clothes, and **eye salve** to cure disease, they could not cure what truly ailed



them. They were powerless and dependent upon Another for the cure! Only Christ in His glorious riches could give them what they truly needed if only they would turn to Him. For this reason, Jesus bids them to buy **gold** from Him **refined in the fire**, so they can truly **be rich** (v. 18). Rather than wear designer suits and dresses so to speak, they need to attain **white**

garments from Him so they could cover **the shame of their nakedness**. Finally, they must get their **eye salve** from Him to **anoint** their **eyes** so that they may truly **see** the world as it is through the eyes of the Savior.

Only Jesus' riches truly supply every need and never run out ([Eph 2:4](#); [Phil 4:19](#)). Only Christ can remove the stain of sin through His death and completely cleanse us from all unrighteousness ([Isa 1:18](#); [1 John 1:9](#)). He alone can clothe us in the purity of **white**

garments, but we are responsible for making choices that maintain purity. Jesus literally made the **blind** to see, but He alone is the only One who can give us spiritual insight to ascertain our true condition and help us to see the world through His eyes ([Phil 2:5](#)).

God has blessed the United States with tremendous natural resources, abundant wealth, a high standard of living, and access to top-notch education. But we should never view these things in isolation from our dependence upon the Lord and giving Him thanks for these abundant blessings. As a whole, our nation has forgotten the source of these blessings and even forsaken the One who has given them; we have become spiritually blind. Our nation continues an ever-quickening downward spiral toward sin and godlessness. And many churches are complacent and doing nothing to spread the gospel which can transform to give life. Some churches are even complicit in the process of degradation—not simply ignoring sin, but promoting and celebrating it! We cannot afford to be indifferent or uninvolved. We must take action. We must first maintain purity in our own relationship with the Lord by diligently seeking Him and being in right fellowship with Him. But we must also speak the truth boldly with love to the culture around us.

Revelation 3:19-20

THE DISCIPLINE IMPLEMENTED FOR REPENTANCE:

Despite the condition of this church, they still had hope because Christ still loves them and gives them a chance to **repent** (v. 19). For both verses 19 and 20, we must remember the context. Jesus is speaking to those who have a relationship with Him. The church has broken fellowship with Christ which needs to be restored; they have not lost their relationship. Nothing can separate us from the **love** of God ([Rom 8:37-38](#)), but God demonstrates His **love** in different ways depending upon our choices and how we respond to Him. Here, Jesus displays His **love** by rebuking and chastening (v. 19). He wants to restore this church into intimate fellowship and help them escape the dangerous path on which apathy is taking them.

They have pushed Jesus out of their lives and broken fellowship with Him. This is why Jesus stands on the outside **at the door** knocking (v. 20); they have excluded Him! Jesus, however, is the one initiating restoration and seeking reconciliation with them. He is knocking and calling out to them. We, on the other hand, must personally respond to His invitation for reconciliation and fellowship—figurately portrayed here as sharing a meal together. We must respond by repenting and inviting Him in to guide

Instruct

our lives. It is not as if some stranger stands **at the door** knocking; they know His **voice**



because they have a relationship with Him (John 10:4). They must open **the door** by repenting and actively cultivate a relationship with Him; this is wholly their responsibility. Therefore, let us ask ourselves, “Are we in right standing with Him or have we become indifferent and pushed Him out of our lives?” Let’s not push Jesus out of our lives with busy schedules,

indifference, and inattention. Let us hear His **voice** and allow Him to guide us.

What does it mean to have fellowship with Jesus? What does this look like in your life?

Question
6

Revelation 3:21-22

THE DECLARATION OF VICTORY:

This letter ends with a word of hope and encouragement with the declaration of victory for the one **who overcomes** in Christ (v. 21). The good news is that when we have a relationship and fellowship with Christ He promises us a share in His victory. In this instance, Jesus promises to **grant us to sit with Him on His throne** just as He **overcame** and **sat down with the Father on His throne**. As joint-heirs with Christ, we do not become co-equal with Him. Rather, in His grace, He gives us a share of His inheritance. He gives us eternal life and conforms us into His righteous image. Let us already begin that process of conforming to His holy image by listening and applying what He has said to us. His love for us should move us to action, motivate us to serve, and propel us to share the gospel to impact the world around us. Let us not be indifferent, uninvolved, and useless. Let us be sold out—cold or hot—so that God may use us for His glory!

In the introduction, Burton Greene was faced with a choice: Be active and reduce the chance of blood clots or ignore the advice of the physician and risk death. Faced with a life-or-death situation, Burton chose the path of apathy and indifference which ultimately led to his demise. He could have made simple choices to begin walking and change his diet, but he was set in his ways. As believers, Christ has warned us about the dangers of apathy and indifference. Like a doctor, He has prescribed the perfect cure to help us overcome and make a positive impact on the world around us. Let us be found faithful and completely devoted to Him. Let us order our lives by the principles of the gospel to live in purity while at the same time speaking the truth in love so that others may know the hope they can have in Christ and the power to overcome in Him.

Incorporate

How can we keep ourselves and the church from becoming apathetic and complacent?
What is the danger of complacency?

How can self-sufficiency lead to sin? How does self-sufficiency blind us to our true spiritual condition?

Truly evaluate your life through the eyes of Christ. Have you given Him complete access or have you pushed Him aside in some areas? In what areas are you doing well and in what areas do you need to grant Christ more access?

Journal: Document God's Work

May 23, 2021



An Overcomer is Adamant

Hebrews 10:19-25

Focal Verse:

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.”

back to
Table of
Contents

Hebrews 10:23

Introduce

Take a moment to think about your favorite movie, television series, or book. What is it? Some of us may have instantly zeroed in on one specific show or novel while others of us may have felt overwhelmed by all the possibilities. We can't choose *just* one because we have immersed ourselves in so many over the years! Now that you've pictured your favorite(s), ask yourself how many times you've seen or read it. Generally, we watch a show or read a work that we consider our favorite more than once—perhaps even dozens of times! We don't usually finish it and put it down never to interact with it again. We watch it over and over again! We become engrossed in it and enthralled by it. We hang upon every word. We visualize every scene. We talk about it with others, asking if they have seen it and what they thought about it. We sing the praises of the work and try to convince them of why it's worthy of being celebrated as a masterpiece.

Still recalling your favorite series, show, or story, consider how much of it you have committed to memory. We have intimate knowledge of them and not just a broad overview of their events. We know every detail and we can



recite much of their dialogue verbatim. Moreover, we don't focus on the dialogue of only one character; we know so much of the movie that we could reproduce the entire script from memory! If you don't believe this, try watching a movie with someone who has seen it multiple times. They cannot help but passionately blurt out the dialogue at key points. Often, their re-enactment of the movie is met with a chorus of "shh" or "be quiet" as others become irritated and frustrated. If you haven't had this happen to you, you have probably been guilty of doing this to others. We may not even consciously be aware of doing it because we find ourselves lost in the movie!

Despite all the time we invest in watching these movies or reading works of fiction, can we truly say they have changed our lives for the better? They may help us to escape reality momentarily or find a moment of solace and peace as crises rage around us. But they do not have an eternal impact upon our lives no matter how much value or

Introduce

importance we may assign to them. Our favorite movies or novels cannot give true direction in our lives. They cannot provide true wisdom to deal with an ever-changing world. They cannot resolve our problems and encourage us to persevere no matter how inspiring they may be. Only one “book” ever written can help us achieve these things because it contains the promises of the One who is faithful.

Having pondered our favorite movie, let’s compare it to our interaction with Scripture which can have an eternal impact upon our lives when we abide by its principles and surrender to the Word (Christ) of the gospel. How well do we know Scripture? Do we pick it up once a week to carry it to church to hear a Bible study lesson or sermon upon a brief passage? Or do we spend time in it daily, studying it thoroughly and memorizing its words so that we can apply them in our lives? If honest, we all probably have a grave imbalance in which we spend much more time on things that do not have eternal value, such as movies, than we do in God’s Word! How many of us can’t wait to talk about the latest episode of our favorite series with our friends each week? Yet, we don’t truly exhibit the same passion for sharing what we have discovered through our study of the Bible that week. Instead, let us hold fast our confession in Christ without compromise because we have been transformed by His blood so that we might spur one to good works that have eternal value in obedience to Him.

Key
Question

How would you compare your knowledge of movies and culture to that of Scripture? How has the Lord spoken to you through this introduction about the importance of studying and applying His Word?

Hebrews 10:19-22

CONFIDENCE IN CHRIST:

The book of Hebrews describes the superiority of Jesus' life and ministry, in particular His sacrificial death, to show how He fulfilled the requirements of the Law (i.e., Old Testament) to remove sin and bring life. The annual ritualistic animal sacrifices offered by the Levitical priests could "never take away sins" ([Heb 10:11](#)) because they could not change the hearts of individuals. Jesus' sacrifice, on the other hand, can transform the sinner by removing His guilt and making him holy ([Heb 10:9-10](#)). His sacrifice is also more effective because, even though He died, He still lives to make intercession for those who trust Him and surrender their lives to Him. Nothing any other sacrifice could ever claim! Consequently, He now sits "at the right hand of God" which allows us to have personal access to the Father through Him alone. Salvation, therefore, comes not through the mindless repetition of ritual; it comes through a relationship with a living Person—Christ.

What are some things that people place their confidence in?

Question
1

We can only have such confidence **to enter the Holiest** place and have intimate fellowship with the Father through a relationship with Christ (v. 19). The phrase **the Holiest** refers to the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle and temple—the inner-most part, where the ark of the covenant was once kept, which symbolized the presence of the Lord among His people. Separated from the outer courts by a **veil**, the high priest entered the Holy of Holies only once a year on the Day of Atonement to make an annual sacrifice first for his own sin (including his family) and then the sin of the people as a whole.

Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

Hebrews 9:12

Jesus, however, entered **by** means of His own **blood** once-and-for-all. In this, we see

Instruct

how His sacrifice drastically differs from those of the high priests in the Old Testament in two ways. First, He did not need to offer a sacrifice for Himself before He entered; He was perfect and sinless ([Heb 7:26-27](#)). Second, He did not sacrifice an animal and use the **blood** of another to atone for the sins of the people. He shed His own **blood**; He Himself was the sacrifice ([Heb 9:12](#))! Through this gracious act, we see the significant cost of Jesus' ministry to us!

The author of Hebrews now uses **the Holiest** place as a metaphor to describe our relationship to the Father which ultimately looks forward to spending eternity in heaven with Him. Our relationship must be our most cherished possession because of the price that Christ paid. No other gift in the history of the world cost as much! We are often reminded in Scripture and when we gather as the church about this cost, but has it become routine to us? We listen, comprehend, and appreciate the gift, but do we truly value it as we should?

Often, if we are honest, we don't allow Jesus' sacrifice to impact our lives in the way that God intended. We fit God into our schedules only when we have time; we don't make Him the priority of our lives. We communicate with Him primarily as a ritual, but particularly when things go awry and we need help; we don't make Him our focus. We spend time with family and friends doing the things we enjoy; however, we relegate God to the time left over and rarely share with others the importance of having a relationship with Christ. This isn't a blistering condemnation on any one of us, but a sobering reminder for us to ponder the significance of Christ's sacrifice and its influence on our lives rather than allowing it to become something routine and ordinary to which we pay little attention.

How has the sacrifice of Christ truly impacted you?

Question
2

Moreover, we can have **boldness** or confidence in our relationship with the Lord because of what Christ has accomplished. In other words, we can know our destiny for sure when we have a relationship with Him. We don't have to "hope" or "think" we have eternal life; we can know with assurance because Jesus has promised life to anyone who would receive Him. We also can know for certain that we can rely upon Him to fulfill His promises and to guide us to righteousness. Earlier in Hebrews, the author interjected, "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain

mercy and find grace to help in time of need” ([Heb 4:16](#)). This declaration of confidence in Christ doesn’t mean that we can treat God irreverently and casually. We must still approach Him as our sovereign Creator and Ruler of the universe. Our confidence then is in Him because He has saved us and transformed us to live a righteous life which overcomes the world when we surrender to Him. Something we cannot do on our own.

In [Hebrews 10:26-39](#), the author outlines the danger of approaching the Lord with such a cavalier attitude that abuses His grace. We should no longer habitually live in intentional sin, thinking as though God will forgive so we can act however we so choose. Although God will indeed forgive any sin, such an attitude devalues Jesus’ costly sacrifice and it does not reflect the change that He has produced within our hearts ([Rom 6:1-4](#)).

This doesn’t mean that we can lose our salvation and never be restored; rather, it means that God will convict us when we belong to Him and transform our desires to follow Him in righteousness instead of participating in sin. A problem arises, however, when we

don’t surrender every area of our lives to Christ and we elevate our desires over His. At such a point, we will sin because our flesh is weak apart from Him. But we can always approach the Lord with reverent confidence, knowing that He will restore us into a right relationship when we do sin ([1 John 1:9](#)). The key to approaching the Lord reverently and avoiding a lifestyle of sin is to remember and reflect upon the significance of His sacrifice. When we do, we will place our confidence in the one Person who can help us to overcome the flesh and sin.

As a result, Jesus has **consecrated for us a new and living way through the veil, that is, His flesh** (v. 20). **The veil** pictures the seamless fabric of the curtain that separated the Holiest place from the outer courts in the temple. At the time of Jesus’ sacrificial death that Friday at three o’clock, **the veil** was torn in two ([Matt 27:51](#)). Jesus’ physical death paved the way for the removal of sin which separated us from God ([Isa 59:1-2](#)). Nothing any longer stood in the way for us to be reconciled with the Lord. We now have direct access through Christ. We don’t need human mediators and agents, such

Hebrews 10:26-27 (NKJV)

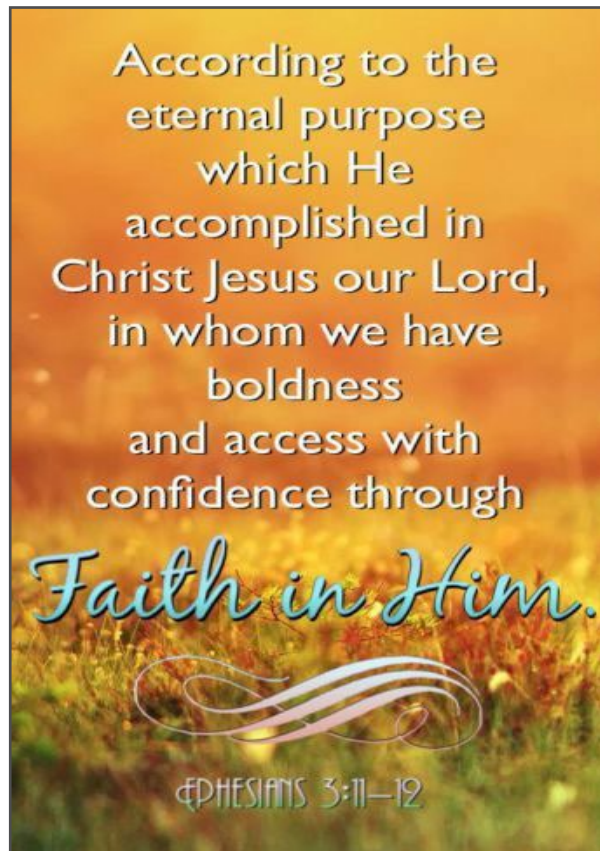
²⁶ For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷ but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.

as high priests and animal sacrifices; we have Jesus who is our **High Priest over the house of God** (v. 21).

What are the benefits of having direct access to God through Jesus as our High Priest?

Question
3

As our **High Priest**, Jesus serves as our Mediator who introduces us to His Father because we have a relationship with Him. Several years ago on a Senior Adult function



which we used as an outreach to the community, some of the Cowboys Cheerleaders attended the event. Toward the end of the day, I went to the place where they were seated to talk to them and get their autographs. Upon introducing myself, much to my surprise one of the Cheerleaders said, "We know you!" Puzzled I inquired, "You do?!" Suddenly, a chorus rang out with one articulating, "You're the one with sixty grandparents." Another said, "It must be nice to have that many taking care of you, visiting and bringing soup when you're sick." Finally, I surmised that one of the upstanding Senior Adults from our church had introduced me to them in a manner of speaking. To introduce me to the Cheerleaders, the Senior Adult had to know me and already have a relationship with me.

As our Mediator or **High priest**, Jesus introduces us to His Father when we have a relationship with Him. He exclaims, "I know you! Well done My good and faithful servant." Unlike the Cowboys Cheerleaders with me, Jesus doesn't just know us causally. He knows us intimately. He knows everything about us; therefore, we can have confidence in Him, knowing that He has put us in right standing with the Father. But we must ask ourselves, how well do we know Him? Do we only know Him casually because we spend time in His Word and prayer only a few hours per week or do we know Him intimately?

Because we have access to the Father through Christ, the author bids us to **draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith** (v. 22). This is an act that we

ourselves must do; we must **draw near**. Jesus has given us the ability to approach God by putting us in right standing with Him through His **blood**. In fact, the author emphasizes that we have had **our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water**. Jesus made us clean. He cleansed us from all unrighteousness; only He can accomplish that. Having cleansed us, however, Jesus has given us the responsibility to make choices that reflect the cleansing He accomplished within us and to approach the Lord with purity ([1 John 5:18](#)). Therefore, we have direct access to forgiveness for sins as well as the power to overcome sin and temptation. In Christ, we have been called to **a new and living way**. It should no longer be business as usual where we find ourselves stuck in our old pattern and routine. We have been given life in Him and we ought to reflect that new life when we humbly approach God! Because we have direct access to God through Christ, we have no excuse for continuing to live according to our old lifestyle. We have the power to live righteously because He has sent His Spirit to live within us and guide us ([Heb 10:15-17](#)). Because we still live in the flesh (i.e., our physical existence), we will be subject to sinful desires. But if we follow the example of Christ, we can overcome them to live in the newness of life as He has called us ([Rom 6:4](#)). From Jesus' own example as well as the rest of Scripture, we can identify four practical ways to engage effectively in this new life and approach God with **boldness** in right standing free from sin.

To overcome temptation, we must first be in an attitude of prayer at all times ([1 Thess 5:17](#)). We have a God who never sleeps or slumbers watching over us ([Psalm 121:4](#)), so we can confidently approach Him at any time and He will help us confront temptation and win the battle with sin ([1 Cor 10:13](#)). We certainly need to pray when we are facing temptation, but prayer must begin even before temptation even crosses our minds. [Luke 5:16](#) notes that Jesus often went into the wilderness to pray in isolation. One could surmise, therefore, that Jesus had journeyed into the wilderness to pray and fast when the Adversary came to tempt Him, so He would have been in the right frame of mind for the confrontation ([Matt 4:1-11](#); [Luke 4:1-13](#)).



Instruct

Second, we must know Scripture and spend time reading, meditating, and memorizing it. Scripture helps us definitively know right from wrong and it keeps us on the right path ([Psalm 119:105](#)). God's Word also helps us to discern His mind and know the responsibilities He has given us ([Psalm 119:11](#)). In addition, it provides the light, or truth, which exposes any sinful deed so that we may avoid the practice of evil ([Eph 5:8-13](#)). The Adversary knows Scripture well, but he distorts it from its original context to fit his purpose ([Gen 3:4](#)). When the Tempter came to Jesus in the wilderness, He turned to Scripture as the Source He used to thwart the temptation and combat the Adversary. Like Jesus, we must know the truth and accurately stand upon what Scripture says. We cannot do this if we read Scripture infrequently, if we read bits and pieces out of context, or if we refuse to hear God speak by reading our own preferences and ideas into His Word. We need to know Scripture as a whole and abide by what God Himself has said therein ([2 Tim 3:16](#)).

What Scriptures help you overcome some of the temptations you personally face?

Question
4

Third, Scripture will help us remove anything from our lives that ought not be there. To battle temptation most effectively, we should remove anything from our lives that can cause us to revert to our old habits from which Christ has already transformed us. Although this may not always be possible, we need to do everything to safeguard ourselves and not put ourselves into tempting situations. This is why Paul encourages us to be cognizant and not do things which can cause our brothers and sisters in Christ to stumble, leading them to once again participate in the sinful things from which they have already been freed ([1 Cor 8:1-13](#)). For example, it would be unwise for those on a diet to fill their pantries at home with junk food and sugary drinks. They would undoubtedly partake! Likewise, if they are tempted when they drive by a donut shop or buffet, they should find a different route no matter the perceived inconvenience it may cause. We need to take this same approach when it comes to sin. Simple steps like these can make a big difference to help us live righteously for Christ and keep ourselves unstained by sin.

Fourth, God has also placed us in a community to find strength and encouragement in our walk with Him. When we surround ourselves with other believers and openly confess the things with which we struggle, we can find encouragement to overcome.

James even tells us, “Confess your trespasses to one another and pray for one another” (Jas 5:16). Not only should other believers lift us up in prayer, but they should also remind us of what God has said in His Word and the path that we ought to take in Him. Therefore, they should point others to Christ in Scripture and offer godly advice based upon His Word—not their opinion. However, we must also know Scripture ourselves because well-meaning people can sometimes give bad advice that isn’t based on God’s Word or is based upon a distortion of it. Nonetheless, God hasn’t called us to walk through life alone, but He has placed us in a family to walk together with Him in the Spirit.



Who do you have that you can share your struggles and temptations with? How have they helped you on your journey?

Question
5

Hebrews 10:23

CONTINUATION IN THE CONFESSION:

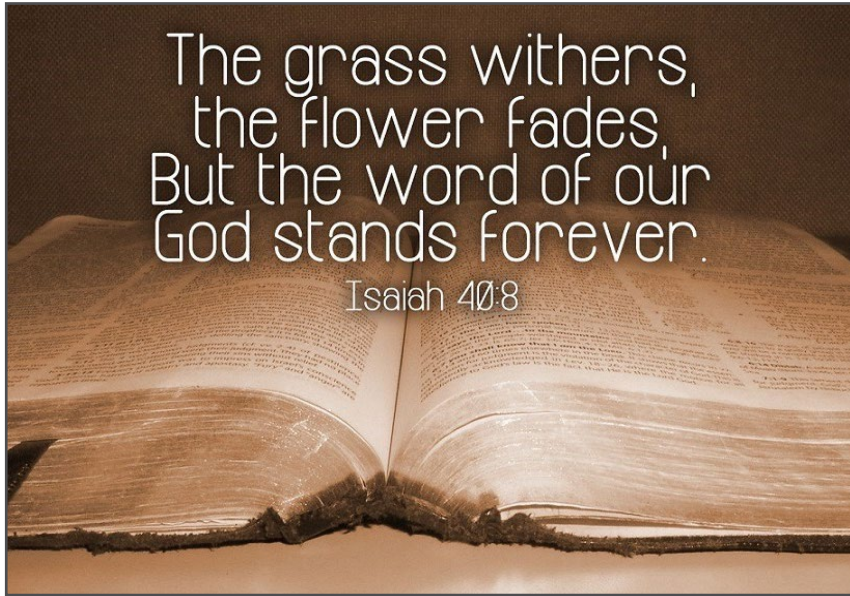
Having implored us to **draw near with a true heart**, the author now exhorts us to **hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering** (v. 23). Our **confession** isn’t something abstract about what we believe, but it is concretely founded upon Christ and His Word. We need something concrete by which to judge our beliefs and our lives, so that we do not drift from the truth. Earlier the author of Hebrews warned, “Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him” ([Heb 2:1-3](#))? Our **confession** is two-fold, however. What we believe about Christ and His Word should influence how we live. In other words, our faith—here synonymous with **confession**—should compel us to continue living our

transformed lives through Him!

How does what you believe about Christ influence the way that you live?

Question
6

In order not to waver in our **confession**, we need a standard that does not change. Anything attached to this world will change. Culture constantly bends principles to fit their ideology at the time. We don't have to look far to see evidence of this today!



But God never changes ([Isa 40:8](#); [Heb 13:8](#)). Because God never changes, we can trust the fidelity and integrity of His Word. In fact, all our **hope** is pinned upon His faithfulness to His Word. Therefore, the author reminds us that **He, God, who promised is faithful**. To illustrate the absurdity of placing trust and finding **hope** in something, such as culture, that

constantly changes, consider a contract. When we enter into a contract, we want to know the terms exactly. We don't want to guess and we especially don't want them to change upon a whim! We would be very unwise to enter a mortgage, for example, without knowing the interest rate and the terms of repayment. Likewise, we wouldn't obtain a mortgage that based the interest and timeframe of repayment upon how the lender felt at the time!

If we wouldn't enter into a contract or an agreement with undeclared stipulations, why do many people base their lives on personal opinions and the secular culture which constantly change? As believers, we have a specific **confession** on which we can order our lives and know the outcome exactly! God has outlined His contract, or covenant, with us in His Word. The terms and expectations never change. Thus, Scripture paints a consistent picture of who God is, how we can attain life through Christ, and how He expects us to live. If God's qualifications for salvation and His expectations for how we should live never change, then we must apply them consistently in our lives without **wavering**.

COMPASSION IN COOPERATION:

The author ends this section by addressing the compassion we should exercise in cooperation. He exhorts us to **consider one another to stir up love and good works** (v. 24). As a result, we should not forsake **assembling together** as some have already done, but we should encourage **one another** as we await **the Day** He returns to conclude this age and call us home. God has placed us within a family of believers to worship Him by growing together, encouraging one another, holding one another accountable, and serving Him by serving the community. But we live in an increasingly isolated world today. And the problem has become more pronounced due to the restrictions we faced with COVID. Yet, one thing remains the same. We need each other! God has not called us to be consumers watching on television or the Internet when we find it convenient, but He has called us as a community to gather together to inspire **love, good works**, and service. We can't do this sitting at home on our couch no matter how "connected" we may think we are.

Why is it crucial to meet together as a church regularly for instruction and worship?

Question
7

Meeting together provides us with the opportunity to meet the needs of the community by showing love. To **consider** means to pay attention in this context. Thus, we are to look for opportunities to show **love** to one another and to do **good works** of service by meeting others' needs. Jesus has called us to **love** one another and we can do that most effectively when we meet corporately as a community—even as small groups within the community such as our Connect Classes. One of the greatest needs facing our society is companionship. Many people may be around others all the time, but still feel isolated and lonely. In the isolation of not meeting together, we can also experience a great increase in depression. By all accounts, many journals and articles deal with the depression that isolation has caused during this pandemic. When we gather in person, we can show love in tangible ways! This is why the author of Hebrews exhorts us to **not** forsake **assembling together!**

It's not just meeting physical needs through acts of service, but encouraging one another spiritually. The word exhort could also be translated encourage according to our vernacular today. We are to encourage others by reminding them of the hope that we have in Jesus Christ who will one day return. We are to keep our eyes focused on

Instruct

Him! To some extent, we already talked about this principle when we examined the accountability that we ought to offer one another to overcome temptation. But we must also encourage others by praying for one another, walking through life's triumphs and tribulations together, studying Scripture together, and spurring one another to live out our faith through righteousness and practical service. Let us, therefore, be adamant about our faith not wavering from the practice of righteousness, but having confidence in our Savior, holding fast to the confession of His Word, and practicing compassion corporately as His body.

Inspire

We live in a world that values entertainment. We can gather for a three or four-hour movie or concert and not even think twice about how much time we actually consumed. We then find ourselves discussing these things with others while at the same time talking about how little time we have for other more important things in our lives. Our Savior deserves much more of our attention than we give to these things which promise entertainment. Movies and other venues of entertainment don't produce lasting life-change! We can only find that power in Christ and we should place our full hope and confidence in Him.

Our confidence is not in some twelve-step plan, in learned counsel offered by the wisest psychologists and philosophers, reading a how-to book on self-help, or even in our own willpower to overcome. The moment we place confidence in ourselves or any other person or practice is the moment we falter. Our confidence is in a single Person. Our confidence should always rest squarely upon Christ through whom we can have a relationship with the Father and be transformed to live righteously free from the enslaving power of sin. Therefore, let us be adamant about what we believe so much so that it influences the way that we live! Let us approach the Lord with confidence because we have life through His Son, but let us remain holy and pure so that we can approach Him in the right spirit and manner.

Incorporate

What biblical responsibilities does the church corporately have in dealing with sin?
Why do we not see (correct) biblical church discipline enacted today?

What are some practical ways that we as a church can help one another hold fast to the confession in Christ and His Word in an ever-changing culture?

In what ways can we show love when meeting corporately as the church?

May 30, 2021



An Overcomer is Active

Galatians 6:6-10

Focal Verse:

"And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart."

back to
Table of
Contents

Galatians 6:9

Introduce

The growing season begins relatively early in the Spring here in North Texas. To ensure maximum yield from the crops we sow, it requires a significant investment on our part. We must persist and persevere over a typically long, hot, and dry summer. To reap a bountiful harvest, we cannot grow weary and become lax in our duties. If we become distracted and derelict in our duties, it can have devastating consequences. As the season commences, we must start by plowing and planting our gardens. But the work doesn't end there. We must constantly provide for and protect the plants over the entire season. In tending



to them, we must ensure they have the right amount of water, the proper nutrients and fertilizers they need, and the right kind of insecticides for the invasive predators we have here. At times, it can become very laborious and tiresome as we pick weeds in the sweltering heat of Texas so that they don't choke out the plants we have sown. The choices that we make and the actions that we take will affect the crops greatly and determine the yield of the harvest that we receive. As temperatures begin to soar in the summer, the moisture in the soil can evaporate very quickly in cloudless skies. If we choose not to water the plants regularly, they will wither and die. Moreover, weeds often grow more rapidly than the plants themselves. If we choose to sit in the comfort of air conditioning rather than actively pull the weeds, they can grow uncontrolled and rob the plants of their needed nutrients.

Although we cannot do anything about natural disasters like hailstorms, we can make sure the soil has the right types of nutrients the plants need. If we don't supplement the soil with lime, nitrogen, and other appropriate minerals, the plants can fail to produce properly and there is a much greater chance of producing an inferior or inedible fruit or vegetable. Furthermore, we have the responsibility to ward off birds and other pests, so we must monitor the crops closely to act swiftly at the first sign of a problem. If we don't, we can find the plants destroyed overnight! We cannot afford to grow weary of doing these beneficial things if we hope to have a great harvest!

Introduce

We may have a general idea of what our gardens need, but we need a plan specifically tailored to them. This requires knowledge and wisdom. We could attempt to grow a garden simply by trial and error; however, this most often does not produce the best results. Instead, we need to read and glean from the knowledge of an expert who has a proven track record of success! We need guidance, but this guidance also requires effort and work on our part. We may have been taught the right things to do, but if we don't apply what we have learned it has no value to us at all!

Likewise, God hasn't called us to conduct ourselves by trial and error in life—simply hoping for the best. Rather, He has given us explicit instruction and knowledge in His Word. Scripture tells us exactly how we should live in order to achieve the best results! We should not deviate from that plan nor should we ever tire of practicing its principles. The moment we do we will find ourselves headed for disaster and failure. Having given us the freedom to make our own choices, God clearly warns about the outcome of what we choose and lays the responsibility on our shoulders to do good in obedience to His Word—for we will reap what we sow. Therefore, let us choose wisely in according with God's Word to continue to do good as we fulfill the obligations to which He has called us.

Key
Question

What opportunities has God given you over the last week to do good?

Galatians 6:6

THE OBLIGATION TO SHARE:

Last week, we concluded with the author of Hebrews' admonition for us to "consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together" which emphasizes the importance of community and the need to look for opportunities to serve. Paul stresses this same importance of community as Galatians 6 begins. As a community led by the Holy Spirit, we are to remind each other of our responsibilities in Christ and restore those who have strayed (v. 1). Although we are responsible first for ourselves and what Christ has commissioned us to do, we must work together as a community to "bear one another's burdens" and rejoice in the Lord together as His people (vv. 2-4). From the dawn of creation, God placed mankind in a family because He realized "it was not good for man to be alone" and he needed a counterpart to share life, endure challenges, and continually point him to the Lord ([Gen 2:18](#)). Just as God designed the physical family, so He also designated the church to function in the same manner as His household!

As we shift gears to verse 6, Paul directs his attention toward those **who are taught the word** and the responsibility God has given them to **share in all good things with him who teaches**. The focus in this passage has generally been said to identify **good things** with material possessions or financial support for full-time teachers called by the Lord to instruct His people. Scripture does establish a precedent for financially supporting those whom God has called into full-time service. In the Old Testament, the Levites whom God designated to lead the community of Israel in service received a tenth of the produce taken as support ([Num 18:21-24](#)) upon which they also offered a tithe to the Lord ([Num 18:25-32](#)). The New Testament also shares this concern for the responsibility of the church to support those whom God has called into full-time ministry financially ([1 Cor](#)



Instruct

[9:3-14; 1 Tim 5:17-18](#)). Although God has decreed such provision in His Word, ministers should concentrate on proclaiming the gospel so as not to “hinder” the work of Christ ([1 Cor 9:12](#)), but this does not absolve from the church from providing for them faithfully and financially.

But here in [Galatians 6:6](#), Paul does not qualify **all good things** as monetary or material support alone. We cannot exclude this application based upon the context nor can we limit it to this aspect only. **All good things** can also include the progress in maturity in the faith when one sits under proper instruction. One of the most rewarding things in which a teacher can **share** is the success of his students in life. Ultimately, disciples or students are responsible for the choices they make, their own spiritual journey in life, and their personal growth. A disengaged, inactive, and inattentive student has no one to blame for his lack of progress but himself. Those who teach **the word** supplement that journey and inspire their students to persevere and remain faithful as they grow. Teachers provide additional insight into the text, assist in comprehension, and offer differing perspectives on application (not meaning) as the Holy Spirit leads. Consequently, teachers find great joy in seeing how God uses them to equip their students for service and the lasting impact it makes the community and culture. Nothing else could provide any greater reward than when students take seriously their God-given responsibility to grow in Him and serve. Although godly teachers do not teach to receive recognition, but to glorify the Lord, take time to share with them how they have impacted your life and helped you on your spiritual journey so that you may rejoice together.

As teachers or even parents, how does it bring joy when we see the ones we have taught succeed?

Question
1

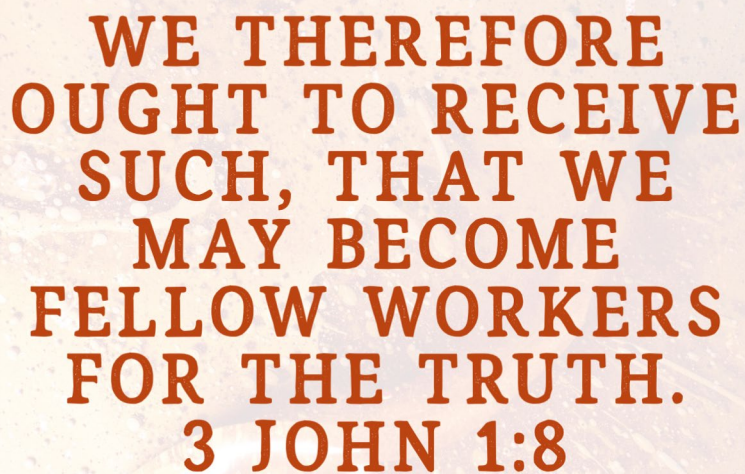
Those **who** are **taught the word** also **share** in the work! When God created the world, He gave mankind the responsibility to work. Work in this context is a privilege and a **good** thing, but the introduction of sin into the world corrupted it like everything else. Nevertheless, God has called us to work together as the church. It’s a **good** thing we **share** in this venture together! It’s not the responsibility of the staff or lay teachers alone to allow God to use them to grow the church or share the gospel. Teachers of **the word** equip all the saints—every member—to engage in its work. [Ephesians 4:11-](#)

[12](#) makes this abundantly clear: God has given “some to be apostles . . . and teachers for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”

Western culture has come to the place where it wrongly believes teachers shoulder all the responsibility and do all the work of educating. In this errant model, the student sits passively, soaking in the information and repeating it rather than learning to use and apply it.

Ask any of our public or private school teachers who receive the blame for their students’ performances, especially the ones who under-perform! Only a few students and their parents truly understand that they **share** the responsibility. In the church,

this idea of sharing the work together is imperative if we want to grow spiritually and numerically as God has intended ([1 Cor 3:5-15](#)). Working together to promote Christ, proclaim His Word, and produce mature disciples who invest in the lives of others is a **good** thing in which we all **share** responsibility.



WE THEREFORE
OUGHT TO RECEIVE
SUCH, THAT WE
MAY BECOME
FELLOW WORKERS
FOR THE TRUTH.
3 JOHN 1:8

How do you participate or share in learning the Word? What responsibilities has God given you as His disciple?

Question
2

Galatians 6:7-8

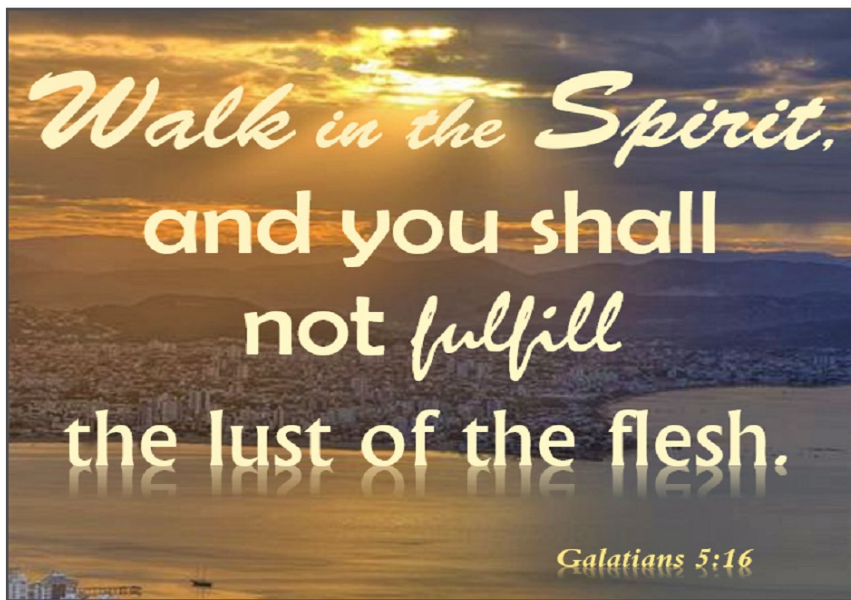
THE OUTCOME OF OUR CHOICES:

Paul’s remarks may seem disjointed here as he transitions from the obligation of the student to the outcome of our choices. But they’re not! They continue the point Paul made in verse 6 that students have an obligation to participate in their spiritual development. Studying God’s Word together as a community is part of the **good things** which He has called us to **share**. We should never view studying Scripture as inconvenient, burdensome, or even tiresome because of its repetitiveness. Rather, it is always a **good** thing which should elicit joy. [Psalm 1:2](#) notes of the righteous, “But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night.” As

Instruct

much as studying Scripture is a blessing, it is even more of a blessing when we apply it in our lives in a way that produces transformation and a positive impact. A teacher can present the opportunity for a student to learn; he can also encourage, inspire, and model for a student as they both grow and serve together. But the student is responsible for the outcome because only he can choose whether to apply what he has learned.

Before continuing our discussion, we must offer one word of caution concerning the interpretation of these verses. They refer to the application of Scripture in our lives and the effect it has upon our actions. It is not talking about tithing or giving financially to



the church as some have wrongly taught. Verse 8 makes this clear. To speak of sowing **in the flesh** means to succumb to our desires and live according to the pattern of this world which stands in direct conflict to the righteousness by which God has called us to live. Such only leads to **corruption** and death. This stands in contrast to sowing **in the Spirit** which

means that we abide by the principles which God has called us and live according to the righteous pattern which He has shown us in His Word and through His Son. In fact, Galatians 5 makes this contrast explicit. In 5:17, he writes, "For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish."

For this reason, Paul warns us against being **deceived** since we have the responsibility to practice the **good things** we have been taught in Scripture (v. 7). Scripture isn't something we memorize and file in our memory to use as trivia when someone quizzes us. God designed Scripture to be memorized and implemented! We deceive ourselves when we think we know better than God and we can navigate our lives on our own without His help. Many believers would never utter this statement aloud, but they live this way. They have intellectual knowledge about God and His Word, but they don't apply it. They don't live by its principles. They may come to church and even attend

Bible study regularly, hearing Scripture with their physical ears. But Scripture has no impact upon them; it produces no growth and transformation! Such people are **deceived** into believing they are in good standing with the Lord even though they do not abide in His Word ([John 15:7](#)).

This leads Paul to assert that **God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap**. God is not fooled by our phony religiosity. When we say one thing and do another, we are the ones **deceived**, not God. The Greek word translated **mocked** pictures someone turning up his nose in contempt. Relatively few people who identify themselves as believers would ever literally stand and shake their fist in God's face in defiance. But we show such contempt when we do not adhere to His Word and live righteously! We treat God with disrespect and disgust. Since God cannot be fooled, we will receive a just "reward" for the kind of acts in which we participate. If we engage in the things of the flesh, we will receive the penalty of **corruption**. In other words, our works will be judged and they won't last ([1 Cor 3:15](#)). This does not mean that the consequences of our evil deeds won't last a lifetime, but that our works do not have lasting value! On the other hand, those who engage in the things of **the Spirit** will receive a lasting, imperishable reward ([1 Cor 3:12-14](#)).

We have an epidemic in our culture where people want to blame others for the actions they themselves took and refuse to accept personal responsibility. In this passage, we most often focus on the idea of reaping or harvesting. For those of us who garden or any rationally-minded person for that matter, we know that we cannot plant a

tomato seed and expect to get a cucumber or a rose seed and expect to get a tulip. It's illogical and against nature. In the same way, we cannot partake in evil and expect good results! This meaning is plain from the text. However, we often overlook, or at least fail to emphasize, one aspect about sowing. As a present active verb, sowing means that someone takes



an active part! It doesn't *just* happen to them. They caused the calamity to befall them because they actively participated in the evil deed.

Our culture looks for ways to excuse their actions and shift the blame. They see

Instruct

themselves as the victims of their environment, their circumstances, and other people. But they themselves precipitated the outcome by sowing **corruption** through the evil deeds of **the flesh**, they caused it! This doesn't mean, however, that bad things can't happen to "good" people or those who live righteously. We see this in the life of Job where calamity struck his household as a result of living in a fallen world and not because of anything that he had done. Therefore, we must have the proper perspective to evaluate why things happen. When we participate in the evil activities of **the flesh**, whomever we should never expect a good outcome. We must always take responsibility for what has happened and repent!

In what ways does the world refuse to accept responsibility and seek to blame others for the outcome they themselves caused by their actions?

Question
3

In the natural growth of plants, it takes a while to see a harvest; plants don't produce fruit overnight. Just as the results of a physical harvest aren't immediate, so also the sowing and reaping of our actions may not always have immediate repercussions. Paul emphasizes this very aspect in verse 9 when he reveals that **in due season we shall reap** what we have sown. Sometimes we are caught with our hand in the proverbial cookie jar and receive immediate punishment for our sin. At other times, however, it may look as if we can get away with our evil deeds. No one knows about them or they have turned a blind eye to our actions, allowing evil seemingly to triumph. God doesn't give a timeframe here in which we will **reap** what we **sow**, but we ultimately know that no action will ever escape His notice and go unpunished if evil or unrewarded if righteous. God, not man, is judge and He will always be the one who brings the harvest to fruition according to His time!

This delay might deceive some into thinking that they have nothing about which to worry. But this goes back to Paul's original assertion in verse 7 that **God is not mocked**. Therefore, we need to remind ourselves of this principle and be cognizant of the things that we **sow** now. One day, either here on earth or in the future in the courtroom of heaven, judgment will come. What kinds of things are we sowing in the way that we live? What should we expect to **reap** as we stand before the Lord?

THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO GOOD:

Paul now turns to encourage us further in the types of things we sow by challenging us **not to grow weary while doing good** (v. 9). He concludes his exhortation in this letter by urging us to **do good to all as we have opportunity, especially those of the household of faith** (v. 10). We should actively seek opportunities to extend the love God has shown us to others by doing **good** works. We briefly discussed this topic at the end of last week's lesson as well. To address this command adequately and do it justice is almost impossible because it take so many forms and God has given us a whole book that guides us in this principle—the Bible.

Yet, we must approach this topic cautiously to ensure that our actions are indeed good and beneficial for the situation. This command requires two things of us in order to apply it correctly in our lives and in the church: 1) we must be guided by the Spirit according to the Word of God and 2) we must be observant and actively look for opportunities to engage in good even though in the Spirit this should come naturally to us. Being guided by the Holy Spirit in this endeavor is essential because some of the things that we may envision as "good" might not truly be beneficial and the most appropriate way to help. We must, therefore, make sure that the "good" we propose to do aligns with the will of God, is consistent with His Word, and appropriate for the situation. This is why Paul reminds us of the two ways: **the flesh** and **the Spirit!**

The world often attempts to **do** things which they define as compassionate and **good**. But they most often exacerbate the problem! For example, giving someone access to clean needles to partake in illegal, harmful drugs is deemed compassionate by some in the world because it can reduce the spread of some blood-borne diseases like AIDS and theoretically reduce the drain on medical and police resources. However, this is misguided compassion and not truly good in the eyes of the Lord because it does nothing to resolve the true problem and transform the habit. In fact, it can lead to a



Instruct

whole host of other problems! Although this may seem an extreme example, we must position ourselves in the church to do **good** which actually reflects God's will and helps people. This can look very different from the way **the flesh** thinks; we must surrender to **the Spirit** for His guidance!

What are some things that may seem good to the world, but are actually harmful?

Question
4

Nevertheless, participating in **good** deeds led by the Spirit should come as second nature to believers in the church. We can never go wrong communicating the gospel and pointing others to Christ through the Scripture. We can never err by interceding for one another in prayer. We should always look for opportunities to meet the physical needs of others when they arise as God gives us the abilities and resources. [Proverbs 3:27](#) puts this into perspective when it bids us, "Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in the power of your hand to do so." To be in a position to do these things, we must be intimately connected to the body of Christ and led by the Spirit. As an overcomer, therefore, let us be active in doing **good** and take great care in what we **sow**, knowing that we will **reap** accordingly.

Often, we may look around at the world and feel that it's hopeless to do **good**. Evil and wickedness appear to triumph. People are persecuted and mocked for doing **good** and standing on God's Word. No one may even notice the **good** we do for them and rarely do they ever return to show their appreciation. But God sees and knows! God will one day reward. We don't do things to please man or to seek an earthly reward. We do **good** things because we love God and He's called us to extend that love not only to those in the church, but even to our enemies! Jesus loved every one of us in such a way that He was obedient even unto death on the cross. Let's follow His example and never **grow weary of doing good**.

Planting a garden requires hard work and dedication even when one has all the right knowledge and tools. Because of sin, the ground produces thorns and thistles, making the work laborious. These challenges aren't things that we can never overcome, however. Yet, to obtain a bountiful harvest means that we must devote ourselves to the task, remain focused, and be diligent to the end. At no point can we afford to grow weary or become distressed in our pursuits; we must persist no matter what obstacles present themselves if we expect to reap a good harvest.

God expects the same of us when we have a relationship with Him. This world will still present problems and challenges because of sin, but these can be overcome in Christ! Christ has reversed the curse and once again enabled us to find joy in doing good works which please Him ([Eph 2:10](#)). Still, this requires dedication and diligence. We cannot become distracted or sidelined in our pursuits because God is our judge. He expects us to know His Word and persist in doing good no matter what we may face in this life. Let us, therefore, be active in our endeavors to know His Word, apply His teaching, and in doing good to all as He gives opportunity.

Incorporate

What “good things” have you learned in God’s Word through others who have taught you? How have you applied them and seen growth in your life?

In what ways have you reaped the things that you’ve sown in life already? What has this taught you? How can you use it to teach others?

What opportunities has God given you to do good in the church? How do you make sure they are actually beneficial and align with His will?

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