

Living as an Overcomer – Tony Evans

The Key to Overcoming - Chapter 1

1. John 16:33 says, “*These things I have spoken to you so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.*” Jesus wants us to have peace in spite of our circumstances. In this world there will be problems, but with our faith in Jesus, we have already overcome our circumstances.
2. Understanding this verse is critical for us to overcome our circumstances. We have already overcome our circumstances whether we know it or accept it because our salvation is secured through our faith in Jesus. We need to have peace regardless of our circumstances because God is in control.
3. Read Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12. All of these verses begin with the same words, “*The one who has an ear, let him hear*”. I have read through the Bible before and for me, reading and studying are not the same. My reading comprehension is not as good as my studying comprehension.
4. Jesus spoke in parables because He knew that if you valued what His words, then you would go deeper and try to understand what He was truly saying. This is exactly what He is saying in these verses. It is important that we understand what Jesus is telling us in the Bible. We need to use everything at our disposal to understand.
5. 1 Corinthians 2:14 (NLT) says, “*14 But people who aren’t spiritual can’t receive these truths from God’s Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them and they can’t understand it, for only those who are spiritual can understand what the Spirit means.*” We are spiritual if we have the Holy Spirit living in us.
6. Other translations use the term “natural men” for people. I prefer non-believers. People that doubt the existence of God think that we as believers are foolish and they fail to understand the things written down in God’s Word. They consider the Bible as fiction or as our Arab tour guide said, “The Bible is exaggerated.”
7. This is what Jesus is saying in these verses in Revelation 2 and 3. “*The one who has an ear, let him hear*”. A person that understands what Jesus is saying is the one with ears to hear because they value anything that Jesus says and will do all they can to understand what Jesus is saying to them.
8. 1 John 5:4-5 says, “*4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. 5 Who is the one who overcomes the world,*

but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” In John 14:6, Jesus tells us how to overcome, it is through faith in Him. Overcoming means getting through difficult times and still maintaining a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

“This tells us we overcome primarily because of who we are in Christ, not because of *what we do*. We overcome because we are born of God, and we are born of God because we believe that Jesus is the Son of God — again, not in a mere intellectual sense, but we put our lives on the fact that Jesus is the Son of God *for us*.” (Guzik)

9. Tony Evans uses the example of a marriage. When we are married, we immediately have the legal status of married but that doesn't mean that we are going to be happily married. As 1 John 5:5 says, when we accept Jesus as our savior then we have the status of overcomers but that doesn't mean we are taking full advantage our overcomer status. We are not “Leaning On The Everlasting Arms” and the power that comes with it.

“To overcome experientially requires working out the power of God in our lives so that we experience it and the freedom it provides To overcome means to overrule a sin or even an illegitimate set of circumstances.” (Tony Evans)

Tony Evans likes the word “experientially”. The root is ‘experience’. When I was at OSU, I had trouble with “book learning” but when I started working and applying the “book learning”, it all clicked and I understood. When I started working, I was learning experientially or by truly experiencing what was in the books. The same thing applies to trusting God. I can read that God will help me get through a difficult situation, but when I experience His help through the worst possible times then I understand. I don't know how nonbelievers can get through the death of a loved one without God's help.

10. Becoming an overcomer requires you to “*be transformed by the renewing of your mind*” (NIV) or “*let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think*.” (Romans 12:2 NLT). Growing up in this world, our parents raise us in hopes that we will become independent adults. However, God doesn't want us to be self-reliant, He wants us to rely on Him. We need God's strength and power to be an overcomer.
11. The Easter story tells us that the tomb is empty. Before he died, Stephen saw Jesus as He truly is now. He saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God (Acts 7:55). In his vision in Revelation 1:13-17, John saw Jesus just as He is.
12. This description of Jesus does not show Him as the meek and mild shepherd or as a servant leader, it shows Him as the all-powerful son of God with:

a. His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow;

- b. *His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace*
 - c. *His voice was like the sound of rushing waters.*
 - d. *In his right hand he held seven stars,*
 - e. *Coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword.*
 - f. *His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.*
 - g. He was so magnificent that John *fell at his feet as though dead*
13. This is King Jesus who, “*disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.*”(Colossians 2:15) He defeated sin and death and is infinitely more powerful than Satan and His minions.
14. We have heard Pastor Brian say numerous times that Satan is not equal to Jesus. Near the end of Revelation, Satan is bound by an angel (Revelation 20:1-10) and is thrown “*into the fiery lake of burning sulfur.*”
15. In order to overcome, we must see Jesus as the conquering king. The scriptures tell us over and over that Jesus is an overcoming king. Read the following scriptures:
- a. Romans 8:37 – We can conquer through the power of Jesus.
 - b. John 16:33 – We can overcome because Jesus has overcome the world.
 - c. Romans 5:8-10 – Jesus died on the cross for us to reconcile us to God in order to save our lives.
16. Throughout the O.T., the Israelites would go back to God getting them out of Egypt. If God could get them out of Egypt then He could get them out of their current problems. In the N.T., Paul pointed out that we have at our disposal, the power that raised Jesus from the dead. Ephesians 1:19-20 says, “*His incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength He exerted when He raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms*”.

“If a weight lifter can lift 700 pounds, you don’t expect he’ll have a problem lifting 200 pounds. Similarly, since Jesus took on the sins of the entire world on the cross, He won’t have any problem helping you overcome whatever you’re facing. No problem is too big for Jesus Christ. No addiction is too big in that Jesus can’t set you free. No circumstance or relationship is too far gone that He can’t redeem it. He’s already handled the whole world’s sin and its accompanying circumstances.” (Evans)

17. Revelation 12:11 says, “*And they overcame and conquered him (Satan) because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, for they did not love their life and renounce their faith even when faced with death.*” (AMP) Overcoming requires the

help of Jesus and your testimony. Sharing our testimony with others is telling them how He got us through a difficult time or how He changed our lives.

Defeating the enemy (Satan) requires 3 actions:

A. Identify with Christ in Faith

18. Faith is an action word. It is not a passive. Often we think that we will keep it in our pocket until we need it. 1 Peter 5:8 tells us that *“Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”* If you are not prepared all the time you cannot defeat him.
19. Galatians 2:20 tells us, *“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”* “To identify with Jesus, then, is to identify with the power He displayed and the victory He secured on the cross.” (Evans)

B. Testify of Christ and His Lordship Publicly

20. Revelation 12:11 also says that they were saved *“because of the word of their testimony”*. Jesus said in Matthew 5:16 *“let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”* Our light is our testimony. Our testimony points to the power of Jesus in our life.
21. Matthew 10:33 tells us that Jesus said, *“But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven.”* God’s plan for Christianity requires us to go and tell others what Jesus has done in our lives, this is our testimony.
22. Before He was betrayed Jesus said, *“Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.”* Jesus glorified God, when He endured the beatings and the crucifixion. When we share the Gospel message with others then we are glorifying both Jesus and God.
23. Philippians 2:10 says, *“at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth.”* We can testify to this fact out of joy today or we can testify to it later out of regret.
24. When we tell others about Jesus publicly, then God is glorified. When someone accepts Jesus and then is baptized, this is one way that they are publically proclaiming the authority of Jesus. Jesus said in Luke 15:10 that *“there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”*

25. Tony Evans says that letting others know that you belong to Jesus is similar to a married couple wearing wedding rings. It is important to tell others that you belong to your spouse and that you belong to Jesus.

“Jesus declares that a person’s willingness to confess Him becomes the marker of their seriousness about Him. This is much more than simply believing in God. After all, Satan believes in God. Alignment under the Lordship of Christ—putting Him in first place—involves publicly declaring and demonstrating an association with Him in both words and actions.” (Tony Evans)

26. Paul tells Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:8 (NLT), “*So never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord.*” He says in Romans 1:16, “*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes*”. The same thing applies to us. God’s plan for getting the good news of Jesus includes us telling others.
27. I heard years ago and Evans says it in his book that “If you were on trial, convicted of being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you.” We are not to be a Sunday Christian or a Christmas and Easter Christian. We are to be a full-time Christian.
28. Romans 12:11 (NLT) says, “*Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically.*” This includes publicly proclaiming the Gospel. I am always impressed by the Jehovah Witnesses and their zeal at proclaiming their distorted Gospel. Christians should have such zeal.
29. I heard it said over and over, “If we had the cure for cancer, wouldn’t we share it. We have the answer to solving the world’s problems and that is Jesus but we do not tell others about Him.” What keeps you from sharing Jesus with others that you encounter everyday?

C. Be Willing to Sacrifice All for Christ

30. In #17 above Revelation 12:11 is quoted. The third part of that verse is “*they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.*” They were willing to share the Gospel message even if it meant death to them. We don’t have to fear death when sharing the good news of Jesus today in our area of influence. Maybe some ill feelings from someone that rejects Jesus but never death.

“Jesus is to be the sum total of your existence, and when you view Him as your Source and sole provider for all things—not just material needs, but also your emotional, spiritual, and any other needs—then making these commitments to Him will come easy. Living as an overcomer is all about a close and abiding relationship with Jesus Christ.” (Tony Evans)