

Spiritual times for Spiritual People

We are definitely living in “spiritual” times! The Lord’s presence is increasing in His church, but at the same time, satan’s influence is also increasing in the world system. For, **“where sin abounds, grace abounds much more”** (Romans 5:20). Therefore, it’s very important that believers stand firm in the knowledge of who they are in Christ Jesus. Every Christian must be certain of his “spiritual” status. That is, the privileged state Jesus secured for him.

In the First Epistle of John, the author had to address the uncertainty numerous believers had concerning their “spiritual” status. This lack of understanding of the truth, and general uneasiness, was caused by disturbing skirmishes with the teachers of false doctrine. Many had substituted intellectual pursuits for faith and John’s purpose in writing was to expose the error of the false teachers and confirm the **faith** of the true believers. Something that needs to be done today as well.

First, John stresses the themes of **love, light and knowledge** in his warnings against heresy. With love being the dominant message. Possessing **love** is clear evidence that one is a Christian, and lack of love indicates that one is still in darkness. Prominent in this epistle is the positive note of the certainty and the absolute truth that believers are destined to overcome. A feature that is an important part of our “spiritual” status. According to God’s plan and purpose, you are on the winning side! Turn with me now to **1 John 2** and let’s read **verses 12 to 14**...

In this passage, John addresses three different groups in the church, not according to physical age, but according to their levels of **spiritual growth**. His purpose is to encourage them to further progress and warn them of the temptations they are certain to face. Firstly, he embraces the whole family with the expression **“little children.”** Here there is probably no thought of age as every believer’s sins are forgiven for Christ’s name’s sake. However, isn’t it a wonderful thing to know, as a present possession, you have the complete remission of all your sins. Christ paid the price for every one of them, and He did this on legal grounds. No sin can be held to your account anymore. But remember, your sins are forgiven for **His name’s sake** only. Clearly, it is for Christ’s sake that your sins are forgiven and not your own. Therefore, He is to get all the glory.

Back to the family illustration, (1) **Fathers** are mature believers who have known the sweet companionship of Jesus Christ and are completely satisfied with Him. There is an air of certainty and a peace around such believers, and they display patience and fortitude beyond normal measure. The church is always in need of more *fathers in the faith*. (2) **Young men** are characterised by vigour and by combat. This period represents persistent wrestling with the enemy. A conflict wherein they learn the secret of victory, namely, *“Not I but Christ living in me!”* Note, such forceful and tenacious believers have become ‘*God-inside minded*’. They live in the revelation that *“greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world!”* The result of being unshakable, strong and having the word of God abiding in you energetically is victory over satan. You are empowered to demoralise the devil by the Word that dwells in you!

Young men are addressed as those who are strong in the Lord and *“in the power of His might.”* They have triumphed over the enemy time and again because of God’s infallible word. Jesus defeated the devil in the wilderness simply by quoting scripture. Shouldn’t every one of us be fully equipped in all circumstances by having enough ammunition to repel every attack of the enemy? Having the ability to overcome the devil and the world system is a primary part your “spiritual” status. According to the English Dictionary, to **overcome** is *“to win a victory over; to succeed in subduing; to make helpless or to deprive of proper authority.”* It can also mean *“to get the better of or to gain ascendancy over”* The Greek word is a legal term and it implies *to master over*.

You are predestined to be **master** over satan and all the demonic forces under his control, and to rule and reign over the negative influences of the world system. Verse 17 says, **“The world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”** The Amplified says, **“The world system is passing away and disappearing, and with it the forbidden cravings (the lusts and passionate desires) of it; but he who does the will of God and carries out His purposes in this life abides (remains) forever.”**

When a bank is in trouble wise people will cease to deposit anything in it. When the foundation of a building is weakened, intelligent builders do not proceed with the structure. Someone once said, *“Concentrating or focusing on the current world order is like rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic.”* Only a fool would live for a system that is about to hit an iceberg!

Verse 16 tells us that the passions of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life are not of God but

of this world - for they are all located (and flourish) in the present world system. Remember, you cannot fight flesh with flesh! Carnal desires and lustful temptations cannot be overcome by your human will or personal strength, you must first do the will of God – for His will is Spirit. **“Not by might nor by power but by My Spirit, says the Lord”** (Zechariah 4:6). The will of God the Father is for you to be **“continually filled with the Spirit”** and consequently live a triumphant life – overcoming the flesh and the decaying system it so desperately craves (Ephesians 5:17,18). When God predestined your future and called you by name, according to His plan, design and purpose (Romans 8), He provided a future wherein you may become **“more than a conqueror.”** Note, your ‘calling’ is in total agreement with the victorious plans that God set out, by faith, in eternity past. The very things that He Himself has spoken out prophetically, you are now able to fulfil. You were created to be a victor!

Think about this for a moment! You were not called at random, but by **faith** God designed your future that you might come to know His Son and the **power of His resurrection**. In fact, you were “called” to be the master of all circumstances! In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said, **“The gates of hell will not prevail against the church.”** To prevail is to overcome, therefore, you have become satan’s master! You can boldly enter the gates that divide the two worlds and exercise your authority. **1 John 4:4** declares, **“You are of God little children, and have overcome them (that is, every evil spirit), because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.”** Because you have the **Holy Spirit** in you, you can detect evil spirits and take authority over them. You can also clearly discern the truth and refuse to listen to the lies of the devil and the world system.

Let’s close by examining **1 John 5:4-5** **“...For whoever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has [past tense] overcome the world - our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”** Notice, it is your faith that overcomes the world order of things, providing you with an effective spiritual weapon by which you can combat both the temptations and the persecutions of a godless society. The world system is a monstrous scheme of temptation, always trying to drag you away from God (and from what is eternal). Today’s secular society is geared to distract you and get you preoccupied with what is temporary. But what is temporary is falling away, and whatever is of the **Spirit** will last forever.

Only a man or woman who is **born of God** can overcome the world, because by faith they are able to rise above the perishing things of the world and see things in their true, eternal perspective. Things which are seen are temporary but things which are not seen are **eternal** (2 Corinthians 4:18). **“So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”** There are so many things that we see in front of us (and all around) that get us side tracked from the things that we ‘cannot see’ - the unseen eternal things. Media and advertising tell us we have to have all these things that we can see right now.

“It’s the best deal out there, but you have to buy it now.” “If you want to fit in with the rest of society, you need to have this fashion item.” “Everyone’s partying! So why should you be any different?” “It’s ok to look, as long as you don’t touch.” It all comes down to ‘self gratification’ versus ‘self control’. But it is important to remember that the things of this world are only temporary. Life with our Heavenly Father is **eternal**! We are to act as the salt of the earth. As followers of Christ we should always stand out from the crowd. Without salt, there would be no flavour. Food would taste bland. So choose to add a little spice to this world by being different.

In order for you to do that effectively, you have to fix your eyes Heavenward. It is not always easy. There are some days when you may totally miss the assignment that God has given you because you were too focused on the things you could see right in front of you. The things that Satan would love for you to keep your focus on so that your thoughts will be pulled away from God. Paul speaks about having **self control** and about training your body like an athlete. Always pushing forward toward a goal that you cannot see.

I challenge you today to ask yourself, **“Where are my eyes fixed?”** Don’t miss out on being the **spice of life** and walking close with the Lord. Seeing through the eyes of faith dims the bright lights of the world system. To see through natural eyes is *sight*, but to see through spiritual eyes is *insight*. The primary organ when seeing through natural eyes is intellect, and the primary organ when seeing through spiritual eyes is **faith**. Your faith is the victory that has already overcome the world! So fix your eyes upon Him! It’s ok to be different!