

You Are More Than a Conqueror

✖ Are you hurting? If you are, you know that physical, emotional or mental pain can make life very unpleasant. I learned this fact firsthand: I was sexually, physically, verbally and emotionally abused from the time I can remember until I left home at the age of 18. Shortly after, I was married—and during the next five years I experienced further rejection, abandonment, betrayal, and finally, divorce.

I know what it is to be a victim. But I have learned from experience and the Word of God that we can have victory over pain instead of being the victims of it. I also know that we can increase or decrease the intensity of our pain by the way we handle it.

The medical field offers “pain management” classes for people who have chronic pain that medication cannot alleviate. “Stress management” seminars are available to people who suffer from stress, which can cause emotional or mental pain as well as physical illness.

Like secular organizations developed for this purpose, the Bible also teaches “pain and stress management.” Romans 8:37 says, “Yet amid all these things we are more than conquerors and gain a surpassing victory through Him who loved us” (*The Amplified Bible*).

The key is that the victory is “through Him.” If we can learn how to lean on God and receive the strength we need, we truly can “do all things through Christ who strengthens us” as stated in Philippians 4:13 (NKJV).

God is more than enough for any situation. He is El Shaddai, the all-sufficient God. As we learn to draw the needed strength from Him, we can live from strength to strength instead of from weakness to weakness. When something drains

our strength and we find ourselves in a stressed or weakened position, God has promised to enable us and be our helper.

In fact, He sent the Holy Spirit expressly for this purpose. Jesus told His disciples before He died that His going away would be good for them because He would send the Holy Spirit to be their “Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Advocate, Intercessor, Strengtheners, Standby)” (John 16:7, *The Amplified Bible*).

In His earthly body, Jesus could not be with everybody all the time, helping with specific situations, but the Holy Spirit can. He is not only *with* the believer, but also *in* him. God is referred to in Scripture as “our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (Ps. 46:1, NKJV). We can receive His help, however, only by asking for it—by relying on and trusting in Him.

As we spend time with Him and talk with Him in a simple, familiar way—we begin to draw strength from Him. If this practice continues not only in times of weakness but also during times when we are strong, we can begin to live from strength to strength.

If we wait until we are weak to draw upon His strength, we will live from weakness to strength and back to weakness. But if we never allow our “tank to get empty,” so to speak, we can live from strength to strength and from glory to glory.

What Constitutes Victory?

Some people are under the misconception that victory is the absence of problems. But I don’t believe that real victory is defined as “being problem-free.” True victory for the child of God comes right in the midst of the storm—when it’s raging and there is yet peace, when tragedy has struck and one can nevertheless say, “It is well with my soul.”

Romans 8:37 says that “we are more than conquerors.” I believe

this means that *we can have assurance of victory even before the battle begins*. We can have such confidence in God that no matter what happens or threatens to happen, we can be on top rather than on the bottom. We do not have to live perpetually *under* something—under attack, under guilt, under financial pressure and so on.

Are you *under* attack or *on* the attack? Some people get defeated just thinking about what *could* happen. They continually live in fear of some future disaster.

From Victim to Victor

Trials will come; the Bible assures us of that (see John 16:33). But we don't have to let them get the best of us. There are several steps we can take toward becoming a victor over our situations.

1. *Develop the proper attitude*. A large part of successful pain management is developing the proper attitude toward it. I went through a period of many months during which I had almost continual headaches. I prayed and sought medical counsel, and the doctor's report was that unless I wanted to live on addictive pain medication, I would have to learn to live with and manage the headache pain.

Thankfully, his report was not the final word on the matter; God ultimately delivered me from the headaches. But during the time of trial, I learned some valuable lessons about pain management that may be applied to emotional and mental pain as well as physical.

I learned that I had to lean on God to strengthen me. Ephesians 3:16 teaches us to be strengthened in the inner man. If we are strong inside, the things coming against us from the outside cannot defeat us.

First John 4:4 says, "Greater is he that is in [me], than he that is in the world" (KJV). We might say it like this,

“Greater is He that is in me, than he that is coming against me.”

If you are physically weak, you might need to eat to gain strength. If you are weak in faith, you undoubtedly need to eat spiritual food. Spend time in the Word and time with God in worship and fellowship, and you will experience His strength flowing into you.

I learned not to talk about the problem or even think about it unless absolutely necessary. This is a challenge because the flesh wants sympathy. Even though talking about it does not solve the problem, there is a longing in us for people to know what we are going through. Ultimately, we must learn to go to the Comforter.

The more we talk about our problems, the bigger they become. We can blow them entirely out of proportion by giving them too much attention. I learned that by paying excessive attention to my problems, I was actually paying attention to the devil.

I am not suggesting that we stick our heads in the sand like ostriches and pretend that we have no problems. I am suggesting that after doing what we can, we cast our cares on God—giving them to Him who is more than enough for any problem that ever existed.

2. *Trust God to change you.* We must turn ourselves over to God and trust Him to do what we cannot. We can exercise a certain amount of discipline and self-control, but no matter how much we struggle, we cannot change ourselves. God has to do it. Otherwise, He wouldn't get the glory.

When I detect weaknesses in myself, I remember that His strength will be made perfect in them if I trust Him. God is more than enough—even to handle us!

We sometimes think God is surprised at the way we act and the things we do. We must remember that He knew us before we knew

Him, and He knew everything we had ever done or ever would do. Psalm 139 says He knows even the words in our mouths that are still unuttered (see v. 4)!

I am no surprise to God, and neither are you. No matter how deep in the pit a person may find himself, God's arm is not too short to save him. We cannot uphold ourselves and cause ourselves to be able to stand in His presence. But Romans 14:4 says, "And he shall stand and be upheld, for the Master—the Lord—is mighty to support him and make him stand" (*The Amplified Bible*).

3. *Submit yourself to God.* To get from being the victim to being victorious, we must know the truth about resisting the devil. We are taught in the Word of God: Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you (James 4:7, KJV).

I believe this Scripture tells us that true resistance is found in submission. As we submit to God and His instructions, we are resisting the devil.

Satan has a plan for our destruction, but God has a plan of deliverance and victory—a plan to prosper us and not to harm us (see Jer. 29:11). It is His will that His children be victors, not victims. To experience the victory, we must follow His instructions.

The book of James teaches us that when we are experiencing trials of any sort and are deficient in wisdom, we are to ask God, who will give to us liberally and ungrudgingly, without reproach (see James 1:5). In other words, He will show us what to do or what not to do in order to have victory. Then we must draw strength from Him, and do it by His grace.

I thought for years that resisting the devil meant only that I should take some sort of determined stand against him. I believed if I rebuked him long enough and loud enough, he would eventually leave me alone.

However, I discovered this was not the case. When I finally sought God for answers to my own weaknesses and lack of victory over them, I realized that though I was attempting to resist the devil, I was not submitting myself to God and His instructions. God will show us how to get out of trouble, but we must pay heed to His advice and take action as He leads.

For example, the answer to your pain, if it is caused by stress, may be declining some of the opportunities for service or social activities that come your way and thus reducing the demands on your time. Learn to say no! The person who refuses to minimize the number of items on his schedule at the direction of the Holy Spirit will continue to suffer the effects of stress no matter how long and hard he resists the devil.

Many times I was so upset by my approach to the problems of life that I ended up acting like the devil instead of resisting him. Many Christians are not very nice when they are having personal problems. Our response to the storm partially determines the length of the storm. We can learn to manage our pain and not let the devil manage us.

4. *Persevere*. Remember: This too shall pass! What you're going through won't last forever, but God so will you. The Bible teaches us to *endure*. We might say that means "to outlast the devil."

Paul wrote to the Hebrews, "You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what He has promised" (Heb. 10:36, NIV). He reminded them that their hope in God was not in vain, "for He who promised is faithful," and that their confidence in Him would be richly rewarded (vv. 23,35). Paul's counsel applies to us today. Let us declare with him, "We are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved" (v. 39).

I could easily have given up when I was overwhelmed by the

emotional pain that came from many years of rejection and abuse. Even the healing process the Holy Spirit took me through brought fresh anguish as He led me to deal with issues from my past. But I was determined to be free, and I learned to trust God to deliver me—in His timing—and to turn my sorrow into joy (see Ps. 30:5; 126:5).

If you, too, are determined to be free—to be more than a conqueror—remember to keep your eyes and your conversation on Jesus and off the situation. Submit yourself to God in all things. Spend quality time with the Lord, drawing upon His strength. Wait in His presence, and you will find that He is more than enough to bring you through to victory, no matter what kind of pain you may be experiencing.

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