

Take Heart – You’re Winning!

Overcoming Evil Part 1

1 John 2:12-14

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1 John 2:12-14 I am writing to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven for his name.

¹³ I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning.

I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one.

I write to you, dear children, because you know the Father.

¹⁴ I write to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning.

I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

Introduction

Discouragement

Imagine a woman who wakes up in the morning and can hardly get out of bed because she is so paralyzed with discouragement. All her efforts to raise her kids in the right way, her ministry at church, her housework – it all just seems to be futile effort that is accomplishing nothing. And the little bit it does accomplish brings her no joy. Or a man who just has the feeling that no matter how hard he tries he seems to experience nothing but defeat. The Christian life, to him, seems like nothing but trying and failing and trying and failing, until now he does not even know if he has it in him to even try much anymore. Other people seem to have so much more success than him, he wonders if they know some secret that for whatever reason he just cannot seem to obtain. And he is this far from just giving up. Discouragement can be one of the most painful and paralyzing things we face in life.

Whether or not those descriptions fit you at this time in your life, it is only a matter of time before the enemy will come after your joy. We are all susceptible to discouragement, and that is what today’s text is meant to address.

This text has no imperative – no command. The purpose is not to get you to do anything. The purpose is simply to encourage. John wants to give his readers assurance and comfort and encouragement and

motivation. And he does so by pointing out to them the wonderful benefits of their salvation. So all you have to do to put this lesson into practice is to be encouraged by it.

My guess is, that was John's first desire when he got out his pen to write this book. But before he can assure them of the benefits of salvation he has to start out with one and a half chapters detailing exactly what it means to be saved. John does not want to risk giving assurance or comfort to someone who is not saved. So we get a chapter and a half of John explaining the fact that God is light and there is no darkness in Him at all. That is really the best summary of that whole section we have studied so far. He starts with an introduction, and then from 1:5 all the way through 2:11 the point has been that anyone who remains in the darkness in an unrepentant way is lost, which means they are not near the presence of God, they do not have fellowship with God, they do not know God, and they are not in God.

And if anyone claims to be enlightened and know God and have fellowship with God and remain in God, then that person must be one who keeps (who treasures) the New Commandment and who repents of his sin, and who trusts in the atonement of Jesus Christ to cover his sin.

So now, by the time we finally get to 2:12, everybody knows exactly where they stand. There should be no more confusion in anyone's mind at this point about whether or not they are truly saved. So this is kind of like when Jesus dismissed Judas from the upper room before He gave all those delightful words of encouragement in Jn.14-17. John is about to deliver some wonderful words of encouragement, but first he had to take some time to get the false Christians out of the room so they do not think this encouragement is for them and, at the same time, to solidify the confidence of the true Christians so none of them would fail to be encouraged because of lingering doubts about their salvation.

All the terms apply to all believers

Now that that work is done and we know for sure that we are saved, here comes the encouragement. Some of it he addresses to the children, some to fathers, and some to young men. But before we dive in to each of those I need to point out to you that what John says to each of these groups applies to all Christians.

12 I am writing to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name.

We know from chapter one that that applies to all Christians.

1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

So it is not just that the sins of one specific group in the church are forgiven. All our sins are forgiven.

13 I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning.

Again – it is not just the elders in the faith who know the Lord Jesus Christ.

2:3 This is how we are sure that we know Him...

Knowing God is another way of saying, "Being a Christian." All Christians know Him.

13 ...I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one.

That is the only direct statement in the book about defeating Satan directly, but there are a couple statements that are very close to the same idea. Chapter 4 talks about our overcoming the antichrists and chapter 5 talks about our overcoming the world (which, he goes on to say, is under the control of the evil one).

So these three words of encouragement apply to all believers. When John directs them at specific groups the point is not that they apply *exclusively* to those groups, but rather that they apply *especially* to those groups. There are certain benefits of being a Christian that the young ones especially need to be reminded of. And the same is true for the fathers and the youths.

It is also worth noting that John says absolutely nothing here about how to determine if you are a child or a youth or a father. That is not the point. The point is John is giving all kinds of encouragement to all kinds of Christians, and your job is to listen for whichever kind of encouragement you need and be encouraged by it. So let's start with the first category.

Children & Forgiveness

12 I am writing to you, dear children

That is John's favorite way to address his readers. He calls us that nine times in this little book. Normally it is a term of endearment for everyone in the church. But in this context, when he goes on to address fathers and young men, it is probably best to take "children" to refer to those who are younger in the faith.

Forgiveness

John especially wants those people who have not been Christians very long to understand that their sins have been forgiven for the sake of Christ's name.

because your sins have been forgiven

The main verb in each of these encouragements (forgiven, known, and overcome) is in the perfect tense, and I believe it is most consistent with the way John uses perfects in the rest of the book to take these with a gnomic or present force. John very often uses the perfect in that way in this book.¹ So the idea is not that the fathers knew Christ in the past and that is having lingering effects. It is talking about the fact that as a general rule they know Him now. And it is not that the young men defeated Satan at their conversion. The discussions about overcoming in chapters 4 and 5 also use the perfect tense but in both places it is clear that it is a current overcoming not a past overcoming. And if the second and third verbs are to be taken that way,

¹ John frequently uses the perfect tense with a gnomic (generic, customary) or present force. Beyond the many such uses of *oida* and *ginosko* are the following:

Gnomic

1 John 1:10 If we claim **we have not sinned**, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

1 John 5:10 Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has **made him** out to be a liar, because he **has not believed** the testimony God **has given** about his Son.

1 John 5:15 And if we **know** that he hears us-- whatever we ask-- we **know** that we have what we **asked** of him.

Present

1 John 2:5 But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly **made complete** in him. This is how we know we are in him:

1 John 4:12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love **is made** complete in us.

1 John 4:17 In this way, love is **made complete** among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him.

1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not **made perfect** in love.

1 John 4:4 You, dear children, are from God and **have overcome** them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

1 John 4:16 And so we **know** and **rely on** the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.

1 John 4:20 If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he **has seen**, cannot love God, whom he **has not seen**.

most likely that is the way John meant the first one as well. You are being forgiven. You are forgiven as a general rule. That fits his earlier discussion of forgiveness in chapter 1 where forgiveness comes in response to confession. The idea of God forgiving all future sins before they are committed is not really a biblical idea. There is a promise for future forgiveness, but, in John's perception especially, the actual forgiveness takes place after the sin is committed.

The moment you first believed, you were justified; which means you were given perfect legal standing in God's sight. That does not change when you sin. When you sin, if you are a believer, you do not lose your justification. You do, however, forfeit a certain amount of nearness to God and intimacy. God is displeased. Then when you repent God restores His favor to you and intimacy is regained.

Why this is especially important for the spiritual children

So why is it so important that the children in the faith especially understand it? Evidently, John's perception was that the ones who were younger in the faith struggled with understanding this.

And that makes sense, because the idea of total forgiveness is a concept so utterly foreign to this world that when you first become a Christian it can be extremely hard to accept and believe. And for that reason Satan tends to really go after new Christians on this front. He tries to use their guilt to destroy them. He does that with all of us, but especially new believers.

The world: You can make up for past sin

Past sin cannot be dealt with in any other way than through forgiveness. But accepting that requires humility. And so the world tries to invent ways of dealing with past sin that do not require humility and that are in their control. Like doing some good deed that makes up for something you did that was bad.

The idea of making up for sin is really a worldly idea, and yet it creeps in to our thinking all the time. Just this last week I realized Tracy was hurt by something I did and I asked her if I could do something to make it up to her. But that is worldly thinking. Showing her love in the present or future does not make up for anything.

The only thing that can be done about a sin in the past is forgiveness. Of course I should love her now, in the present, but that does not make up for the past. The only thing that can be done about sin in the past is for me to repent and for her to forgive. It is pride in us that wants to make up for past sin. Our flesh loves to imagine that it can erase its own guilt. Nothing you can do can erase guilt. The only way out is for the one you sinned against to forgive.

Strategic for Satan to cause doubt over forgiveness

And so attacking on this point is a very strategic tactic for Satan. Just think of all the harm he can do if he can cloud your thinking on this issue. If he can manage to make you think of yourself as unforgiven, he has succeeded in getting you to doubt one of God's most basic promises.

Nothing pleases God like faith. You are never closer to God than when you are trusting Him. The most intimate act that can possibly take place between a human being and God is for God to make a promise to that person, and for that person to respond by believing and trusting. That is what Enoch did that was so pleasing to God, and without that it is impossible to please God. (Heb.11:5-6) So if God has promised to forgive, and God is supremely pleased by His people believing and trusting in His promises, then you can see why Satan would want to convince you that you are not forgiven (or that you might not be forgiven, and that you cannot know for sure).

If we cannot trust God at the most fundamental, basic level, how can we trust Him with anything else? If His promises about forgiveness are not clear enough or frequent enough in Scripture for us to believe them, and if He has not done enough to convince us that He is serious about those promises, then what promise is there in the Bible that we can believe?

Another reason Satan majors on this is so he can cripple you with discouragement. How many times in the New Testament do we read exhortations about staying encouraged?

**Hebrews 12:3 Consider him who endured ... so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.
5 Do not lose heart when he rebukes you**

Ephesians 3:13 I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged

Colossians 3:21 Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.

Hebrews 3:13 encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened

2 Corinthians 4:1 since ... we have this ministry, we do not lose heart.

15 All this is for your benefit ... 16 Therefore we do not lose heart.

It is so important that we do not become discouraged. If you fight against Satan he cannot win. And so his best hope is to get you to just give up. He cannot stand against the weapons God has provided in the gospel, and so he works hard to just get you so discouraged that you just quit fighting. If he can get you thinking about all your many failures, and get you really down emotionally, and then he whispers in your ear, "You've already blown it. What does it matter what you do now? You've already sinned against God. You're already hopelessly guilty – you might as well just indulge your desires completely now."

It is easy to fall for that when you think you have unforgiven sin hanging over you. But if the slate is clean, then you are motivated not to mess it up. So John wants you to understand that the slate is clean! You need to understand that, to have success in the Christian life.

That is not to suggest you take your sin lightly. The more broken you are over your sin when you do sin, the more you will love God when He forgives you. But that only works if you have full confidence in the totality of the forgiveness. What an incredible, amazing thought that after all that you have done you could walk into this building this morning with a clean slate!

Psalms 32:1-2 Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. ² Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit.

So take heart. Your sins are forgiven! Rejoice that your names are written in heaven! Rejoice!

Josh.7:10 The LORD said to Joshua, "Stand up! What are you doing down on your face?"

That is a good question I think for a lot of people. What are you doing down on your face? If you have fallen – get back up. Your sins are forgiven. Another reason why Satan works so hard to get you to doubt forgiveness is so he can hinder your love for God. People who spend a lot of time beating themselves up over past failures often begin to develop a subtle feeling of resentment toward God. They feel like God is constantly angry with them, and they cannot do anything to change that. And it just dumps constant cold water on the fires of their love for God. It is hard to love someone who is holding a grudge against you. It is hard to love someone who is holding your past over your head all the time, so Satan works hard to paint a picture of God as holding grudges. And probably the biggest reason of all why Satan does this is to defame God's name. God's greatest desire is the glory and renown of His own name. And the most valuable thing for us is the glory and renown of His name, so Satan works hard to destroy that. Satan wants to portray a picture of God as an unloving, unforgiving ogre who has no mercy and no compassion.

So much of Satan's strategy is riding on getting you to doubt God's forgiveness. You can see why he is the accuser of the brethren. That tactic pays off more for him than anything else.

For His name's Sake

Maybe you are sitting there thinking, *OK, so how do I fight this? I know I shouldn't entertain doubts all the time, but I just can't help it. How can I become more confident about forgiveness?* John gives us a huge boost in our effort to overcome our doubts in the last three words of the sentence.

12 I am writing to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven for his name.

When we doubt our forgiveness it is usually because we feel so unworthy of forgiveness, right? But God does not forgive anyone because of their worthiness. Worthiness to be forgiven is a ridiculous oxymoron. If you are worthy then you do not need forgiveness. God does not forgive because of our worthiness; He forgives because of His name. It is precisely because of your unworthiness that God is motivated to forgive when you are repentant, because it is through forgiving unworthy, repentant sinners that His name is magnified.

Psalm 79:9 Help us, O God our Savior, for the glory of your name; deliver us and forgive our sins for your name's sake.

Psalm 109:21 But you, O Sovereign LORD, deal well with me for your name's sake; out of the goodness of your love, deliver me.

Jeremiah 14:7 Although our sins testify against us, O LORD, do something for the sake of your name. For our backsliding is great

Isaiah 48:9 For my own name's sake I delay my wrath; for the sake of my praise I hold it back from you, so as not to cut you off.

The reason God forgives is for the sake of His name. The greatest thing that can ever happen is for the fame and renown of His name to be spread abroad and put on display. That is the most loving thing God could ever do for us. And one of the chief ways He accomplishes that is by forgiving unworthy sinners. That puts His mercy and grace on display. God does not want to just be merciful. He wants to put His mercy on display so everyone can see it and marvel at it and take delight in it. And that displaying and publishing of God's wonderful attributes is His name.

And the more unworthy I am, and the more egregiously I have sinned against Him, and the more hopeless my condition; the more His name is glorified and the more His grace is put on display when He forgives me. That is one of the reasons why public confession is such a good thing. The more awareness everyone has of my unworthiness to be forgiven the more they will marvel at God when He forgives me.

So God's main motive for forgiving us is His own name. If He forgave for lesser reasons He would not be as glorious. A lot of times when we overlook an offense it is really just because we do not want to deal with the discomfort of the whole thing so we just sweep it under the rug. Other times it is just out of laziness, or so that the person will owe us a favor, or to manipulate the person. If God forgave for those reasons it would be evil. But God's forgiveness is never out of any motive other than the highest and best – His own glory.

The logic of grace

This is why the logic of grace is so counter to the logic of works.

Psalm 25:11 For the sake of your name, O LORD, forgive my iniquity, for it is great.

Human logic would say, "Please forgive me because my sin is small" or "Please forgive me *even though* my sin is great." But the logic of grace says, "Forgive *because* my sin is great"! The greater your need the greater your occasion to request mercy from God. And the greater your sin the greater God's glory

when He forgives it. Any time you have an impulse that makes you reluctant to seek mercy and grace from God, realize that you have a drastically warped and incorrect understanding of the nature of God, and run to His Word to correct that.

Does that mean we should sin more so that His name will be honored more? No, because while His forgiveness of sins brings Him great honor, our *committing* those sins brings Him great dishonor. And Jesus did not just die to forgive sin. He also died to prevent sin. (Tit.2:11) So we never sin for the sake of God's glory. But we do seek forgiveness for the sake of His glory, and when we do that God is glorified in two ways. First, because He puts His mercy on display by forgiving you. And second, because His trustworthiness is put on display when you fully trust Him to forgive you completely.

Think about this the next time you are tempted to downplay your own guilt in order to save face. When we do that we glorify our own name at the expense of God's name. The less serious we make our sin and guilt the less motive God has to be merciful, because the less it would put His glory on display if He showed mercy.

So if you struggle with trusting in God's forgiveness just ask yourself – how motivated is God to forgive your sins completely? Remember the beginning of the chapter – where it says your sins are forgiven because Jesus is your advocate. All of God's mercy to us is given as a favor from God the Father to God the Son. How eager is God to forgive you? His eagerness to forgive you matches His love for His own Son. Take all of God's concern that He has for the glory of His own name, and add to that all the love the Father has for the Son, and the sum of those two added together is how motivated God is to forgive all the sins of those who repent and who are in Christ. So trust Him to forgive for His name's sake and for the sake of His Son, and do not ever blaspheme God by assuming He will not follow through on His promises.

And when you think about your forgiveness, let it bring joy to your heart. When David sought forgiveness for his sin in Psalm 51 he said...

**Psalm 51:8 Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones You have crushed rejoice.
12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation**

The more joy you have in your forgiveness the more God is glorified.

Fathers & Knowledge of Christ

After addressing the children, John turns to the fathers in verse 13.

¹³ I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning.

I take it "fathers" refers to those who have walked with the Lord for a long time. And for them it is especially important to understand the fact that they know him who is from the beginning. John began this book by introducing Jesus to us as "He who was from the beginning." So we know this is a reference to Jesus.

Everyone who is a believer has a personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus. But John feels a special urgency to say this to the older saints. We do not know for sure why that is, but I can make a guess. Remember we found that the false teachers that have shaken up this church were doctrinal innovators. They were adding to God's Word and coming up with new, novel doctrines. and whenever people do that they are usually trying to appeal to the young. They paint the older people as washed-up old fogies who are too entrenched in tradition to be able to understand the new ways. They present all their novel, esoteric philosophies and all the young people are sitting there amazed saying, "That is so deep!" And the older people are saying, "Huh? That's gibberish."

But when they are really slick teachers and everyone starts following them, and you know your mind is not what it used to be, as an older person you can start to think, "Maybe they're right. Maybe my old mind is too slow to understand the really deep things."

And John respectfully calls them fathers (even though he is probably older than most of them), and he says, “I’m writing to you to reaffirm to you that there is no secret, esoteric, hidden knowledge that rises any higher than the knowledge you have. You know personally the Eternal One, “Him who is from the beginning.” He existed for all of eternity past, which means He is the Source and Sustainer of all that exists and the very Ground of all being. There is no knowledge any higher or any deeper or any more profound than what you have.

Knowing a person, in the biblical sense, goes far beyond the intellectual aspect. It is a relational idea. Adam knew his wife Eve and she conceived a child. (Gn.4:1) God told Israel **I have known only you out of all the clans of the earth (Amos 3:2)**. Knowing, in this context, points to an intensely personal and intimate relationship. It speaks of a closeness where there is mutual love and affection, and delight in one another.

Do not be intimidated by the dizzying intellect of the doctrinal innovators who come out with the philosophic religio-babel and impress everyone with the depth of their understanding. If they are not walking in the light - if they have departed from the truth of the Gospel, or they are not treasuring the New Commandment in their hearts; then they are in the darkness, and all their brilliance and enlightened philosophy is nothing but a lot of aimless stumbling around in blindness and ignorance.

Children & Knowledge of the Father

One of the most difficult questions to answer about this text is, “Why does John repeat the three statements?” But if you look carefully at the text you will notice that it is not an exact repetition. What he says the second time to fathers is identical to the first time. What he says to young men the second time is almost identical – he just adds a clause about their strength. But what he says to the children is completely different. The first time he tells them their sins are forgiven, and the second time he talks about them knowing the Father.

If John makes three statements, then repeats two almost verbatim but completely changes the third, that has the effect of drawing attention to the one that is changed. So it seems that John wants to especially underscore the fact that the children know the Father.

And it is not hard to figure out why he would do that. If he just points out the fact that the older saints know Him who was from the beginning that could lead to some real misunderstanding. It might be assumed that the Christian life is a progression that starts with having your sins forgiven at the beginning, and later on ends up with finally coming to know of God later on. So only the older saints really know God. And I think that is an implication that John wants to avoid. And so he says...

I write to you, dear children, because you know the Father.

Special, intimate knowledge of God is not reserved only for the most advanced or most highly enlightened. It is a privilege that belongs to absolutely every one of God’s children.

To the fathers John said, “You know Him who was from the beginning” (referring to Christ). There he wanted to emphasize the fact that they had a personal relationship with the One who is the Beginning and the Ground of all being. But to the children he speaks of knowing the Father. I think the point of that is to say, “Look, the definition of being a child is you have a father.” It wouldn’t make any sense to say children in the faith do not know God, because if anyone knows a father it is his child. As Christians we all know God personally, from the least of us to the greatest.

One of the things that occurred to me as I studied this passage this week was the fact that what John is describing in these verses is nothing less than the fulfillment of the promise of the New Covenant.

Isaiah promised the Messiah would come and usher in a new age of light. Jeremiah described that very same thing in terms of a New Covenant.

Jeremiah 31:33 "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. ³⁴ No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

In this glorious New Covenant, all of God's people will know Him personally - from the least to the greatest, and all of them will be forgiven.

The Christian life is a progression from knowledge to knowledge. The knowledge a child has of his parents is wonderful, but the knowledge of a husband and wife is much greater. There are levels of love and intimacy that can only come through mature, rational understanding that far exceed what a child can ever experience. So the Christian life is all about knowing God, from beginning to end. It is based on the foundation of full forgiveness of sins, and on that foundation a love relationship of knowing God is built. There are a lot of really smart people in this world but you - YOU, children and fathers, all of you who are in Christ *know God!* No one else in this world – not even the most brilliant genius, has knowledge that is anything like that.

Young Men & Victory

So the Christian journey is from knowledge to knowledge, and along the way in this journey is victory. In between the time of childhood and the time of adulthood is the time of youth, and John connects that with triumph.

**1 John 2:13 ... I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one.
14 ... I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.**

The third thing Jeremiah emphasized about the New Covenant was that it would be characterized by victory rather than defeat.

Jeremiah 31:31-34 "...I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. ³² It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the LORD.

The Church will not do what Israel did. God will see to it that His Church overcomes the enemy and remains loyal to Him. God has promised to give us all the strength we need to realize victory. That is true for every believer, but it is especially important for the young men to be reminded of this.

Why the order?

Another one of the many puzzling things about this passage is John's order. Instead of going from children to youth to fathers, he mentions children first, then fathers, then youth. He does that both times. It seems to me the intended effect of that is probably to draw attention to the third category.

Why the young need to know about victory

Evidently some of the younger Christians were despairing of their ability to gain victory in the warfare. That is easy to do. When you are young you can get to thinking, “I’m so dominated by passions and desires and temptations. I don’t think I can stand against them.”

2 Timothy 2:22 Flee the lusts of youth

That is not just talking about sexual lust, although it includes that. It is a word that refers to any strong desire. And Paul calls them “lusts of youth,” indicating that when you are young they are especially powerful.

And so when you are young and you get battered around by intense sinful desires, and deceived and outsmarted by the devil at every turn, you can begin to wonder if you have what it takes to be victorious in this war. And John really wants to encourage you.

12 ...I am writing to you, young men, because you overcome the evil one.

Then he steps it up a notch in verse 14.

I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you overcome the evil one.

If you know the Lord you are strong. If you are a Christian then the Word of God lives in you and that makes you stronger than the evil one.

We are like the Israelites taking over the Promised Land – we do not have to lose any battles.

Romans 16:20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

When Jesus Christ finally crushes the life out of Satan once for all He is going to use your foot to do it. You are strong, and your strength comes from the Word. The areas where it seems impossible for you to gain victory – you can gain victory. You have access to the omnipotent power of Christ through His Word. That is not to say it is easy. It is anything but easy. Nor is it automatic. But it is possible. God will supply you with the strength that you need to be victorious.

And when I say “victorious” I am not just talking about resisting temptation. This word “overcome” is not primarily a defensive idea. It is an offensive one. You have the power to go into Satan’s territory and wreak havoc on his whole operation. Just by proclaiming the gospel you can crush his fortresses to powder.

God gives young people especially the zeal and energy to fearlessly proclaim the truth, and that makes you absolutely invincible. It demolishes what Satan is trying to do. Even in your human weakness, you can mumble and stumble your way through presenting the gospel to people and it will have divine power to demolish strongholds. And souls will be snatched right out of the enemy’s grasp and pulled right into the kingdom. It is like we sing in that song – “He’s got all the power you need.”

In your Christian life God is going to call you to do some seemingly impossible things. And humanly they are impossible, but then through His Word He is going to supply you with enough power to do them.

Do not downplay the degree of divine power that is at work in you. If it were not for that awesome power you would be dead right now. Unbelievers are still standing because Satan is not fighting against them. But the most powerful evil being in existence is fighting against you – doing everything in his power to utterly destroy you. And you are still here. You are still here because there is power at work in you that is beyond anything you can possibly imagine.

There are sins that you used to struggle with that are gone now. And every one of those is a crippling defeat of Satan’s work. There are thousands and thousands and thousands of temptations you have resisted. There are countless acts of righteousness that he did everything in his power to prevent and failed. He has gone up against you head to head thousands of times, and thousands of times has been knocked flat through the power of the Word. Have you lost some battles too? Of course. But only when you have let go of the

power of the Word that is available to you. Which is great news. That means the problem is not lack of power! You are strong, and as a rule you defeat the evil one.

Conclusion

Last night the Lord gave me an opportunity to test this study. As I was driving home from a disappointing meeting a wave of despondency came over me. I was glad for the opportunity to put the principles I had learned in this study into practice, but the first thing I noticed was something very strange. There was a reluctance in my soul to do it. It was like my soul was saying, "I don't want to pursue joy right now. I just want to drop into self-pity for a while." There is something alluring about the slough of despond. Something in us is actually tempted by discouragement. And so when the feelings of discouragement first hit they must be resisted just like any other sin. Preach to your soul about the importance of joy!

Streams of tears flowed from the eyes of the prophet Jeremiah over the apostasy of his people back in the days of the Old Covenant. Oh, how the faithful over the centuries must have longed for the days of this amazing New Covenant that Jeremiah wrote about. They dreamed of a time when all of God's people would know Him – from the least to the greatest. They fanaticized about a time when all the sins of all God's people would be completely forgiven. And when there would be triumph and victory and loyalty to the covenant rather than apostasy and punishment and defeat.

That age has been inaugurated. The time is now. So do not be discouraged. What are you doing on your face? Get up! What sorrow do you have in your life that is even worth comparing to these glorious realities? What could you possibly be discouraged about, if you know with certainty that all your sins are forgiven? And you know the Father in the way a child knows his daddy? And you have a personal relationship with the One who is the Ground of all being? And you have access to supernatural strength that can give you victory over the most powerful evil being there is? Take heart, and rejoice in the unspeakable blessings of your salvation.

Benediction: Romans 8:33-39 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died-- more than that, who was raised to life-- is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶ As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." ³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Summary

There are no commands in this passage. It's just pure encouragement. Discouragement can be one of the most painful and paralyzing enemies we face in life, and if you're not discouraged now, it's only a matter of time before the enemy will come after your joy. We are all susceptible, but our joy is so important that John gives this passage to re-encourage us, and to give each of us tailor-made encouragement for whichever stage of life we are in.

Devotionals

Day 1-- The God who forgives for His name's sake

Psalm 25:10 All the ways of the LORD are loving and faithful for those who keep the demands of his covenant. 11 For the sake of your name, O LORD, forgive my iniquity, for it is great.

What is wonderful about this attribute:

Note the word "for" in verse 11. It is *because*, not *in spite of*, the magnitude of guilt that David sets forth as the reason why God should show mercy.

The reason God forgives is for the sake of His name. If God forgave for lesser reasons He would not be as glorious. If He forgave out of fear of man or out of laziness in not wanting to deal with sin or out of some façade or pretence that a relationship is something that it is not – all that would be evil. That is often the way we "forgive." But God's forgiveness is never out of any motive other than the highest and best – His own glory.

This is why the logic of grace is so counter to the logic of works. Our prideful, human reasoning would expect something like, "Please forgive me because my sin is small" or "Please forgive me *even though* my sin is great." But it says neither. It says, "Forgive *because* my sin is great"! The greater your need the greater your occasion to request mercy from God. And the greater your sin the greater God's glory when He forgives it.

Experiencing this attribute:

Obviously the wrong way to experience this attribute would be to sin more so that His name will be honored more. While His forgiveness of sins brings Him great honor, our *committing* the sins brings Him great dishonor. The right way to experience this attribute is to 1) understand the logic of grace, 2) gain an understanding of the magnitude of your sinfulness and guilt, and 3) trust Him to act according to the logic of grace.

1) The Logic of Grace

The logic of merit would think, "The greater the sin the less of a position I am in to request mercy." The logic of grace thinks like David: "The greater the sin problem the more dire my circumstance which means the more of a candidate I am for mercy." Any time you have an impulse that makes you reluctant to seek mercy and grace from God, realize that you have a drastically warped and incorrect understanding of the nature of God, and run to His Word to correct that.

2) Pray for insight into the greatness of your own guilt.

He who has been forgiven much loves much. Once we learn the logic of grace, the two factors that will cause us to seek earnestly after mercy will be our awareness of how great our sin is and our desire to see God's name glorified.

Lord, show me the greatness of my sin. Help me to be able to see it even in times when I have not done something other people see as scandalous. Help me to understand the enormity of my guilty and the evil within me every day.

How great is my iniquity before You! Every sin I commit is a great evil because it is committed against such a great God. Every one of my sins is a sin against great holiness and great goodness and great power and great mercy and great patience. The longer You have been patient with me the greater the evil when I prey on that patience and use it as an occasion for further evil.

My sin is great because it is sin against great light and revelation. You have shown me so much from Your Word; You have revealed to me so much of Your glory – that for me to sin against You is to sin from a position of enlightenment, which makes my sin great indeed. To prefer garbage to Your glory is bad enough, but to have a grand view of Your glory and then to prefer garbage dishonors You a hundred times more.

My sin is great because of my continuance in it. I confess it and return to it, confess it and return, confess and return – day after day, week after week, year after year. The clinging of my soul to evil shows my evil to be exceedingly great. Moderate evil might stumble into occasional sin. But it takes great evil to cling and continue and lean toward sin year after year.

My sin is great because of the frequency and number of my sins. I sin continuously. I have sinned the same sin against You thousands of times. My sins, piled up, would make an unscalable mountain.

My sin against You is great because I have done so much of it in the face of resolutions not to. I have committed to make changes, and then have returned to my sin. I have sinned against my very baptism – that day when I publicly resolved to forsake sin.

My sin is great because of how it reigns in my heart. In many cases I have voluntarily re-enslaved myself to sins from which You had already freed me. I have turned to them as my master, preferring them over You as a master!

My sin is great because of its source. The fact that it springs from deep within me – from my very heart, makes my condition exceedingly evil. If I relax and stop fighting tenaciously, and I just follow my impulses for a while and do whatever I feel like doing – I do things that lead away from You. Prone to wander, Lord I feel it; prone to leave the Lord I love.

My sin is great because it aids and abets Your greatest enemy's attacks against Your name. I know that pain of having my friends join with my enemies. Lord, so often I have done that against You!

My sin is great because of how much it has hurt others and even drawn others into sin – compounding the dishonor to Your name.

My sin is shown to be great because of the level of Your wrath against it. It is exposed as great because of the greatness of the price that had to be paid for it.

Have mercy on me, dear Lord, for my sin is great. I am an ideal candidate for You to display Your mercy, dear Lord, because of the exceeding wickedness within me. I do not come pleading based on my merits, but on Your mercy. Lord, You who are called merciful – be to me what You are called. Make good Your promise of forgiveness and restoration from sin to this sinner – for the sake of Your fame and renown and for the glory of Your great name; forgive my great sin and deliver me from it, Lord.

Even while praying this very prayer, the prayer is contaminated by sin in my heart. My greatest acts of piety need to be repented of. And yet You accept me and make promises apply to me so that I can have faith in Your faithfulness to those promises. Lord, You are so gracious and kind!

Lord, I rejoice in the fact that You have made forgiveness of my sin a matter that is connected to Your own glory. If it were not, what hope could I have for forgiveness? You have no interest in doing things that bring no glory to Your name. And so the only way I could ever enjoy Your mercy is if You design things in such a way as to connect my receipt of Your mercy with the glorification of Your own name. And that is what You have done! I bless Your name, Oh glorious God.

Now, teach me to experience this and enjoy it more. Teach me to understand the wonder of it far more than I do. I like the thought of it now, after a time of meditation. But in my day-to-day living my thoughts about Your forgiveness are so abstract and theoretical – they have very little effect on me. Lord, open my eyes that I might see and enjoy Your name-glorifying forgiveness even with a moment's thought.

3) Trust Him to forgive for His name's sake!

Never blaspheme God by assuming He will not follow through on His promises.

Think: Have you downplayed your own guilt – either in your own mind or before others, in order to save face? If so remember, the less serious you make your sin and guilt the less motive God has to be merciful.

Day 2 -- The God who forgives through Jesus' Intercession

Psalm 51:7 Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

9 Turn Your face away from my sins and blot out all my guilt.

The hyssop branch was used to sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice. David knows that the death of an animal does not actually cover the sin (v.16). David was looking not to the ritual, but to the actual act of divine cleansing of which the ritual was a picture.

What is wonderful about this attribute:

We understand that the real atonement (payment, covering, cleansing, and forgiveness) of our sin comes through the death of Jesus Christ. But just as the blood of the animal had to be applied in a specific way (hyssop), so Jesus' blood must be applied to us in a specific way. Jesus' death did not automatically save anyone or cause anyone to be forgiven (which is why even the elect, prior to receiving the gospel and trusting Jesus Christ, were by nature objects of God's wrath and really were en route to hell – Eph.2:3). The hyssop that applies the blood of Jesus' sacrifice to our specific sin is the current, present tense intercession that Jesus Christ is carrying on right now before the Father on your behalf.

1 John 2:1-2 My little children, I am writing you these things so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father-- Jesus Christ the righteous One. ² He Himself is the propitiation for our sins

The word "propitiation" points to Jesus as both the priest who offers the sacrifice and the lamb who is the sacrifice. And the word "advocate" points to Jesus' work as an intercessor between us and God in which He pleads for our forgiveness on the basis of His own sacrifice on our behalf. And God the Father, the awesome, righteous, angry Judge, hears and accepts Jesus' pleading willingly and eagerly and enthusiastically and with great joy and delight in His heart.

Thank You, dear Lord, for Your willingness to forgive! Thank you for blotting out my sin instead of blotting out my name!

Why does Jesus have to constantly plead our case before the Father? Is the heart of God the Father toward us different from Jesus' heart? Is the Father reluctant to forgive while the Son is more merciful? No! Their desires and nature and will are all identical. The reason God has chosen to apply the blood of Christ to our sin only through the specific pleading of Jesus Christ on our behalf is this: the Father wants all of His mercy toward us to be given *as an expression of love to the Son*. The most important thing is not for us to be forgiven. The most important thing is for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to be exalted and glorified. And so God has made it so that the only way mercy can ever come to us is if it comes from the Father as a favor to the Son. That way the main issue in our salvation is not God's love for us, but the Father's love for the Son, who is utterly worthy of love and favor.

Experiencing this attribute:

The condition for receiving forgiveness and cleansing is repentance – turning from the darkness back to the light. That involves confession (acknowledgement of the truth about God and about your own sin), and a wholehearted embracing of God's way (which is accompanied by a deep grieving and brokenness over having offended and dishonored God).

1 John 1:6-9 If we say, "We have fellowship with Him," and walk in darkness, we are lying and are not practicing the truth. ⁷ But if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸ If we say, "We have no sin," we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Psalm 51:16-17 You do not want a sacrifice, or I would give it; You are not pleased with a burnt offering. ¹⁷ The sacrifice pleasing to God is a broken spirit. God, You will not despise a broken and humbled heart.

Whenever you confess your sin remember – the only reason your request can (and will) be granted is because of the exuberant, enthusiastic, infinite love the Father has for the Son; and because of how utterly deserving Jesus is to have His requests on your behalf granted (as well as because of Jesus' willingness to make those requests on your behalf).

Remember also that Jesus did not die just to forgive your sin. He also died to prevent it. According to Titus 2:11 He died to purify a people of His very own who are eager to do what is good. Whenever you confess your sins and are reminded of Jesus' work of intercession on your behalf, let that motivate you toward that eagerness to become what He gave His life for you to become.

Think: Satan's plan is to discourage you with your sin by keeping the entire focus on you, not on Christ. When your works reproach you, turn to His works!

Day 3: The God who allows Himself to be known

Good morning dear Lord, teach me how to stir up my soul to praise You. My soul is so prone to sluggishness, blindness, nearsightedness, and dullness and inattention to Your glory. Wake up, soul! Arise! Fall to the ground in awe! The King Himself is present!

Psalm 104:1-2 Praise the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, you are very great; you are clothed with splendor and majesty. ² He wraps himself in light as with a garment; he stretches out the heavens like a tent

What is wonderful about this attribute:

Psalm 103 is designed to stir our souls to praise Him for His benefits. Psalm 104 is designed to stir our souls to praise Him for His glory reflected in the creation. It teaches us how to become skilled at seeing His glory reflected in the world He made.

And His glory is not hidden. God has clothed Himself in the very means by which perception takes place - light. If light itself is His garment, there is no excuse for not seeing Him. He has not hidden Himself from us. There is no excuse, then, for our dullness other than closed eyes.

Pry them open, Lord. Make my heart interested enough to see Your glory that it will open the eyes of my sluggish soul – eager to see. It is an amazing thing, dear Father, that You have revealed Yourself to us! Let me have the drive and eagerness to see Your glory that I so often have for seeing impure things. Let the intensity of my desire to behold Your power and glory at least match the intensity of desire I have for the sins my flesh so craves.

Psalm 103:7-8 He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel: ⁸ The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.

Before we were saved we all had some understanding of God, but the dim shadow of natural man's concept of God is not powerful enough to draw out true worship from the heart or become its prime Object of affection. Only the glory of the revealed God of Scripture enlivens our dead hearts to love. Only His Word about Himself applied to the heart by His Holy Spirit can do the miracle of giving a gnat some appreciation of a Rembrandt.

Father, please, do that miracle for me today. On my own I am a gnat. I buzz around the brilliant brushstrokes of Your compassion and grace and patience and love, and I see little more than a gnat sees in any convenient place to land. I buzz around the shading and perspective and color and mood of Your genius and while the art experts stand in awe, the reaction of my heart isn't much different than when I see a brick wall. How dull is my heart! And so apart from You graciously making known to me Your ways and Your deeds as You did to Moses and Israel, I won't see You as I ought.

But praise be to You, dear Father, that You have made known Your ways and deeds, You have revealed Yourself, and You have promised that if I seek after You, You will allow Yourself to be found by me! I can see and appreciate Your glory! Lord, let me so revel in that possibility that I will recoil from sin or anything else that will cloud my vision of You.

Experiencing this attribute:

Whenever you turn on a light so that you can see clearly what you could not see when it was dark, let that remind you to take a moment to delight in God's self-revealing nature. That which is hidden to us is hidden not because of deception or secrecy, but because of our own inability or unwillingness to gaze upon true brightness.

And whenever something about God or His Word becomes clear in your mind, so that you can see the meaning and significance and implications for life, and you are suddenly able to appreciate the sweetness of it – realize that is much, much more than a mere intellectual breakthrough. It is God turning on the lights. Each time you understand and delight in some truth about God You have just experienced this attribute of God!

Let me spend the day today enjoying the fact that You reveal Your ways and deeds. You show me Your ways – not just the ways in which I'm supposed to walk, but those in which You Yourself walk. I get to see Your very path! Your mannerisms, Your attributes, Your decisions, Your preferences, Your inclinations, Your affections – Your way. I can not only see it, but walk with You in it! Oh Lord, that excites my heart, but not enough. Let that truth become so compelling to me, Lord, that at the moment of temptation or distraction it will still powerfully drive my thoughts and motives and will and actions and affections.

Think: Have you experienced this attribute of God in the past several minutes? If so, revel in the fact that He is right there in the room with you and has granted you access to His favorable presence. If not, keep seeking, harder and harder until you do experience His nearness.

Day 4: You know God!

¹³ I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning.

Everyone who is a believer has a personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus, but John feels a special urgency to say this to the older saints. The false teachers that have shaken up this church were doctrinal innovators. They were adding to God's Word and coming up with new, novel doctrines. And whenever people do that they are usually trying to appeal to the young. They paint the older people as washed-up old fogies who are too entrenched in tradition to be able to understand the new ways. They present all their novel, esoteric philosophies and all the young people are sitting there amazed saying, "That is so deep!" And the older people are saying, "Huh? That's gibberish."

But when they are really slick teachers and everyone starts following them, and you know your mind is not what it used to be, as an older person you can start to think, "Maybe they're right. Maybe my old mind is too slow to understand the really deep things."

And John respectfully calls them fathers (even though he's probably older than most of them), and he says, "I'm writing to you to reaffirm to you that there is no secret, esoteric, hidden knowledge that rises any higher than the knowledge you have. You know personally the Eternal One, "Him who is from the beginning." He existed for all of eternity past, which means He is the Source and Sustainer of all that exists and the very Ground of all being. There is no knowledge any higher or any deeper or any more profound than what you have.

Knowing a person, in the biblical sense, goes far beyond the intellectual aspect. It is a relational idea. Adam knew his wife Eve and she conceived a child. (Gn.4:1) God told Israel **I have known only you out of all the clans of the earth (Amos 3:2)**. Knowing, in this context, points to an intensely personal and intimate relationship. It speaks of a closeness where there is mutual love and affection, and delight in one another.

Do not be intimidated by the dizzying intellect of the doctrinal innovators who come out with the philosophic religio-babel and impress everyone with the depth of their understanding. If they are not walking in the light - if they have departed from the truth of the Gospel, or they are not treasuring the New Commandment in their hearts, then they are in the darkness. And all their brilliance and enlightened philosophy is nothing but a lot of aimless stumbling around in blindness and ignorance.

I write to you, dear children, because you know the Father.

Special, intimate knowledge of God is not reserved only for the most advanced or most highly enlightened. It is a privilege that belongs to absolutely every one of God's children. To the fathers John said, "You know Him who was from the beginning" (referring to Christ). There he wanted to emphasize the fact that they had a personal relationship with the One who is the Beginning and the Ground of all being. But to the children he speaks of knowing the Father.

I think the point of that is to point out that the definition of being a child is you have a father. It would not make any sense to say children in the faith do not know God, because if anyone knows a father it is his child. As Christians we all know God personally, from the least of us to the greatest.

Jeremiah 31:34 No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

1 John 2:20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth.

The Christian life is a progression from knowledge to knowledge. You start out knowing God. And the goal is to get to know God better.

What an amazing thing it is that God enables us to know Him right from the very beginning. You do not have to spend years trying to ascend to some higher plane of existence. Knowledge of God is not reserved for the elite few who have gone through some special process or who have lots of education. "From the least of them to the greatest." You know God from the first second you are born into His family in repentance. The lowliest, most ignorant Christian who has ever lived knew the Father.

The knowledge a child has of his parents is a very profound thing. Just ask some of these parents who have young children. Do those little kids know their parents? At the information level they have a long way to go, don't they? I could tell you more facts about Jason and Jen than little four-year-old Jerry could. Little True Brandt isn't doing any scholarly research or formal psychological study into the unique attributes of Flip and Collette. He just loves them – and trusts them, and looks to them for absolutely everything he needs. He doesn't understand much, but in some ways his knowledge of them is more profound than the knowledge most of us have of one another. He can pick out their voices in a crowd. He can tell even in the pitch dark if it's his mom holding him or someone else. And nothing in this world makes him happier than their presence.

So the knowledge of a child is a real knowledge for sure. But there is a deeper knowledge than that.

Ephesians 1:17 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.

The Christian life is a progression from knowledge to knowledge. The knowledge a child has of his parents is wonderful, but the knowledge of a husband and wife is much greater. There are levels of love and intimacy that can only come through mature, rational understanding that far exceed what a child can ever experience. So the Christian life is all about knowing God, from beginning to end. It is based on the foundation of full forgiveness of sins, and on that foundation a love relationship of knowing God is built.

There are a lot of really smart people in this world but you - YOU, children and fathers, all of you who are in Christ *know God!* No one else in this world – not even the most brilliant genius, has knowledge that's anything like that.

Day 5: You are strong!

1 John 2:13 ... I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one.

14 ... I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

When you are young you can get to thinking, “I’m so dominated by passions and desires and temptations. I don’t think I can stand against them.” The lusts and desires of youth are especially powerful (2 Tim.2:22). And so when you are young and you get battered around by intense sinful desires, and deceived and outsmarted by the devil at every turn, you can begin to wonder if you have what it takes to be victorious in this war. And John really wants to encourage you. If you know the Lord you are strong. If you are a Christian then the Word of God lives in you and that makes you stronger than the evil one. We are like the Israelites taking over the Promised Land – we do not have to lose any battles.

Romans 16:20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

When Jesus Christ finally crushes the life out of Satan once for all He is going to use your foot to do it. You are strong, and your strength comes from the Word. The areas where it seems impossible for you to gain victory – you can gain victory. You have access to the omnipotent power of Christ through His Word. That is not to say it is easy; it is anything but easy. Nor is it automatic. But it is possible. God will supply you with the strength that you need to be victorious.

And “victorious” speaks of much more than merely resisting temptation. This word “overcome” is not primarily a defensive idea. It is an offensive one. You have the power to go into Satan’s territory and wreak havoc on his whole operation. Just by proclaiming the gospel you can crush his fortresses to powder. God gives young people especially the zeal and energy to fearlessly proclaim the truth, and that makes you absolutely invincible. It demolishes what Satan is trying to do. Even in your human weakness, you can mumble and stumble your way through presenting the gospel to people and it will have divine power to demolish strongholds. And souls will be snatched right out of the enemy’s grasp and pulled right into the kingdom. It is like we sing in that song – “He’s got all the power you need.”

In your Christian life God is going to call you to do some seemingly impossible things. And humanly they are impossible. But then through His Word He’s going to supply you with enough power to do them.

Do not downplay the degree of divine power that is at work in you. If it were not for that awesome power you would be dead right now. Unbelievers are still standing because Satan is not fighting against them. But the most powerful evil being in existence is fighting against you – doing everything in his power to utterly destroy you. And you are still here. You are still here because there is power at work in you that is beyond anything you can possibly imagine.

There are sins that you used to struggle with that are gone now. And every one of those is a crippling defeat of Satan’s work. There are thousands and thousands and thousands of temptations you have resisted. There are countless acts of righteousness that he did everything in his power to prevent and failed. He has gone up against you head to head thousands of times and thousands of times has been knocked flat through the power of the Word.

Have you lost some battles too? Of course. But only when you have let go of the power of the Word that is available to you. Which is great news. That means the problem is not lack of power! You are strong, and as a rule you defeat the evil one.

So do not be discouraged. What sorrow do you have in your life that is even worth comparing to these glorious realities? What could you possibly be discouraged about, if you know with certainty that all your sins are forgiven? And you know the Father in the way a child knows his daddy? And you have a personal relationship with the One who is the Ground of all being? And you have access to supernatural strength that can give you victory over the most powerful evil being there is? Take heart, and rejoice in the unspeakable blessings of your salvation.

