

How We May Triumph

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God's Word clearly teaches that each one of us can triumph over Satan and his snares. However, even those who understand and believe this sometimes err greatly in their conception of how the victory will be accomplished.

Let us notice some ways in which it will **not** be accomplished. We will not overcome Satan and evil by carnal, fleshly, or material means. We are indeed engaged in a war, but not a carnal one (2 Cor. 10:3-4). Our struggle is spiritual (1 Tim. 4:4-7). As Christian soldiers we are commanded to "be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might" (Eph. 6:10). The verb is in the passive voice (literally, "be made strong"), implying submission to the avenues of spiritual strength the Lord has provided.

The great curse of the rank-and-file soldier of Christ is a spirit of selfishness, resulting in rebellion toward spiritual authority. This is often focused on those who faithfully preach God's Word. Many saints are not as wise or as spiritually mature as those sinners in Thessalonica. When they heard the Gospel, they "... accepted it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the Word of God . . ." (1 The. 2:13). Tragically, many who style themselves "soldiers of the cross" accept the Word of God as if it were the words of men, despising its authority as it reproves them. Often such seek to silence those who faithfully proclaim that Truth.

Note that spiritual strength is "in the Lord" (Eph. 6:10), as opposed to "out of the Lord." "In the Lord" is a common New Testament phrase indicating fellowship with Christ by coming into the sphere where the Lord is and where He blesses. It is equal to being in the church/kingdom/body of Christ—to being saved, redeemed by the Blood of Christ. There is no spiritual strength sufficient for our struggle with Satan outside of Christ and His church. Regardless of how sincere, pious, or morally good one outside of Christ may be, spiritual power is found only in Christ. Our labor avails "in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58).

Further, our hope of victory is not in the devices and inventions of men, but "in the Lord." ... The weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh." (2 Cor. 10:4), either in the sense of physical weapons or the philosophies, reasonings, and gimmicks of men, "for our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, ... but against the spiritual hosts of wickedness ..." (Eph. 6:12).

If we overcome Satan it will be through reliance upon the Lord's way, not the ways of men.

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in *The Edifier*, weekly bulletin of Pearl Street Church of Christ, Denton, TX December 1, 1988, of which I was editor.]

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