



[James 1:12](#)

(12) Blessed *is* the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

New King James Version

"Proved" ("approved," NKJV) comes from the Greek word *dokimos*, meaning "stood the test; tested to be trustworthy; of sterling worth, like metal which is cleansed of all alloy." *Dokimos* or one of its forms describes the successful testing of precious metals and coins, as well as the approval of the tested objects as genuine.

"Crown" is translated from *stephanos*, which in turn derives from *stepho*, meaning "to encircle, to twine or wreath." *Stephanos* describes the victor's crown, the symbol of triumph in the public games or a contest. It can also be the reward or prize given to honor a person. Though the word can denote a crown of royalty, its more usual sense is the laurel wreath awarded to a victor or a festive garland worn when rejoicing.

In early times, it was a token of public honor for distinguished service. At other times, it symbolized the [joy](#) of a wedding or the gladness of a festival, especially at a king's coronation. These early crowns were woven as a garland of oak, ivy, parsley, myrtle, or olive branches. Later, these natural wreaths were imitated in gold.

In [James 1:12](#), the apostle is saying that the man who overcomes trials becomes a man of sterling worth and emerges strong and pure spiritually. But what must we overcome? In Revelation, each of the letters to the seven churches of Asia Minor contains the phrase "to him who overcomes." Later, in a summary statement near the end of the book, [Christ](#) says, "He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his [God](#) and he shall be My son" ([Revelation 21:7](#)). It is obvious that overcoming is a prime activity in a Christian's life.

Paul says we are in a warfare against "spiritual wickedness" ([Ephesians 6:12](#), KJV). He

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also writes that "the carnal mind is enmity against God" ([Romans 8:7](#)) and that "those who are in the flesh cannot please God" (verse 8). John says those who "overcome the wicked one" are strong ([1 John 2:14](#)), and then he says we are not to [love the world](#) or its lusts and [pride](#) (verses 15-16).

We have, therefore, three general areas in which to overcome:

1. We must overcome [Satan](#), his demons, and their evil influence.
2. We must overcome this world and its ways.
3. We must overcome our fleshly, carnal, human nature.

The way that Christ taught to overcome is not only to avoid [sin](#), but to do what is good and right. Paul explains this succinctly to the Christians in Rome, "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" ([Romans 12:21](#)). So we see that the crown of life is a crown of righteousness, and *righteousness* can be defined simply as "right doing." An [overcomer](#) is victorious over sin!

— Martin G. Collins

To learn more, see:
[The Crown of Life](#)

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