



"A problem is a chance for you to do your best."
—Duke Ellington

20-Feb-26

The Seed of Overcoming

As the [Passover](#) season approaches, and we begin our self-examinations, we should ask ourselves: How are we doing compared to last year? What worked, what failed, and what should we focus on now?

Do we feel that our overcoming has stalled? Do the same old sins keep popping up in our lives, and we just cannot seem to overcome them? Perhaps a slightly different approach to our self-examination will help us better pursue our long-term goal of overcoming.

This approach is not about applying techniques from self-help books or employing tactics to fight specific sins. Instead, we need to define more precisely what we are trying to overcome. Most people say we are to overcome [sin](#), which is correct, but focusing on sin might be holding us back. Most sin is only the outward expression—or outworking—of something evil within us. Jesus teaches in [Luke 6:45](#) and [Matthew 12:34](#) that what comes out of a person reveals what is in his heart.

In [Galatians 5:19-23](#), the apostle Paul provides two contrasting lists: the [Works of the Flesh](#) and the [Fruit of the Spirit](#). Paul obviously used "works" and "fruit" purposely, but in general, works and fruit are products of a

process. So, in this way, the works of the flesh can also be viewed as fruit for comparison's sake. Our outward sins, our transgressions, therefore, are products of what has been planted and nurtured within, just as our expressions of the fruit of the Spirit grow from something internal.

This understanding means that if our primary approach in overcoming is to fight outward sins directly, we are striking at symptoms rather than the cause, which creates a never-ending battle. In the analogous area of health, we are far healthier when we root out the underlying disease or imbalance than when we just treat its outward manifestations.

[Romans 7:14-25](#) describes this internal battle against sinfulness and the confusion it can bring. Paul calls it a "law" within us, a force that drives the conflict between flesh and spirit. He adds another dimension in [Galatians 6:8](#), saying that whatever we sow, we will also reap. If we sow to the flesh, we will reap corruption, but if we sow to the Spirit, we will reap everlasting life.

So, what exactly have we planted and cultivated when we reap corruption? To answer that, we must view the Fruit of the Spirit and the Works of the Flesh as character traits. The Fruit of the Spirit describes the very character of God—[love](#), [patience](#), [faithfulness](#), [kindness](#), etc.—attributes that define His nature. Conversely, the Works of the Flesh reflect the nature of [Satan](#) and those who follow him—sexual perversion, idolatry, selfishness, hatred, jealousy, dissensions, etc.

With that understanding, we must ask, "What causes these traits to take root in a person?" Genesis 3 gives us the starting point. Adam and Eve's transgression began not with an act but with a belief. They swallowed Satan's lie, and in doing so, destroyed their trust in God's [goodness](#) and sovereignty. Once trust was broken, self-focus took over, and they chose to act on their own understanding and desires rather than God's Word. In other words, they planted seeds of character independent of [God](#).

Likewise, Satan's rebellion was born from rejecting God's sovereignty and exalting his own will. He sowed the seeds of his character through prideful insurrection and independence.

In contrast, Abraham's story reveals the other path—that of absolute trust in God. When he prepared to sacrifice [Isaac](#) (Genesis 22), his obedience was not blind but flowed from [faith](#) in God's goodness and sovereignty. That faith became the seed of his righteous character.

Thus, what we are truly overcoming are the indwelling lies, excuses, and self-reliant patterns that keep us from fully trusting and submitting to God's authority. That is where we must focus our efforts in overcoming and begin walking by true, living faith.

[Deuteronomy 1:26-27](#) shows the Israelites' rebellion in the wilderness was rooted in a lie. [Moses](#) writes:

Nevertheless you would not go up [into the Promised Land], but rebelled against the command of the LORD your God; and you complained in your tents, and said, "Because the LORD hates us, He has brought us out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us."

They convinced themselves that God had abandoned them. How often do we echo this lie in our own despair, believing God has forgotten us or led us into insurmountable trials? Yet [Deuteronomy 8:2-7](#) reveals that God allowed them to go through trials to humble and teach them—to form in them a heart that obeys, fears, and trusts Him to fight their battles and bring them into their inheritance.

In the same way, our trials are God's tools to refine our character. Each difficulty becomes a test of whether we will continue to submit to Him. As [Romans 7:24](#) illustrates, our inner war between flesh and spirit finds resolution only in Christ: "O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from [this body of death](#)? I thank God—through [Jesus Christ](#) our Lord!"

Job's story stands as a perfect example. God allowed his trials to expose and purify his heart. Though he suffered great loss, Job declares, "Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?" ([Job 2:10](#)). Through

it all, Job learned to trust God, not because of His blessings, but because of His goodness. In the end, Job's [repentance](#) marked the death of his self-reliance and the birth of his more complete faith.

So, what are we overcoming? In every sense, it is our own nature—our carnal hearts, our fleshly independence, our desire to rely on ourselves instead of God. Overcoming is ultimately not about perfect performance but perfect surrender, out of which comes obedience. It is about living a life that always trusts in God's sovereignty, placing Him before us as our Savior, Redeemer, Protector—the One who fights our battles! It is knowing and trusting that He is working a salvation in us that no one else can, certainly not ourselves (see [Jeremiah 17:9-10](#)).

Christ has already planted the seed of victory within us. When we walk by faith—when we trust His solutions to our problems—we nurture that seed into fruit that reflects His character. Every storm, every setback, and every trial becomes soil in which to plant good seed and an opportunity to cultivate deeper trust.

As we enter this season of reflection, may we sow faith instead of fear, trust instead of control, and submission instead of rebellion. We must place our hearts fully under God's authority, knowing that the harvest of the Spirit—love, [joy](#), [peace](#), patience, goodness, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control—will lead to eternal life for those who endure.

The seed has been planted in faith. Now, let us nurture it by living through and in Christ forever.

- Joshua Montgomery

New Transcripts

[1842: Joshua's Four Miracles \(Part Two\)](#)

Given by Richard T. Ritenbaugh on 18-Oct-25

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Faith Overcomes the World](#)

by Martin G. Collins

As we attempt to overcome the world, we soon realize that we battle against invisible principalities, requiring us to form a close relationship with Christ, developing His faith to subdue the pulls of the world. As God brings His children to perfection, He allows all manner of sore trials to shape us. We cannot afford to lose faith while He perfects us through afflictions and trials. The one factor that gives us the power to overcome the world is our relationship with Christ, which enables us to do all things. As we walk with God, we need to exercise living faith, one that requires good works. The indwelling of God's Spirit enables us to be faithful, having a kind of second-sight into the spiritual world, making faith possible even without physical evidence.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[How to Be an Overcomer](#)

by Herbert W. Armstrong

WHY are we not more successful in living up to God's standard? WHY do we slip and fall occasionally? Here is how YOU can overcome where you are weakest and hardest tempted!

Featured Audio Schedule

Friday Night Bible Study

The next Bible Study (Friday 20-Feb-26) will be **Abraham (Part Four)**, given by **John W. Ritenbaugh**. The Bible Study will be featured on the [CGG homepage](#) from **6:00 pm Friday** (EST) and all day Saturday.

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