

## MINISTUDY Why Is OVERCOMING So Important!

The Good News, in conjunction with the Correspondence Course Department, presents brief monthly excursions into the study of the Bible, delving into topics relevant to the development and increased understanding of future members of the God Family. Bible study is one means by which Christians are renewed daily (11 Corinthians 4: 16), so let's refresh ourselves with more of the precious truths of God's Word!

Instructions: The format of these ministudies is similar to that of the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course. Look up and read in your Bible the scripture references given in answer to the questions. Comments following the questions elaborate on the scriptures just read. That's all there is to it! (These studies are based on the King James Version of the Bible, unless otherwise stated.)

The Bible speaks a great deal about overcoming. Let's understand exactly what it is, why it is so important in living the Christian life, and what bearing that overcoming has on the occupations of born-again Christians in the ruling Kingdom of God.

1. Did Jesus Christ become perfect? Hebrews 2:9-10. Notice especially the last part of verse 10. What did Christ say He expects of His followers? Matthew 5:48. Who are they to become like? Ephesians 4:13.

In the original Greek, the word for perfect in Matthew 5:48 is (eleios, which also means complete. In other words, Jesus said that His followers are to become complete - a spiritual sense - ritually mature.

Obviously, we cannot become absolutely perfect in character until the resurrection when God will complete the process and give us new, perfect spiritual bodies with a perfect -sinless (1 John 3:2, 9) - nature that will be like Christ's and the Father's. But in the meantime, God wants us to grow in His spiritual character daily by obeying His commandments and overcoming and rooting sin out of our lives - growing toward that spiritual perfection.

2. Even though Christ was the very Son of God and possessed the Holy Spirit without measure (John 3:34), did He still have to learn obedience?

Hebrews 5:8-9. Did Christ overcome? John 16:33. Did He resist temptation? Hebrews 4:15.

Jesus Christ became perfect through the trials and tests of human experience. He overcame the temptations of the devil, His flesh and the world around Him. In spite of opposition and temptation, He kept God's commandments perfectly. Thus He was able to become the Savior of mankind and the supreme example of spiritual maturity. Christians are to be striving to emulate

3. Because Jesus Christ overcame during His human life and was born again by a resurrection, where is He presently seated? Revelation 3:21. Have all angels, authorities and powers been made subject to Him under His Father? I Peter 3:22. Ephesians 1:20-22: 1 Corinthians 15:27.

4. Just how great is the authority that Christ has already inherited? Hebrews 1:1-2: Matthew 28:18.

Notice how the Moffatt translation renders the original Greek of Hebrews 1:2: "But in these days at the end he has spoken to us by a Son - a Son whom he has appointed heir of the universe ... "!

5. Will Christ be the only inheritor and ruler of this earth and the vast universe" Or will there be co-rulers, joint heirs, with Him to share His great inheritance and responsibility\_' Romans 8:16-17: Revelation 21:7.

We, if we have become true Christians, are now the Spirit-begotten children of God. We are heirs -joint heirs with Jesus Christ - destined to inherit all that the ever living God has created, when we are born again at the resurrection as members of the God Family!

6. Just how important is overcoming to our being in God's Kingdom and receiving an opportunity to rule with Christ" Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26-27: 3:5, 12. 21: 21:7. Will our spiritual works in this life determine our reward -- our opportunity for service - in God's Kingdom? Matthew 16:27

Through overcoming the sinful pulls and impulses of the flesh, the world and the devil, and rather submitting to God and His ways our spiritual character is being created- we are building the very character of God and the more we over come, the greater the responsibility Christ will give us in His government on earth. Thus the greater will be our reward!

But no one can overcome for us. No one can produce spiritual works for us. It requires putting forth effort on our part, together with the help of God's Holy Spirit, to become the kind of spiritually minded and motivated persons God can use in His Kingdom. Overcoming (ceasing from doing) the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21) involves letting Christ, by means of His Spirit, live in us to empower us to bear spiritual fruit - to perform spiritual works.

Whether your reward in God's Kingdom is great or small depends on you! It depends on your works. It depends on how much effort you expend in overcoming and growing spiritually. It depends on whether you always willingly let Christ mold you into His character image or whether you tend to resist change. Notice Paul's advice in Romans 12:2: "Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould. but let God remake you so that your whole attitude of mind is changed. Thus you will prove in practice that the will of God is good, acceptable to him and perfect" (Phillips Modern English translation. paraphrased).

The parable of the pounds recorded in Luke 19 shows that the degree of reward each Christian will receive will be according to how much he grew and overcame spiritually in this life - how much good fruit he produced by his effort and the help of the Holy Spirit. In this parable Christ pictures Himself as a young nobleman going to a far land (heaven) to receive a kingdom and to return (to earth) (verses 11-12). As He left. He delegated certain responsibilities to each of His servants (representative of converted Christians to whom God has given His Spirit).

At His return, having obtained the Kingdom, how will Christ judge His servants" Luke 19:1 Notice the words -that he might know how much every man had gained by trading."

Each pound represented a unit of money symbolizing -spiritual value God has given each Christian His Holy Spirit to be used to serve others, to overcome and develop spiritual character and to accomplish the Work of-God.

8. Will each servant's reward be directly proportional to the degree of his growth - his spiritual overcoming and development" Verses 16-17 compared with verses 18-19.

True Christians are the servants of Jesus Christ

I "Corinthians 7:22-23), Some overcome more than others - accomplish more spiritual works with what they have been given and develop more spiritual character than others. Thus, in the Kingdom or Family of God, each will receive greater or lesser positions of responsibility dependent on the degree of his spiritual overcoming and character development in this life. Each will be rewarded "according to his works" (Matthew 16:27). But everyone will have a vital, meaningful responsibility to perform.

The responsibilities, which each one of God's Spirit-begotten children today is in the process of qualifying for, and which God wishes to bestow on us. are in addition to the gift of eternal life (Romans 6:23). So the reward is commensurate to our effort and diligence in overcoming, but access to eternal life comes freely through Christ as God's gift. There is no way we can earn salvation.

9. Does the principle of Matthew 24:46-47 illustrate that it is those who are faithful and overcome to the very end --- those who are still growing in spiritual character at Christ's return (or at their death, if that comes first) - who shall inherit God's Kingdom and receive a reward"

10. Does I Peter 1:5-9 also show there is need for continual growth in the virtues of Christian character is long as a person lives." Do verses 10-11 strongly imply that those who don't continue to grow and overcome may not make it into God's Kingdom"

If you are not moving forward in growth, then the tendency is to slip backward!

11. In what capacity is Christ now serving true Christians" Hebrews 4:14-16.

As the High Priest of all Spirit-begotten children of God, Jesus Christ is always available to help us overcome. He takes special interest in our spiritual development, helping to prepare us so we can eventually inherit all things with Him!

Christ is always on the job and available to help in times of weakness or trial, through the Holy Spirit He helps us to live a life of overcoming. Thus we have an active role in the salvation process too. It is up to us to "take earnest heed" to use today's time and opportunities for overcoming spiritually,

Stay close to God by drawing near to Him in prayer and through Bible study--Change, Overcome, strive continually build the character of God, until death or until the moment Jesus Christ returns when God will instantly change our weak, inadequate bodies into powerful, sinless, glorified Spirit bodies (Philippians 3:20, 21 ). It is then that we will be rewarded with stimulating responsibilities and opportunities to do great good in the world tomorrow as members of the Family of God! - Prepared by Richard Sedliacik