

# Overcoming the Evil One

Micaiah Stierle

In this life, we must contend with the devil. By no means, however, has God left us powerless in this fight.

John began his first epistle reminding us that what the apostles heard and saw, they reduced for us to writing (1 Jn. 1:1-4). This is a valuable point, which colors the rest of the epistle. John said that the message he proclaimed can lead us to the salvation God offers (1:2). He added in the rest of the first chapter that we *must* “walk in the light as God is in the light.”

John introduced the great antagonist in our walk in the light in chapter 2, verses 13-14, when John called the devil the “evil one.” He stated we have overcome in our fight against the evil one. But how? Beyond Jesus’s great sacrifice (1:7), what is our key to victory? At the end of 2:14, John explained we overcame *because* the word of God abides in us. Here, John ties back to the beginning of the letter where, in chapter 1, he introduced our need for God’s word – the “Word of Life” (1:1). So, the word of God is key to our fight against sin and the evil one.

John is not alone in tying the power of the word of God to our overcoming sin. Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:14-15, “But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” God’s word is the key to fighting for righteousness. *In a time where our instruction comes from scripture, and not from prophecy, we must rely very heavily on the word of God for guidance.*

In Psalm 119, the psalmist discusses, in great detail, the scriptures and how we relate to them. In fact, in the entire psalm, only two verses do not mention, in some form or another, God’s precepts. Verses 9-16 discuss our fight against sin. Here, the psalmist asks the question, ‘How can we stay pure in God’s sight? The answer, he concludes, is by guarding our hearts with the word of God.

Understanding that God’s word is the key tool to our success in the fight against sin, the psalmist resolves to focus on it. The psalmist mentions in verse 11 that he has stored the scripture in his heart. This, he says, aids him in striving to keep from sin.

How exactly do we “store up” God’s word in our heart? Psalm 119:15-16 provides some insight. Verse 15 shows the psalmist resolving to meditate on God’s precepts. This is fundamental to storing God’s word in our hearts. Meditation involves constant study. We need to regularly fill ourselves with the Bible. Even more than simply reading words, we must intentionally try to discern the actual meaning of the text. Meditation

requires that we wrestle with the things we do not understand, and struggle to comprehend them better.

Meditation mandates that we ponder what God has said continually. Psalm 1:1-2 says, "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked...but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night."

Back in Psalm 119:15, the psalmist says that he *delights* in God's statutes. This is another indispensable tool to write God's teachings on our hearts, and overcome the evil one. Consciously appreciating the power and benefit of the Bible brings tremendous power to our study and to our struggle against sin. It is important that the commandments of God are more powerful to us than the pressure the world inflicts. Then, we are able to focus on God's input above all trials.

In conclusion, the word of God is the invaluable weapon that God has given us to combat sin. To use it effectively, we need to study it, meditate on it, memorize it, and let it guide our lives. By it, we will be able to overcome the evil one, as Jesus did in Matthew 4.

"This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success." - Joshua 1:8

*Micaiah*