

Overcomers for Christ

June 2016

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Glory Meeting of the Overcomers for Christ February 2016



Self-centeredness/Pride - Part 1

By Wade Anderson

I first have to say, "WOW! It's hard to believe it's June and we are half way through the year 2016 already! I am in a state of 'awe' as God continues to move the ~~Overcomers~~ for Christ through doors only He could open. Praise Jesus!"

When I say 'I'm in a state of awe' it doesn't mean that I didn't believe God didn't have more in the works for us all. What I simply meant was, well, let me use these Scriptures to explain. **"Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things - and the things that are not - to nullify the things that are, (WHY?) so that no one may boast before Him."** (1 Corinthians 1:26-29 NIV)

Without throwing anyone else under the bus I can honestly say that I quite possibly could have been labeled a 'poster child' for, **"a foolish thing of the world ... a weak thing in the worlds eyes ... a lowly, despised thing by the worlds standard."** And I'll also be the first to tell you, "Having been lifted out of the life and style I was once seemingly buried alive in I KNOW this change that has taken place in my new life had absolutely nothing to do with me except, I surrendered and submitted to be used by Him for anything greater than myself." Sometimes we hear the word 'humble' and think that we are to view ourselves as lowly worms just crawling along the earth waiting to reach our lot in life. I honestly don't believe that's an accurate definition for the word 'humble'. In fact, the definition I find in the back of my Bible says, not proud or arrogant, having a spirit of submission or difference; to bring into submission. In my own personal life I've experienced this to be simply; teachable, willing to go anywhere or do anything that a lot of times seems impossible for me to accomplish.

Let's pray; *"Gracious and almighty heavenly Father, I thank You for Your most Precious and Holy Spirit that You promised would always be in and with us, to teach us, guide us, correct us and prepare us for even things to come ahead of us. Today and everyday help us to remember that we already HAVE Your very presence inside of us just waiting to be asked for His help. I know Lord that You have been impressing upon me this message I'm about to share here with my brothers and sisters for some time now. I pray that anything said here today that is not of You be washed away in the precious Blood of Your Son Jesus and only truth be digested. I ask these things with complete confidence that You do hear and answer prayer. It's in Jesus' name we pray and believe to receive. AMEN! AMEN"*

Before we go any further I want to ask you all, if you would, to repeat this after me; *"Lord Jesus, I place myself before You to be the student and I submit to be Your servant. I invite Your Holy Spirit to be my teacher. I open my heart to receive ALL that You have for me to learn here today. Thank You Lord, AMEN!"*

Without these previous Scriptures from **1 Corinthians 1:26-29** it might seem from the title that this message would be of one about arrogance, boasting or of setting oneself above another, but it's not. In fact, there may be several places where you too may feel "this doesn't apply to me." But I ask you to keep reading, don't lay it to the side, and instead continue to ask the Holy Spirit to bring the clarity. The reason I say 'you too' is because when I first began to hear the Lord teaching me in this area I also felt 'this doesn't apply to me' but I kept listening. I'll explain.

As I begin let me step back about 6-8 months prior to this event, April or May of 2014, and set this all up for hopefully a better understanding. I had gotten an invite from a friend and brother at church to go with him in January 2015 to an all men's conference/retreat up in Woodland Park, Colorado. I was on board and excited from the very beginning. We talked about it often and even encouraged other men to come along. Some of the other men did agree to come along but as the 8 months slowly crept by, people's lives were in different places and it ended up only the two of us made the event. With no condemnation let me say this, the two of us had made a commitment with each other regardless of what happened to make this event. These other men weren't so sure what lay that far ahead of them but they were going to 'try'. How many of you know that when we hear the voice of God and begin to make plans that far in the future the enemy is going to do all he can do to derail your plans?

Honestly, even for myself it seemed as though things were unraveling on both ends the closer we were to leaving for Colorado. The excitement had somewhat fizzled away as I was being caught up in everything 'I' thought 'I' had to take care of before 'I' could leave. It actually felt, in a sense, like God had pulled away from me and it seemed like it was harder to hear from Him. Finally, about a week prior to our leaving I went to God and threw it ALL out on the table and said, *"God, I know it's not 'me' that makes any of these things I'm so caught up in bear fruit. Instead of being so consumed in 'me' and what 'I' have to do I'm going to leave it all here, at Your feet. I open my heart ready to receive what You have planned for me in Colorado."* And you know what happened in those next few days? The excitement came flooding back into my heart as I began to block those thoughts of 'self' out.

This was the first time I'd been to a men's event of this magnitude. It was about a 12 hour drive, I LOVE to drive, so we

had decided to leave Phoenix about 6 pm and drive all night. Even though this brother and I did have a really great relationship I know now he was in no way prepared for the journey he was about to embark on. Being locked in a car for 12 hours with me sharing my life and testimony, well, let's just say it enlightened him to a world of people and events he had only heard of or seen on some TV show but certainly he had never ever experienced. Honestly though he wasn't even gun shy. After the men's event in Colorado he crawled right back into the car and we did another 12 hours together. Actually, I believe our transparency throughout the whole experience strengthened our relationship. I truly thank God for brothers and accountability partners like this brother.

I had no idea how HUGE of an event this was really going to be. As the first evening got under way there were close to 600 men in attendance. What do you think the whole 2 day experience/topic, brought by several different teachers, was about? PRIDE! As the evening rolled on it felt like everything that was being said I was doing my best to write down. Some of the things really caught me off guard to the point I wasn't so sure I agreed with it. But it was like the Holy Spirit was peeling back the layers to uncover something I'd never considered inside myself before. Many times that first evening I was in tears while writing and trying to keep up with what was being said. In reality, it wasn't so much what I was writing that was making the greater impact. It was what I was feeling on the inside of me that was speaking directly to my spirit. Obviously this was exactly what I needed to hear. Go figure, right?

As the first evening session was coming to a close the speaker began to give a specific invite. He said, "You're here tonight not by some coincidence but by divine appointment. You all are not the average just 'come to church' group. I know there are some of you that have been hearing and feeling the Spirit of God tugging away at your insides. You may have never considered this topic in the context of the way it was taught tonight but still, there's something churning that you just can't resist as truth in your own lives. If that's you I'd like for you to stand up right where you're at." As he first began to give this invite I felt something so strongly that I'd already laid by Bible and notepad on the floor. As he finished speaking, and before I even knew it, I shot up out of my chair to my feet. Being closer to the front of the room I was more focused on the speaker and what else he might say than what was going on around me. After a few minutes he said, "Okay, I'm going to extend this invitation and wait for a few more minutes because I know this is NOT all the men that God is speaking directly to here tonight." When he said that I turned to see how many men were on their feet. Now scoping out what was taking place I seen I was 1 of about 30 out of 600 men standing and I quickly began to feel foolish. And as quickly as that thought came it diminished as more men started popping up across the room. "I know there are probably lots more of you still sitting that God is prompting to stand up but I'm going to continue on," he said.

Looking around the room he then said, "This is generally the part of the service where most people ask everyone to bow their heads as we pray with and for these standing men. But that's the opposite of what this is all about. Instead, I want all of you that didn't stand to take a good long look at these men standing before all the rest of you here tonight. Some of these men are probably truly feeling humiliated but regardless they couldn't remain in their seats and because of that God is beginning to change some of these men's hearts and lives right now concerning this topic." As he finished with this last statement, and before he began to pray, more men kept popping up until there were close to 50 or 60 men now standing.

Above, where I said I felt foolish and somewhat humiliated was exactly the speaker's topic. The more he talked and drew attention to all of us the worse 'I' felt. So many times we get more concerned about what people might think about us than the obedience to the tugging of the Holy Spirit inside of us, and consequently we seldom experience ALL of what God has prepared for us to do or be. Remember above where I had told God, "I open my heart ready to receive what You have planned for me in Colorado"? From the moment I prayed that prayer I had begun building myself up and preparing myself with a spirit of expectation! Going with that kind of expectation is what caused me to leap to my feet even before my flesh had an opportunity to react. However, once I was standing and looking around the flesh said, "Look what a fool you've made of yourself in front of 600 men," trying to get me to sit down. I believe we would all be much wiser if we were to take on not just the mindset but more importantly the lifestyle that the Apostle Paul spoke of in **Galatians 1:10** when he said, **"Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would NOT be a servant of Christ."** When Paul said, **"Am I now"** those words speak to my own heart, and in my paraphrase to mean, 'After all that I had done against God, continuously attempting to fit in and please the world and always coming up short, then Jesus coming personally into my life and setting me free from myself why would I ever again seek the world's approval?' Sadly enough a majority of the body of Christ does not take Paul's approach on their journey with Jesus. Most people receive their salvation and are okay with simply reading their Bible and having one-way conversations with God. And I'm not saying this with any judgment or condemnation either. But there are literally cities of people that never step out on a limb to witness to those around them. Can I tell you that most of the reasons people choose not to step there is because of rejection. Often times we listen to the flesh as it casts thoughts of fear about what 'might' or 'might not' take place. In no way am I minimizing salvation, but in that light it has the tendency to paralyze some people causing them to 'just be saved'. Can I tell you something else? Anyone that has ever been around fruit trees knows that the 'fruit' grows out on the binding limbs of the tree. The difference with following the leading of the

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Don't worry about anything; instead pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank Him for all He has done **Philippians 4:6 (NLT)**

Prayer Requests

I would like to ask if you all would pray for my mother, stepdad, two brothers, three aunts, grandmother, my son, all my little cousins, nephews and all other relatives across the world, and all those whom are incarcerated and those who continue to keep the Lord in their hearts. I ask if you would pray that the Lord keep a protecting watch and care and provide my family with the things they need. Keep them out of harm's way, and keep them strong until I'm able to reunite with them in May 2017. I really appreciate your time and giving the Lord this request ... **E.B.**

Well, can you please ask people at the church if they will pray for all of us in here? Plus my old cellie, they split us apart and he is like my kid and I was looking out for him and protecting him, because he ain't cut out for prison life at all. His only source of help in here passed away and he wasn't dealing with it all that good. Now we ain't with one another, and I worry about him a lot. People in here prey upon the weak kind of people, and I ain't around to prevent people from doing that to him or from him being somehow harmed. So, really need your prayers for him please. That kid means a lot to me and needs the Lord to watch over him more than anyone knows, because like I said, I ain't with him to protect him or defend him, if needed ... **J.M.**

I was so lost I have had to let go of what I couldn't do nothing about but pray for my children, who have gotten so lost in the world. My son was released from prison in December 2015 and He was never seen again after that day, all I can do is pray for him. I know I can't let go of what I've found or how far I have come in my walk with Jesus Christ. If I am faithful to Him, He will never let me down, this is why I ask if you all will pray for me that my children will find the love of our Father. My daughter has turned to meth and in the last letter, she told me to live my life and stop trying to live hers. I am just going to put my daughter in His hands and keep her in prayer. If you all will pray for her? I can tell you that hurt, but I also know I must remain strong faithfully and pray and God will see me through it! **"How joyful are those who fear the LORD, all who follow His ways! You will enjoy the fruit of your labor. How joyful and prosperous you will be! Your wife will be like a fruitful grapevine, flourishing within your home. Your children will be like vigorous young olive trees as they sit around your table. That is the LORD's blessing for those who fear him."** (Psalm 128:1-4) ... **G.B.B.**

I have a prayer request. My 14 year old daughter is down in San Antonio, Texas with her two other sisters and her stepdad. They say that she is suffering from depression and anxiety and she is now cutting herself. They are trying to get her into a treatment facility but what she really needs is PRAYER and right now my family in Christ! I still have so many questions but I'm simply going to trust in God for His supernatural healing ... **L.M.R.**

Praise Reports

I was moved from a 4 yard to a 3 yard because my score and custody level went down somehow. It's a mystery to me still on how or why it changed. But to be honest I praise the Lord it changed, and I was removed from living in the two-man cells into an open yard in dorm style living environment. Even though now I live with a total of about 35 or so people, instead of just one other person, I still enjoy the lower custody level yard. I am able to have peace of mind plus when being around others that annoy me, I can just leave and go walk about the yard, or isolate myself and meditate, or have a personal conversation with the Lord. But the most wonderful aspect about being on a lower custody yard for me is watching the sunrise and watching the cars drive on the highway ... with how it all sounds early in the morning time. That right there feels almost like actual freedom. It's really wonderful to me ... **J.M.**

Praise God! He showed me an answer to my fervent prayer list for the month. He totally squashed my warrants/detainer out of Texas! Once I'm released from here I'm a free woman, I can get a driver's license! Woo Hoo! All the glory to my Father in heaven and who can list the glorious miracles of the Lord? **"Who can ever praise Him enough?" (Psalm 106:2)** A beautiful promise from God, Praise be to the Lord, for He showed me the wonders of His love (Psalm 31:21) ... **L.M.R.**

I really do appreciate your cards and mail; it makes a big difference in here. I can truly testify that God and the devil are real! Angels and demons are also real! Injustice, power and greed are the harvest of satan's dark works. Why anyone would deny the existence of God and deprive themselves of His wonders bewilders me. Praise God He is always with me and continues to bless me in all weather ... **V.D.**

Just a few lines to let you know that God still hears and answers prayer! Praise God, my surgery went well and I'm doing okay. It's been 3 weeks now and I'm already feeling better. They fused my 2nd and 3rd disks - put rods in them and I'll be going back for surgery on my 4th and 5th disks next month ... **W.R.**

I'm finally at a complex, I won't be leaving. I left Alhambra and went to a private prison and then ended up in the hospital twice. The private "for profit" prison sent me to a state prison medical unit which is for bed-ridden guys waiting to die. A very sad place, the old guy next to me died during the five days I was there for liver failure. Which made it more depressing for me, then the doc said I did not belong there, at least not yet. So I was moved permanently ... Praise the Lord ... **R.S.**

Overcomers for Christ

From the Inside

A New Purpose For My Life

By V.H.

I've recently read *'The Purpose Driven Life'* by Rick Warren and I loved it! I learned a lot! One of the things that I've learned is that we ALL are missionaries. Everywhere. All the time. Ever since then I've been putting myself out there, spreading the Gospel.

Today, for example, I took your most recent newsletter and went around the yard, even door to door, and told people about your ministry. As a result, over 50 women signed up to receive your newsletter! How awesome is that!? Praise God!

I go to church here on Saturday mornings. I teach one on one Bible studies and I currently have 3 ladies I sponsor. Plus, I too work the steps myself and go to meetings on Fridays. I applied for a mentor from a church but they turned me down. It seems they don't want anyone with psychiatric issues. HELLO! I live on a medical yard in a prison. Depression, anxiety, post traumatic stress disorder and addiction are, sadly, all too common to nearly all inmates. And this is only my opinion, but, if they turned me away for those reasons, then they probably don't have many mentees. So sad.

Oh yah, before I forget, I would have gotten over 60 women signed up for the newsletter but the officer on the yard made me stop. He told me to stop acting like a Jehovah's witness going door to door spreading the Word. Remember, it wasn't me that said that it was the officer on the yard. Anyways, I'll accept that, I've been called worse.

In July I had my 4 years of sobriety anniversary. This may sound weird but I am so happy and grateful to be here in prison. For the first time in my life, my only responsibilities are to get an education and get close to God. And with that I'm grateful to say, I've got a 4.0 grade average AND I'm in LOVE with God, Jesus and the Bible!! I love it all! I have a freedom I've never known before. I'm enjoying it and I'm determined to make the most of the new purpose for my life. See, I've never had structure in my life and it's resulted in my not having a foundation for my life either. If not for me being here I'd probably still be out there making poor choices and being the all around ignorant person I used to be. It's funny how I came in here kicking and screaming, and now I'm thrilled beyond belief! Go figure ...

Fight the Good Fight

By J.H.

WOW! First I have to thank you all so much for my birthday gift with all the signatures, that made me smile! I keep you guys in my prayers and wish all of you the best. God is great, and staying thankful is the key to obtaining the peace that passes all understanding! Your cards and notes add fuel to my life and keep me pushing in the right direction.

I read a cool quote a while ago that says, "The true soldier fights not because he hates what's in front of him, but because he loves what's behind him." Folks we are in a spiritual warfare, every day we battle against satan and his tactics. When I fight the good fight, knowing I have Jesus and my brothers and sisters behind me, praying for me and going through similar struggles, it gives me added strength.

Knowing His grace IS sufficient, even though I just received a denial in my appeal I truly understand the God of the universe loves me and has my best interest. (**Romans 8:28**) I rest in that, my flesh wants to leave but my Father who knows my tomorrows and who has complete control over the courts knows what's best. That's why we cannot be lukewarm, we're either all in or not at all! I'm all in and I know my Overcomers for Christ family is to!

Spiritual Journey

By C.S.

Hello Overcomers for Christ. I would like to thank you for coming and visiting with me. I really appreciate you all being my spiritual guide along the journey of life, my quest for righteousness and what I'm going through right now.

After we talked and then prayed about my current situation I was contacted a few days later by my attorney, and BAM the prosecutor already came down 1 1/2 years from the original plea. I have another court date in April but I want you to know that God has sent you to help save my life. I'm already beginning to watch and see as the Lord is really starting to bless me. I did have faith before but NOW it's official, "Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior!" I hope you reserve me a seat in

Overcomers for Christ

From the Inside

your church for when I am released from prison.

Listen to God

By M.G.

It's up to us to pray as much as our heart's desire in order to send those we pray for a message.

Write a written request by writing down every scripture you find. Also, as you're listening to the Holy Spirit for the details, write down the impressions and ideas He gives you. Take your time; let the Spirit develop your prayer. Let the truth He reveals to you settle in and begin to work in you. Get your petition firmly in mind, and then when you're ready, present it to God. Believe me, He'll be listening.

A word from God, "Let me anoint you with My presence. I am the King of kings and the Lord of lords, dwelling in unapproachable light. When you draw near to Me, I respond by coming closer to you. As My presence envelopes you, you may feel overwhelmed by My power and Glory. This is a form of worship, sensing your smallness in comparison to My Greatness. Man has tended to make himself the measure of all things. But man's measure is too tiny to comprehend My majestic vastness. That is why people do not see Me at all, even though they live and move and have their being in Me. Enjoy the radiant beauty of My presence. Declare My glorious Being to the world!"

Here I Am Lord

By R.L.

My brothers and sisters in Christ, I pray these words reach you guys in abundance of blessings ... it was impressed upon my heart to write you all these few lines.

It has been a HUGE blessing you all coming into my life. Man, the visits come just when I need them the most. It comes to mind when Jesus Christ was at His weakest and lowest point (**Matthew 4:11, Luke 22:43**). Every time there is a word or a Scripture that he shares with me that lets me know that God IS present and working with me. Being incarcerated for nearly 8 years in the county gets hard. But when I get a visit and a newsletter from the Overcomers for Christ, well, it lifts my spirit! I am truly grateful for all the effort and support you all show me and I know the Lord brought you all into my life for a reason. Your newsletters are passed around here in this pod and many others read them and send their HELLO'S!

Let me share with you all a little piece of how the Overcomers for Christ is working in my personal life right here where I'm at. Recently I got some upsetting news from my attorney that I am probably going to be here for quite some time more. As sad as this was to me I know the Lord is not done working both in me or through me right where I'm at. Then I got a visit from Brother Wade, as we were talking about my new situation it was towards the latter part of our visit when he handed me the newest issue of the newsletter. As he handed it to me he said, "This is the only one of these that has been printed as of yet but the Holy Spirit just told me to give it to you." When I saw the cover (February 2016), man it hit me hard! And right then I felt the Lord say, "I'm still working in you."

See, it was while I was previously reading through the **Book of Jeremiah Chapter 18**, "The Potter and the Clay", that I first started feeling this message from the Lord. And when I was handed the newsletter there it was, the front cover picture, conformation of what the Lord had already begun to tell me. Even though this LONG county time is hard, I know that when my stay here ends the purpose for my stay here will be accomplished. For the meantime all I can say is like Samuel, in **1 Samuel 3:4** said, "**Here I am Lord.**"

1 Chronicles 1:1-4:4

1 Chronicles begins with a long list of descendants from Adam on down, a genealogy, giving us insights to some of the people on how they acted, if they had pleased God. Each of us is forging our own reputations, developing our own personal qualities by which we will be remembered. How would God summarize your life up to now? Some definitely claim how they live is their own business. But scripture teaches that the way you live today will determine how you will be remembered by others and how you will be judged by God. What you do now does matter. (2:3)

Here we continue to read lists of descendants, many of which have their individual stories scattered throughout the Bible, such as Joab, Abishai, Caleb, Abigail, Bathsheba, Solomon, and the list goes on. Some of them were huge parts in history others were small. (2:18-4:4)

Acts 23:11-24:27

God works in amazing and amusing ways. There were infinite possibilities of ways God could use to get Paul to Caesarea, but He chose to use the Roman army to deliver Paul from his enemies. God's ways are not our ways. Ours are limited, His are not. Don't limit God by asking Him to respond your way, when God intervenes, things will work out much better than you could ever imagine or anticipate. (23:23-24)

Paul's talk with Felix became so personal that Felix grew fearful, Felix, like Herod Antipas (Mark 6:17-18) had taken another man's wife. Paul's words were interesting until they focused on "righteousness and self-control and the judgment to come." Many people will be glad to discuss the Good News with you as long as it doesn't touch their lives too personally, when it does, some will resist or run. But this is what the Good News is all about - God's power to change lives. The Good News is not effective until it moves from principles and doctrine into a life changing dynamic. When someone resists or runs from your witness, you have undoubtedly succeeded in making the Good News personal. (24:25)

Psalms 3:1-4:8

When circumstances go against us, it is tempting to think that God is against us. But David reminds us that the opposite is true. When everything seems to go against us, God is still for us. If circumstances have turned against you, don't blame God, seek Him. (3:1-3)

We can be confident that God listens to our prayers and answers when we call on Him. Sometimes we think that God will not hear us because we have fallen short of His high standards for holy living. But if we have trusted Christ for Salvation, God has forgiven us, and He will listen to us. When you feel as though your prayers are bouncing off of the ceiling, remember that as a believer you have been set apart by God and that He loves you. He hears and answers, although His answers may not be what you expect. Look at your problems in the light of God's power instead of looking at God in the shadow of your problems. (4:3)

Proverbs 18:14-18

This **Proverb** affirms the value of coping skills. Sickness can be overcome but there is no medicine for a broken spirit. (18:14)

Whenever both sides agree on a method of settling a dispute, that method is a means to peace. The casting of lots was a biblical pattern for assistance in decision making. (16:33), behind the lots was the sovereign power of God.

“Foot” Notes

Hello fellow Overcomers, I saw a gal on TV the other day that really got me thinking. She was speaking on authenticity in the church. So, I'm sure pretty much all of us have walked into a church and knew from a quick glance that, "I'm not going to fit in here" just by the way you're looked at. You know, gasps of horror or a pinched expression as if someone just bit into a lemon. All members with perfect hair, perfect clothes, all with an air of perfection as if none of them have ever had a single struggle. I've backed out of a few of those myself.

Ya know the facade of perfection is ridiculous. For the Bible tells us that if we follow Christ we will face hardships, we will be persecuted, we will be hated. So, why the facade? I just don't get it. That being said, I just want to tip my hat to those who keep it real. We know we are sinners, we know we are flawed, and we know we don't deserve God's love. But we accept Salvation and continue to be who we are and not some fake cardboard cutout of what some think a Christian has to be. The Overcomers I know have always kept it authentic (sometimes scary authentic), but they are real and their love for God is real. May God bless you all, short and tall. Vaya con Dios ... don't ride faster than your angels can fly!!!

Holy Spirit to 'step out there' is, this limb may bend and sway but it will NEVER break.

Let's go to the Bible where we can see these very same things taking place with Jesus and His disciples. As Jesus opened up in **John 14:1** He said, *"Don't let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in Me."* It was directly after His explanation about going to prepare a place for them that Thomas said, **"Lord, we do not know where You are going, so how can we know the way?"** (**John 14:5**) So, Jesus answered and said, *"I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."* And wouldn't you know it Phillip pipes up and says, **"Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us."** (**John 14:8**) Then in **John 14:15-31** Jesus is not only trying to comfort and encourage them but He was promising them the coming Holy Spirit. In **John 14:28** we read, *"You heard Me say, I am going away and I am coming back to you. If you loved Me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I."*

Think about this for a minute. This was the night before His Crucifixion and Jesus was trying His best to give them, the very men He had hand chosen to walk with Him, as much detail and insight into the next few days events that He could. Now I don't know about you all but there are times that I can almost hear different tones in certain voices as I read the Bible. Reading through these events here it's almost like I can hear Jesus' tone with them as He says, "Guys, if you really loved me and heard the things I've explained to you, you wouldn't be so depressed and mixed up right now! Instead, all you're focusing on is, 'Look what 'I' gave up to be Your disciple - all of 'my' plans, hopes and dreams. Now 'my' fishing business is ruined! What's going to happen to 'me' if You really aren't the Messiah, and what if 'I'm' not the foundation of Your church? Will they crucify 'me' next?" Heck guys, earlier today you were fighting over which one of you is greatest and worthy of the best seat in the kingdom! Don't be so self-centered! Instead, you should be rejoicing that I am going to the Father!" Can you hear the tone? Instead of reflecting on all the things Jesus had personally taught them while He was with them all they were thinking of was themselves. The disciples were about to enter the most challenging time of their lives - Christ's betrayal, arrest and crucifixion. And because they couldn't get past 'themselves' they couldn't even begin to see what was about to happen to Jesus. The root of all these kinds of thoughts and emotions is SELF.

This next example of self-centeredness is often times rooted in grief. When a loved one dies, we immediately begin to ask ourselves, "How will I ever get along without them?" Our first reactions are to give into the powerful and strong emotions, as we focus on death and loss, crying out, "I'll never see them alive on earth again! How will I get through this?" That was once me as well. In a sense I was more or less trying to convince myself that my mourning was for the deceased, when in reality, it's for myself? Think about it, if that loved one we are grieving over was not lost then they are now in heaven! This is what the Apostle Paul was saying here in **2 Corinthians 5:8** (NLT), **"Yes, we are fully confident, and we would rather be away from these bodies, for then we will be at home with the Lord."** That loved one is NOW standing in the presence of Jesus and that's a reason to celebrate! Take a look in **John 11:17-36**, the story of Jesus and His friend Lazarus, it says, **"Jesus wept."** Jesus was flesh and had emotions just like you and I but I believe, because of their relationship, He knew the grave was not Lazarus's final resting place. The pain and the loss seem more real to us than our loved one's happiness and peace in heaven. Sure there is a grieving process we will always go through but that situation doesn't have to turn into a crises or define the rest of our lives. It is when we allow something like this to define the rest of our life that we've then made it all about us. Believe me, I've felt these very same emotions when someone in my own life has passed. And in the past, I personally allowed such emotions to suck me deeper and deeper into that drug addiction. Self-medicating was not about them either, it was ALL about me! I guarantee you that NOT one of those loved ones or friends would have wanted me to do that to myself over them. I agree that it may feel like a piece of our heart has been torn out but isn't that the reason we've run this race? YES! In fact, the Apostle Paul says this very thing in **Philippians 3:14**, **"I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."** This is exactly why I like the term 'Home Going Celebration' over funeral. We gather together at their passing not looking at it as death but as a celebration of the life they lived here on earth with us. Instead of putting so much focus on the times and events we will no longer have with them it could help our grieving time considerably if we focused more on the time we have already had with them. I know I've probably crossed over the line where some of you believe I'm being insensitive. But that is not my purpose for saying these things so I'll stop right there.

Michelle and I used to have two dogs that we each loved in our own ways. These were not 'our' dogs, she had 'hers' and I had 'mine'. Michelle had an all white Pit Bull named Powder and I had an all white, except around his left eye was black, American Bulldog named Bruiser. Powder was the runt of the litter when we got her and soon after that she contracted Valley Fever. Michelle loved Powder so much and clung to her like she was her own child. And I know our daughter Courtney would totally vouch for that last statement. She nurtured her and cuddled her, hand fed her, prayed for her healing and even carried her out to go to the bathroom and slowly Powder was better than ever. In Powder's lifetime the Vet couldn't understand how healthy she appeared because her blood work always showed something entirely different. When she was about 4 years old she became real sick again to the point where the only thing she was able to do on her own was barely lift her head. Again we hand fed her and carried her out to use the bathroom. The Vet recommended we

put her down but after all that Michelle had been through with Powder she just couldn't bring herself to do this. Quickly we seen that it would be selfish on our part to keep her with us as sick as she was. So together we made the decision to put Powder down. Michelle was stronger than I had expected and went and even laid with Powder at the Vet until she took her last breath.

That left us with just 'my' dog, Bruiser. Bruiser was exactly that, a real aggressive dog that if he didn't like the way you looked, spoke or even came in the door he would reach out and nip or bite you. He was also food aggressive, when Powder was alive. This was at a time in our lives when our grandchildren were 8, 3 and 1 years old. After Bruiser had nipped at several different pals of mine and then about tore my thumb off when I tried to discipline him I came to the same crossroad Michelle had. I had to step up and swallow the same pill she had to about 13 months earlier with Powder. As much as I loved 'my' dog I couldn't even consider the self-centeredness. I had to seriously evaluate what a bite like that would do to these three young grandsons of ours. I couldn't rationalize it away that 'my' dog wasn't even sick or maybe 'I' could just keep him out in the shop with me. One bite to one of my grandsons and I would have to kill the dog on the spot because of my own 'self-centeredness'. Even though this was a cut and dry situation to have 'my' dog put down, I can see today that this next decision was all about me too. I 'thought' I just couldn't do it so I asked Michelle to take Bruiser just like she took Powder. I was now putting Michelle through something like that twice. He was 'my' dog. Even that was self-centeredness on my part.

It is natural as human beings to think about ourselves during 'our' grieving process that time before the inevitable death of a loved one and the death of that loved one. But our growth, maturity and healing come when we can rejoice for the loved ones that have went home to heaven. We can take those moments of self-centeredness and learn and grow from it and then share it with others who are going through the same thing. This has been a lot to digest, I will leave you for now and we will continue this next month.

Overcomer's Testimonies

Fond Memories

By G.B.B.

Hello, sister Michelle. Girl let me tell you, I remember when you wrote that piece in the newsletter about your mother ... it brought me to my knees. Sis, my mother and I were so close. She was more to me than just a mom, my mom was my best friend. When I was just 9 years old, I became very sick and went into a coma for 3 1/2 weeks. The doctors told my mother that I was going to die. My mom wouldn't receive what they told her and she responded with, "Well you must not know my God." Shortly after that comment, I came out of the coma. Then at the age of 16, I was riding my bicycle when a car hit me and again I laid in the hospital in a coma. My mother never left my side. All the time she sat there with me she was reading God's Word and praying over me until I came out of the coma. At the age of 31, I was riding my Harley Davidson home when a truck hit me and once again I fell into a coma. This time was more intense than the other times so my mother gave up her job and moved into the hospital for 68 days. All the while continually reading and confessing God's Word over me. She continued to tell the doctors and nurses, "Evidently you don't know my Father like I do" ... and yes, once again I came out of that coma to.

I have done a lot of time behind these walls and fences. Back in 1999 my mother passed away and I wasn't there with her. I almost fell apart. That is, until I remembered what she had showed me, "Go to God in prayer." In the last 2 1/2 years, my health has gotten bad and I've found myself in the hospital several times. One night as I returned to the prison from the hospital I began to ask God to show me His love for me. Soon after this I heard a voice tell me, "You still have a lot to do before you come here to be with the Father." The coolest thing was it was my mother's voice that I heard tell me this. She went on to tell me, "You are going to get out of prison so you can meet the son and your grandchildren you've never met yet."

So sister Michelle, let me tell you that your mother is right there with you and I know you do know that. Trust me, I felt a blessing today that our mothers who are so dear to us are blessed and in a much better place with God. I just wanted you to know that your message took me back to some very fond moments with my mother.

What Others Are Saying...

"I want to say 'thank you, thank you' so very much for my birthday letter where you all signed it with great messages for me. It was so beautiful and brought lots of joy to my heart just knowing I'm not forgotten in the free world! It was one of a kind so I framed it so I'll always remember how I felt when I received it ... when no one else cared. I really was shocked because I didn't know anybody knew my birthday ... in fact it was the only one I received. Thank you all always for the positive words of encouragement and newsletters as well." ... **M.A.**

"First, I send my respect to you and all of the *Overcomers for Christ* helpers. Next I've got to say, that I just realized that it was about the same time that I fell from the Lord that your newsletters started coming my way. You guys have been with me for the whole time I've been down. I've been down 8 years now on a 43 years to life sentence. It might be strange but the first thing I do is go to the pictures. Even though I'm from Riverside, CA but for some reason, looking at the pictures makes me feel like I'm looking at home. Anyways, keep up the good work and please tell everybody there with you that they are bringing light into this man made hell and I for one appreciate it." ... **D.M.**

"Overcomers, just writing to say thank you for all the newsletters and correspondence over the years that I've been locked up here. I'm being released on May 1st to freedom once again. I've received the newsletters since 2010 and they have really helped me through this time of being locked up. God surly has blessed you with a wonderful thing. I pray He continue to use you all for many years to come." ... **D.C.**

"Thank you for all the cards and the newsletters have been awesome too! How cool it was to see a poem that I submitted get printed. I love poetry, collecting it and writing it. I'll also be submitting some art work as well that you have my permission to use in the newsletter. I also want to start tithing to your ministry. I know it's not much but it is 10% of my monthly wages here. There are several ministries that show love and support to inmates and I want to start showing my love and support back by tithing 10% every month. This month it's the *DS&C* Ministry." ... **V.H.**

Quote Worthy

"The temptation of the age is to look good without being good."

- Brennan Manning (1934 - 2013) - an American author, priest, and public speaker. He is best known for his bestselling book *The Ragamuffin Gospel*.



Ministry Tithes & Offerings ... 2 Ways to Give

It takes the body of Christ working together to create, print, and mail this newsletter. None of this would be possible without the faithful support of many people who believe in this ministry. The vision of this ministry is to offer hope, love, and encouragement to those who are incarcerated. You are investing in spreading the Word of God to lost souls, and encouraging and mentoring believers.

There are **two** ways to give to the *Overcomers for Christ* ministry:

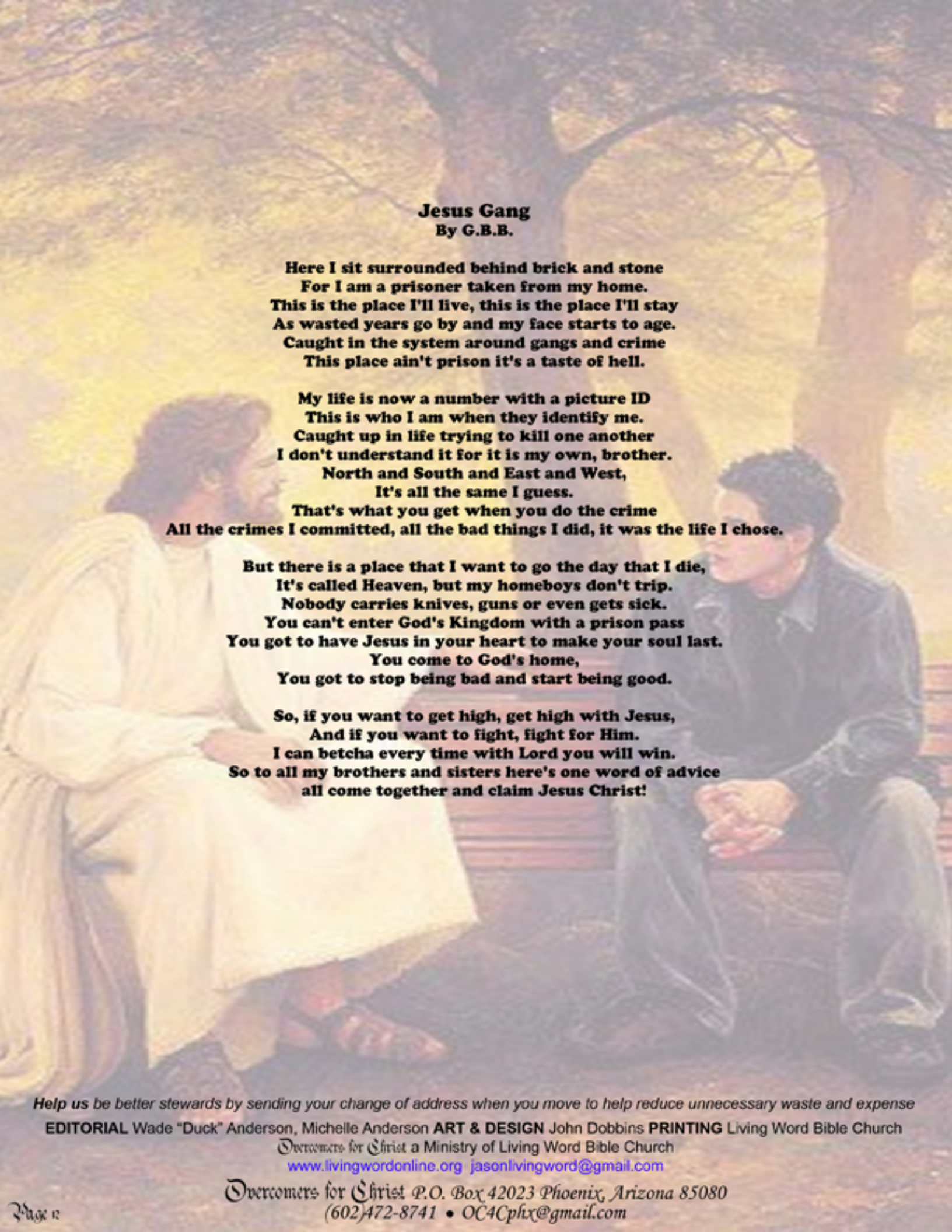
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By **ONLINE** at <http://livingwordonline.com> - click in the **"Give"** icon - If you are new online giver, then click on **"Create Account"** and then follow the account set-up. If you are existing online giver, then select **"Give Now"**. Once you are logged into the website, then click on **"Give Now"**, and under the **"Give To"** drop-down select **"05 Outreach"**, then from the drop-down to the right select **"Overcomers for Christ | Prison Ministry"**

We thank everyone who sows into this ministry. We pray that all that your hands touch will be richly blessed, and that you will have abundance in every area of your life.

Your giving does qualify as a charitable contribution on your taxes. If you have any questions, please call or write Wade Anderson.

Overcomers for Christ P.O. Box 42023 Phoenix, Arizona 85080
(602)472-8741 • OC4Cphx@gmail.com



Jesus Gang
By G.B.B.

**Here I sit surrounded behind brick and stone
For I am a prisoner taken from my home.
This is the place I'll live, this is the place I'll stay
As wasted years go by and my face starts to age.
Caught in the system around gangs and crime
This place ain't prison it's a taste of hell.**

**My life is now a number with a picture ID
This is who I am when they identify me.
Caught up in life trying to kill one another
I don't understand it for it is my own, brother.
North and South and East and West,
It's all the same I guess.
That's what you get when you do the crime
All the crimes I committed, all the bad things I did, it was the life I chose.**

**But there is a place that I want to go the day that I die,
It's called Heaven, but my homeboys don't trip.
Nobody carries knives, guns or even gets sick.
You can't enter God's Kingdom with a prison pass
You got to have Jesus in your heart to make your soul last.
You come to God's home,
You got to stop being bad and start being good.**

**So, if you want to get high, get high with Jesus,
And if you want to fight, fight for Him.
I can betcha every time with Lord you will win.
So to all my brothers and sisters here's one word of advice
all come together and claim Jesus Christ!**

Help us be better stewards by sending your change of address when you move to help reduce unnecessary waste and expense

EDITORIAL Wade "Duck" Anderson, Michelle Anderson **ART & DESIGN** John Dobbins **PRINTING** Living Word Bible Church

Overcomers for Christ a Ministry of Living Word Bible Church

www.livingwordonline.org jasonlivingword@gmail.com

*Overcomers for Christ P.O. Box 42023 Phoenix, Arizona 85080
(602)472-8741 • OC4Cphx@gmail.com*