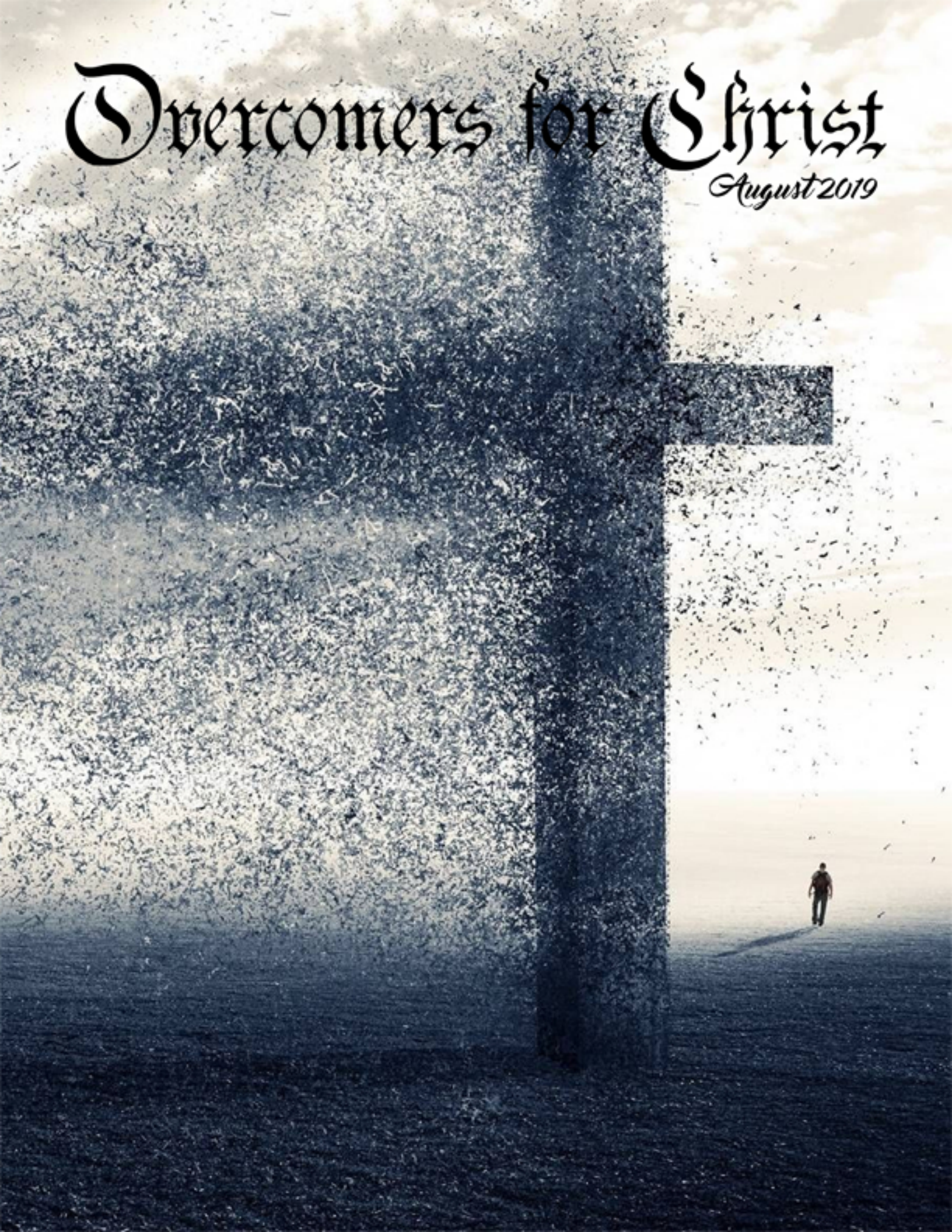


Overcomers for Christ

August 2019



Glory Meeting of the Overcomers for Christ

September 2018



The Cost of a Free Gift By Rodger Whisman

Before starting this message I was considering core values in our Christian beliefs and from where do those beliefs originate, and for what reasons? Are they Scriptural truths or simply opinions passed down to us from past religious systems? What I learned was that there are fractures in foundational beliefs. But the foundation in which Christ set cannot be broken nor can it be fractured.

As I began to listen to other brothers and sisters and then share with them I soon became aware of a common struggle with many Christians. Within some of these struggles I had a better understanding of what created the vast differences in denominational beliefs, and why they struggle with their own differences.

Many serve the Lord with all that they have in their hearts. They live their lives with all their hearts but still have issues with **The Cost of a Free Gift**. In that, they continue to struggle instead of resting in their Salvation. I could see struggles in this life, in the world's ways. But to struggle in God's promises and truths at a foundational level seems a bit strange, to me. If a foundation is not solid and sure, everything that is built on it may not fare well. After careful thought and Scriptural research I put what I had seen before the Lord in prayer. I even thought to myself, "Who do we think we are at times? Why teach or preach on opinions?"

These fractures in our foundational beliefs in Christ can be traced to many reasons. I want to share with you all a few of these reasons that I have found to be most apparent.

The way we were raised and our own personal beliefs play a big role in our lives. I refer to the majority of those things as our humanity, and for the most part we have been taught to embrace our humanity. That is an error because as Christians we are to embrace Christ, our Lord and Savior. We live in our bodies all the days of our natural lives here on this earth. But, we are not subject to the flesh. This is why Paul said, in **Romans 8:7-8**, "**Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.**" Now listen to these same Scriptures in the NLT translation. "**The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.**"

To press on in the subject of this message, another fallacy are the things we learn in knowledge and then try to apply that to our Christian walk. We are taught and come to learn, nothing in life is free. We are also taught that if it is free, there must be a catch to it somewhere. Someone is paying the cost some way, somehow.

We are soaked in advertisements and the media with 'stuff' that is supposed to be free. Or buy one, get one free. Then we find out that there are preconditions or up sales; meaning that the item shown is of a greater price. What you see may not be what you get. After going through these mazes a few times we then learn to always be skeptical.

Maybe the way we were raised, lacking in trust and love makes us see things adverse or different. Weak on moral values such as truth IS a big factor. Maybe it was in our lack of training in the stewardship department where respect is questionable. It could have been going through an early trauma where care and good got punished, instead of constructive criticism where encouragement could have been given. All of the above can creep into any Christian's life at any level and could create cracks and fractures in our foundation.

Here's a curve for you. Think on how many Christians love to be givers but they pull back and struggle when it is time for them to receive. And they act that way for a multitude of reasons. We are human and we are very subject to human error. Or how about this saying: To error is human.

There are also times that a fracture is called; incorrect information. Then, without realizing it, we apply that incorrect information to our lives, lifestyles and Christian walks. And later on when we find out, through the truth in God's Word, that we have been running our Christian lives on incorrect information we have a tendency of shutting down in many areas that could have been fruitful. This includes accepting the blessings God has for us in His gifts and promises. And yes, at that point we can get a little bitter and indifferent towards others around us AND the Holy Spirit. In those times we close our spiritual ears and become near incapable of receiving from the Lord via Holy Spirit's direction.

When someone like a best friend or a family member that has always been there for us, someone special in our life that we know really loves us and has our well being at heart and even Holy Spirit attempting to reach in and tap on our hearts ... why is it even then that we pull back from them? My own conclusion is that it all derives from confusion that walked on our beliefs and became error. This is a sign that we are dealing with a serious fracture. This is a hard position to be caught in as God IS our Giver. That is when we end up with a growth problem or rather, a building issue.

I can share that this I too had to deal with to get to the end results of my own foundation fractures. I too had a real messy

mess that withheld my Christian maturity and also impacted my life for many years. I had to get to the root of my own Christian issues, the core of what my own malfunction in my Christian walk was.

My beliefs were, "Anything that I received I had to pay back in equal value or more value." A deep fracture of not wanting to receive anything at all, due to the 'pay back' was always in my for frontal thoughts. And friends, my life, in my own eyes, soon became unworthy of the blessings from God. My stand still or stop, soon became a slide backwards to a full run away, catch me if you can, I am out of here mentality with God. This mentality also caused me to resort to blaming Him for the messes that I created. As I first said, with this closer review of my own life and walk I'm becoming more aware of the fractures and wrong foundational beliefs in my own life. It's through this process that I too have become more aware of **The Cost of a Free Gift.**

The gifts from God are without charge, expectation and or judgment. God's gifts and promises are about real love to ALL of mankind. This includes both you and me AND it's a 100% guarantee. God's love for each of us is so great that He sacrificed His only begotten Son (Jesus), so that you and I could have the free gift of Salvation. God has offered this gift to not only you and I but to the entire human race (**Titus 2:11**). Let's take this a step further. Even in this free gift of Salvation God has also offered us all a free choice to either accept or reject His gifts. So we see clearly that locked within God's LOVE is free choice. Those two issues can NOT be separated in anyway. My first and foremost intention in this message was/is to share and reason with you all so let's now take this to Scripture.

I'm most assuredly convinced that **John 3:15-16** is a notable Scripture of God's truth towards ALL mankind. Jesus Himself said, *"That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* Let's stop here for just a second and really think about what Jesus just said. I believe that it is fair to think and even ask whether Jesus Christ Himself had free choice in His being sacrificed? The answer here is one that has had many inputs in Christian denominations and the opinions vary greatly. BUT the Scriptures, here in **John 10:16-18**, are very clear and to the point. *"And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."* I love how in **Verse 16** here Jesus spoke specifically about you and me. Most people don't relate to the truth here, but I want you to know that the Mosaic Law was given for the Jewish people. It's so important to see that right here Jesus is telling EVERYONE, Jew and Gentile, that He's giving up His life and laying it down for you! That is what He means when He says, *"And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold (Jew)."*

Let's now reason on not only the free gift of Salvation through Christ, but let's add to that the gift of life. Naturally you are alive and breathing as you ARE reading this article. God freely gave each of us life. To add depth to these words, God is life. According to **Genesis 1:31**, *"And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day."* All of these Scriptures that I have began to relate to are foundational and cannot be broken. In other words, if you alter them to change their meanings you will delete their value and importance. The house will crumble as cracks will grow bigger the more we try to build something on half truths, opinions or folk lore.

Scriptural truths, from the foundation up, must be maintained. To live, to have life and to enjoy it in abundance is also a gift of God. **Ecclesiastes 3:13** states, *"And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God."* So this life we are living here on earth is already a gift of God. It is free to all mankind. We can't earn it, and there is no way to find payment for it because there is no payment on our lives because it is a free gift. And now that the life issue is reasoned out let us now go back to the free gift of Salvation.

Listen as Paul speaks about being saved and or redeemed in **Ephesians 2:8**, *"And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages He might show the incomparable riches of His grace, expressed in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast."* Clearly, not by anything we have ever done or will ever be able to do, God has given us the free gift, on our part, of Salvation through/by believing (faith) in the One that He sent to redeem us, Christ Jesus. There is absolutely no way to pay for it or attempt to be good enough to receive it. God freely hands it to us and it's by our own choice to believe and accept it. If we reject His free gift by not believing it's still our choice.

Now in reference to everlasting life, the truth is; Jesus Christ our Lord, by choice, died on the Cross and rose again from the grave so that you and I could have this gift of everlasting life. His obedience to go to the Cross was not a cover up band aid for sin repair. His life was/is a full pardon abolishing our sins so we could receive the everlasting life by great and precious promises in His Holy Scriptures.

... continued on page 9

THIS IS THE CONFIDENCE WE HAVE IN APPROACHING GOD: THAT IF WE ASK ANYTHING ACCORDING TO HIS WILL, HE HEARS US. AND IF WE KNOW THAT HE HEARS US - WHATEVER WE ASK - WE KNOW THAT WE HAVE WHAT WE ASKED OF HIM. 1 JOHN 5:14-15 (NIV)

Prayer Requests

I recently found out that my eldest son (29) really struggles with depression. I'd appreciate prayers for him, his name is A.J. Also, as of this date, I am under a year to go until my release. I am officially 'short timing'. So, please pray that my mom stays healthy. I can't wait to see her, my wife, kids and grandkids ... **B.M.**

Tell all the brothers and sisters there that I send my love in Christ their way, and thank them for all they do for us. Prayer for my mom's continued good health, continued healing for my brother Mark and April. For me to get out before Christmas. Prayer for Mr. Trump and all the leaders in the world ... **R.L.**

I'm writing to ask if you could keep my sister Tammy and her son Cody in your prayers? Cody is going through some stuff and Tammy and I pray for Cody to answer the door to Jesus as He knocks ... **D.F.**

I want to ask that you continue to pray for me and keep me in your thoughts. Thank you and the **DS&** family for accepting me and understanding where I'm coming from and where I plan to go ... **D.T.**

Please pray for my wife, Marisol, my son, Chris, his wife, Sandra, who were in a car accident and are okay but to recover soon from all the hurts. As well as for my mom and our entire family and all the brothers and sisters in Christ and for all my enemies. Thank you and God bless you always ... **M.R.**

This unit has not had an assigned chaplain for several years, but that will change in a couple months. So, please keep us in all your prayers that God places the right chaplain here. A chaplain that is willing to expand God's Kingdom and wants to help inmates come to Christ ... **B.H.**

I have a few prayer requests ... R is looking for some grace in his legal case vs. Maricopa county. He got thrown around by them while cuffed up and still suffers from a collar bone injury. The current snag is that he cannot prove that his injury wasn't pre-existing. It's just legal garbage but he might take it to trial. Pray that God's will be done here. Pray for Chaplain R, I ask that God bless him and his family as he ministers to us.

Please pray that my attempts to make inroad with other artists will bear eternal fruit, especially the un-churched guys. Some artwork is really dark and while appreciate the skill, the content shows what's in a man's heart. I also have relationships with guys in the secular bands on my yard, I pray to be an encouragement and a light, as they all know I'm born again. It ain't me, it's all about Jesus ... **B.M.**

Praise Reports

Overcomers for Christ family, greetings to you all! I received your card and I want you to know, it lifted my spirits and truly reminded me I have not been forgotten! I also know that besides my own blood family, you, my church family continually are praying for us behind these walls. What an awesome blessing it is to have God's FAVOR shine upon you, even in prison! So, the reason I say that and the reason you haven't heard from me in a while is some of the awesome changes I've been dealing with due to all my mountains God has moved for me, and has been keeping me pretty busy! Geez where do I start? You know how women are, we like to make our stories elaborate and in complete detail, but I'm gonna make it short and sweet. All year I had been struggling to get my high school diploma on file, because the retention job I wanted so bad required it, and they had turned me down two times because I didn't have it. Well, a few days after finally getting it on file, they posted a job fair for the job I wanted. Everyone says how hard it is to get that job and it's true a lot of people interview over and over and never get hired. I go to the job fair and about 40 people show up to turn in applications. Then at the job fair, the ladies say a minimum requirement is you must have at least 18 months remaining in DOC, due to the fact there is so much time to train. I sat at a table by myself staring at my application. I put my heart into and prayed over it. Just when that liar, "fear" tried to knock me down, I stood my ground. As the women stood up to filter out of visitation and hand in their applications, I turned in mine too (oh yeah so I didn't mention this was at the beginning of October 2018) my release date is December 22, 2019. Yep, the math is less than 18 months. As I walked out, I prayed, "Lord, You know my heart and You know what I need and no matter what Lord, You are my Source!" One week later, 7 names are posted for pre-interview testing 7 out of 40! Yep, guess who was one of those 7, Me!! A week after testing now, down to 4 people to move on to interviews. Fast-forward 1 more week, 2 people are hired and will be moving yards for the new job and you guessed it, I'm one of them! October 24th I came from a yard of 1,200 women and a job that couldn't support me or help me save money for my release. I arrived to this yard with approximately 250 women no more standing in lines for everything! And now I have started to build my retention. The same week I arrived, I received a letter from my husband saying he too had finally gotten a retention job! God is Good. His mom also just got approved for phone calls, so I now get to call my kids and I can pay for it myself and keep that financial burden off grandma. So basically, to sum it all up God is Good. I was having some struggles when I first started but God has had my back! I know if God is for me NO ONE can be against me! I'll be getting a new boss come January, I've only met him on the phone, but when he said he was also a pastor I knew I was where I was supposed to be! Well friends, thanks for all the letters and prayers! May God Bless you and all your families ... **B.M.**

Overcomers for Christ

From the Inside

Stay Focused on Jesus Christ

By T.D.

I want to give a shout out to my fellow Christian brothers doing time like myself. Keep your head up, stay focused on our Lord Jesus Christ and know that we must stay strong in our faith and thank God every day for sending His Son to die on the Cross for our sins ... Amen!!!

Struggles

By A.G.

Hello brothers and sisters at *Overcomers for Christ*! Blessings to you and your families. I am writing to you because I have not written to you in a long time. I've been struggling a lot with a few issues but the Lord says we will have struggles in our lives. Struggles can bring you ups and downs and it can become very challenging at times, but with the Lord's help we do not have to lose hope for through my struggles, trials and tribulations, I'm still standing tall through it all.

May the Good Lord ...

By B.T.

Jesus loves you all thank you for always sending cards and *Overcomers* letters. I pray every day for the brothers and sisters in your letter who ask for prayer, I love to pray. Thank you for the letters and the uplifting messages and Scriptures you send me.

I'll be 60 years old in June, I've been down almost 23 years. I love reading, studying, and growing doing Bible courses.

May the good Lord bless you, your family, your loved ones, your helpers and your ministry. For all your help, the love you do, and sharing the good news about Jesus to all of us.

May the good Lord bless everything you all do and prosper you all and heal you all. May the Lord help you and your family with all your needs.

May He protect everyone of you and all the brothers and sisters and new believers around the world.

May the Lord make His face shine on you all and give you all so much peace and love in Jesus' name, amen!!

Gratitude and Being Released

By R.V.

My dearest brothers and sisters in Christ ... First in prayer I thank the Lord for being so, so amazing to me through all these years. As my time comes to an end in the weeks to come, I want to extend my appreciation to you all for feeding me the Word through the newsletter on the monthly basis. I know through God, all things are possible and without God, we can do nothing.

So, that being said, He made it possible for me to receive your newsletters for two years. Thanks for all the love and time you put into making these newsletters possible. Without your stewardship a lot of us wouldn't be who we are today. The newsletters are such a blessing to me and others as well. So, know what God put together in these newsletters will only flourish in the years to come. Also, thank you so much for the beautiful birthday card you all sent to me. It touched my heart and brought joy. Like I said, my time has come to an end, I will be getting released and hoping to meet you all in person.

Thank you for your time and I made it , finally, praise God!!

Depressed/Scared But NEVER Alone

By W.D.

I want to start off by saying, it's been over three years since I last wrote to all of you there at the *Overcomers for Christ*. And in that letter I asked to be added to your monthly newsletter mailing list. I've been receiving the *OS&S* newsletter and reading it ever since. The reason that I haven't written was because I was severely depressed and had pretty much given

Overcomers for Christ

From the Inside

up on life. The depression came from the fact that I was convicted of a sex crime that I didn't commit. In that I lost the woman that I loved more than anything in this world AND I was now dying of a severe case of Hepatitis C.

I soon found out that a person in the A.D.O.C. with Hepatitis C has to have an elevated liver enzymes that average out to be 2.8 or higher to receive treatment. In 2017 my average was 1.9. Then, only one year later my liver enzymes shot up to 6.6.

At that point I was told by the doctor that I was going to be going before the Hepatitis C treatment committee to be evaluated for treatment. The doctor also told me that I had stage 4 Cirrhosis of the liver, the final stage prior to dying of the disease. In addition to that I had had a liver biopsy that showed my liver to only be functioning 25%. He told me then that if I didn't get treatment for the Hepatitis C, that I would face liver cancer and/or face full liver failure.

I was so scared! Even though I had stated earlier that I didn't care if I died because I considered my life over with this 17 year sentence and the loss of the only woman I ever loved ... when it came down to it, I really DIDN'T want to die and especially NOT HERE IN PRISON! I could have filed for Post Conviction Relief to appeal the conviction. But I didn't because I THOUGHT I had totally given up!

Like I said, I came back to my dorm scared out of my mind that I was dying alone in prison. Even my sister had quit writing me back in 2016 and I hadn't had any contact with my other 3 siblings for years. I even felt that God had deserted me. I've been a Christian for years, but had backslidden. I had long since stopped reading my Bible and praying, that was in July 2018.

In less than 2 months, the Hepatitis C treatment had been approved! In September of 2018, I began taking a medication called EPCLUSA also known as Mavyret. This medication costs \$1,000 a pill, and I have to take it for 12 weeks, that's 90 days at \$90,000!

As of November 5, 2018, the Hepatitis C virus can NO LONGER be detected in my body! I know that ONLY GOD could have performed that miracle through Jesus Christ! Even when I had given up, felt deserted by God and pretty much lost my faith, God healed me!

God is a merciful God beyond measure. He loves us in spite of ourselves. Just like the Israelites when they lost faith in God as He had Moses lead them out of Egypt, God in His love and mercy didn't turn away from them. God continued to guide them as He provided for them. And He did the same for me! Praise God!

I have since rededicated my life to Christ, left my various sins there with Him, especially doubt and lack of faith. I am also trusting God to deliver me from this false conviction and to heal me further from the stage 4 Cirrhosis. As well, I am further believing and trusting that God will bring a good Christian woman into my life. Someone who won't look at my past life and convictions to hold them against me. I need this person to be my friend first, while getting to know one another while I believe God to deliver me from this false conviction or until my release in 2027.

As I've already stated, previously, I felt that I was all alone in here, but I now realize that God has NEVER left me and is with me at all times. Also, in answer to prayer, my sister Missy wrote me last month for the first time in 2 1/2 years. And in her letter she told me that one of my other sisters also wanted my information so she too could write to me. God is AWESOME! He so often gives us more than we even ask for! Praise God!

It's for this very reason that I know that God IS going to deliver me from this false conviction, heal my liver completely and bring a special Christian lady into my life and all in the very near future. He has already put His plan in motion so all I have to do is to declare it by faith and believe that it has ALREADY been done and it WILL come to pass. I do this, in the Name of Jesus!

I've been feeling God lead me to write this letter to all of you there at the *Overcomers for Christ*, but I kept procrastinating until I told myself, "God obviously has a reason why He is leading me to write." I decided to continue to trust Him and have faith that He will make known His reason's to you and to me soon enough! With that, I pray that someone is both inspired and touched by what God has led me to write.

Isaiah 12:1 - 18:7

Chapter 12 is a hymn of praise - another graphic description of the people's joy when Christ Jesus comes to reign over the earth. Even now we need to express our gratitude to God, thanking Him, praising Him and telling others about Him. From the depths of our gratitude, we must praise Him. And we should share the Good News with others. **(12:1)**

Beware of placing confidence in human power because one day it will fade, no matter how strong it appears now. **(14:5-6)**

We may seek our own ways of escaping daily troubles - work, friends, pleasure or even some man-made religious idea. But our only hope lies in God, the only one who can hear and help us. **(16:12)**

Often we depend on the trappings of success (expensive cars, pastimes, cloths, homes) to give us fulfillment. But God says we will reap grief and pain if we have depended on temporal things to give us eternal security. If we don't want the same treatment that Damascus received, we must turn from these false achievements and trust in God. **(17:7-11)**

2 Corinthians 13:1-13

The Corinthians were called to examine and test themselves to see if they were really Christians. Just as we get physical checkups, Paul urges us to give ourselves spiritual checkups. We should look for a growing awareness of Christ's presence and power in our lives. Then we will know if we are true Christians or merely imposters. If we are not actively seeking to grow closer to God, we are drawing further away from Him. **(13:5)**

Psalms 57:1-58:11

At times we may be surrounded by people who gossip about us or criticize us. Verbal cruelty can damage us as badly as physical abuse. Rather than answering with hateful words, we, like David, can talk with God about the problem. **(57:4)**

The Old Testament is filled with references to justice - it is a key topic in the **Psalms**. Unfortunately, many judges and rulers in ancient times took injustice into their own hands. They had complete authority with no accountability and power to make their own laws. When earthly judges are corrupt there is little hope for justice in this life. But God loves justice, and those who obey Him will experience perfect justice in eternity. **(58:1)**

Proverbs 23:9-11

The term 'redeemer' referred to someone who brought back a family member who had fallen into slavery or who had accepted the obligation to marry the widow of a family member. **(Ruth 4:3-10)**

God is also called the Redeemer **(Exodus 6:6, Job 19:25)**. **(23:10-11)**

"Foot" Notes

Hello Overcomers! This Foot Note is a little personal. As an aging cat my memory's not as sharp as it once was. That being said, it'll be many winters before this ole scooter tramp forgets the event of June 2019. For one it has been over 11 years of patiently waiting for the timing to be right with God. As you all may have read once or twice, in **Acts 1:7**, **"It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by His own authority."** We should know that our Father God sets the time for all events. You know, "Everything in God's own time." So you can only imagine my immense joy when I got a letter stating, "It's time brother, send the paperwork for pastoral visits." It seems that God's timing was perfect as I know that Brother 'Duck' wouldn't have sent his letter otherwise. We each were gifted with two hours of laughter, tears that finished off both a spiritual and personal kick in the pants. "THANK YOU JESUS!"

In closing just know that whatever it is God will make it so that it is His will, but in His own time. Eleven plus years is merely a blink of an eye in the scheme of God's universe.

Vaya con Dios ... Love to you all short and tall ... Don't ride faster than your angel can fly.

This is an area that a fracture can begin to show up in our personal lives with Christ, the inability to fully receive our pardon, our gift from God. God Loves us beyond our greatest imagination AND our welfare is one of His greatest concerns. The concept of earning and being good enough, or even performing systematic tasks is the same as refusal by a lack of understanding of His grace and mercy. My dear friends, this is a gift that NO MAN can ever qualify for. All we truly need to do is believe and receive it.

What we have reasoned thus far was and even still is a stumbling block for many people, for many ages and most likely for years yet to come. And due to its content I will leave that share as it is for now.

In our own thinking and lack of Scriptural truth we always seem to run to the world to earn its mentality. That's where qualifications become a must. In that mentality we believe that we have fouled up so badly that we have extinguished the grace and mercy with all the love and forgiveness because it was in a measured storage box somewhere and it must be refilled by deeds and works. Or, we could have gotten into the sermons of a man that lacked fundamental Scriptural understanding that tends to state that Salvation is entered with 25 goodly balloons. After we bust several of them and pull down the remainder by the strings for our own use, by then we have run out of God's grace and mercy. At that point we have to work harder to earn more balloons or our Salvation is over. When we go to Hebrews it states a far different view than that of the balloon theory mentality. Listen. **"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."** (Hebrews 13:5)

Jesus Christ Himself spoke the truth of Salvation as the very Word of God, stated to His own nation (Jews) in **John 8:31-32**, **"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."** So what truth is being spoken here? Jesus Christ IS the Savior. He was offering them life everlasting through the free gift of Salvation.

So, when we are feeling challenged and our foundation is trying to fracture as things are getting confusing and personal chaos arises; we can return to the Cross and lay down our petition and accept by faith that it is heard. Let's read **1 John 5:14-15** together, **"And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him."** We then can walk away knowing our hearts are restored and we can rest in our Salvation and renew ourselves in the confirming words of the Scriptures.

If need be and we are in sin we simply need to repent of those sins with all our hearts. Acknowledge Him as Lord and Savior of our lives and press on in faith. If you have become doubtful of your Salvation just put that to rest and behind you right now! Christ LOVES you! And the proof of that LOVE and forgiveness was already nailed to Cross for you and about you! Then you will see very quickly that His gift was never gone or taken away. In fact it was with you all through your hurting, losses and challenges. Our Lord and Savior see's it all. He misses nothing. And most assuredly you have not taken Him by surprise when you slipped and totally blew it. We ALL are going to slip and make mistakes and errors.

Not one of those slips or errors disqualifies us from or out of our Salvation. Once we repent and turn around to head in the opposite direction we head back to our first love in Christ. There we find out that the only thing holding us back or deceiving us, was us. **Titus 3:5-7** clearly tells us, **"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."** It sure sounds as if a soul had to be cared for, one that was struggling with the cost of a free gift because of the challenges in his/her Christian walk.

Allow me to encourage you to consider a study in the **Book of Romans**. Get with a like-minded believer and go over and over Romans. The old saying that 'All roads lead to Rome' will begin to take on a whole new meaning for you. I want to wrap this up with a Bible promise of the Messiah. The Old Testament is prophesy of Him foretold and the New Testament is proof of that prophesy fulfilled and why a New Covenant was necessary. All of the hundreds of thousands of bulls, goats and sheep that were sacrificed with enough blood to fill lakes for all those hundreds of years were unable, under that sacrificial system, to reach into mankind and change his heart. Yes, that religious system held all peoples in awe and wonder, but it lacked in what one Man; the Son of God, for a one time offering of Himself as then Sacrifice creating the New Covenant that COULD reach into mankind and touch our hearts. His sacrifice has the power to change our lives and most assuredly change our lifestyle. His obedience gives us the ability and the right to become sons and daughters of God, with everlasting life.

"I pray that this message begins to break strongholds, doubts and false illusions. May confusion be broken with confidence. And may God bless you all in His abundance."

Overcomer's Testimonies

First of all, my name is Willie and I've known a certain lady, we'll call her 'Elaine', and her family for over 18 years. So I consider her another mom. In fact I tell people in here that she is my god mom.

Anyways, I've been through a lot. I've been down 6 years now and have always rebelled. In the middle of 2015 I was sent to a prison in the upper Northern part of Arizona. It was like I had been sent to Alcatraz because it was in the middle of nowhere and far away from my family. While I was there I got really depressed and heavily in to Meth (really anything) and was doing EVERYTHING that came with it. Things like beating people up and robbing Peter to pay Paul. Long story short, I ended up in the hole. I was down to 156 pounds and mad at myself for allowing myself to get into such a mess. I felt like I had disappointed everyone and let them down.

I had a dope fiend friend as a celli but he introduced me to the Word through Juice T.V. This channel had sermons and music videos of Christian music. For some reason it was uplifting and enlightened my spirit and really made me feel good. But even before all of this, I'd gone to church with my mom throughout my life but never really understood what it was about and never read the Bible. So I decided that I needed to change my life.

Even though I had gotten my visits and phone privileges taken away for 2 years I decided that I was going to push through it. That's when I got transferred to a different prison. It was here that I started going to church services. And THEN I got into Bible college. I accepted Christ in to my life and got excited about Jesus and now reading the Bible it was talking to me strongly. Shortly after this me and another brother were baptized into Christ on 9/16/2017.

Now, I'm going to church, reading and studying the Bible and doing Bible studies through the mail. I'm also attending Bible studies here and there on the yard. Even with all of this I sometimes still feel like, "Here I am saved and baptized and on my way too ... where ... with no direction or anything." I know that through prayer and reading God's Word I WILL find my direction. But honestly, even with that, I still sometimes feel lost. I know that I am still a child in His Word and I'm not going to mature over night and know everything.

Learning to grow, I still feel like sometimes I'm not getting it and start to struggle. I'm learning that sometimes 'I'm' the one that overwhelms myself. At times I get all into it and then allow my head to beat me up because I try to remember everything and know everything and that just drives me nuts. I ask brothers in here for help but some aren't ALL in and others don't have time for me. One thing that I do know is this, **"This walk with Christ is forever my new life!"**

With all of that being said please let me tell you SOME of how Jesus has blessed my life. First, I got my visits and phone back a year and a half early. When I first came down my ex bad talked me to my son and he was out of my life for 2 years. No matter what I was going to push through it. I used to send a letter at least once a month and in 2017 out of the blue he began to write me back. Now, even through phone calls both my son AND my ex are talking to me and my mom. I give ALL the praise to God for all of this!

I've done almost all of the programs provided for me here. I've completed 15 of them as of now. My family see's the difference in me and are proud of me. I now have a great relationship with my biological mom AND my god mom and her family have supported me with love and compassion through all of this. Today, I just want to be a better person, in Christ, for myself and all the people around me.

I'd been doing that other lifestyle since I was 13 years old. I first came to prison when I was 18 years old, been down 3 times and have 5 years left on this sentence and am now 40 years old. I NEED for this to be the last time so I'm doing everything I can to utilize this time to better myself. **Today, I'm fully convinced that being a Christian, in Christ, isn't going to stop here at the gate!! - W.S.**

Christian Comedy



A Response to K.H.

By U.S.

I'm writing in response to, 'I'm Asking By K.H.' in one of your past newsletters.

Let me tell you this my brother K.H., you're not alone in your struggle. There's so many of us brothers and sisters going through exactly what you are going through. I myself have struggled with what you are going through and let me tell you this, with Jesus there is NO middle ground. You have to surrender it all to Jesus. Every hurt, every past regret and holding NOTHING back! Surrender it all wholeheartedly with Jesus! It's ALL or nothing! In **Hebrews 13:5-6** it tells us **"Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."** So we say with confidence, **"The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?"** My new friend and brother, Jesus will never leave us or even forget about us, it's His promise! I too haven't heard from my family in like 7 months already. I have come too far to turn back ... and so have you! It's ALL or nothing. I just wanted to reach out to you to tell you that you are not alone, keep the faith, stand strong, keep believing and keep praying because God does not test our faithfulness without showing Himself faithful.

God's name **'ADONAI'** literally means, *The God that's in control, in charge*. So give Jesus ALL of your life and heart K.H. then trust and believe and then you WILL receive! The best thing I've ever done with my life was to give it ALL to Jesus! ALL or NOTHING!

Bible Cryptograms

Some helpful ways to solve Bible Cryptograms:

1. Start with small words like I, a, of, as, he, to, be, etc.
2. By looking for the same combinations of letters more than once in a puzzle you will find the more common words. The combination "H Z D" appears more than once, so the word "THE" would be a good choice to try first.
3. By filling in the most common letters in the three and four letter words - other bigger words will start to form

BIBLE-CRYPTOVERSE (Scripture verse in code)		No.10				
K X F	A V R R	A N R O	V U	H Z D	A N K G	X L
□ □ □	□ □ □ □	□ □ □ □	□ □	□ □ □	□ □ □ □	□ □
Q X X B	M D U	N U B	O D D E	H X	H Z D	E N H Z G
□ □ □ □	□ □ □	□ □ □	□ □ □ □	□ □	□ □ □	□ □ □ □ □
X L	H Z D	I V Q Z H D X F G .	L X I	H Z D		
□ □	□ □ □	□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ .	□ □ □	□ □ □		
F E I V Q Z H	A V R R	R V T D	V U	H Z D	R N U B	
□ □ □ □ □ □ □	□ □ □ □	□ □ □ □	□ □	□ □ □	□ □ □ □	
Letter used:						
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z						

Quote Worthy

"People see God every day, they just don't recognize Him."

- Pearl Bailey (1918 - 1990) - an American actress and singer. After appearing in Vaudeville she made her Broadway debut in St. Louis Woman in 1946. She won a Tony Award for the title role in the all-black production of Hello, Dolly! in 1968. In 1986, she won a Daytime Emmy award for her performance as a fairy godmother in the ABC Afterschool Special, Cindy Eller: A Modern Fairy Tale.

Living Word Bible Church Locations

Mesa - 3520 E. Brown Rd. Mesa, AZ 85213 **Ahwatukee** - 14647 S. 50th St. #165 Phoenix, AZ 85044
Scottsdale - 8551 E. Anderson Dr. #105 Scottsdale, AZ 85255 **Gilbert** - 202 S. Gilbert Rd. Gilbert, AZ 85296
Florence - Florence High School 1000 S. Main St. Florence, AZ 85132

Ministry Tithes & Offerings

Here is how you can give to the ~~Overcomers~~ for ~~Christ~~ ministry:

By **check** or **money order** – Make checks payable to **Living Word Bible Church** and in the memo section put "For Overcomers for Christ". Mail your check or money order to PO Box 42023, Phoenix, Arizona 85080

Your giving does qualify as a charitable contribution on your taxes. For donations of less than \$250, your cancelled check is sufficient proof for taxes. For donations of \$250 or more, you will receive a contribution statement from the organization. If you have any questions, please call or write Wade Anderson.

By the Blink of An Eye

By R.D.W.

A seed is planted, Soil is its birthplace
Peeking its head out of the dirt, born and fragile like a babies face,
As months go by, you see this seed is a beautiful rose going through its phase.

But 'By the blink of an eye' its life could be changed,
If planted right and raised in a pleasant place, this rose will become plenty and all bloom to the suns ray.

Life is a precious gift this rose never took for granted,
It never argued or disagreed with the places it was planted.

All it asks for is water, sun and shelter from the storms wreckage,
It never asks to be clipped, sold and placed in a package.

As this rose is taken to its destination its colors begin to change,
It's in a dark place and praying that it brings a smile upon a face.

It hasn't had water or sun so its peddles are darkening and starting to fade,
It remembers ifs stem has been clipped from its roots to lifeless days.

But then it remembers 'by the blink of an eye', it can still bring a smile to someone's face.
The package reaches its destination and is opened to the rose's answered prayer,
A ten year old cancer patient named 'Rose' has the biggest smile on her face,
She immediately puts the rose in a vase and tells it, "We're off to a better place."

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

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