

More Than Conquerors



David Brandt Berg

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A Mountain Streams book

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INTRODUCTION

No one's life is without problems, even a Christian's. Some say *especially* a Christian's. But why is that? Why doesn't God solve all of our problems the instant we receive Jesus as our Savior? Why doesn't He make this life as painless and perfect as the Heaven He has promised us? Why hardships and suffering?

The short answer is that God knows we need them. Troubles cause us to turn to the Lord and depend on Him more, and through that we learn more about His love and loving ways. If we take them the way He wants us to, troubles help prepare us for the next life and equip us to better help others get through this one. Troubles strengthen us and teach us faith and trust.

All the faith we need to trust God through even the most trying times is at our disposal. Faith comes from studying and applying God's Word (Romans 10:17; James 1:22–25). And that's what the ten articles that make up ***More Than Conquerors*** are about—helping us understand how God is working out His plan, even through our problems and seeming failures.

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ... In all these things we

are *more than conquerors* through Him who loved us”
(Romans 8:35,37). That’s the kind of faith that brings us
through to victory every time—and it can be yours!

God's Chesspiece

You Can't, but He Can!

The Lord wants you to be yourself and not try to be somebody else or pretend to be something you're not. When I was teaching music, I used to point to a note on the musical scale and tell my students, "That's what I want you to be—B natural!"

God doesn't want you to try or pretend to be something you're not and couldn't possibly be. However, He teaches in His Word that almost anybody can be almost anything—if they have faith and it's according to His will. If you have faith, even faith no bigger than a tiny mustard seed, you could say to a mountain, "Move from here to there," and it would move. Nothing would be impossible.¹ So anybody can be somebody or somebody can be anybody, because with God nothing is impossible and all things are possible to those who believe.²

¹ Matthew 17:20

² Luke 1:37; Mark 9:23

A lot of Christians make idols of the great men and women of God of the past. They idolize the heroes of the Bible, the patriarchs and the prophets, the Christian saints and martyrs, and they exalt them to such heights that they make it almost impossible for others to believe they could ever do the same things. And sad to say, it seems that all too often people do that to excuse themselves.

They want to be able to say, “It’s impossible to be like that today. That sort of thing is reserved for Bible times, or saints or patriarchs or prophets. Nobody else can be like that. Ordinary Christians aren’t supposed to try to be like that. It’s out of your range. You’d have to be perfect. It’s impossible. Don’t even try! That’s reserved for the special, chosen, exalted ones—those holy ones who were specially made in Heaven, not the normal run of humanity. People today can’t expect to do miracles or have other gifts of the Spirit like the apostles and great missionaries of the past had. The day of miracles is past!” It’s to excuse their own sad spiritual state and lack of good works. They don’t want to have to do those things themselves, or to have others expect that much of them.

And one of the biggest lies the Devil tells them is, “You can’t be that way because you’re sinful and make mistakes, and you cannot be both good and bad.” Well, the Lord in His Word said, “There is none righteous, no, not one. ... For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”¹ And that includes

whom?—Not only you and me, but the saints and the prophets and the apostles and the patriarchs, and everyone else except God Himself.

Now that changes the picture! That brings the apostles, prophets, and heroes of the Bible down to our level, and that means it's possible for us to become more like them. Regardless of our sins and mistakes and faults or whatever, we too can be used of the Lord.

If the Devil tells you that you'll never amount to anything for the Lord because you're so bad, don't listen to him. That isn't so!

Most Christians are taught that they can't go to Heaven unless they're saintly. But that is the most damnable sin of all: to think you can be good enough to deserve to go to Heaven or be saved! That is self-works, self-righteousness, hypocrisy—and it's a doctrine of devils!

God created man and put him on Earth in part to demonstrate His power in giving him salvation—to show that in spite of all our faults and shortcomings He can save us and make us useful. He can even use *you*. The fact that God can use you, bad as you are, gives the glory to Jesus when you do anything good or right.

I'll give all the glory to Jesus,
And tell of His love, His wonderful love.
I'll give all the glory to Jesus,
And tell of His wonderful love!

¹ Romans 3:10,23

Even the great apostle Paul lamented, “Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” He as good as said, “I stink! I’m a horrible mess!” But then the Lord encouraged him with the answer to his dilemma: “Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”¹

Now, doesn’t that give you some hope? When the Devil reminds you of your mistakes and faults and shortcomings, it helps to remind yourself that, yes, you’re no good; yes, you’re a sinner; yes, except for the love and mercy and grace and goodness of God, you’d never make it!

It takes a miracle of the grace of God! It *all* has to be a miracle! Your thoughts, your love for the Lord and others, your work for the Lord—all of it is a miracle of God’s grace, “faith working through love.”² It’s *God’s* work. You just have to have the faith that *God* is going to do it *through* you.

For many years I was convinced that I was nothing and nobody and could never do anything! I was too sinful, too carnal, I didn’t read the Bible enough and didn’t pray enough. How could I ever hope to do anything for God?

Be honest. Isn’t that the way you feel sometimes? I’m sure the Devil lies to you like that too. When he does, slap him in the face with Scriptures, like Jesus did when the Devil tempted Him in the wilderness.¹

¹ Romans 7:24–25; I Corinthians 15:57

² Galatians 5:6

“It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”²

Where sin and human faults and failings abound, God's grace does more abound.³ That's what it's all about!

Why do you think the Lord lets you make mistakes? Why do you think God let Adam and Eve fall prey to temptation in the Garden?—To prove that they needed God, and to prove that *you* need God! You can't do it on your own! And what does that do?—It glorifies the Lord!

So do you get the point? This is what it's all about—that it's all for the glory of God. Of course you can't do it! Of course you can't save yourself! Of course you can't live a perfect Christian life! Of course you can't be good or do anything good of yourself! He said Himself, “Without Me you can do nothing.”⁴ A lot of people have been taught the false doctrine that they're supposed to do most of it with just a little help from God, but I want to tell you right now, God does it all!

Isn't that a comforting thought? Isn't it wonderful to know that you can just trust the Lord and not worry about having to be perfect? Trust the Lord; He's going to do it!

You don't have to have faith to do things that the Lord isn't asking or expecting of you. You just have

¹ Matthew 4:1–11

³ Romans 5:20

² Galatians 2:20

⁴ John 15:5

to have faith to be what He's made you to be and to do the job He has for you, whatever that may be. Don't try to be somebody you're not, but don't let the Devil lie to you that you can't be who God can make you, or do what God wants to do through you. God won't ask you to do anything more than He knows you can do, with His help.

Too many Christians have been taught two conflicting doctrines: first, that they can't be saintly and perfect, and second that they can't be saved unless they are. Both are the Devil's own doctrines! It's no wonder that a lot of Christians give up trying to be or do anything for the Lord!

But the wonderful truth of the matter is that you can do anything with Jesus' help. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."¹ With His help you can do anything, go anywhere, and be anybody God wants you to be!

God has given us a free will, but to be successful for the Lord or even as happy as He would like to make us, we have to continually yield that will to Him. We have to find out from Him what His will for us is—what He knows is best for others and us—and then choose that.

Everybody has their place and job for the Lord, like the pieces on a chessboard. Chesspieces have no will of their own. When a player picks up a chesspiece and moves it to another square, the chesspiece doesn't protest; it yields and goes where it's

¹ Philippians 4:13

sent, right? Well, you're in God's hands! Think of that whenever the Devil tempts you to worry about this or that. You're in the hands of the Master Player and He's going to put you wherever He wants you, so just trust the Lord.

You don't have to make all the decisions; you only have to be yielded. But you're a free moral agent and you can choose *not* to be yielded. When it comes right down to it, the only decision you have to make is to choose to do God's will, whatever it might be. Simply yield to His moves, and let Him do the thinking and the choosing. He can see the whole game, the whole chessboard, and all the pieces. You've got very limited vision and very limited power, but He sees and has it *all*.

Just be what God wants you to be. Don't worry about what you can be or can't be or will be or won't be, like I did for nearly 50 years! I spent over half my life worrying about what I would be, when all the time I was being exactly what God wanted me to be and learning all the things God wanted me to learn.

There have also been times when *I've* chosen to do this and do that, and God's had to change my mind or do something else in spite of me—and I always found out in the end that He knew best.

It's wonderful to let God decide, because He always has our best interests at heart and He knows what's best. He never fails. Even if He should let us get His instructions wrong or do something wrong, He's able to use even that to teach us some lesson

and bring about some good if our hearts are right with Him.¹

So quit worrying about what God's going to do. You're in God's hands. "Trust in the Lord, and do good."² "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths."³ "Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it,' whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left."⁴

When a guide leads you down a path that's new to you, he doesn't tell you what you're going to need to do before you get to the turn or the fork in the way. He waits till you get to the point where you need to know before he tells you what to do or where to go next—and that's the way it is with the Lord. In most cases, you don't need to know all the details of what you're going to do tomorrow. Jesus said not to worry about tomorrow. You often have to plan ahead, but you're not to *worry* about tomorrow. Just do what God knows you can do and what God asks you to do today, and be prepared to do the same tomorrow.

God made you a particular kind of chesspiece, and He's given you powers accordingly. God is the player; you're just the chesspiece. You're His piece, and all you have to do is what God tells you to do.

¹ Romans 8:28

³ Proverbs 3:5–6

² Psalm 37:3 KJV

⁴ Isaiah 30:21

He doesn't even expect you to do it yourself. He'll reach down and take ahold of you and move you where He wants you to go. *You* can't do it, anyway—but you can with His help! You can't, but He can!