

## You can be an Overcomer! 03

“But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” John 1:12

### A Special Walk with God

This can be your experience; an ongoing closeness to God is a sweet, comforting experience. If you have given yourself to God, to do His work, you have no need to be anxious for tomorrow. He whose servant you are knows the end from the beginning. The events of tomorrow, which are hidden from your view, are open to the eyes of Him who is omnipotent.

When we take into our hands the management of things with which we have to do, and depend upon our own wisdom for success, we are taking a burden which God has not given us, and are trying to bear it without His aid. We are taking upon ourselves the responsibility that belongs to God, and thus are really putting ourselves in His place. We may well have anxiety and anticipate danger and loss, for it is certain to befall us.

But when we really believe that God loves us and means to do us good we shall cease to worry about the future. We shall trust God as a child trusts a loving parent. Then our troubles and torments will disappear, for our will is swallowed up in the will of God.

Christ has given us no promise of help in bearing today the burdens of tomorrow. He has said, “My grace is sufficient for thee” (2 Corinthians 12:9); but, like the manna given in the wilderness, His grace is bestowed daily, for the day’s need. Like the hosts of Israel in their pilgrim life, we may find morning by morning the bread of heaven for the day’s supply.

One day alone is ours; and, during this day, we are to live for God. For this one day we are to place in the hand of Christ, in solemn service, all our purposes and plans, casting all our care upon Him, for He careth for us. “I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.” “In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.” Jeremiah 29:11, Isaiah 30:15.

**If you will seek the Lord and be converted every day; if you will of your own spiritual choice be free and joyous in God; if with gladsome consent of heart to His gracious call you come wearing the yoke of Christ, the yoke of obedience and service,—all your murmurings will be stilled, all your difficulties will be removed, all the perplexing problems that now confront you will be solved.**

**The problem is that in order to have such an encouraging experience, you need to be one of God’s little children who, in spite of the daily troubles and trials, is each day trying to live the life of an overcomer.**

Eight special promises for Overcomers

The fact that you can resist temptation and overcome sin in your life is solidly Biblical. God wants you to enter this experience. His holy Word, the Bible, has abundant promises for those who will enter this experience. Here are several of them:

**“To him that overcometh** will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.” Revelation 2:7.

**“He that overcometh** shall not be hurt of the second death.” Revelation 2:11.

**“To him that overcometh** will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.” Revelation 2:17.

**“He that overcometh,** and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations.” Revelation 2:26.

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**“He that overcometh**, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.” Revelation 3:5.

**“Him that overcometh** will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God: and I will write upon him My new name.” Revelation 3:12.

**“To him that overcometh** will I grant to sit with me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne.” Revelation 3:21.

**“He that overcometh** shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son.” Revelation 21:7.

This is an experience that each of us wants! We do not want to miss out on being able to enter through those pearly gates, into the City of God, and living forever with Jesus!

“In God will I praise His Word . . . in God I have put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.” Psalm 56:10-11

“I will look unto the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me.” Micah 7:7

“But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for Himself: the Lord will hear when I call unto Him.” Psalm 4:3

Claiming those Promises:

Can they really be mine? The promises to overcomers are most glorious. But what is it that is overcome? What does it mean to overcome? According to the Bible, “to overcome” means to resist the temptations of the devil and to overcome sin. When Satan tempts us into sin, he gains a strong advantage over us: “Of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.” 2 Peter 2:19. “Be not overcome of evil.” Romans 12:21.

We can resist temptation and overcome sin in our lives only through the enabling strength of Christ. There is a way to resist Satan’s temptations and overcome.

First, Christ must dwell in our hearts by faith: “Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.” 1 John 4:4.

Second, we must regularly study God’s Word: “I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.” 1 John 2:14.

Third, through faith in the enabling strength of Christ, we must obey God’s holy law: “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?” 1 John 5:3-5.

Thus, through obedience by faith, we shall be able to overcome; and, instead of receiving the reward of the wicked, we shall “inherit all things.”

“He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.” Revelation 21:7-8.

We overcome by resisting temptation to sin. But what is sin?

“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.” 1 John 3:4.

That is clear enough. The Bible definition of sin is breaking God’s law.

The verses surrounding 1 John 3:4 help explain what is involved here. As we read them, we see that it is God’s plan to enable us to obey the commandments. Only He can help us resist sin, so we can live pure, clean lives:

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“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. “And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. “And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin. “Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him. “Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. “He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.” 1 John 3:1-9.

What sweet promises are these! Jesus wants to clean our hearts and make us His humble, obedient children.

Yet it is only through the enabling grace of Christ, our Lord and Saviour, that our hearts can be purified of sin. It is only through His empowering help that we can resist the devil and his temptations.

“And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him . .

“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.” Revelation 12:9, 11.

The verses that come after that (verses 12-16) explain how the devil is determined to use sinful temptations to destroy as many of us as possible. In that passage, Satan is portrayed as a great dragon trying to devour the offspring of the pure woman, which is the true church. But the promise is given that God’s faithful ones will be enabled to keep the commandments of God, and thus triumph over the devices of the devil:

“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”—Revelation 12:17.

“Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”—Revelation 14:12.

Some people think that Jesus did all the over-coming for us, when He died on Calvary; so we need not do any overcoming. But all the Bible verses you have just read clearly show that it is Gods faithful ones on earth who, through Christs enabling merits, do the overcoming! Jesus does not do our overcoming for us.

You and I want to receive the promises to over-comers. We want to inherit a home in heaven. It is sin that, in the strength of Christ, we must resist and overcome.

The question needs to be asked again: What is sin? We have learned that, according to the Bible, sin is disobedience to the law of God.

“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.” 1 John 3:4.

The Bible definition of sin is breaking the God’s law. So the error that is floating around, that God has no law, is totally untrue. If there is no law, there is no sin!

“Where no law is, there is no transgression.” Romans 4:15.

As with God’s government, so it is with nations: Any nation, that is daring enough to get rid of its laws, will have no lawbreakers! Without laws, there are no crimes. Everyone can commit any atrocity, with no fear of police, courts, or prison. Just as civil governments must have laws, so God has moral laws also. God’s moral law is written in Exodus 20:3-20. It is the Ten Commandments.

Preachers sometimes say that the law “has been done away with.” Often we hear this argument: “Well, since we are not under the law but under grace, we do not need to keep the Ten Commandments any longer.” Is

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this a valid point? The Bible certainly does say that we are not under the law, but does that imply that we are free from the obligation to obey it? The text is found in Romans 6:14, 15. "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid."

How easily we could prevent confusion if we accepted exactly what the Bible says. Paul gives his own explanation of his statement. After stating that we are not under the law but under grace, he asks, "What then?" This simply means, "How are we to understand this?" Then notice his answer. In anticipation that some will construe his words to mean that you can break the law because you are under grace, he says, "Shall we sin (break the law) because we are not under the law but under grace? God forbid." In the strongest possible language Paul states that being under grace does not give a license to break the law. Yet this is exactly what millions believe today, and they totally ignore Paul's specific warning.

If being under grace does not exempt us from keeping the law, then what does Paul mean by saying that Christians are not under the law? He gives that answer in Romans 3:19. "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." Here Paul equates being under the law with "being guilty before God." In other words, those who are under the law are guilty of breaking it and are under the condemnation of it. This is why Christians are not under it. They are not breaking it - not guilty and condemned by it. Therefore, they are not under it, but are under the power of grace instead. Later in his argument, Paul points out that the power of grace is greater than the power of sin. This is why he states so emphatically, "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." Grace overrules the authority of sin, giving power to obey God's law. This is the effective reason that we are not under the law's guilt and condemnation and also why Paul states that we will not continue to sin.

Suppose a murderer has been sentenced to death in the electric chair. Waiting for the execution the man would truly be under the law in every sense of the word - under the guilt, under the condemnation, under the sentence of death, etc. Just before the execution date the governor reviews the condemned man's case and decides to pardon him. In the light of extenuating circumstances the governor exercises his prerogative and sends a full pardon to the prisoner. Now he is no longer under the law but under grace. The law no longer condemns him. He is considered totally justified as far as the charges of the law are concerned. He is free to walk out of the prison and not a policeman can lay hands upon him. But now that he is under grace and no longer under the law, can we say that he is free to break the law? Indeed not! In fact, that pardoned man will be doubly obligated to obey the law *because he has found grace* from the governor. In gratitude and love he will be very careful to honor the law of that state which granted him grace. Is that what the Bible says about pardoned sinners? "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." Romans 3:31. Here is the most explicit answer to the entire problem. Paul asks if the law is nullified for us just because we have had faith in Christ's saving grace. His answer is that the law is established and reinforced in the life of a grace-saved Christian.

The truth of this is so simple and obvious that it should require no repetition, but the devious reasoning of those who try to avoid obedience makes it necessary to press this point a bit further. Have you ever been stopped by a policeman for exceeding the speed limit? It is an embarrassing experience, especially if you know you are guilty. But suppose you really were hurrying to meet a valid emergency, and you pour out your convincing explanation to the policeman as he writes your ticket. Slowly he folds the ticket and tears it up. Then he says, "All right, I'm going to pardon you this time, but ..." Now what do you think he means by that word "but"? Surely he means, "but I don't want to ever catch you speeding again." Does this pardon (grace) open the way for you to disobey the law? On the contrary, it adds compelling urgency to your decision not to disobey the law again. Why, then, should any true Christian try to rationalize his way out of obeying the law of God? "If ye love me," Jesus said, "keep my commandments." John 14:15.

**Many religious teachers assert that Christ by His death abolished the law, and men are henceforth free from its requirements.** There are some who represent it as a grievous yoke and, in contrast to the bondage of the law, they present the liberty to be enjoyed under the gospel.

**But not so did prophets and apostles regard the holy law of God.** Said David, "I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts." Psalm 119:45. The apostle James, who wrote after the death of Christ, refers to the Decalogue as the "royal law" and the "perfect law of liberty." James 2:8; 1:25. And the Revelator, half a century after the crucifixion, pronounces a blessing upon them that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Revelation 22:14.

The claim, that Christ by His death abolished His Father's law, is without foundation. Had it been possible for the law to be changed or set aside, then Christ need not have died to save man from the penalty of sin. The death of Christ, so far from abolishing the law, proves that it is immutable. The Son of God came to "magnify the law, and make it honorable." Isaiah 42:21. He said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law"; "till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law." Matthew 5:17, 18. And concerning himself he declares, "I delight to do Thy will, O my God; yea, Thy law is within my heart." Psalm 40:8.

**The law of God, from its very nature, is unchangeable. It is a revelation of the will and the character of its Author.** God is love, and His law is love. Its two great principles are love to God and man. "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Romans 13:10. The character of God is righteousness and truth; such is the nature of His law. Says the psalmist, Thy law is the truth; all Thy commandments are righteousness. Psalm 119:142, 172. And the apostle Paul declares, The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." Romans 7:12.

Such a law, being an expression of the mind and will of God, must be as enduring as its Author.

It is the work of conversion and sanctification to reconcile men to God, by bringing them into accord with the principles of His law. In the beginning, man was created in the image of God. He was in perfect harmony with the nature and the law of God; the principles of righteousness were written upon His heart. But sin alienated him from his Maker. He no longer reflected the divine image. His heart was at war with the principles of God's law. The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. Romans 8:7. But God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that man might be reconciled to God. Through the merits of Christ He can be restored to harmony with His Maker. His heart must be renewed by divine grace; he must have a new life from above. This change is the new birth, without which, says Jesus, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

The first step, in reconciliation to God, is the conviction of sin. "Sin is the transgression of the law." "By the law is the knowledge of sin." 1 John 3:4; Romans 3:20. In order to see his guilt, the sinner must test his character by God's great standard of righteousness. It is a mirror which shows the perfection of a righteous character and enables him to discern the defects in his own.

The law reveals to man his sins, but it provides no remedy. While it promises life to the obedient, it declares that death is the portion of the transgressor. The gospel of Christ alone can free him from the condemnation or the defilement of sin. He must exercise repentance toward God, whose law has been transgressed, and faith in Christ, His atoning sacrifice. Thus he obtains "remission of sins that are past" and becomes a partaker of the divine nature. He is a child of God, having received the spirit of adoption, whereby he cries, "Abba, Father!"

Is he now free to transgress God's law? Says Paul: "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law." Romans 3:31. "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Romans 6:2. And John declares, "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous." 1 John 5:3. In the new birth the heart is brought into harmony with God as it is brought into accord with His law. When this mighty change has taken place in the sinner, he has passed from death unto life, from sin unto holiness, from transgression and rebellion to obedience and loyalty. The old life of alienation

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from God has ended; the new life of reconciliation, of faith and love, has begun. Then “the righteousness of the law” will “be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Romans 8:4. And the language of the soul will be, “O how love I Thy law! it is my meditation all the day.” Psalm 119:97.

“The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.” Psalm 19:7. Without the law, men have no just conception of the purity and holiness of God, or of their own guilt and uncleanness. They have no true conviction of sin and feel no need of repentance. Not seeing their lost condition as violators of Gods law, they do not realize their need of the atoning blood of Christ. The hope of salvation is accepted without a radical change of heart or reformation of life. Thus superficial conversions abound and multitudes are joined to the church who have never been united to Christ.

### **GOD’S PLAN TO SAVE YOU FROM SIN**

Romans 3:23 “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”

Isaiah 59:2 “But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear.”

Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

2 Peter 3:9 “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

Exodus 34:6-7 “The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.”

John 3:16-20 “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. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.”

Luke 19:10 “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

Matthew 1:21 “He shall save His people from their sins.”

Isaiah 53:6 “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

Acts 16:31 “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”

2 Corinthians 6:2 “Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”

John 1:12 “But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.”

Galatians 2:20 “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”

John 3:3 “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

2 Corinthians 5:17 “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

Philippians 2:13 “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.”

Hebrews 10:16 “I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them.”

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1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Philippians 4:13 "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

### **You can be Kept by the Power of God**

In these days of so many bad habits; we need the saving and keeping power of God. And how great is His power to help and uphold the very weakest! Let us see how much God promises to do for those who trust Him: "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness." Isaiah 41: 10.

God promises to hold us with His own right hand. And He also adds, "For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee." Verse 13.

God helps us, saves us, and keeps us through Jesus, His beloved Son, our Redeemer. We read further, 'Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and you men of Israel; I will help thee, said the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.' Verse 14.

When we give up to God our bad ways or habits, our Creator makes us into a new creature, victorious over them all! Just as He promises: "Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth. Thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shall make the hills as chaff." Verse 15. Can you imagine a worm with teeth; teeth that can chew down mountains of difficulties?

Not only does God make us victorious over all bad habits when we give ourselves wholly to Him, but He also gives us glory and joy in our hearts. He says: "Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them. And thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, and shall glory in the Holy One of Israel." Verse 16.

The following story is told by Mrs. J. K. Burney in one of her booklets about the truth of these great promises of God. She was asking a man to sign the Temperance pledge and give up drinking, but he answered: "Oh, lady, it's no use. I'd break it right off, and I shouldn't like to break your pledge."

'Listen', I replied. 'Here are some words just for you: "I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not, I will help thee."

"Where did you get that, lady? Would you mind reading it again?"

I opened my Bible to Isaiah 41:13. He read and reread the verse, then said: 'You see how my hand trembles? Do you suppose I could write my name if God held my hand?'

'Oh, yes, I am sure you could.'

'Do you suppose I'd ever take another glass of liquor if God held my hand?'

'Never, unless you took your hand out of the Lord's. He never lets go of anyone.'

'I've tried a good many times alone. Now, here goes for God and me.'

He kept his pledge, frequently saying, 'It's a good grip He gives me; never saw anything like it in my life.'

"Lady do you suppose I'd ever take another glass of liquor if God held my hand?"

Yes, the Lord is able to keep us at all times from falling into any sin whatsoever; for He says also, "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear."

"Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and My right hand hath spanned the heavens: when I call unto them, they stand up together." Isaiah 59:1; 48:13.

Jesus can keep us faithful in His service all day long, all our life long!

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After a meeting held in a seaport town, two sailors were spoken to about salvation. One of them said, "It ain't no use. If we gave up drinking and swearing tonight, we would be as bad as ever tomorrow."

Taking his watch from his pocket, the leader of the meeting said, "Do you think the maker of this watch could wind it up again?"

"Of course he could," they admitted.

"Well, God is your Maker, and don't you think He could wind you up and keep you going?"

"We never thought of that, sir."

"Come to Him, then, and prove His power. He can put you in working order and keep you going on board ship just as well as on land."

They did so, and many months later they returned after a voyage. When asked how well God had kept them, they replied: "All right, thank God! We made up our minds that every morning we would kneel down and ask Him to wind us up for the day, and every night we would thank Him for having done it; and He did."

Is the Lord your keeper? Does He keep you when you are tempted and tried? Are you enjoying His wonderful keeping power? If not, do you wish you were kept by His mighty power all day long and had peace of mind and gladness of heart? You can choose to have it.

God saves and keeps us through Jesus, who is the good Shepherd of the Father's sheep, and who says, "I am the good shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine." John 10:14.

Do you wish He were your Shepherd, too? He will be, just say from your heart, that you accept Him as your heavenly Shepherd, that you want Him to hold your hand and He will! In this simple way all the blessings of God's keeping power through Jesus may be yours, both in this life and in the life to come.

Read in your Bible the wonderful Shepherd's Psalm, # 23. It is for you— if you want it! Search your Bible for other precious promises and realize they are all for you. God never breaks his promise!

#### MORE PROMISES FOR THE OBEDIENT

John 1:12. "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name."

Galatians 2:20. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

Philippians 2:13. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

1 John 1:9. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."