

Climbing Higher

Overcoming Spiritual Obstacles

D O R O T H Y D A V I S

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Dedication

*To Barb Palmiter,
faithful friend and sister climber*

CLIMBING HIGHER: OVERCOMING SPIRITUAL OBSTACLES

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Preface

I love mountains! The White Mountains of New Hampshire, the Berkshires of Massachusetts, the Rockies—American and Canadian—I have seen these and more. I never tire of viewing panoramic scenes from some lofty spot. It refreshes the soul and clears the senses.

The Christian life consists of mountaintop experiences as well as spiritual valleys, with many obstacles in between. To reach the point of some sweet, new view of God's work and character may take great spiritual work on your part. You may get pricked by some briers (those little convictions of the Spirit). You may have to remove some debris (sin) from your path. You will definitely have to expend some spiritual energy (Bible study and prayer) to reach new plateaus. But the view from above is certainly worth it!

The climb to new spiritual heights is a challenging and continual one. Perhaps you've only just begun. Whatever your spiritual status, the enabling power of Jesus Christ is available to see you through every obstacle. Sometimes the going gets rough; sometimes it seems easy. God's Word, the Bible, gives direction for every step. Here we go then. Let's climb together!

How to Use This Study

Each lesson in this study is divided into five sections. Follow these suggestions as you prepare each lesson.



I. PREPARING TO CLIMB

Following the introductory comments, these questions will prepare your heart to study God's Word. The answers to these questions will not be discussed in class.



II. FINDING A FOOTHOLD

The questions in this section concentrate on the actual text of God's Word and will help you understand what God's Word says.



III. PRESSING UPWARD

As you answer the questions in this section, you will see how the truths of God's Word apply to your life.



IV. REACHING NEW HEIGHTS

This section is personal. It is designed as a starting point to help you put God's truth into practice.



V. VIEW FROM THE TOP

These final words will help seal firmly in your mind what you learned from the Bible passage.

Becoming an Overcomer

“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 5:4, 5).

The Bible, God’s written Word, introduces us to the reality of living victoriously in this world. God invites each of us to be an “overcomer,” one who has, through Christ, triumphed over Satan, sin, and Hell. The first thing we must do to be overcomers is to receive Christ, to be found in Him.

What satisfaction could a person gain from being a fake? In 1906 a mountain climber named Frederick Cook organized a party of men in an attempt to be the first to conquer Alaska’s Mount McKinley. Shortly after arriving and realizing the prospects of success were hopeless, Cook suddenly announced that he would take three of the men and climb the mountain. He returned in less than a month, claiming victory. This was a virtually impossible amount of time for such a climb. However, one of the three men secretly admitted that *he* had never climbed Mount McKinley, and a supposed photo of the same man on top of the mountain was later exposed as a fake! This Doctor Cook, claiming to have reached the summit, hadn’t even taken the first step toward climbing it!

Many people today claim to be Christians. They think that being born into a family that practices a certain religion makes them Christians. Or they feel that attending a certain church, being baptized, giving money, or going through a ceremony makes them Christians. They may pretend to be followers of Christ or be quite sincerely ignorant of God’s truth.

Nevertheless, these people are fake Christians when measured by the teaching of Scripture. They can't possibly reach the heights of the victorious Christian life, because they haven't even taken the first step: becoming a real Christian. God desires every woman to be an overcomer in this life. Let's examine the first step necessary to such a life.



I. PREPARING TO CLIMB

- Do you know for certain that you will go to Heaven to be with Christ when you die?
- On what do you base this certainty?



II. FINDING A FOOTHOLD

1. A person who is in slavery, blind, lost, and dead is not exactly an overcomer! Yet spiritually, this is how God describes every person who has never made a personal decision to receive Jesus Christ into his or her life. The problem is our sin, which separates us from God, Who is holy. Jot down what each of the following verses tells us about ourselves apart from Christ.

Romans 3:23

Ephesians 4:18

John 8:34

Ephesians 2:1

Isaiah 59:2

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2. According to the following verses, unless a person's sins are forgiven, or erased, what will be her eternal destiny?

Romans 6:23

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9

3. Many people today mistakenly think that they will get to Heaven by being good or doing good deeds. But this is *not* what the Bible teaches. Being good cannot erase the sins of sinful people, nor can religious works or ceremonies take away our iniquities. How do the following verses refute the false idea that good works will get us into Heaven?

Romans 3:10-12

Titus 3:5

Matthew 7:21-23

Isaiah 64:6

2 Timothy 1:8, 9

4. God, Who both hates sin but richly loves each sinner, provided a way for us to be forgiven, reconciled to Himself, and made recipients of His gift of eternal life. He sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ—Who is Himself God—to die on a cross, bearing God's punishment for our sins. Since He never sinned, He died not for His own sins but for the sins of each person who has ever lived. Summarize the truth about Christ as presented in each of these verses.

John 3:17

1 Corinthians 15:3

1 Peter 3:18

Romans 5:8

5. The Bible declares that Jesus not only died, but that He rose from the dead three days later as proof that He is God and that His death for us was acceptable to the Father. Read these verses. What did His resurrection accomplish?

Romans 1:4

1 Corinthians 15:3–6

1 Peter 1:3

6. A woman can receive forgiveness of sins, eternal life in Heaven, and salvation from God's judgment by receiving Christ as her Savior and putting her faith in His work on the cross as the only payment for her sins. What do the following verses teach you about how a person can

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have God's gift of eternal life? For each verse, write down the verb, or action, God requires.

John 1:12

John 6:47

Romans 10:9, 10

Romans 10:13

7. How does the Bible *assure* us that when we repent of our sins and come to Christ, asking forgiveness and inviting Him to come into our lives, He will do as we ask?

John 6:37

John 10:28

1 John 2:25

1 John 5:14, 15

8. In each of these passages, what description is given of the person who has put her faith in Christ?

1 John 5:4, 5

Romans 8:37-39

2 Peter 1:3



III. PRESSING UPWARD

1. God emphatically declares that success, fulfillment, and victory in this life can take place only when a person establishes a right relationship to God. The *only* way we can come to Him is through Jesus Christ's atoning death. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Many people go through life trying various means to feel successful. What are some of the ways people endeavor to fill their lives? Why can none of these things *guarantee* success?

2. Some people have just given up hope. For them, perhaps, life has been a series of rejections, disappointments, bad decisions, and failure. Far from being overcomers, they merely exist from day to day. Christ came to lift us from the dust of sin and despair and give us hope and strength. How has Christ brought meaning to your life? Or, to what areas of your life do you want Christ to bring new hope?

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3. Many obstacles can prevent a person from putting her faith in Christ. Select three of the following terms and explain how each might possibly hinder a woman from receiving Christ as her Savior. How can God and His Word remove these hindrances?

Pride

Fear

Ignorance

Satan

“Religion” or self-righteousness

Guilt

4. When did you take the first step to becoming an overcomer? What caused you to realize your need for a Savior?



IV. REACHING NEW HEIGHTS

Has God spoken to you through His Word? Spend a few moments in prayer, committing one of the following areas to Him. What *action* can you take to obey God? Allow Him to work in your life as He seeks to make you an overcomer!

- _____ I need to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior. I am now praying this prayer to Him: “Dear Lord, I know that I am a sinner and need to have my sins forgiven. I believe that You sent Your Son, Jesus Christ, to die for my sins and that He rose again and now lives in Heaven. I am asking Him to come into my life and give me Your gift of eternal life. Please forgive me and receive me. Thank You for loving me and answering my prayer.”
- _____ I am a Christian, but I know that I am not living a victorious spiritual life. I am going to pray that the Lord will teach me His truth through the coming weeks and that I will grow in grace as I study His Word.
- _____ I am a believer who is learning much about living for Christ. Right now I am asking God to show me through this study in His Word any areas or attitudes that are not reflecting His glory.



V. VIEW FROM THE TOP

A personal relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ enables you to be an overcomer in both life now and life after death. Apart from Him, you are lost in your sins and face eternity in Hell, separated forever from God. (This is the clear teaching of Christ Himself in Scripture. Read John 3.)

When we receive God's grace and wondrous gift of eternal life by faith, true satisfaction is just beginning. No, Christ doesn't necessarily change our circumstances, but He can exchange our weakness for His power to live victoriously through them. He doesn't guarantee us riches in material wealth, but we have infinitely valuable spiritual riches and resources. He doesn't always give worldly success and renown, but we can attain spiritual success and receive a rich welcome in Heaven by the Lord Himself.

When we come to Christ, we are “more than conquerors” (Romans 8:37). In Him, we're prepared to scale the heights to spiritual stability. But the first step is crucial, yes, indispensable! Without it, you'll be forever doomed to the “lowlands of despair.” Have you taken the first step?