

COMMIT TO MEMORY

You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. - 1 John 4:4

CONSIDER

There was a concern years ago that Japanese made vehicles would out-sell American made vehicles due to the concept of zero tolerance—little or no room for error. As a result, American car manufacturers began to raise the standard back home in order to become more competitive.

In other words, to maximize business productivity, decrease your level of tolerance for error. In being human, we will never perfectly reach that but if it is the goal, it will set your business and product apart. This is due to the fact that when mediocrity is the standard, people will simply shop elsewhere. And if this is true in business or even basketball, manufacturing or flying—why do we question it when it comes to the God who made it all? Is God to expect less from you and me, and from His church? That's the message that Jesus brings to the church of Thyatira. He wants them to know that in order for them to live as overcomers both on earth and for eternity, they will need to have a zero tolerance mindset toward sin. They will need to never settle for their own sins or the sins of others.

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CONNECT

Remember to always open your group time together in prayer. Invite God's Spirit to manifest Himself fully in your midst, to soften your hearts and open your ears to His Word as well as to guard your lips—seasoning each person's speech as with salt. Keep specific prayer requests to be covered at the end of the meeting, if possible. This is a time to connect with each other and to connect with God as we open our time together.

Share your responses to these questions as you open up your time of connection.

Take some time to reflect on the overall study of overcoming. Share any new insights you have learned since last week or applied in your life.

In what ways has this study met your expectations? In what ways has it differed?

This is a time to connect with each other and to connect with God as we open our time together.

After this preliminary connecting time is completed, watch the DVD teaching by Pastor Evans on this session. Next, have someone read the discussion questions in the Concentrate section and guide the discussion.

CONCENTRATE

Use the following questions and Scripture passages to guide your discussion of the teaching you just experienced from Pastor Evans and the discussion from your group members.

1. Read Revelation 2:18-28.

Had everyone in the church at Thyatira committed rebellion in tolerating the deeds of Jezebel?

What was the message to those who had not been tolerant?

2. Pastor Evans speaks in the video of the position of Jezebel as to one reason why she was able to get away with so much immoral behavior and enticement. He states, "Position does not trump standards." How does a position of spiritual authority sometimes impact whether or not we will choose to hold someone accountable within the body of Christ? Should things be this way and if not, what can be done to address it?

3. One of the things Jezebel did in the church was to encourage people to eat things sacrificed to idol. Pastor Evans defines idolatry as any person, place, thought or thing that usurps God's rightful rule in your life. We do not typically have idols in today's culture that are made from wood carvings or set upon our mantles, as in days past or other cultures. What are some of the idols we have in our contemporary American culture – such as materialism and narcissism. Discuss some common ones today.

Notes

(Use this space for personal notes on the lesson and discussion.)

CONVERGE

“be doers of the Word,
not just hearers”
- James 1:22

In this section, talk with the group about how you will apply the wisdom you've learned from the teaching and Bible study.

Discuss the following questions:

1. In the video teaching, Pastor Evans gave the illustration of his son, Jonathan, lowering the basket in order to dunk when he was shorter. What was Pastor Evans' response to the lowering of this basket? Is there anything in your life or relationships where you feel that the basket should or could be raised higher? If it is not too personal, share this with the group.

2. How does knowing what the rewards of overcoming will one day be give you motivation to repent of your sins, overcome temptation and not tolerate the sinful influences of others?

3. Accountability is a tricky thing to do because it sometimes feels like unrequested judgment. Discuss ways you can open yourself up or others up to be more willing to be held accountable on sins you may not even recognize you are doing. Share some best practices that have worked for you, or others, in the past.

Focusing
on practical
applications of
what we've
learned in this
lesson in
order to better
align our life
choices with
God's truth
and will.

To close your time together, spend some time worshiping God together—praying, singing, reading Scripture. Use the Prayer and Praise to keep track of how God answers prayer.

CONTINUE

Rest, and allow the Lord to lead you as you seek Him through His Word.

The following section is for you to use personally on your own as you continue in the week's topic throughout the next few days. Pray and ask the Lord to open your ears to truly hear His truth and apply it in your life. If you want to, feel free to write what you learn in the margins or in the Notes section of this week's lesson.

Day 1

I have been crucified with Christ; and 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 up for me.
 - Galatians 2:20

REFLECT:

What does it mean from a practical standpoint for Christ to live in you?

In what ways do you experience the truth that you have been crucified with Christ and you now live by faith in the Son of God?

In what ways do you believe you could experience this at a greater level?

Day 2

No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it. Corinthians 10:13

REFLECT:

Are you facing a temptation in your life right now? Can you identify the "way of escape"? If not, ask the Lord for wisdom on where/what this is.

Consider Christ's suffering on the cross which He endured for the joy set before Him. Are you willing to endure temptation in order to gain the eternal reward Jesus spoke of in His message to the church at Thyatira?

Reflect on a temptation you gave into it and the consequences that ensued. What did these consequences teach you?

Day 3

And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.
 - Revelation 12:11

REFLECT:

This verse tells us that they overcame because of the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. What is your testimony that will enable you to overcome further temptation or trial?

How does the blood of the Lamb ensure our ability to overcome?

Do you struggle with loving your life more than surrendering to the Lord in a spirit of love for Him? In what way does this show up the most?

Day 4

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. - 1 John 4:1

REFLECT:

Is it easy to spot a false prophet in our contemporary Christian culture? What are some of the indicators?

How often are you to test the spirits to see whether they are from God?

Aligning your thoughts with the truth of God's Word is one way of discerning whether what you are thinking is from God or not. Do you make this a regular practice? If not, will you commit to doing so?

Day 5

You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.
 - 1 John 4:4

REFLECT:

What does it mean that greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world?

If you are struggling in the area of tolerance and temptation, what is one thing you can do in order to strengthen your resolve to overcome?