

Light and Life for Facing Temptation

Psalm 119:105-112

Introduction

In the 1960s, even though racism was deeply entrenched in this country, the Civil Rights workers marched and saying "We Shall Overcome."

So what song should Christians sing when we face temptation? Should we sing "We Shall Overcome"? Or should we sing "We Might Overcome," or even "We Won't Overcome"?

The answer is found in Psalm 119:105-112 —

How does the author describe God's word? (v. 105)

He says God's word is a lamp to his feet, and a light to his path.

The problem is that sin keeps us in the dark about what path leads to destruction, and what path leads to Paradise Valley.

But when we open up God's word we will see clearly which is which.

How does that truth impact him? (v. 106)

It leads him to make a solemn commitment before God to obey his word.

That does not mean he believed he would be saved by his obedience. Both Old and New Testaments teach clearly that we are saved by faith alone; this is even more clear now that we see Christ's death and resurrection.

That also does not mean he is promising to be perfectly sinless. He knew he still had indwelling sin, which he would not be free from until heaven. But he is promising to pursue sinlessness. But this raises another question...

How can he make this commitment when he knows his own sinfulness? (vv.107-108)

It's because he knows that when he is severely tempted, if he will cry out to God, God will give him such spiritual life that he will be able to overcome the temptation (107).

And when God does this, causing the psalmist to praise God, even then the psalmist will not rely on his own strength, but will pray and ask God to teach him; and God will (108).

So he can make this commitment because he knows God will enable him to overcome every temptation.

This is also taught in 1 Corinthians 10:13.

How does this truth affect him? (vv.109-112)

It makes him passionate about obeying God's word.

What does this mean for us?

When facing temptation, instead of singing "We Might Overcome" we should focus on all that God promises to do for us — and sing "We Shall Overcome."



HOME GROUP DISCUSSION OF SUNDAY'S TEACHING

(Sometimes in our home groups we talk about Sunday's teaching, so we can work together on responding to God's Word — asking questions, sharing insights, talking together.)

In the past, when you have faced temptations, what song have you sung? Have you sung "We Shall Overcome"? Or "We Might Overcome"? What factors have gone into this choice of song?

How confident are you that God's word is a lamp to your feet and a light to your path? What strengthens your confidence in this? What weakens your confidence in this?

Are you comfortable making a commitment to God that you will pursue sinlessness? Why or why not?

I believe that in verses 107–108 the author tells us why he is able to make the commitment of verse 106 — and the reason is because when he is severely tempted, he knows that God will always give him life and will teach him his word. Can you think of a better explanation for verses 107-108?

Do you agree that every temptation we face can, by God's grace, be overcome? Do you agree that this is the point of 1 Corinthians 10:13? Why or why not?

This passage teaches that God gives two precious gifts: the LIGHT of the word, which dispels the darkness of sin; and the LIFE of the word, that breaks the power of sin. Which of these do you use more frequently? Which of these do you especially need right now?

Are you persuaded by this passage that the song you should sing when you face temptations is "We Shall Overcome"? Why or why not?

