

Module 5: Overcoming as a Disciple

Remain consecrated and committed unto God

So far in this discipleship course, we have looked at what it means to be a disciple, how we become a disciple, and what is the mandate of the disciple.

As a disciple of the Lord, we need to continually walk in commitment to the Lord, and we need to stay consecrated unto Him. Our spiritual journey takes us from being a convert to a disciple, but a disciple is one that remains committed and who remains set apart unto the Kingdom of the Lord. The concept of a disciple after all is that we are no longer merely converts but followers, and a follower obeys and remains faithful to His master.

As a disciple we therefore overcome when we continue steadfast in our journey with the Lord. For it says in *2 Peter 1 (NKJV): 5 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.* Again, the word “add” is a verb, which implies continual action. We have a responsibility as children of the Lord to play our part in this spiritual walk with the Lord. God does His part, but we have to continue abiding in Him, trusting in Him, submitting in Him so that we may grow and persevere in virtue, knowledge, self-control and godliness. This all speaks of a continual decision of the will and the mind to serve the Lord and to stay committed as His disciple.

Romans 6: ¹¹Even so consider yourselves also dead to sin and your relation to it broken, but alive to God [living in unbroken fellowship with Him] in Christ Jesus. ¹²Let not sin therefore rule as king in your mortal (short-lived, perishable) bodies, to make you yield to its cravings and be subject to its lusts and evil passions. ¹³Do not continue offering or yielding your bodily members [and faculties] to sin as instruments (tools) of wickedness. But offer and yield yourselves to God as though you have been raised from the dead to [perpetual] life, and your bodily members [and faculties] to God, presenting them as implements of righteousness.

The Lord is calling for His people to yield and to consecrate themselves to the glory of God. And this should be an ongoing process. How the Lord is calling for a people, who have been made alive from sin, to present themselves unto God in a constant yearning and longing to have a deeper and unbroken fellowship with the living Lord.

To consecrate speaks of being set apart unto God in one’s life and service. How God is calling for a people who will be willing to seek Him in such a manner of faith and love, for we have been made alive were we once dead and so we who are alive can glory in the knowledge that our hope rests in the risen and living Lord Jesus.

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A disciple overcomes and stays the course when we remain committed to the cause, and when we remain set apart. Paul writes in *2 Timothy 4: 6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.*

Indeed, Paul finished the race – he therefore overcame the trials, tribulations and the onslaughts that come against any follower of the Lord. We can only finish the race and fight the good fight if we keep on fixing our eyes on the Lord, when we remain committed to the Kingdom and when we remain consecrated. This is again the very concept of discipleship – a disciple only follows the Lord and is committed unto the Lord. If this is not so, then such a person is not a follower of the Lord, therefore not a disciple.

Psalm 119: Blessed are the undefiled in the way, Who walk in the law of the Lord! 2 Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, Who seek Him with the whole heart! 3 They also do no iniquity; They walk in His ways. 4 You have commanded us To keep Your precepts diligently. 5 Oh, that my ways were directed To keep Your statutes! 6 Then I would not be ashamed, When I look into all Your commandments. 7 I will praise You with uprightness of heart, When I learn Your righteous judgments. 8 I will keep Your statutes ...

Take note how words in Psalm 119 such as “walk”, “keep” and “seek” are used, for this speaks of action, and it speak of a continuing motion towards achieving something. Our spiritual walk as a disciple should not be one of passivity, but of continuous growth, continuous commitment and continuously seeking to obey the Lord, to obey His Truth, to obey His commandments and to be continually set apart for His Glory. A disciple never stagnates, but every day seeks to renew his mind, his heart and to draw closer to the Lord.

For the Lord does not want only 10% of us. He does not want 50, 70 or even 99%. He wants all of us. He wants all our devotion and love. He desires a full commitment. He desires us to be zealous, passionate, and wholly set apart in love and life unto Him. *Deuteronomy 4:24: For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.*

To serve God in the hope and faith and love of being alive in His glory is the true place of consecration. How else but to consecrate ourselves unto God if we truly have sought to die with Jesus in our old ways and then to be resurrected into the fullness of God? And by that death unto the world and our ways, we present to God ourselves as living sacrifices to His glory and for His glory. *Romans 12: 1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then*

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you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Remember, we have been bought with a price. *1 Corinthians 6: 19* Do you not know that your body is the temple (the very sanctuary) of the Holy Spirit Who lives within you, Whom you have received [as a Gift] from God? You are not your own, *20* You were bought with a price [purchased with a preciousness and paid for, made His own]. So then, honor God and bring glory to Him in your body. In the eyes of God, after we have received Jesus, we belong to ourselves no longer. Our Lord Jesus has already paid a price to purchase us, and rightfully we belong to Him. *"Whether we live or we die, we are the Lord's" (Romans 14:8).*

So now, as a new convert, we grow as disciples, and as we grow we honour the price paid and we honour the Lord by honouring Him by laying down our very lives. This therefore speaks of commitment and zealous consecration.

When it comes to consecration, we have to remember that Jesus through His death and resurrection first gave Himself to us so that we may be able to give ourselves to Him. Our life and hope therefore rests in the risen Lord. Indeed, the Lord has died for us and by His Blood we are sanctified and consecrated, meaning He has set our sins apart and He has made us alive from sin.

The sanctification or that holy process of being set apart that took place on the cross and in the empty tomb is solely the work of Christ. It is a completed work that is applied to everyone at the time of salvation. The believer has therefore been placed into this position by God.

This position does not change based on day to day actions. As Hebrews says, "we have been sanctified . . . once for all." Indeed, Christ has already redeemed the believer, justified the believer, and sanctified the believer when He died on the cross, rose the third day, and ascended to the Father.

The work of sanctification within Jesus is finished. But what is left for us to give ourselves fully unto a new life unto God, so that we may bear fruit. Jesus said, *"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me" (John 15:1-4).*

The bearing of the fruit is therefore the "evidence" and the natural outflow of being alive to Christ. But bearing fruit does not happen overnight. We need to consecrate ourselves to Him and remain in Him before we can bear fruit because of it. There is no fruit unless there is an abiding in Christ. How we need to *pursue* the place of abiding in Christ. So even though sanctification

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in Jesus is secured and is sealed once and for all, we cannot miss the importance of abiding in God, and to abide means a process of surrendering, which involves the physical, mental, and spiritual experiences of our existence on the earth.

This is thus the consecration of us unto Jesus. It is one thing to believe in Jesus, but it is another thing to pursue Him, to draw closer to Him in relationship, to seek Him, to submit to the Spirit and to truly abide in Him. This is the spiritual journey of the disciple, and in this walk and in this continuous surrendering we shall overcome. To submit and to die to the self requires a life completely surrendered to God. To abide requires us to be faithful, obedient and committed to God.

As we are thus sanctified in Christ, we need to remain and abide in Christ, and we do so be remaining and abiding in the Spirit and being consecrated to Christ in the way we live. Only when we have entered into this transaction of completely handing over our life to Him will we know Him even more deeply.

We cannot by works secure our salvation, but if we stay in the Lord then our works and deeds will reflect that we are a people who are dead to the world and alive to God. Indeed, nothing can separate us from the love of the Lord (Romans 8), but we need to remain and to abide and to grow closer to Him – He who has overcome the world and death. God is the constant factor. He has sanctified us, but we need to remain in Spirit and Truth and so bear fruit to His glory.

We have all been given a free will to make decisions and choices, but a life alive to God is one where everything we do and say is to His glory. We are called to deny ourselves and carry the cross (Mark 8:34), which means denying the Self so that God is enthroned in our lives. One cannot carry the cross and deny oneself one day and not another. We are called to live as children of the light and to be a holy priesthood which is set apart for Him.

Question is how many of us are abiding and remaining in Jesus, how many of us have truly consecrated ourselves to Him and are we truly bearing fruit in Him in Spirit and Truth? Let Your will be done oh Lord we pray, according to Matthew 6, but then our will cannot be glorified.

We need to lay down the old man, but for some, perhaps for all, this takes time to walk in His light. A journey consists of many steps, and so it is with our spiritual walk of remaining true and faithful, just as Jesus remains always true and faithful by the act of the cross.

In the end, to remain committed and consecrated speaks of aiming and pursuing godliness. *1 Timothy 6: 11 But as for you, O man of God, flee from all these things; aim at and pursue righteousness (right standing with God and true goodness), godliness (which is the loving fear of God and being Christlike), faith, love, steadfastness (patience), and gentleness of heart.*

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12Fight the good fight of the faith; lay hold of the eternal life to which you were summoned and [for which] you confessed the good confession [of faith] before many witnesses. 13In the presence of God, Who preserves alive all living things, and of Christ Jesus, Who in His testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I [solemnly] charge you 14To keep all His precepts unsullied and flawless, irreproachable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ (the Anointed One), 15Which [appearing] will be shown forth in His own proper time by the blessed, only Sovereign (Ruler), the King of kings and the Lord of lords, 16Who alone has immortality [in the sense of exemption from every kind of death] and lives in unapproachable light, Whom no man has ever seen or can see. Unto Him be honor and everlasting power and dominion. Amen (so be it) ... 20 O Timothy, guard and keep the deposit entrusted [to you]! Turn away from the irreverent babble and godless chatter, with the vain and empty and worldly phrases, and the subtleties and the contradictions in what is falsely called knowledge and spiritual illumination.

Final instructions and words of advice usually contain treasures of worth – such as the instruction given to Paul in his epistle to Timothy the young disciple. Final instructions are like a condensed version of the teacher’s wisdom and knowledge, and portray fundamental truths and treasures of spiritual values. When it comes to his final instructions, Paul charges Timothy to flee from all things that are not from God and to rather pursue and to aim for righteousness (right standing with God and true goodness), godliness (which is the loving fear of God and being Christlike), faith, love, steadfastness (patience), and gentleness of heart.

Both the verbs flee and pursue speak of action and deliberate decision – it speaks of an action that simply doesn’t happen but it is an action that needs to happen by the will and the conscious decision of the one initiating the action. We are therefore not simply going to wake up one day and by mere chance walk in righteousness, godliness, love, gentleness and faith.

These virtues speak after all about the fruits of the Spirit – therefore the Spirit of God – which implies we need to take a decisive and conscious action by moving closer to God by seeking Him and obeying Him. We need to actively and with purpose submit to His will and intent. To pursue implies a forward motion, but such a journey towards God and such a desire to walk in the Spirit and Truth comes not merely by remaining motionless.

We need to want and desire to pursue all that is right. This is the journey of the disciple if the disciple desires to overcome this world and wishes to remain committed unto the Lord. This implies taking action when it comes to the way we think, what we say, what we do and how we do it.

Paul also speaks about keeping all His precepts unsullied and flawless, irreproachable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ (the Anointed One). Again, this speaks of action for the word “keep” is also the word used to imply keeping guard. We have to be mindful, aware, and alert and to be

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constantly striving every day to walk in the ways of God and in the ways of godliness until the coming of Jesus.

Emphasis is placed here on the continuous journey of pursuing goodness and godliness, for we need to do so until a set period of time which is when the Lord returns, therefore it should be an effort from our part that should never fade in terms of our resolute passion in the pursuit of being children of the Lord. It says in *1 Peter 5:7-9*: *7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. 8 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.*

As with Paul, Peter places emphasis on the ongoing and active process of being alert, being sober minded, of standing firm and of resisting the ways of the world. How we need to come to that point of realisation that the Lord is looking at us to also play an active and certain role in our spiritual development – we simply cannot be passive and lethargic but we need to be active, bold and determined to make sure that what we say, do and think is to His glory.

We all experience external pressures that make us walk not according to the ways of the Lord, but for this reason we need to be actively aware of such dangers and pitfalls and instead seek to earnestly walk in His Spirit so that we may walk in true love and hope.

In the end, we have to realise that somewhere along the line we have to decide if we are taking our relationship with God seriously or if we have just been fooling around and playing games. Somewhere along the line we have to realize this is not some kind of club we have joined or that it is about having a good time with God, but it is about His Name and Kingdom that we carry with us, and we have a responsibility and an accountability through our conduct and speech for the world to see Jesus in us.

To be a disciple is a very serious matter. It is about commitment. It is about being passionate to serve the King of kings and the Lord of lords. It is about continuing to grow in such a manner and to stay committed so that our light may shine in this dark world of heresy and apostasy.

We are here as God's ambassadors. We are here as His ministers and representatives. We are here to uphold His Name. May we therefore as disciples stay the course, persevere, and may we continue to bring the Lord all the honour and all the glory.