

Overcome

NEW COMMAND FROM 1 JOHN

GROUP GUIDE
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ABOUT THIS SERIES

For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world - our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believe that Jesus is the Son of God?

John, 1 John 5:4 - 5

We live in a fallen world that has come under the influence of the forces of darkness. As a result, hatred and division have saturated our way of life; broken relationships and fragmented families are the norm; war, murder and self-preservation are the cost. But as Christ-followers, we are not called to be willing perpetrators or blind victims to that darkness.

We are called to overcome.

In this series, the book of 1 John will reveal the path to be an overcomer.

A path that has defeated the darkness and has begun the healing process in our world.

A path guided by one word that changes everything: love.

Ground Rules

Here are some guidelines for your gatherings.

Confidentiality

If the group is going to move towards authenticity, then what's shared in the group should stay in the group (note: for situations that you are not qualified to speak into, use a referral to Cornerstone Counseling).

Don't Rescue and Don't Fix

Let people openly share without trying to solve their problems. Only give advice if they request it.

No Crosstalk

People feel valued when we listen. The opposite is true as well: people will feel devalued if they are constantly interrupted. If someone has the floor, no other conversations should be happening.

Give Everyone a Chance to Share

Everyone has something to contribute and everyone should feel heard. Don't be too quick to provide all of the answers. Give others space to share.

Use Humor Responsibly

Our conversation should build up rather than tear down. Humor can be a great thing provided it is not used as the expense of others.

Use 'I' Statements

Groups are an opportunity for self-reflection. We should be quick to reflect on how what we are studying should shape us personally, and slow to tell others how it should shape them.

Fight for the Relationship

Real relationships only thrive when we commit to 'fight' for the relationship. We will not hide from conflict or disagreement, but will instead discuss them in an open and healthy way.

Leader Guidelines

Thank you for taking the time to invest in others by leading a group. As a leader, your task is to create an environment where real relationships can thrive. Here are some things to keep in mind as you do that:

Multiply.

The mission of the church is to multiply disciples. Groups are one of the environments where this occurs. You are involved in the discipleship of each person in your group. We ask that each of our group leaders has someone who they are equipping to be a disciple-maker.

Create a safe environment.

When we say 'safe', we mean an environment where participants can freely share without feeling belittled or that what they share will get spread beyond the group. When we say 'safe', we also mean a group where participants can encounter Jesus and His plan for their life.

Recognize that your group is unique.

This booklet is designed to be a general guide, but every group is unique. So when you're planning, take into account what does and doesn't work for your group and shape the session to their personalities and needs.

Review the ground rules.

Periodically, remind your group about the ground rules for the group.

Ask lots of questions.

Engaging leaders draw participants into the discussion. Ask many questions and lead your group into self-discovery. Follow the 70/30 rule: your goal should be to talk for less than 30% of the time. If you're going over that, then people in your group are going to feel limited in their ability to engage!

Get feedback.

Improve your group by asking others for feedback.

Seek wise council.

There are some questions you won't be able to answer and some situations you aren't trained to handle. That's OK! Know who your wise council is (whether a coach, minister, or another disciple-maker) and turn to them in your time of need.

For more on this topic, check out *Servant-Leadership Training* and the *CCW Group Leader Training 2.0* resource on RightNow Media.

Before the Session

Prepare for the Session: As a group leader, it's essential to be prepared. Before the group session:

1. **Pray.** God is the one doing the transformation.
2. **Take time to read over the Bible passage.** Write down questions and observations.
3. **Preview the session guide.** Highlight important questions to ask and add your own.
4. **Tap into study resources.** Check outside sources to expand your understanding of the topic. Some recommended resources include: The BibleProject, RightNow Media, and the CCW Resource Center.

During the Session

Share: Take time to review the content from last week. Use this time to check on:

- **Prayer Requests:** Follow up on any prayer requests that were made the previous session.
- **Application and Challenges:** Take time to provide accountability for any goals that the group set the previous week ('This week, I would like to...').

Transition: Introduce the topic (we give you an example each session).

Read It: Read through the Scripture passage. If it's a larger section of scripture, break it into smaller sections and ask questions throughout.

Talk About It: Make sure the passage is understood by:

1. *Retelling* the story in your own words.
2. *Asking review questions.*
3. *Seeking additional questions.* Check to see if your group has additional questions about the passage.

Apply It: The apply it section may have both (a) application questions and (b) challenges. Challenges are real-life ways to put Biblical Truth into effect this week.

Pray Together: Find creative ways to engage your group in prayer.

After the Session

Follow Up: Be present with group members throughout the week by: (1) Reminding them of their application/challenge commitments, (2) Checking in on needs and prayer requests and (3) Finding opportunities to do life together.

Input Group Attendance: Fill out your Group attendance in the ChurchTeams email that you receive.

THE GOD WHO OVERCAME

Icebreaker

Spend some time opening conversation with this question:

- When have you faced a challenge or opposition that you had to overcome?
- When you think of the word 'overcome' what does it bring to mind?

Transition

It's time to move towards reading God's Word. Transition your group into the study by saying something like:

This month we're going to be reading one of the short letters found right near the end of our Bibles: 1 John. This book is packed with two key themes that we will be exploring. The first is the idea of overcoming the world; but our ability to overcome isn't bound up in violence, rebellion, or protests. That leads us to the second theme: love. Love is the way in which we overcome.

Note: Before starting into the Read It section, consider watching the BibleProject overview video on 1-3 John.

Read It

Scripture reference: **1 John 1:1 - 2:6**

Review It

- John starts with a statement about why he is writing. What does he say are the reasons for penning this letter (1:1 - 4)?
- What does it mean for there to be no

darkness in God at all (1:5)?

- According to John, how do we have fellowship with God (1:6 - 7)? What does it mean to 'walk in the light'?
- Why is recognition of our sins critical for a right relationship with God (1:8 - 10)? Why is the confession of sin so challenging?
- Who acts as our advocate before God (2:1)?
- Propitiation means to appease someone or to atone for a wrong. What does it mean for Jesus to be the 'propitiation for our sins' (2:2)?
- How do we show that we truly know Jesus (2:3 - 6)?
- What happens when we keep Jesus' word (2:5 - 6)?

Apply It

- How has God overcome the darkness?
- How have you tolerated 'darkness' in your own life as you have followed Jesus?
- Where have you failed to be authentic in your confession of sins?
- From this passage...
 - ...what do we learn about human beings?
 - ...what do we learn about God?
 - ...what do you learn about yourself?
- How should what we discussed shape how you live in the coming week?

Pray Together

Take time to complete your ChurchTeams group attendance sheet (found in your email).

THE RIGHT KIND OF LOVE

Icebreaker

Spend some time opening conversation with this question:

- What is a food that you absolutely love?

Transition

It's time to move towards reading God's Word. Transition your group into the study by saying something like:

In our last session, we read how God overcame the darkness with an amazing act of love: Jesus. As we continue to read 1 John, we will discover the reason that we often fail to be overcomers: sometimes our love is misplaced.

Read It

Scripture reference: **1 John 2:7 - 3:10**

Review It

- John talks about a commandment that is both old and new. What makes this old commandment new (2:7-8)?
- How do we choose light over darkness (2:9-10)? Why is hatred of others a part of the darkness?
- What is the product of living in darkness (2:11)?
- What are some of the benefits of being a child of God (2:12 - 14)?
- What does John warn us against loving (2:15-17)? How is our love for the world a misplaced love?
- What desires come from a misplaced love

of the world (2:16)? As a group, take time to talk about what each of these might be: desires of the flesh, desires of the eye, the pride of life.

- According to John, how do we know that it is the last hour (2:18)? What is an anti-christ?
- How do we recognize false teachers? How do we stand against the false teachers of this world (2:20-27)?
- Why does the world fail to recognize the battle between light and darkness (3:1)?
- What hope do we have as Children of God (3:2-3)?
- How should we live as Children of God (3:4-10)?

Apply It

- Where do you have misplaced love in your life? What is the cost of that love in your life?
- How can you become more aware of the false teachers (antichrists) of this world?
- If someone were watching your life, would they be able to tell that you are a Child of God? What would need to change for someone to see this in you?
- From this passage...
 - ...what do we learn about human beings?
 - ...what do we learn about God?
 - ...what do you learn about yourself?
- How should what we discussed shape how you live in the coming week?

Pray Together

PEOPLE WHO OVERCOME

Icebreaker

Spend some time opening conversation with this question:

- When do you find it most challenging to love others?

Transition

It's time to move towards reading God's Word. Transition your group into the study by saying something like:

If we're going to be overcomers, it means having a love that drives away the darkness of this world. In this session, we'll discover how this love manifests itself in our lives.

Read It

Scripture reference: **1 John 3:11 - 4:6**

Review It

- What has been the message from the beginning (3:11)?
- What negative example of love does John give (3:12)?
- Why does the world hate Christ-followers (3:13-15)?
- How do we know what love is (3:16)?
- How should our love look (3:17-18)?
- John tells us that at times our hearts will condemn us - but that God is greater than our hearts. How have you found this to be true in your life?
- What are the commands that God expects us to live (3:23 - 24)?

- Why does John warn us to not believe every spirit (4:1)? What is the litmus test for knowing whether a spirit is of God or of the antichrist (4:2-3)?
- How can we know that we have overcome the world (4:4-6)?

Apply It

- John reminds us of the two commands of God (3:23): Believe in Jesus and love one another. Which of these two commands do you find most challenging? What challenge does it present?
- How is your life a beacon of love? Where have you failed to love others well?
- From this story...
 - ...what do we learn about human beings?
 - ...what do we learn about God?
 - ...what do you learn about yourself?
- How should what we discussed shape how you live in the coming week?

Pray Together

Session Four

LOVE IMPOSSIBLE

Icebreaker

Spend some time opening conversation with this question:

- What is the most loving act that another person has done for you (outside of Jesus)?

Transition

It's time to move towards reading God's Word. Transition your group into the study by saying something like:

John has taught us how God overcame the world: love. He's pointed out the fact that if we're going to join God in being overcomers, we need to stop loving the wrong things and start loving like Jesus. In this last session, we will look at how this impossible task is made possible through God.

Read It

Scripture reference: **1 John 4:7 - 5:21**

Review It

- What does it mean for God to be love (4:8)?
- How has God shown His great love for us (4:9 - 10)?
- What should be our response to the impossible love of God (4:11-12)?
- How does God equip us to have the same impossible love that He displays (4:13 - 16)?
- Why do we not have to fear God and His judgement (4:17 - 18)?
- Who is the perfect model for the impos-

sible love (4:19-21)?

- How does John describe the commandments of God (5:1 - 3)?
- How have we joined God in overcoming the world, the darkness, and the evil one (5:4 -5)?
- What does it mean for Jesus to have come by 'water and blood' (5:6)?
- What three things testify to the authenticity of Jesus (5:7-8)?
- What testimony is greater: man or Gods? What is testimony that God gives (5:9-12)?
- What confidence can we have in our requests towards God (5:13 - 15)?
- How should we be praying for one another (5:16 - 18)?

Apply It

- From this story...
 - ...what do we learn about human beings?
 - ...what do we learn about God?
 - ...what do you learn about yourself?
- How should what we discussed shape how you live in the coming week?
- What gives you confidence that you can display the impossible love that God embodies?
- How will you join God in overcoming driving back the darkness in this world?
- What is your biggest take-away from the book of 1 John?

Pray Together

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **RIGHTNOW MEDIA**

Get a free RightNow Media account to get access to thousands of study resources. Some potential resources include:

- **How to Read 1, 2, 3 John** (Tim Mackie): The Bible can be hard to interpret. It's lengthy, packed full of characters, and sometimes difficult to tie into daily life. 1, 2, 3 John, for example, teach about God's love and warn against false teachers. In this post, The Bible Project breaks down the books of 1, 2, 3 John into digestible pieces so we can understand and apply their truths.
- **1 John - What is a Christian?** (Phil Vischer): What is a Christian? Phil Vischer, Founder of Jellyfish Labs and co-creator of the acclaimed VeggieTales, opens the Bible to a tiny book all the way at the back. With the help of some animated friends, Phil walks through the entire book of 1 John to answer the question, "What is a Christian?" This pioneering series packs tons of good theology into short sessions that toddlers to adults will enjoy. Learn not only what the Bible says, but also why and what it means for us today.
- **1 John: A Call to Authentic Faith & Sacrificial Community** (Sparrow Conference): Community can be messy and complicated. Even though we are surrounded by people many of us feel disconnected, not knowing how to connect with others or how to navigate difficult relationships. Some of us use social media to hide, allowing our relationships to be defined by "likes" and "shares". This lack of depth is pouring out into culture, where many of us see the need for reconciliation, but feel hopeless, not knowing where to start. Join Jurrita Williams, Ashley Irons, Lauren Chandler, Elizabeth Woodson, and Rachel Joy and take a journey through the book of 1 John to learn how to pursue vibrant and redemptive community. Discover what it means to step out of your comfort zone and go deeper, loving others in the same way that Christ has loved us.
- **Love Does** (Bob Goff): In Love Does, a five-session video-based small group study (guide sold separately), you will discover the whimsy of New York Times best-selling author Bob Goff through a sometimes humorous, thought-provoking, meaningful lesson that makes faith in God simple and real. You will discover the paradigm shifts, musings, and stories from one of the world's most delightfully engaging and winsome people. What fuels his impact? Love. But it's not the kind of love that stops at thoughts and feelings. Bob's love takes action, just like Jesus did. Bob believes Love Does. This study guide will lead you and your group deeper into content with video notes, group discussion questions, and between session personal reflections and actions to enhance the group experience.

- **THE BIBLE PROJECT** (www.thebibleproject.com)

The Bible Project offers a variety of amazing resources. These videos expand on many of the ideas that we have touched on in this series.