

## Seeking a Spiritual Growth Mindset (Go To Meeting)

Norbert Bohnert—November 3, 2023

Two weeks ago, I spoke on *God is a God of Purpose*. Today's message, though it might be not directly related, it basically relates to what our purpose and one of the goals that we should be striving for in our Christian walk with God.

*God has set before each one of us incredible human potential to be part of His Family for all eternity!*

- What a remarkable calling that God has extended to us
- What a unique opportunity that God has extended to each and every one of us
  - Do we grasp the magnitude of this understanding that we receive?
  - Do we really comprehend what it means for us?

God has individually called each one of us to be called out of this world *to change, to grow, to overcome and to be a part of His God Family!*

Romans 12:1: "I exhort you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, Holy *and* well-pleasing to God, which is your spiritual service. **Do not conform yourselves to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind in order that you may prove what is well-pleasing and good, and the perfect will of God**" (vs 1-2).

God is instructing us to transform the mind that we all have. That is, we are to be something different than what we were when we were first called. We are to go beyond the physical realm. We understand the duality that God has placed within His Word, the physical and the spiritual. *God wants each one of us to strive and to attain that spiritual level!*

John 6:44: "No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day."

Without the calling that God has extended to us, we would not understand this concept of overcoming. It involves the work of the flesh, and it involves the Fruits of the Spirit.

To the world this is a foolish concept, but through our calling and through the indwelling of God's Holy Spirit working within us, we can understand what it means to overcome.

1-Corinthians 1:20: "Where *is the* wise? Where *is the* scribe? Where *is the* disputer of this

age? Did not God make foolish the wisdom of this world?"

I think we understand this concept that we are speaking of. That *the world thinks it's wise in its own foolishness*, discounting God's existence and going its own way, thinking that while doing that they are truly seeking a right way of life. *God has made foolish the wisdom of this world* as we just read.

Verse 21: "For since in the wisdom of God the world through *its own* wisdom did not know God ...[and we certainly see that today] ...it pleased God to save those who believe through the foolishness of preaching. For *the Jews* require a sign, and *the Greeks* seek after wisdom; but we proclaim Christ crucified. To *the Jews* *it is* a cause of offense, and to the Greeks *it is* foolishness; **but to those who are called**—both Jews and Greeks—**Christ is God's power and God's wisdom**" (vs 21-24).

We are given the right wisdom, the right perspective, the right foundations to look to God, His way of life, and the teaching that Christ has given to us. This overcoming involves a fundamental change in each of our own lives. It's a change that is fundamental and it's in our heart and mind.

- How can this be possible?
  - ✓ it involves growth
  - ✓ it involves overcoming
  - ✓ it involves a change of our nature
  - ✓ it involves taking on God's mind and God's perspective
- How truly penetrating in our lives is that Spirit of God working in us?

*We have the doctrines, but is it actually penetrating in our lives to start:*

- that growth
- that change of process
- that development
- that maturity to produce Godly fruit

That's what I'm going to expound on today with this message. The question I ask is: **Do we have and are we seeking a spiritual growth mindset?**

- to grow spiritually?
- to develop God's way of life?
- to put on His mind, this fundamental change of the renewing of our mind?

This must be occurring; it must be taking place in our lives. **Overcoming is key** to our conversion and to salvation. It is also key for success in our daily physical existence. Overcoming means **dealing with the causes of sin instead of and rather than its effect!**

So, let's look today at the purpose of overcoming and why it is essential for a Christian. We'll look at some character traits required to overcome obstacles we encounter in our life. We'll also look at a few Scriptures that provide principles of perseverance in how to be an overcomer. We'll also see examples of individuals who have overcome, as well as the reward God promises to those who overcome.

Opposition, obstacles, and trials we know are all a natural part of life, and we have all come to know that quite well.

1-Peter 4:12: "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial among you *which is* taking place to test you, as if some strange thing *were* happening to you. But to the degree that you have a share in the sufferings of Christ, **rejoice so that at the revelation of His glory, you also may rejoice exceedingly**" (vs 12-13).

These trials are not something that are unique to us individually. It's not unusual that we experience them. A corollary to this Scripture is found in:

1-Corinthians 10:13: "No temptation has come upon you except what is common to mankind. **For God, Who is faithful, will not permit you to be tempted beyond what you are able to bear;** but with the temptation, He will make a way of escape, so that you may be able to bear *it*."

We must remember that God is with us. ***He will not tempt us beyond what we are able to handle!*** He won't give us more than we can actually bear. He will not test us beyond our ability to overcome.

We can be assured that God has our best interests front and center as He is working out His Plan for each one of us individually within our own lives. Just as we develop physical muscles by overcoming opposition, resistance training is one aspect of getting one's physical body into shape.

So, too, we develop *spiritual muscles* so to speak of *Godly character* by overcoming the challenges, the trials, and the adversities that we have in life.

Webster's Dictionary defines overcoming as *to conquer, to master, to prevail over, to overpower, and to be victorious!* These are all aspects of

overcoming that we need to keep front and center in our lives, as well as the spiritual battles that each one of us is fighting.

What makes one individual give up in the face of failure? *Adversity!* While adversity and difficulties motivate others to dig in harder and strive to overcome, we must realize that talent, ability, intelligence and spiritual knowledge are not static conditions. They can be developed through hard work, through good coaching, and effective strategies that we can employ for solving problems. ***IF*** you apply yourself:

- to expecting growth
- expecting change
- expecting to improve

***THEN*** you tend to achieve more than you would be able to if your thoughts and beliefs that your talents or abilities are fixed. That mentality of having no room for improvement is a dangerous mentality to have. Then you just begin to reign yourself to failure and to not try, *but to give up!*

Brethren, the point is that there is a direct link between the effort we put forth in our lives and the outcome we achieve and accomplish.

- Are we putting the hard work in? *We must ask ourselves that!*
- Are we putting in the effort to earn the right to be counted among those people who are talked about in Heb. 11 about the individual's faith?

Those are individuals who earned the right to be called individuals of faith. They put forth a lifetime of overcoming, of growing, of maturing, and they earned the right to be there.

So, to each one of us, we ***are not earning salvation because God gives that to us!*** But we must make ourselves available to it; that is our responsibility. We don't earn the right to salvation. He gives us that freely. But there is the amount of work that we need to do, each one of us, in facing our lives on a daily basis.

Our sins, our human nature, and to grow so that God would be willingly extending that salvation to us. Each one of us can improve in specific areas of our lives. If we work at it, especially ***IF*** we know what to do, what's expected of us, and how to proceed further, *we will certainly succeed!* This is where coaching also becomes very important. ***The instruction we receive from God's Word through the Scriptures, through His teachers:***

- teach us
- help teach us
- instruct us in God's way of life

*of course, can only happen with God's help!*

Combining God's guidance and His strengths through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit together enables this growth to take place in our lives.

We must realize that God the Almighty is always there for us. Through Jesus Christ we have been truly rewarded with understanding. Our intelligence is not fixed, rather, it is developing throughout our lives, and our brain, our thoughts, and how we react is malleable, just like plastic.

- it can change
- it can grow
- it can improve

Every time we have a specific thought or do something in response to a particular situation or an event, we strengthen that pathway of ours.

The more we think about or do a certain thing, like a righteous act or behaving in overcoming, the stronger and more set that pathway becomes for each one of us. It's like learning an unfamiliar task, such as acting in accordance with God's Law *or* like thinking about something in a different way through the perspective of God's Law or through the prism of His Law and His way of life.

Also, brethren, have you ever realized that when we respond in an uncharacteristic way, not carnally as we're used to, but with the principles of the beatitudes that God has given us in Matt. 5-7 or 1-Cor. 13, the love chapter, we are putting on more of this mind of Christ, whether we realize it at the time or not.

We are leaving behind the old ways in our lives. It may not be easy. In fact, more likely at times it will be probably more difficult for each one of us to think of things in a new way, to respond in a new way, ***to see things always from God's perspective, His way of life!***

It goes against our human, carnal nature. It's difficult because we are forging a new Godly, outgoing perspective and a new outgoing path.

***IF*** we keep repeating that thought of those actions or positive Godly emotions, often enough, it actually gradually becomes easier for each one of us. ***This in turn leads to becoming second nature within our lives and finally habitual!***

- that is God's character being developed within us
- it is God's mindset that is growing within our lives

Our former bad habits that we may have, old responses, start to become weaker as we no longer are using that as our basis for moving on.

This is exactly what God was talking about as we read earlier in Rom. 12, about having this mind of our transformed, having our minds renewed. That is what God was instructing us to do. To have this renewed mind, to be transformed in our responses and actions and how we interact with other people.

As we change our responses, we begin to see the Godly fruits being born and we see less of the fleshly works in our own lives. It's bound to happen. This process should reinforce how good and how perfect God's Law and His will really are. How righteous His ways are.

But the underlying key to all this spiritual growth we are speaking of comes to ***practice!*** Yes, ***practice!*** We need to

- practice God's way of life
- internalize God's standards
- apply and continually act Godly

Realizing that some things in our lives are hard to do if we don't know what or how to do it, while other things are hard not to do because they just are habits.

We must learn the positive actions and unlearn the negative actions that we have. The good news is that we all have this ability. Each one of us. Our minds can change. They can improve.

God wants us to transform our minds and to be renewed. That is the purpose that is set before us. He instructs us to do so. He helps us in the process as we yield to Him and to His way of life.

Remember that God created us; He knows how we function. He knows our human nature. ***God gave us His Law and reflects His mind to instruct us in the correct path we are to take!*** There were the two trees in Gen. 2. There are two ways of life. There is the way of the give and there is the way of get. One is outwardly focused while the other is inwardly motivated.

We either live a way of love and outgoing concern or we live a way that promotes our own self-interest. But God doesn't leave it there. He goes on further to tell us that one way of life ***leads to life*** while the other one ***leads to death***. It goes even further still than that:

- He knows our proclivities
- He knows our nature
- He knows the influences that the world around us can have on each one of us
- He does not want us to lose our way

- He doesn't want us to wonder which way to choose
- He doesn't want it to be nebulous for us
- it's not left to chance

God our Father, as a loving Father, affirmatively tells each one of us ***to choose life so that it will be well with us!***

When you have a moment read the whole chapter of Deut. 28. It's interesting to note that the first few verses—1-13—talk about the blessings that overtake us if we choose God's way of life. ***He wants us to have a way of life!***

The remainder of the chapter talks about the results of choosing the way of death. It mentions all the curses, and it's extremely lengthy list that will befall us if we choose the way of death.

Deuteronomy 30:11: "For this commandment, which I command you today *is* not hidden from you, neither is it far off."

God's commandments are not hidden from us, we know that. They are not far away.

Verse 12: "It *is* not in heaven *that you should* say, 'Who shall go up to heaven for us, and bring it to us, so that we may hear it and do it?' Neither *is* it beyond the sea *that you should* say, 'Who shall go over the sea for us to bring it to us, so that we may hear it and do it?' **But the Word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart,** so that you may do it. Behold, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil, **in that I command you this day to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments so that you may live and multiply.** And the LORD your God shall bless you in the land where you go to possess it" (vs 12-16). *God instructs us to keep His commandments.*

Verse 19: "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. **Therefore, choose life, so that both you and your seed may live,** that you may love the LORD your God, *and* may obey His voice, and may cleave to Him; for He is your life and the length of your days, so that you may dwell in the land, which the LORD swore to your fathers—to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob—to give it to them" (vs 19-20). *We are instructed very clearly here that:*

- we must choose life
- we are to love God
- we are to obey His voice
- we are to cling to Him in a close-knit relationship

***because He is our life and our future!***

The bottom line to spiritual growth and overcoming is that we must each need to practice the desired behavior. We need to have it foremost in our minds and continue to remind ourselves why:

- Why do we want to change?
- Why we want to overcome?
- Why do we want to learn a new Godly perspective?
- Why do we no longer want to respond in a carnal way as our former selves?

All very valid questions that we may continually ask ourselves. With in doing this, we need to:

- remind ourselves also of our calling
- remind ourselves of Christ's sacrifice for each one of us individually and personally
- remind ourselves of the goal toward which we are actually headed

***We need to see the big picture! That is what we must do!***

See that incredible human potential that God has set before each one of us and made known to us to be born into God's Family, to be part of that relationship, to be kings and priests at that time, to be educators and leaders in the world to come.

By using God's Holy Spirit, we can learn new responses and establish new Godly habits. We need to challenge ourselves to overcome, to learn, to study, and to develop God's ways so that we can develop **His mindset** and become spiritually stronger within our lives.

As we overcome and learn new ways to respond, it certainly is not always easy. Actually, it's a struggle, a struggle that is totally involved in this process. But this is how growth works and occurs. We need to see the value of the struggle and sticking with the difficult task of having a Godly response to situations that occur within our lives.

Another very important aspect is we need to support one another. So crucial, just like a young child, a toddler learning to walk, the adults hover over the child, expressing encouragement at every incremental step taken in learning how to walk.

They are encouraging. They are strengthening. The same needs to be true in our own Godly fellowship. We must see everyone as a child in God's eyes. See the challenges they face. As we learn more about each other, we understand each other's background. We get to know the obstacles, the challenges, the difficulties in their lives. As you get closer to that person in a friendship and being a

brother and sister in Christ relationship, we can see changes occurring. We can see growth taking place.

We can see overcoming happening within the individual's lives. Then, as this is occurring, we must see them as a member of this fellowship family to encourage and support each other, strengthen each other, and encourage continually one another through this process. This is very important for us to remember.

Research has shown—this isn't rocket science—that students, and we can call ourselves students, babes in Christ, are more inclined to persist if instructors share with them how success occurs.

That is not a matter of IQ or talent or ability, but rather focusing on the process of learning. It becomes hard work at times, a structured program and always trying new techniques in learning and approaching things in a different way than we are used to. I think we are all familiar with some famous quotes about the definition of insanity: Doing the same thing repeatedly but expecting different results.

If we are slipping, if we are falling, we must try new approaches, new ways of life, looking to God's Word, His way of life, and His commandments to see how to handle the particular circumstance we are dealing with in our lives. You know what? **God will be there for us!**

Brethren, we have structure in our spiritual growth. The year is structured by God's Holy Days. Rehearsing it yearly with their specific meanings and with meat-induced season, we have no excuse but to grow in Godly knowledge.

The weekly Sabbath structures are weak. It shows us how to use our time properly. Throughout the week and the weekly lessons, we learn every Sabbath to help us gain spiritual insight on principles of living and providing new insight on how to achieve and gain spiritual maturity.

What we need to do, at times, is just **stop, pause, and think!** We need to reflect:

- on God
- His Law
- His ways
- His approach

*With that, we need to affix firmly within our minds our spiritual goals:*

- Where are we headed?
- What is our purpose as humans?
- Why did God create us?
- Why has He called me and you?

*All questions we should be asking ourselves and spending some time thinking about these basic essential issues of life!*

As we do it, it will help us to have a reason that motivates us to keep overcoming and growing in God's ways.

Proverbs 29:18: "Where *there is* no vision, the people perish; but happy is he who keeps the Law."

With no vision, with no revelation, people will cast off restraint and they will perish. We need to know where we are going. That is an essential point that I'm trying to make. ***We need to know where we are going!***

Proverbs 11:14: "Where *there is* no wisdom, the people fall; but in the multitude of wise counselors *there is* safety."

What God is basically saying here is that:

- ***without*** counsel
- ***without*** vision
- ***without having this instruction***

***our plans will go awry!***

*But with counsel and with instruction, they are firmly established!*

Proverbs 24:3: "Through wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established."

The *spiritual* house we are talking about is ***our character, the Godly character*** that we are building, the Temple that God wants us to have.

Verse 4: "And by knowledge the rooms shall be filled with all precious and pleasant riches."

These riches are *spiritual* riches of life. So, the knowledge of how to live, how to achieve success, and how to live a fruitful, productive life:

- as men and women
- as husbands and wives
- as members of our community
- as members of the Church of God

***We should be examples in this world!***

Verse 5: "A wise man *is* strong; yea, a man of knowledge increases strength, for by wise counsel you shall make your war; and in a multitude of *wise* counselors *there is* safety" (vs 5-6).

The warfare we are waging is a *spiritual* warfare. It is one of

- overcoming
- spiritual growth
- spiritual development

*In all of this we must appreciate **the Godly fruit of patience!***

The changes in our lives we are talking about are *overcoming*. All of us know that that is not easy. They can be very difficult. They aren't automatic and they don't occur by wishful thinking. It takes work on our part and it takes dedication. It happens in incremental steps, just as a young toddler learning how to walk.

Through the Godly fruit of patience we must make allowances for setbacks and yet maintain the willingness to try again.

As we witness the changes in our own lives, the overcoming, the development of new Godly traits, or the banishing of a negative habit that we may have, **we need to express thanks to God the Almighty! Thank Him for:**

- the help
- the strength
- the insight He provides us

*Take encouragement from the growth that we are making as a stepping stone for future changes in our lives!*

Part of the responsibility of the ministry, the teachers, is to help us focus on what God expects from each one of us. We must use the Word of God to help correct ourselves where needed to sharpen our focus, to inspire us **and to give us knowledge of God's way of life in his Word of Truth!** We are here to teach. It is the teacher's responsibility to help each one of us

- to stay on course
- to stay on task
- to focus on the job we have at hand
- to be instructed in righteous ways
- to grow spiritually

Growth in a spiritual mindset is an ongoing process! We need to continue to implement and practice the skills that we learn daily from God's Word and from the messages that we hear.

Each one of us is responsible to learn, and with that learning, to grow. Our minds will change because of this aspect of plasticity **IF** we ask God and put forth the effort needed to change.

As to each of the seven Churches of Rev. 2 & 3, God's instruction is the same to each group. **He says to overcome!** Let's take a look at the example of Paul.

Philippians 3:8: "But then truly, I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count *them* as dung; that I

may gain Christ."

I think we are all aware of the many hardships that Paul faced and endured. But he persisted, he continued to pursue the goal that was set before him.

Verse 9: "And may be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is derived* from law, but that *righteousness*, which *is by the* faith of Christ, the righteousness of God *that is* based on faith; that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death" (vs 9-10>

*That was Paul's focus! Paul was committed to overcoming!*

Verse 11: "If by any means I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead."

This was Paul's focus; he had it firmly in his mind where he was headed and the direction he was pursuing.

Verse 12: not as though I have already received, or have already been perfected; but I am striving, so that I may also lay hold on that for which I also was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not count myself as having attained; but *this* one thing *I do*—forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth to the things that are ahead" (vs 12-13).

These are all encouraging words that God gives us! **To focus on the future**, what we have and what we need to change and to overcome, **knowing all the while that God is totally with us in the whole process!**

Verse 15: "So then, let as many as *be* perfect be of this mind. And if *in* anything you are otherwise minded, God will reveal even this to you."

We are to be mature and we are to strive for perfection in our lives, which is that maturity. We need to strive for it and we need to become *spiritually mature!*

*Paul recites where he gets his strength.* Philippians 4:13: "**I can do all things through Christ, Who empowers me.**"

This was Paul's perspective that he could do all things, because he knew that Christ was with him every step of the way, guiding and leading him.

God has given us light, has placed human nature within us and has given us free will. This human nature provides the resistance within our lives that we need to help motivate us. Motivation to overcome and to grow in the development of a Godly and spiritual mindset.

God didn't take us out of this world. He could have easily done that, but He chose not to do so. Rather, he has placed us within an environment so we can develop His Holy and Righteous character.

Our environment provides repeated opportunities for overcoming and practicing Godly responses and proving that God's Law and way of life really are the best and do lead to success now and into the future.

Yes, our carnal nature and our environment around us ensures the intensity and duration of the practice that we will need to continue to strive to master the task of overcoming. It is hard work, as we all know, and it is not always straight line progress.

As we put in the effort, brethren, it contributes to a habit of its tenacity; that tenacity and steadfastness breeds success as we stay with it. We learn to stay on task, and as with Paul, we strive for the excellence of the calling that God has extended to each one of us.

Aspects of this spiritual growth mindset are about change and how we think. No longer do we think that This is too hard: 'I give up. I sinned again, what's the use?' We begin to eradicate and remove those kind of thoughts.

Rather, in place of those thoughts, our focus becomes centered on wanting to overcome; wanting to become a better individual than we presently are. We witness the growth that we've achieved, and we strive harder to gain greater success in our lives. ***That is part of our purpose!***

We carefully consider the messages we receive on a weekly basis and use them to improve our future behavior. We ask as well in this whole process ***for God to show us secret sins***, what we're missing, so we know where to focus our attention.

Psalms 19:12: "Who can understand his errors? Oh, **cleanse me from my secret faults.**"

Here David wanted to know areas where he could grow, improve and change. He wanted to understand his errors. That was his desire. This is part of the reason why God called David 'a man after His own heart.'

But who can know his errors to be cleansed from one's secret sins? We know what the answer is; we know that ***God knows that!***

Jeremiah 17:9: "The heart *is* deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?"

***That's the deceit, that secret sin that we are talking about.*** The heart is deceitful and it will hide

our sins from us so that we can't see them; so they are obscured and we won't work on them.

Verse 10: "I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings."

God searches. He knows and He will reveal to each one of us the secret sins within our lives. He knows our heart and He will reveal it to us. But we need to ask Him for that revelation. ***We need to ask Him!***

We realize that we are to become perfect *as our Father in heaven and as our Savior Jesus Christ!* This process requires a continual refinement within our lives. We learn from our mistakes, and we ask God to show us how to grow and how to improve our lives. God tells us how to improve by His Word and in His Word.

Ephesians 6:10: "Finally, my brethren, **be strong in the Lord, and in the might of His strength. Put on the whole armor of God** so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, because we are not wrestling against flesh and blood, but against principalities *and* against powers, against the world rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spiritual *power* of wickedness in high places" (vs 10-12).

Verse 13: "Therefore, take up the whole armor of God so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having worked out all things, to stand. Stand, therefore, having your loins girded about with Truth, and wearing the breastplate of righteousness, and having your feet shod with *the* preparation of the Gospel of Peace. Besides all *these*, take up the shield of the faith, with which you will have the power to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one; and put on the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God; praying at all times with all prayer and supplication *in the* Spirit, and in this very thing being watchful with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints" (vs 13-18).

Paul talks about putting on the whole armor of God. It's just a reference for right now, but something worth going back to and studying later for the specific traits we need to have. All the strategy to use in overcoming!

Psalms 19:7: "The Law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandments of the LORD are pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether, more to be desired than gold,

yea, much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward” (vs 7-11).

That reward that God holds out in front of each one of us ***is to be part of His Family!*** The Law of God is a perfect Law. Keeping the law is how we pursue the perfection that God wants us to acquire.

Another strategy in overcoming is to strive to learn lessons from the examples of others. Both those within the Scriptures as well as other successful individuals in life who have overcome obstacles and trials.

I was thinking and I want to share a couple of quotes that are timely and worth considering covering what this message is all about. Some of you may have heard these quotes as they are quite popular.

One can choose to go back toward safety or forward to growth.

Growth must be chosen again and again—  
Abraham Maslow

Another quote that I think is very relevant to what we are covering today.

Obstacles are those frightful things you see  
when you take your eyes off your goal—  
Henry Ford

I think this is very true! If you have a goal that is so fixed in your mind that you want to achieve and acquire it, you don't see the obstacles as being obstacles that will prevent your growth.

In the other case, you'll actually strive. You won't see the obstacles as a way of stopping you. That is commitment! You will continue to pursue! But ***IF*** you take your eyes off that goal, what we're trying to achieve—the growth we're trying to maintain—***THEN***, of course, the obstacles can loom as a massive wall in front of us that we can't penetrate and get past. Can you relate to that? *I certainly can!*

One more quote I want to bring up here is, and I think this is very relevant:

The ultimate measure of a man is not  
where he stands in moments of comfort  
and convenience, but where he stands at  
times of challenge and controversy—  
Martin Luther King.

Let us take this message today to heart. It is very important in our future. The other character trait besides perseverance and overcoming ***is the fruit of joy in the small things accomplished!***

We need to have joy and express thanks to God for the small things in our lives in overcoming. Yes, it may be small in terms of what we have achieved, a small hurdle that we've overcome, but no matter how small it is, we need to see it as an accomplishment, as something that we have personally achieved, and with that, certainly have grown.

Let us take joy in those small steps and measurements that we make in our lives, and let us not take them for granted!

1-Corinthians 10:1: “Now, I do not wish you to be ignorant *of this*, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea. And all were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. And *they* all ate the same spiritual meat. And *they* all drank *of* the same spiritual drink; for they drank from *the* spiritual Rock that followed *them*. And that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not pleased, for their dead bodies were strewn in the wilderness. Now these things became examples for us, so that we might not lust after evil things, as they also lusted” (vs 1-6).

Verse 11: “Now all these things happened to them *as* examples, and were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages are coming.”

These words, brethren, were given to us as examples, as an admonition, as a warning that we will need to take seriously, that we should take to heart and correct our faults, the secret sins that we see in our lives today.

I already mentioned Heb. 11, individuals there of faith who have earned the right to be mentioned in that chapter.

Pursuing spiritual growth, ***this spiritual growth mindset***, and taking on the mind of Christ is a lifelong process. It does not happen overnight, and we need to see what we need to change and overcome.

Then, with God's help, we must start the process, we must begin, we must practice, and God will bring each and every one of us to the end of that process as we rely on and yield to Him, guaranteed.

Spiritual growth requires patience and self-control because it takes time to overcome sin. We need to make good use of our allotted time on this earth because I think it has been impressed on each one of us that our end can come suddenly, and it can come unexpectedly. Overcoming is a universal necessity! We all need to overcome. It is important to God, ***and it has to and must be important to each one of us!***

Revelation 3:20: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me, To the one who overcomes will I give *authority* to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and sat down with My Father in His throne. The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (vs 20-22). *Those who do:*

- overcome
- persist
- pursue
- practice

*God’s ways will be brought into God’s Family.*

We need to stay attached to God the Father and to Jesus Christ:

- we need to cling to Them
- we need to stand up and be counted
- we need to continue to put forth the effort to overcome in our time of trials, challenges, and difficulties
  - that is the purpose we are to fulfill
  - that is what spiritual growth and a spiritual mindset are all about.

***Let us use that power of God, the Holy Spirit, to move forward in our lives and achieve this total spiritual mindset we are all striving for!***

Scriptural References:

- 1) Romans 12:1-2
- 2) John 6:44
- 3) 1-Corinthians 1:20-24
- 4) 1-Peter 4:12-13
- 5) 1-Corinthians 10:13
- 6) Deuteronomy 30:11-16, 19-20
- 7) Proverbs 29:18
- 8) Proverbs 11:14
- 9) Proverbs 24:3-6
- 10) Philippians 3:8-13, 15
- 11) Philippians 4:13
- 12) Psalm 19:12
- 13) Jeremiah 17:9-10
- 14) Ephesians 6:10-18
- 15) Psalm 19:7-11
- 16) 1-Corinthians 10:1-6, 11
- 17) Revelation 3:20-22

Scriptures referenced, not quoted: Deuteronomy 28

Also referenced: Message: *God is a God of Purpose*

NB:bo  
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