

QUESTIONS CHRISTIANS ASK WHAT'S NECESSARY FOR VICTORY?

ROMANS 8:31–37; 1 CORINTHIANS 9:24–27; 1 JOHN 5:4, 7



The Heart of the Matter

Victory in Jesus Christ. It's what many Christians want. It's what we've been promised by Christ Himself. But we often find ourselves asking, "Why don't I experience more victory in Christ?"

Isn't it interesting, in passages on Christian victory, the Bible doesn't mention one time the blare of a bugle or the stomping of an infantry or the clanking armor of a soldier or the bursting sounds of battle on the landscapes around us? The victorious life finds its source in Christ Himself and in our quiet submission to the empowering work of the Holy Spirit.

So, why *don't* we experience more victory in the Christian life? Each member of the family of God has championship material deep down inside. But many of us have begun to believe in the flabby philosophy of our times. We have neglected the spiritual disciplines and opted for comfort and mediocrity. So now what do we do to find victory?



Discovering the Way

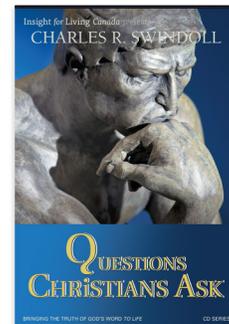
1. Five Things Victory Is *Not* (Romans 8:31–37)

Before we can understand what the Bible says about spiritual victory, we must learn how *not* to define it.

- Victory is *not* a once-for-all accomplishment.
- Victory is *not* an emotional high.
- Victory is *not* a dream reserved for supersaints.
- Victory is *not* an independent achievement.
- Victory is *not* something that happens to us as we passively wait and remain uninvolved.



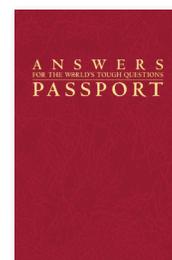
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2. Four Things Victory Includes (1 Corinthians 9:24–27)

Of all the wrong teachings about Christian victory, passivity is the most dangerous to us. Spiritual victory in the Christian life requires:

- *Action*: The apostle Paul used athletic terms to describe the spiritual life.
- *Aim*: In order to achieve victory, we must shoot at the right target.
- *Discipline*: Christians must exercise good, old-fashioned self-control.
- *Reward*: An imperishable, eternal crown awaits Christ-followers!



DOORWAY TO HISTORY

Paul's Inspiration

Games were incredibly popular in the Greek and Roman world. Competitions between men were held throughout the empire. The exhibitions took place in gymnasiums, theaters, and amphitheaters. The games at Olympia, Greece, were the earliest version of the Olympics, and Paul himself may have witnessed the Isthmian games near Corinth, which took place every two years. Initially, the games consisted of a single, nearly two-hundred-meter race—a lap around the stadium. Later games added longer runs, wrestling, and boxing (1 Corinthians 9:26). Winners at the games received crowns or wreaths.¹

All the winners of the Isthmian games collected perishable prizes—money, education for their children, an olive or celery wreath for their heads. Modern-day Olympians receive medals. But wreaths wilt and medals tarnish. Only the Christian's reward will last forever—it will never rust or collect dust! Do you believe that?

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Starting Your Journey

According to 1 John 5:4–7, spiritual victory has three prerequisites:

- *Birth*: We must be born into God's family.
- *Faith*: We must trust in God's overcoming power.
- *Truth*: We must rely on the Holy Spirit to give us victory.

Where are you on this journey to victory? What principles from this lesson can you implement to gain victory? Do you need a change in perspective, attitude, or action?

ENDNOTE

1. Adapted from Insight for Living, "First Corinthians," in *Insight's Handbook of New Testament Backgrounds: Key Customs from Each Book* (Plano, Tex.: IFL Publishing House, 2012), 44.