

Small Group Guide – Overcomer

The Real Thing – Week 9

1 John 5:1-12

Before You Meet

Encourage group members to read 1 John 5:1-12 on their own before gathering. Ask them to come prepared to share one thing that stood out to them from the passage or the sermon.

Opening Question

Take a few minutes to get the conversation started before diving into the text.

When you hear the word "overcomer," what comes to mind? Share a time when you or someone you know overcame a significant challenge. How did that experience shape your understanding of what it means to persevere?

Key Takeaways

Use these points to help frame your group's discussion. These represent the central ideas from the sermon.

1. The New Birth Changes Everything Being born of God is not simply a ticket to heaven. It begins a transformation that changes what we believe, whom we love, and how we live. The new birth does not make us perfect, but it does make us different.

2. Faith is the Means of Victory Overcoming the world does not come through personal strength, discipline, or willpower. Victory comes through faith in Jesus Christ. The strength of our victory rests not in how strong our faith feels, but in how strong Jesus is.

3. God Has Testified About His Son Our faith is not wishful thinking or one religious opinion among many. God has given a reliable and trustworthy testimony about Jesus through the water, the blood, and the Spirit. That testimony demands a response.

4. Eternal Life is Found in Jesus Alone God did not place eternal life in religion, church membership, good works, or sincerity. He placed it in His Son. The most important question anyone can answer is not "Am I religious?" but "Do I have the Son?"

Discussion Questions

Work through these questions together as a group. You do not need to cover every question. Let the conversation breathe and follow where the Spirit leads.

On the New Birth

1. The pastor said, "The new birth does not make us perfect, but it does make us different." In what ways have you seen that difference in your own life since coming to faith in Christ?
2. John connects love for God directly to love for God's people. Why do you think it is impossible to genuinely love God while consistently rejecting or avoiding His people? What makes loving other believers difficult at times?
3. The sermon made a distinction between religion and the gospel. Religion says obey so that God will accept you. The gospel says God has already accepted you in Christ, so now you walk in obedience. How does that distinction change the way you think about following God's commands?

On Faith and Overcoming

4. The pastor described the world not as people or creation, but as a system of values, desires, and beliefs that stand in opposition to God. Where do you feel the pressure of that system most in your daily life right now?
5. The sermon used the image of a bridge to explain faith. What matters is not the intensity of your belief in the bridge, but whether the bridge itself can hold you. How does that image help or challenge the way you think about your own faith, especially in seasons when it feels weak?
6. The pastor said, "Overcomers are not people who never struggle. They are people who keep trusting Jesus regardless of what comes their way." How does that definition of an overcomer encourage or challenge you personally?

On God's Testimony

7. John points to the Spirit, the water, and the blood as three witnesses that all agree about who Jesus is. Why does it matter that the same Jesus who was baptized is the same Jesus who was crucified? What is at stake if we separate those two events?
8. The sermon warned that false teachers often use the name of Jesus while changing His identity. What are some ways you see Jesus being redefined or reshaped in today's culture or even within the church? How do we guard against that?

9. The pastor said the Holy Spirit will never lead us away from the real Jesus and will never contradict what God has revealed in His Word. How does that serve as a practical test when evaluating spiritual messages, teachings, or experiences?

On Eternal Life

10. John says the one who has the Son has the life, and the one who does not have the Son does not have the life. The pastor described this as clarity, not harshness. Do you find it difficult to hold to the exclusive nature of the gospel in today's culture? How do you navigate that tension with grace?
11. The sermon reminded us that eternal life is a present possession, not only a future promise. How should the reality that we already have eternal life change the way we approach our daily struggles, fears, and decisions?

Reflection Questions

These questions are more personal and can be used for individual journaling or shared in smaller groups within your gathering.

- What is the world currently pressuring you to believe that contradicts God's Word?
- Where are you being tempted to compromise rather than obey?
- What are you facing right now that is making it difficult to trust Jesus?

Practical Applications

The sermon closed with four action steps. Use these as a framework for how your group can move from discussion into daily living this week.

Believe the truth about Jesus. Identify one area where the world's narrative is competing with what God's Word says about Jesus, about you, or about life. Write it down and bring it back to the truth of Scripture.

Love like Jesus loves. Choose one person this week, inside or outside the church, whom you will intentionally encourage, forgive, or serve. Do not wait until it feels natural. Do it as an act of obedience.

Do what Jesus says. Name one specific command from Scripture that you have been avoiding or delaying. Commit to taking one concrete step of obedience this week, even if it is costly or uncomfortable.

Trust Jesus no matter what. Identify the circumstance in your life right now that is making trust most difficult. Bring it before God in prayer this week and ask Him for the faith to keep trusting even when you cannot see what He is doing.

Closing Prayer

Close your time together by praying as a group. You may want to use these prompts to guide your prayer.

- Thank God for the gift of eternal life found in His Son.
 - Ask Him to strengthen your faith in the real, historical Jesus revealed in Scripture.
 - Pray for one another by name, asking God to help each person overcome the specific pressures, temptations, and struggles they are facing this week.
 - Ask the Holy Spirit to continue His work of transformation in each of you, making you more like Jesus each day.
-

Memory Verse for the Week

1 John 5:4 -- Reflect on John's declaration that whoever has been born of God overcomes the world, and that this victory is our faith.