

1 John 5:4 (NKJV)

⁴For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

In **2 Timothy 3:1** The apostle Paul says, *“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come.”*

He then describes in **2 Timothy 3:2-5** what those perilous times will look like

- I believe this is the world in which we are now living

In this series we will look at what the Bible says about being an overcomer in the midst of perilous times!

2 Timothy 3:1 (NKJV)

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:

- Know – to know something definitely, emphatically and with absolute certainty
- Something so urgent that it **MUST** be known, **MUST** be recognized, and **MUST** be acknowledged

The Holy Spirit is saying in this verse is that the following information should not be considered optional

- He wants us to fully grasp what He is saying
- He wants us to be prepared and not be taken off guard
- He’s not saying this to scare us but to prepare us
- He wants us equipped for the last days storm ahead

After Paul writes to the end times church to be emphatically aware of the times in which they are living, he lists the characteristics of a lost society that has run amuck

2 Timothy 3:2–9; 12-13 (NKJV)

²For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, ⁴traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! ⁶For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, ⁷always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁸Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; ⁹but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.

¹²Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. ¹³But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

- We touched on these signs of the times in the first segment of this series
- Now I would like to look at these characteristics in depth

If we are unaware of what's going on we will be sucked into the same lifestyle that the rest of the world is

Lovers of themselves

The glaringly evident sign that we are in the last days will be inordinate *self-love*

- The Holy spirit depicts a society that is *self-focused, self-centered, self-absorbed, and self-consumed*
- The original language gives us the picture of a people who love themselves the way they should love other people
- In fact, it describes a deep, profound *love of self*
- An excessive *self-fondness, infatuation, or self-attraction*

Their love is mis-directed towards self rather than others as originally intended

- Loyal to themselves above all else
- Their chief loyalty will not be to God, their nation, their family, their employer, their employees, or to those whom they call friends

This inordinate *self-love* will be the catalyst for all of the other societal dangers Paul talks about

When self is the foundations of one's life, or society as a whole, nothing built upon it will be quite right

- This characteristic will be widespread and prominent in the last days

Just check out the Christian/Psychological//Motivational sections of the bookstore

- These sections encourage people to love themselves first and foremost

Misdirected money – Covetous

Again, when you look at the original language he is describing a society that will have a love, fondness, attraction to money or possessions

- An inordinate fixation on money and material possessions

In ancient Greece, the word would be used to describe an individual who had money and possessions but was so self-absorbed they refused to share their resources with others

- Self-embellishment or greediness
- An insatiable desire to have more, more, more

Ecclesiastes 5:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; Nor he who loves abundance, with increase. This also *is* vanity.

The reason this kind of person is never satisfied is that covetous souls always want more and will never be satisfied, no matter how much they get

Psalms 62:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ Do not trust in oppression, nor vainly hope in robbery; If riches increase, do not set *your* heart *on* them.

- Yes God wants to bless us, but we can never forget the source of those blessings

Establishing God's covenant on the earth should be a chief financial priority to every committed Christian

We must guard ourselves against falling prey to this covetous tendency in society

- We do this by first and foremost dedication our resources to God and stay ready to give into His work
- Each of us is responsible to take part in spreading the Gospel around the world
- We all have a responsibility to help financially provide for the local church as well as missionaries around the world

Matthew 6:21 (NKJV)

²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Jesus made it clear that where a persons treasure is or the value they place on money or where their money goes is the great revealer of where his heart is

- If you want to know where your heart is, follow your money – Money really does tell the truth
- It reveals what we love and cherish the most
- What does your money reveal about you?

In the ancient pagan world when a person came to worship a god, he brought a sacrificial offering to demonstrate his devotion

- These were often extravagant offerings

In the last days, the society will be so self-fixated and self-worshipping that they will extravagantly worship at the altar of self, demonstrating that they love themselves more than anything else

Matthew 6:24 (NKJV)

²⁴ “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

- “Mammon” is an Aramaic word that essentially means “riches”
- The Assyrians got the concept of a god of wealth from the Babylonians
- Babylon was a city founded on pride and arrogance
- At its heart, it is an attitude that is self sufficient
- A heart that doesn’t need God
- A heart that trusts in riches

All money has a spirit on it

- Either the Spirit of God or the spirit of mammon
- There is no half and half
- It’s one or the other

Money that is submitted to God and His purposes has the Spirit of God on it

- Which is why it multiplies and cannot be consumed by the devourer
- Money that is submitted to God and devoted to serving Him rather than trying to replace Him – is blessed by God
- God’s Spirit blesses it

Money that is not submitted to God has the spirit of mammon on it by default

- That is why people often try to control and manipulate through money
- Its why people think riches and wealth can produce happiness or fulfillment
- Mammon is basically the spirit of the world and that spirit is a liar

Mammon promises us those things that only God can truly give

- Security, significance, identity, independence, power, and freedom
- Money tells us it can insulate us from life's problems
- Money tells us it is the answer to all of life's problems

Mammon is nothing more than this worlds system that stands in sharp opposition to God and His ways

- Mammon says, Cheat and steal
 - God says, give and receive
- Mammon says take
 - God says give
- Mammon is selfish
 - God is generous

The Antichrist will try to get people to submit to him through the use of economics – **Revelation 13:17**

The spirit of mammon stands in direct opposition of the Spirit of God

1 Timothy 6:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of evil*, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

- Money and mammon are not synonymous
- Money is not inherently evil
- The “love” of money is evil
- It will try to make you serve it
- Who you serve (obey) becomes your master – **Romans 6:16**

Mammon is a spirit and, as such it will talk to you:

- *“if you had the right credit cards, the right clothes and the right car, and you lived in the right neighborhood and know the right people, you’ll be happy and fulfilled”*
- *“if you had more money people would listen to you, your relationship problems would go away, and life would be so sweet”*
- *“you could do what you want, go where you want, and live the way you want”*

It can also be religious:

- *“if you just had more money then you could really start to help people”*
- *“you either need God to work a miracle right now or you need more money”*

Money is never the answer – God is

Money cannot fix problems – only God can

True Riches

Luke 16:9–13 (NKJV)

⁹“And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, (*earthly possessions are gone – NLT*) they may receive you into an everlasting home. ¹⁰He who *is* faithful in *what is* least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in *what is* least is unjust also in much. ¹¹Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true *riches*? ¹²And if you have not been faithful in what is another man’s, who will give you what is your own? ¹³“No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”

- Money is not unrighteous, mammon is
- Money can be used for either good or evil purposes
- It can be used for either temporal or eternal purposes
- What is eternal in our lives? – PEOPLE!

The only lasting thing we will ever encounter in this life is people

- We should be using money to affect people
- To help them hear the Gospel
- Notice Jesus says, *they* will welcome you not money
- *Friends* not money will receive you into your everlasting home
- I want my money to be used in helping people, loving people, feeding people, and caring for people

Matthew 6:19–21 (NKJV)

¹⁹ “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

- Just as Jesus turned water into wine He can turn your money into souls
- He is the only one that can transform unrighteous mammon into true riches
- It doesn't matter how much we have or don't have
- If we belong to God then our money is His, not ours
- He that is faithful with little – **Luke 16:10**
- Where your treasure is, your heart will be

How can I know where my heart is?

- Am I looking to God or money to meet my needs?
- Do I get angry or resentful when people don't help me the way I want them to?
- Do I look to my job or boss or investments as my source?
- Do I blame others for my circumstances?
- Do I compare my life with others?

Deuteronomy 8:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ “And you shall remember the LORD your God, for *it is* He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as *it is* this day.

How to determine if you are affected by the self-focused spirit of the age

We all veer off track from time to time in the area of selfishness

- We all make mistakes with our money and resources
- There is no condemnation
- However, we need to examine ourselves on a regular basis to see if we are off track

2 Corinthians 13:5 (NKJV)

⁵ Examine yourselves *as to* whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.

Let's open our hearts and be honest

What do I give financially into the work of God's Kingdom?

- Do I give the tithe of all my increase, as commanded in scripture? – **Malachi 3:8-12**
- Or do I make excuses and use the money elsewhere for my own needs and personal pleasure?
- Remember if you follow your money you will see where your heart is
- Do I truly love God or am I invested in my own interests?
- God already knows the truth
- He doesn't need your answer – but you need it!

Make the adjustments you need to make and stay free in this critical hour

What do my spending habits reveal about me?

- Take a look at the money you spend on hobbies, personal possessions, and other non-essentials
- Compare that to the amount of money you invest in the Gospel

What do my spending and giving habits reveal about my love for God and concern for others who need to hear the Gospel

- We can all mislead ourselves into thinking we are generous

The question is what would God say about my spending habits?

Would He say that the Gospel is most important to me?

- What do my spending habits reveal about my driving motivation in life?
- We need to answer this difficult question to see if we have been affected by the self-focused age in which we live

What do I do with my time?

- Do I spend my time mainly on my own interest or a significant amount of time to serve my church and others?
- Do I spend time with God as a top priority?
- Or do I complain that I don't have time to pray and read my Bible?
- Yet somehow I find time to watch TV, go to the movies, or do other things I like to do

What do I do to serve others?

- Words are easily spoken but often do not match reality
- Do my words and life reveal that I am doing my best to be a blessing to others?
- We all know we should serve others and usually say we want to

Its amazing how many people say they want to serve God and others yet never adjust their schedules to do so

- Words are easily spoken but actions reveal a person's sincerity
- There is a fuller, richer walk with God on the other side of our decision
- Am I devoted to my own needs and interests?
- Or am I in love with God and His Church?

When I pray do I pray about myself only, or do I pray for the needs and dreams of others?

- When God hears me pray, what does He hear?
- Would He report that I am an unselfish person who is concerned about others?
- Would He report that I am primarily concerned about myself?
- There is nothing wrong with praying for our own needs and plans
- We must avoid becoming affected by the spirit of this self-focused age

What personal sacrifices do I make to serve the Lord?

- What sacrifices have I made for Him or others?
- Do I care deeply for God and live according to His will and commands?
- Am I willing to inconvenience my life in anyway or sacrifice any of my private plans?
- How long has it been since I gave up something or changed my schedule to help someone or be obedient to God ?

Can I honestly say that I am picking up my cross and dying to my own interests in order to serve others?

- Do I make a positive difference in the lives of others?
- God will find someone to take up your slack, but He wants to use you

What am I sacrificing to be obedient to God?

- Is there anything I am personally laying down in order to walk in obedience to God and His word?
- Our would you honestly say you don't sacrifice much for God or others?
- Am I willing to be inconvenienced to help someone else or serve in the church?
- Or am I unwilling to jeopardize my own comforts and pleasures?

Am I doing whatever is required to serve God as the highest aspiration in my life?

Matthew 16:24–27 (NKJV)

²⁴ Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. ²⁵ For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. ²⁶ For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? ²⁷ For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.