

What It Really Means To Be More Than Conquerors

By [Dr. J. R. Norwood](#)

Romans 8:37 (ESV); No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

There are just some verses of scripture that stand out as being particularly stirring and empowering. These are those verses that resonate and provoke an emotional response in us and are repeated often as words of encouragement and used as rallying cries for the saints. Such is the case for the section of scripture out of which words from verse thirty-seven come in the eighth chapter of the apostle Paul's epistle to the Romans, "...we are more than conquerors...". These words are indeed soul-stirring and encouraging. Such a powerfully poetic affirmation fills our hearts and strengthens our resolve.

The eighth chapter of the letter to the Romans is a chapter filled with wondrous and powerful verses. Reading it can leave you feeling emboldened. The apostle writes in verse eight, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." He writes in verse fourteen, "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God," using the term "sons" not to relegate this wondrous blessing to males only, but rather tying it to the status of all those who trust in Jesus as having the inheritance that, in Paul's day, legally belonged to a man's sons, especially the firstborn son. We know that this is not a matter of gender because he writes in verses sixteen and seventeen, "The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs – heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him." Then, continuing this powerful affirmation, the apostle even addresses the issue of suffering in verse eighteen, by saying "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us." These encouraging, affirming, powerful verses lead us to a wondrous crescendo with the often-repeated thirty-first verse, "... If God is for us, who can be against us?" And then, in verse thirty-seven, comes the spiritually charged and often repeated powerfully encouraging affirmation, "... we are more than conquerors..."

Indeed, the apostle Paul wants to encourage believers in this chapter. He wants to embolden and strengthen believers and give them the assurance that they should and can have in this great and wondrous salvation wrought through the Lord Jesus Christ. We love to repeat these glorious words of victory and conquest, "we are more than conquerors." These words are easy on our ears

and lift our hearts. The problem is that the way that these words are used is often out of their original context and more glorifying of us than of the one they are actually meant to truly glorify. There is a tendency to misuse these words. There is a fleshly, egotistical, inclination to misapply these words. And, quite often, it is because most people who repeat these words do not understand what they actually mean. Too often too many who recite these words don't get the point of the verse from which they come. So many boldly and pridefully proclaim, "We are more than conquerors," and will even modify it and exclaim, "The Bible says that I am more than a conqueror!" But what exactly is meant by that statement in its original context? I'm pretty sure that many who recite this verse, along with so many other verses, would be surprised as to exactly the original intent of the words. They would be shocked at how the Holy Spirit would have such verses faithfully applied in the lives of believers today and would be surprised by how people misapply them.

In its original context, being called "more than a conqueror" is not about our ability or achievement. Rather, it is about our undeserved blessing. At the end of the seventh chapter of this letter, the apostle Paul speaks of the weakness of all humans, including himself, failing to live the righteous life under our own power. He speaks about the battle within, struggling between the desire to serve his natural fleshly fallen nature and the desire to do what is right and godly. In the twenty-fourth verse of the seventh chapter, Paul even cries out in frustration, "wretched man that I am!" How does Paul go from being "wretched" to suddenly claiming that he and all his fellow believers are more than conquerors? What has changed? What makes the difference?

Far too often we see the misinterpretation and misapplication of this verse of scripture. Far too often we see people lifting this as though it is about their ability to achieve their goals, a reminder of their own inner strength and vigor to defeat any foe. We claim victory in ourselves. We claim our own power to overcome. We pat ourselves on the back and treat Jesus like he merely gave us an assist in reaching the goal we set for ourselves or that he merely coached and encouraged us to overcoming the obstacles in our way. Self-actualization, self-glorification, and self-celebration have become the popular focus in our society. We claim these words, and those like them in scripture, as a form of self-affirmation and sadly even a form of self-congratulations. When misused and misunderstood these words conjure up images of us leading the battle and victoriously defeating our adversary. Songs are even sing about going into Satan's camp and taking back what he stole from us. We are encouraged to praise ourselves and give credit to ourselves for defeating Satan, for conquering demons and the forces of evil. However, that is the lie that weakens us and deceives us. That is not what these words are about.

These words are not about what we achieved or can acquire. The verse is not about our power or our might or a victory that we won by the strength of our hands or the determination of our wills. Those who peddle a false non-biblical

gospel declare even to the unrepentant and unregenerate that they can justly claim their victorious life because they are worthy of greatness and quote these words to support their false claim. Even believers are often deceived into thinking they are worthy of such a claim of victorious conquering because of their own herculean spiritual attainments. Some even presume to misappropriate these glorious words to be about gaining success in this world or achieving one's personal goals and increasing one's material possessions or worldly status. The lie often goes something like this,

Claim that you're a conqueror and you shall be! The Bible says that you're a conqueror, so you need to think and act like one. Matter of fact, God says you're more than just a regular a conqueror. That means you're a super-conqueror. You have the power to get what you want. You have the power to do what you want. Just believe it and achieve it because you're a conqueror. You're a super conqueror!

That is twisting the text. It is missing the powerful point of the text. It is vital that we do not misunderstand what it means in saying that we are "more" than conquerors. While it may seem that it suggests an even greater claim that we can make for ourselves, when considering the entire verse in context, one realizes that this is not the case.

The words of verse thirty-seven come after the apostle has listed the sufferings and persecutions that saints were going through in his day. These trials left some of the Roman Christians, who were the original recipients of the letter, wondering if the trials and tribulations of this world meant that the Lord no longer loved them, or the powers of darkness were able to block the love of God and perhaps even the salvation promised. Paul then even seems to double-down on this by lifting up a passage from the forty-fourth Psalm that speaks of being slaughtered like sheep and relates the intensity of the believers inability to shield themselves from troubles and trials and even martyrdom. It is against this backdrop that we are reassured by the words, "...in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us."

This is not about our achievement. This is about the power of the love of our God in action. This is not about our ability; it is about the saving grace of Jesus Christ. Paul is not referring to our determination to rise above the efforts of the enemy and defeat him. Paul is talking about our Lord and Savior rescuing and delivering us from the clutches of our enemy and the consequences of our own sinful depravity. Paul is not talking about us thwarting the attack of the adversary so that we suffer no pain or persecution or inconvenience. Paul is saying that even persecution and pain and martyrdom cannot take our salvation away. He is declaring, under the divine superintendency of the Holy Spirit, that we cannot be divided away from the love of our Savior or the victory he has won. It is not about our conquest over our life's problems. It is about the Lord Jesus's conquering love that cannot be overcome or deterred or reduced by any attack upon us or

situation we go through or even death itself. It is not about our achievement; rather, it is about our blessing. It is not about what we have done, but about what has been done for us. It is not about what we have won but is about what has been won on our behalf. These words are not about us but are about the one who has loved us with an almighty and everlasting love and what he has done for us.

We also need to understand that we are not called "conquerors," but we are called "more than conquerors." What does it mean to be "more than a conqueror?" In the original Greek text, this is not multiple words, but it is one word... ὑπερνικάω [hupernikaō (oo-payr-nee-cow')]. It is above and beyond being a conqueror. The term refers to receiving an overwhelming victory. In the manner Paul is using the term in our text, he is referring to the fact that we are the victors, the "hyper-conquerors," in a battle that we did not fight. We are the recipients of a victory that we did not win. In the context of this passage, it means that we received what we did not earn for ourselves. We gained that for which what we did not work but received "through him who loved us." It also refers to the utter defeat of an enemy... a decisive and final victory... the inability of an enemy to rise again.

One may ask, if this is not a battle we have won for ourselves and we are not the ones who can claim to have conquered by our own strength and power, in what sense are believers, the disciples of Jesus Christ, called "more than conquerors?" It is because we are the beneficiaries of the decisive battle that Jesus Christ fought and won for us. This is the battle that Jesus Christ fought on the cross. It is the victory that Jesus Christ won over sin and death. It is his conquest over Satan and his delivering us from the curse brought by human sin.

In the ancient world, as a sign of total victory, the conquering general or warrior king would often be depicted in artwork as treading over vanquished enemies. It was symbolic of a total victory... a hyper-conquest. We see this even in scripture in Joshua 10:23–25, as the Israelites defeated a unified force of five kings and Joshua called the leaders of his people to "'...Come near; put your feet on the necks of these kings.' Then they came near and put their feet on their necks. And Joshua said to them, 'Do not be afraid or dismayed; be strong and courageous. For thus the LORD will do to all your enemies against whom you fight.'" In that day, the Israelites had to physically go to war and rely on the Lord to give them the victory. Against all odds, they became conquerors by the blessing of God upon their efforts, with the divine power miraculously fighting on their behalf and empowering them to claim the Promised Land and defeat their enemies. But that is not exactly what Paul is saying here in Romans eight about the followers of Jesus Christ. Here we see that we are more than merely conquerors blessed with a divinely aided victory. Rather, we are the adopted children of God. We are heirs with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We are the King's kids who did not even fight by his side in the decisive battle but are blessed by the conquest and share in his victory anyway. We are the adopted children of the conquering King.

We are actually adopted from among the King's enemies and transformed into the King's own heirs. By the conquering King's grace and mercy, we are recreated from being allies of the rebellion against him into to being members of the conquering King's royal family. We are the rescued, the delivered, the spared. And, for love's sake, for his own glory, and for his glory to be evident in his church, the Word tells us that the enemy vanquished by our Lord's victory on the cross is put under the feet of those who were freed from bondage by the Lord and have been rescued, redeemed, and embraced by the Lord. Romans 16:20 declares, "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet." However, we are not to presume this is our own doing or by our own power or to our own praise. Indeed, it is God who is the actor in this statement. God is doing the crushing, and he is condescending to grant us the privilege of being used by him in the process. This gives us no reason for boasting of ourselves. Rather, we should join in with the words of Psalm 47:1-3; "Clap your hands, all peoples! Shout to God with loud songs of joy! For the LORD, the Most High, is to be feared, a great king over all the earth. He subdued peoples under us, and nations under our feet."

Moreover, while some erroneously presume to claim the glory of being more than a conqueror as though it is an individually held status and badge of personal pride, the truth is that our glorious conquering King graciously shares his victory with all those whom he, by his own sovereign power and grace, has claimed, rescued, and redeemed as the people of his kingdom. Just as in Psalm 47:1-3 the people of Israel were urged to collectively celebrate the Lord's conquest over the nations as a victory in which all of the Lord's people share, we must also acknowledge that our champion, the Lord Jesus Christ, shares his victory not only as a mere individual blessing but as a collective one. It is a kingdom victory, won by the King and bestowed upon all of his people... upon all of those granted citizenship by his saving grace and made joint heirs of his kingdom by his redeeming love.

If we truly comprehend what it really means to be "more than conquerors through him who loved us," our worship, our witness, and our confidence is well founded. When the focus of our worship is on Christ... when it is Christ centered... when it is about his victory... his conquering, his grace... his love... his mercy... his forgiveness... and not our presumed power...our misguided self-worship... our claims of personally won victories or conquering inner power, then we have turned away from a form of self-worshipping idolatry and toward rightly honoring and exalting our Lord and King and Savior. When we understand what it really means to be "more than conquerors through him who loved us," our witness and our testimony will be about what Christ has done and not what we do, in and of ourselves or even who we are by ourselves. Our ministry and service will be to his glory and not for our own glory. We will focus on his will and not our own will... on what he commanded and not on what we desire... on his grace and mercy and not what we wrongly think we have earned or deserve. Our faith and

trust is well founded, not in ourselves, but in him... not upon sinking sand but upon the solid rock!

When we understand what it means to be “more than conquerors through him who loved us,” then despite any fear or threat, disappointment or trial, we can trust in our Savior, our victorious conquering Champion’s, words “In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33 ESV). We can confidently look back to his victory on the cross and rising from the dead and eagerly anticipate his glorious return, repeating with joy the words that Saint John heard in his vision of the heavenly realm, “...Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered...” Revelation 5:5 (ESV). The Lord Jesus Christ is the conqueror, we are the graciously rescued and adopted heirs who share in our King’s victory, not by our might, but because of his gracious saving love. We are more than conquerors through him who loved us!

Romans 8:35-39 (ESV): 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? 36 As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

This article is provided as a ministry of [Third Millennium Ministries](#) (Thirdmill). If you have a question about this article, please [email](#) our *Theological Editor*.

Subscribe to *Biblical Perspectives Magazine*

BPM subscribers receive an email notification each time a new issue is published. Notifications include the title, author, and description of each article in the issue, as well as links directly to the articles. Like BPM itself, *subscriptions are free*. To subscribe to [BPM](#), please select this [link](#).