

SABBATH SCHOOL

Jr. High School Sabbath Instruction Program — Teacher's Outline

Level J • Unit 1 • Week 4

IS OVERCOMING OVERWHELMING?

OBJECTIVE:

To give students an understanding of what it means to live within this world and live the way God wants us to, following the example that Jesus Christ gave us. Open discussion format.

SCRIPTURES:

1 John 5:19; Revelation 12:9; 1 John 2:16; Matthew 6:19-21; John 18:36; Romans 12:2; John 16:32-33; 17:11-23

LESSON:

Being a young person in today's society can be very difficult. What are some of the things young people face in today's world?

(Give students time to respond.)

Every day we are attacked by outside influences that are contrary to God's way of living, and these influences can be subtle and difficult to overcome. What are some things that we can do to overcome the challenges of this world? (Prayer; study; talk with parents, pastor or other adults; support one another; remove yourself from difficult situations; etc.)

When we consider all the challenges that we must face each day living in a world that walks contrary to God, the task of overcoming can seem overwhelming. Throughout history, society has struggled with morality. This struggle has been increasingly more apparent in recent times. This can cause many challenges for you as young people in this world. Combine that with the pressures of school and peers and the load can seem a bit heavy.

Let's turn to 1 John 5:19 and see what the Bible says about this subject:

"We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one."

Let's compare this with 1 John 2:16:

"For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world."

God's people are few in comparison to the whole world. And the majority of the world lies under Satan's deception Revelation 12:9 says, *"So the great dragon . . . that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world . . ."*

Although it appears as though the odds are against us, we must always remember that God is with those who serve and follow Him and obey His commandments. God wants to be a part of your life and will be there for you when you turn to Him with a right heart and attitude. You can go to God through prayer, and you can hear His response through His Word, the Bible.

(Have the students give examples of ways in which Satan attempts to deceive or pull our attention from God.)

Where should we put our focus? (Give students time to respond.)

Turn to Matthew 6:19-21 and see what example Jesus gave us to follow:

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

Paul also instructed the church in Romans 12:2:

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind . . ."

We can see from these two passages (as well as many others in the Bible), that it is very important for us to keep our heart and mind focused on God and His way. Our actions and speech are an example of what's in our hearts (we must guard our tongues). Our thoughts or mind—what we think about—tell God where our focus is. So when you get discouraged become a visionary by focusing upon God's Kingdom and thinking about the plan of God and His goodness. Then all the other things in our lives will take care of themselves.

In Romans 12:2 we read that we are not to be conformed to this world. What does it mean to be conformed to this world?

Comment: *The New Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus* defines "world" as "the earth and its inhabitants." It defines "worldly" as "relating to the world: engrossed in temporal pursuits; earthly; mundane; carnal; not spiritual." So from these definitions, we see that there is a definite contrast between being "of the world" (i.e. carnal, earthly, mundane) and being "not of the world" (i.e. spiritual). What does God have to say about this?

Let's turn again to 1 John 2:16:

" For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life—is not of the Father but of the world."

Satan used these traits against man from day one. He wanted to deceive mankind into following a "get" way of life rather than the path which God wants us to follow. Satan deceived Eve in this manner. (See Genesis 3:6.)

Is there any hope in overcoming? Yes. Christ came before us and came into this world just as we are. He faced all of the trials, tribulations and pressures that are common to us. But He faced even more than that. Jesus was without sin. He overcome Satan in the desert (see Matthew 4). He died for our shortcomings, our sins, which are a result of our inability to overcome at times. But we have hope because His death for us enabled us to take part in something greater and that is to have our sins forgiven and be washed by the blood of Christ that was shed for our sins. This allows us to be renewed and to press forward toward the Kingdom. (Passover pictures a renewal of this covenant.)

Christ prayed to God the Father the evening before His crucifixion. His prayer was not a selfish prayer; His prayer was for you and me. Let's read in John 16:32-33; 17:11-23.

Christ knew the challenges that we face would be difficult, but if we call upon God's name and look to the example of Christ we can overcome. Do not become discouraged when you fall down. God knows we will stumble and He will be there to pick us up and forgive us when we ask Him through prayer and repentance. We will all make mistakes. It is important that we learn from these mistakes and humbly go before God seeking His forgiveness, which He will happily give to those who truly repent. This wonderful gift is available to you. (See *United News*, January 2000, Vol. 6, No. 1, pg. 2 "Are Our Children Called?").

As youth in the church, your challenges are many. Your parents know and understand this. Your parents were once your age and faced similar pressures from society. So work together with your family and your friends to overcome this world and become a member of God's family.

Q&A (Open Discussion)