

# LIFE IN A DANGEROUS NEIGHBORHOOD

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Let's face it – we are all living in a dangerous neighborhood!!!!!!

God loves His creation, but not the world system that operates through the commercial, political, medical, educational and cultural systems. Behind these systems is the intelligent, malevolent operation of the evil one, that Paul calls “the god of this age.” This being is far from omnipotent - he is defeated, but he seeks to influence and control the minds of the people of the world. He is also opposed to everything about God, the Creator of heaven and earth, contradicts God's word, persuades men to ignore God's counsel, and injects his atheistic immorality into every sector of society and culture. The god “of this age” blinds humanity to the existence, reality, plans and purposes and salvation of God, our Heavenly Father, and urges us to pursue a destiny without reference to Our Father's plans. ( 2 Corinthians 4.4)

The apostle John plainly states that “*the whole world is under the sway of the wicked one.*” This is why it is so broken and confused and why Christians live in an alien environment - a world which does not share their goals, vision or moral values, and is under the sway of this Evil One.

Information is power - it changes our lives. When we are aware of what the world is, the mind behind it and how it keeps us from our true destiny, we are in a position to overcome it. When we see the reality of God's Kingdom and embrace His call, plans, values and ways, we can say, “*Thanks, but no thanks!*” to the world's agendas and deliberately choose to follow Jesus, enter into the wonderful plans He has for us and live by His ways and instructions.

4,000 years ago Abraham was called out of Babylon - a creation of man's humanistic ability. He left its lifestyles and ways because He saw something better - a city built on God's plans and promises, whose ‘builder and maker is God.’ So it is with us, when we are born again we see another kingdom - the Kingdom of God - and we can begin to give ourselves over to the plans and purposes of God “*who has called us out of darkness into His*

*marvelous light.*” We see a better world, one which is not controlled by man's systems but by Gods' plans with man's cooperation. We do not physically leave the world - that would be impossible - but we spiritually and mentally distance ourselves from it and its values. “*I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.*” (John 17.15)

Even though, as believers, our lives are under the rule and blessing of God because of what Jesus has done, we continue to live in a hostile and broken world which is the source of much suffering and many problems. Jesus warned us “*In the world you shall have tribulation but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world*” (John 16:33). Later He uses the phrase “*He who overcomes as I also overcome.*” (Rev. 3.21) We overcome as He overcame by continuing to draw from His life, refusing to lose heart and tenaciously trusting Him to carry us through. “*For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.*” (1 Jn 5.4)

When we realize that suffering is a part of the condition of the present fallen world until Jesus returns, we will be better equipped to endure life's difficulties, resist discouragement and maintain our trust in the Lord by looking to Him to strengthen us with His joy. We maintain our ‘good cheer’ by praising and thanking God in all circumstances knowing that He is using all things for our good. “*Be strong in the Lord and in the power of HIS might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*” (Eph. 6.10) Furthermore when we keep our joy and refuse to be drawn into the cycle of strife and accusation we will overcome evil with good.

It's a rough world out there; but hang in there, keep your joy. We are not of this world. Our God is able to carry us through! Remember the long oppressive era of man's mismanagement of this world is coming to an end when the Lord Himself will return to reign and rule from Jerusalem and unite heaven and earth under His wonderful rule.