

Got Your Nikes On?

Joe Slater

Scripture makes no indication as to which brand of athletic shoes is superior. One manufacturer, however, has chosen a name identical to the New Testament word for victory in 1 John 5:4. *“For whoever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the **victory** that has overcome the world – our faith.”*

Nike (pronounced NEE-kay) is found in no other place in the New Testament, though kindred words are used five other times.

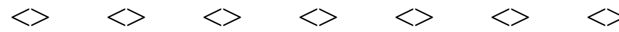
Athletic shoe makers want us to believe that wearing their shoes will help us win. God wants us to realize that only through Jesus Christ can we enjoy real victory in the final analysis. Jesus overcame sin and death. He *“was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin”* (Hebrews 4:15). On Calvary, Jesus suffered, bled, and died to take away our sins. And on the third day, he arose triumphant over death. Even before He went to the cross, Jesus claimed victory; it was as good as done. *“In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world”* (John 16:33).

Since Jesus overcame the world, we (through Him) can overcome it, too. John identifies the means by which we enjoy such victory – “our faith.” The next verse continues: *“Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”* (1 John 5:5). Our confidence, then, is not in ourselves – our intellect, our strength, our skills. Rather, we trust in Jesus, who was, is, and always will be God.

Remember that the faith which pleases God is never “faith alone.” Saving faith invariably includes loving, trusting obedience. Thus, John refers to the victorious person as one who loves God, loves God’s children, and keeps God’s commandments” (1 John 5:1-

3). Such a person may be compared to an athlete who has his running shoes on his feet.

Ultimate victory will be ours when Jesus raises the dead and takes us home. “So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: *‘Death is swallowed up in victory’*” (1 Corinthians 15:54). But even as Jesus claimed His victory before the cross, so we share in victory even in this life. John commended his readers because they had overcome the wicked one (1 John 2:13, 14). What about you? Are you enjoying victory now? Do you have the assurance of ultimate victory when Jesus returns? “But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:57).



Will We Get Up Again?

Even for people who have been redeemed, the question is not will we sin, or even how many times will we sin? The big question is, will we get up again and again and again? While it is true that we are to help bear each other’s burdens, it is also true that each child of God has a responsibility to carry his own weight, and that each Christian will stand before the Judge as an individual. God has designed a path back home for every one of His children who have wandered away. If we will confess our wrong and turn back toward Him in prayer, He will run down the road to meet us. He will bring us home with great celebration in His heart. If you know someone who has walked away from God, don’t ever quit praying for them. Don’t ever give up on them. God doesn’t give up. He waits and waits and waits patiently for their return. We should praise Him every day for His compassionate love toward all of His children!

--Jeff Jenkins (Lewisville, TX) via Facebook

How Shall They Hear?

“Who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4).

Ed and I were returning to Denver from Vail, Colorado. Motorhomes, trucks pulling trailers, cars, and eighteen-wheelers filled all three lanes on I-70 East. We rounded a long, descending curve, and what I saw made me cry out in fear and concern. In the middle of the inner lane lay a large, yellow dog. It had evidently fallen from a vehicle and was hurt and in pain. It could not get up. A car had stopped about ten feet above where the dog lay, and a woman had exited from a car stopped about thirty feet downhill. She was carrying a coat to wrap around the dog. A truck had stopped on the shoulder of the outside lane.

We were in the middle lane, so stopping would have made a dangerous situation worse. But for the next ten minutes, I choked back tears. I couldn’t forget the look in that dog’s large brown eyes. Filled with trust, they pleaded for help. The dog was lying on its side, and its tail was wagging as people approached it. The only thing I could do was say a prayer for the safety of the people who were helping and for the dog.

Yes, I was filled with pity for that dog and prayed for it. Then I realized something. People who live right beside us don’t know God. As far as I know, they have never heard about Jesus and His saving act of mercy. Are they not as important as that dog? Have I ever cried because they are lost and doomed? Have I even once prayed for them?

“How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things!” (Romans 10:15).

--Donna Richmond Wittlif (Denver, CO)