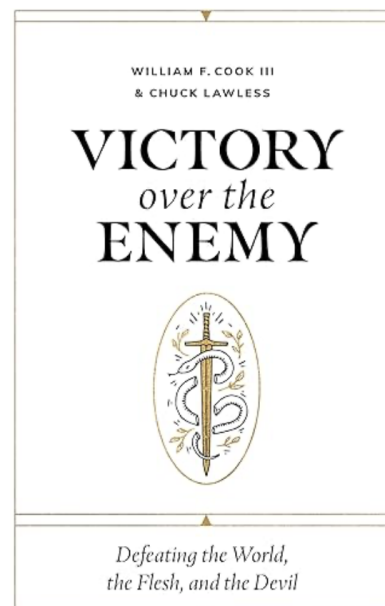


**Cook, William F., and Charles E. Lawless. *Victory over the Enemy: Defeating the World, the Flesh, and the Devil*. Brentwood, TN: B&H Academic, 2023.**

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The book, *Victory over the Enemy: Defeating the World, the Flesh, and the Devil* is an invaluable resource for believers. All believers encounter spiritual warfare. The topic of this book is both relevant and timely to experience victory over the enemy. Dr. Cook and Dr. Lawless strike a balance between theology supported by Scripture while also keeping the text readable and digestible. The book covers three sections: recognizing the enemy, knowing God's provisions, and disciplining our lives for victory. The pages of all three sections are saturated with God's Word, serving as a key reminder that our victory has already been won. We fight from that place of victory using God's word as our guide. The beginning of the Bible starts with God and it ends with God, therefore that is where our focus should remain. "As ominous as this sounds, Satan is not God's equal. He was created by God, exists under God's sovereign control, is limited by God in what God allows him to do, was decisively defeated at the cross, and one day will be thrown into the lake of fire" (10). While Satan is the enemy, we need not dwell on him or his limited power. Our God, creator of all, reigns supreme!

This book has several strengths and a single weakness. Strengths include a deep commitment to Scripture, appropriate use of personal stories, and



a logical progression through reality towards victory. As mentioned previously, the pages of the book are drenched in Scripture. With Jesus as our example, we see He quoted Scripture when tempted by the devil (Matt 4:1-11, Luke 4:1-13). He rebuked the temptations of the enemy with the Word of God. Therefore, we too should be well versed in Scripture that we might close our hearts toward the lure of the evil one. The authors showed the reader how to pursue Scripture by referring to it frequently and including an exhortation to memorize these words of life as well. In books on spiritual warfare, there can be a tendency to overuse personal stories. However, this book uses personal stories sparingly, humbly, and poignantly to emphasize an experience rather than to pridefully show current places of personal victory. This restraint strengthens the book. A final strength of this book is the division of sections and the progression of how to be victorious in spiritual battle. Being able to swiftly and correctly recognize the enemy allows us to tap into God's provisions more quickly, in turn guiding us into a disciplined lifestyle of victory. This linear progression makes the pathway to victory easy to remember and quick to recall in moments of temptation. A singular weakness was the lack of pastoral or prewritten prayers. The conclusion of the book ends with a lovely pastoral prayer. Each chapter of the book would have ended stronger had they all had a pastoral prayer or a prayer to pray over oneself as the closing words.

Life on the field has proven to be full of spiritual warfare. Several nearby neighborhoods are enveloped in palatable darkness. The cycle of evil spirits bothering the sleep of children is commonplace. The air between heaven and earth becomes heavy and it is a fight to reach out towards Christ, especially during Ramadan, an Islamic season of fasting. This book provides the reader with specific encouragement in this fight. One particularly encouraging quote drives believers to return to the Gospel, receive the grace God freely gives, and march onward filled anew with His power. "Past spiritual victories and blessings are not sufficient for future battles. Past godliness can never be an excuse for present disobedience." (pg. 97) In addition, since this book is rooted in God's Word and the main premise in strategy to live victoriously

focuses on **obedience**, that makes this idea simple to recreate as we share this with our local brothers and sisters in discipleship relationship. What better truth to impart than to highlight the outcome of consistent obedience to the Father?

In summary, this book will surely bless, stretch, and encourage you as you serve the Lord on the field. When read and applied, you can expect to encounter the Lord in a new and fresh way as you grow deeper in your understanding of how to claim victory over the enemy. For further reading, you might enjoy the following books. *Discipled Warriors* by Dr. Chuck Lawless, gives great insight and detail on how to equip the church for spiritual warfare. *Brokenness, the Heart God Revives* by Nancy Leigh DeMoss, leads you through brokenness into repentance and finally into a great movement of God in your life. Lastly, *Coming to a Place of Abiding, a Prayer Mentor Booklet Series* by Clyde J Hodson moves through prayers from Scripture and the names of God to pray over your life or ministry.