

The Tree of Life is a weekly teaching summary.
The Tree of Life for week ending 11/02/03.
The Strategical and the Tactical Winners
1 John 4:5-4

Revelation 12:11 *Furthermore, they [believers in the Lord Jesus Christ] overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and [they overcame him] because of the doctrine applied by means of their testimony, and they did not love their life even to death.*

These believers overcame Satan and the kingdom of darkness for three reasons:

1. The blood of Christ, which dealt with their sin.
2. The Word of God.
3. They did not love their life (they were not occupied with self-preservation, even to death).

The final phrase tells us how we know we are becoming a winner; it is when we are not afraid of death. It is when death has lost its sting and you live in the reality of **Psa 23:4**, “*Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for Thou art with me.*” Then we can say with the Apostle Paul in **1Co 15:55**, “*O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?*”

If you are a winner believer, you will have dying grace, whether it takes you a prolonged period of time to die, or you die in an instant; in either case, you have lost your fear of death. Believers who have failed are usually afraid of death, and Satan has the power to make them fear death, through the cosmic system, **Heb 2:14-15**, “*Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.*”

We see the believer’s victory over maximum pressure in **Rev 12:11**. These Tribulational believers were strategic winners because they had believed in Christ, and they were tactical winners because they had advanced to maturity during a very difficult time. This is the “winner’s verse,” and it shows two categories of winners. Every Christian is a **strategical winner**, because they have made a one-shot decision to personally trust in Jesus Christ, resulting in eternal life and a resurrection body (**1Jo 5:4-5**). The **tactical winner** resides, functions, and continues his momentum inside the predesigned plan of God.

The believer’s strategic victory is based on one decision, but it is the many positive decisions made after salvation that produces the tactical winner. The believer in Christ is already a strategic winner and has the *potential* of becoming a tactical winner in the angelic conflict. God has designed the Christian way of life so that we can be a double winner. The same word is used for the strategical and tactical winner—*nikao*, translated “overcome” in **1Jo 5:4**, “*For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world [our faith].*” The strategical winner at

salvation is identified in **Rev 12:11** by the phrase “*Furthermore they overcame him because of the blood of the lamb* [the saving work of Christ on the Cross].” However, *nikao* also means overcomer or winner, meaning a tactical winner after salvation. Winners are described by the word *nikao* in **Rev 2:7,11,17,26, 3:5,12,21**.

- Tactical winners will be able to eat of the Tree of Life in the middle of the Paradise of God, **Rev 2:7**. Only tactical winners have the privilege of access to the Gazebo in the garden and the Tree of Life. The winner is a member of the “Paradise Club” forever. This includes three special privileges—eating from the Tree of Life, access to the Gazebo in the Garden, and access to the Paradise of God, **Rev 2:7**.
- In **Rev 2:11**, they shall not be hurt by the second death because of blessing by association.
- In **Rev 2:17**, they eat of the hidden manna and receive a new name on a white stone; the new knighthood is given to the winner.
- In **Rev 2:26**, they are given power and authority to rule nations.
- In **Rev 3:5**, they are clothed with the uniform of glory, which includes presentation in the Court of Heaven to God the Father. While tactical winners are honored in the third heaven, losers will wait in the second heaven.
- In **Rev 3:12**, their names are written in the historical records of heaven and they have a coat of arms, which allows them to enter the New Jerusalem.
- In **Rev 3:21**, winners are granted to sit with Christ on His throne.

The momentary decision of faith in Jesus Christ breaks Satan’s back strategically. However, there are two sides to the angelic conflict as it extends into human history—our **strategic** and **tactical** victories over the kingdom of darkness. The Chief Witness in all of human history is the humanity of Jesus Christ in hypostatic union. He created a strategy to defeat Satan and executed the plan magnificently, and therefore He is called, “*the Amen, the faithful and true Witness*” in **Rev 3:15**. The tactical witnesses are invisible heroes, believers who execute the predesigned plan of God in the Church-age. Mature believers are classified as tactical witnesses, which means we pursue the same objective, but in lesser magnitude than the strategic victory of our Lord. The term “tactical” means “relating to combat tactics as involving actions or means of less magnitude or at a shorter distance from a base of operations than those of strategy.”

Our Lord accomplished the strategic victory of the angelic conflict through His salvation ministry on the Cross and His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. The believer accomplishes the tactical victory of the angelic conflict through his advance to spiritual maturity. When our Lord was on the Cross, He won the strategic victory, and He will return at the Second Advent for His tactical victory. It is your **daily attitude** toward Bible doctrine, in both perception and application that becomes your tactical victory. You can be a strategic winner and a tactical loser. A strategic winner has eternal life, but in eternity he has nothing to show for the time that he spent on earth.

Rev 12:11 emphasizes the importance of tactical victory in time, growing in grace, daily perception of doctrine, and application of doctrine to the momentum tests that every believer must pass before becoming a winner: “*Because of the doctrine applied by means of their testimony.*” We are left on this earth to become winners. Not all believers are tactical winners, in fact, in most generations the minority of believers are tactical winners. Tactical winners will be decorated with the *order of the morning star* and crowns. They will have the uniform of glory and will be on the “honors list,” so that

while the Tribulation is taking place on earth, they will be presented in the court of heaven.

There are two categories of winners among believers—the *strategic* winner and the *tactical* winner. The strategic winner has eternal life and can never lose it, and will have a resurrection body in heaven forever. The tactical winner, however, is going to have much more. In fact, the tactical winner is going to be invited to parties in eternity and enjoy special privileges that the strategic winner will not have. These mature believers are classified as tactical witnesses in time. Remember **Act 1:8**, “*But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.*”

The believer accomplishes the tactical victory of the angelic conflict through his advance to spiritual maturity in the predestined plan of God; at this point he becomes an invisible hero. Anyone who believes in Christ is a winner strategically in the angelic conflict, therefore all Christians today, and all believers in the tribulation, are strategic victors, but it is the tactical victory that results from Bible doctrine. In God’s plan, **rank has its privileges**, and there is no equality in heaven. Equality ends with the strategic victory; all believers have the strategic victory by virtue of having accepted Christ as Savior, but it is the tactical winners who are going to have higher rank and greater privileges in eternity.

Heaven is a perfect place, and a perfect place is based upon self-determination. You get into heaven by non-meritorious self-determination: “*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.*” That is a one-shot decision, and that is your strategic victory, but after that, you have to make many “tactical” decisions, and the decisions you make on earth determine your status quo in eternity. No one can do it for you, and if you are bullied into making these decisions you are not going to last in the spiritual life. Your tactical victory is between you and the Lord and is strictly your own business. Tactical victory will wipe out fear in your life. Then you can “fasten your seat belt” for any disaster that may hit you or even your country, and you can ride it out, and see it through, and watch it with fascination as God’s will unfolds. If enough believers achieve the tactical victory, they can avert disaster in a nation.

The signs of the last days are given in **2Ti 3:1-5**, “*But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men [including believers] will be lovers of self [no spiritual life], lovers of money [greedy], boastful, arrogant, revilers or slanderers, disobedient to parents [lack of authority orientation from childhood], ungrateful [no capacity for appreciation], unholy, unloving [no capacity for impersonal love], irreconcilable [implacable, refusing to forgive because of bitterness and jealousy], malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of divine good, treacherous [faithless and disloyal], reckless [thoughtless, always thinking about self], conceited [puffed up, inflated with self-righteous arrogance], holding to a superficial form of the spiritual life, although they have denied its power; and avoid such men as these.*” When believers give up on the spiritual life, they become lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. They are in such a state of confusion, they simply give up. Many believers go to church on Sunday and say, “That’s my spiritual life and that’s all that I need to do, see you next Sunday.” They never take in doctrine during the week, never study, and never pray; it never goes beyond Sunday morning all their life. In **2Ti 3:5** “*They hold to a superficial form of the spiritual life, although they have denied its power.*”

There are two powers in the spiritual life that believers deny—the filling of the Holy Spirit and the power of the Word of God. They have no metabolized doctrine circulating in the soul; they are out of fellowship and have abandoned the spiritual life, and garbage leaks in from the subconscious and begins to push out any doctrine that is already there. **2Ti 3:5** says, “*Avoid such men as these.*” You are to avoid such people as these because these people can have a strong influence on your life.

In verse 6 we read, “*For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses.*” “Silly women” are those who think they are strong, when they are very weak. The Greek word here is *gunaikaria*, which does not just mean silly women but also males who are emotional in their souls. They derive their strength from their stubbornness and their concepts of morality, but they have no problem-solving devices. They know something is wrong, so they come back to Bible class, but they come with a soul full of garbage and they are very vulnerable, and so in verse 7, they are “*always learning and never able to come to the knowledge [epignosis] of the truth.*” They have no metabolized doctrine and are tactical losers, which means they reside and function in the cosmic system. The believer who is both a strategic and tactical winner will receive great blessings in time, and of course, greater rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Characteristics of Strategic and Tactical Winners

1. The strategic winner glorifies Christ by his one-shot decision, faith in Christ.
2. The tactical winner glorifies Christ through his advance to maturity in the predesigned plan of God. **Eph 2:8-10** deals with both the strategic winner and the tactical winner: “*For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not as a result of works, that no one should boast [strategic victory]. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them [tactical victory]. For we are His creation [Church-age believer, new spiritual species] having been created in Christ Jesus [baptism of the Holy Spirit] for good of intrinsic value achievements which God has prepared in advance, that we should walk by means of them.*”
3. The strategic winner receives a resurrection body and eternal life, but loses both temporal and eternal rewards, **Mar 10:29-30**, “*Jesus said, ‘Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel’s sake, but that he shall receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life.’*”
4. The tactical winner receives supergrace blessing in time plus eternal reward in the eternal state.
5. The strategic winner is supported by logistical grace, while the tactical winner is supported both by logistical grace and supergrace blessing.
6. Therefore, God’s grace provision for the strategic winner is the saving work of Christ on the Cross plus logistical grace support plus maximum divine discipline in time. The believer who is a strategic winner but a tactical loser lives in the cosmic system.

7. God's grace provision for strategic and tactical winners adds a provision of logistical grace, which the tactical winner utilizes properly, plus supergrace blessings, momentum testing, and suffering for blessing. For the tactical winner, his suffering is for blessing.
8. All believers are strategic winners by virtue of having believed in Christ, so all believers are strategic winners in the angelic conflict because of the saving work of Christ on the Cross, **Rev 12:11**, "*Furthermore they overcame him [Satan] because of the blood of the lamb* [the saving work of Christ]."
9. Only the unbeliever is a strategic loser in the angelic conflict. Therefore the unbeliever will share the destiny of Satan forever. He lives under Satan's system in time, which is the cosmic system.
10. The carnal, cosmic believer is a strategic winner, but a tactical loser.
11. The believer who is both a strategic and tactical winner has made thousands of decisions from a position of strength. He generally has personal control of his life and a personal sense of destiny from the inculcation of Bible doctrine and its application to his circumstances.
12. The tactical winner possesses an *edification complex* in his soul in time, plus the uniform of glory to go with his resurrection body in eternity.

Summary of the Difference Between Strategic Victory and Tactical Victory

1. The one-time decision, faith in Jesus Christ, produces a strategic winner in the angelic conflict, in contrast to the unbeliever, who is a loser in the angelic conflict, and shares the destiny of Satan, the eternal lake of fire. On the other side, in the tactical victory, we have a contrast; instead of a one-time decision, you have to make many positive decisions, with regard to the plan of God, the system for producing winners. You make decisions with regard to authority, i.e., enforced humility leading to genuine humility.
2. Under strategic victory Christ is glorified by one decision, the positive decision to believe in Him—one decision glorifying the Lord, which has eternal repercussions. Under tactical victory, He is glorified by many decisions, which have temporal and eternal repercussions.
3. Under strategic victory, we have eternal life and a resurrection body, but no eternal reward. Under tactical victory, the result is eternal life and a resurrection body, plus the uniform of glory and fantastic blessings in time and eternal rewards.
4. The strategic winner who fails to advance lives in the cosmic system, and he fears death, whereas the tactical winner lives in the predesigned plan of God and has no fear of death.
5. The strategic victor is sustained in time by logistical grace only; he is in the cosmic system, and he is the enemy of the Cross, but he is kept alive by logistical grace. The tactical victor is sustained in time by both logistical grace and supergrace blessing.
6. The cosmic believer is a strategic winner, but a tactical loser. The believer in the predesigned plan of God is both a strategic and tactical winner.
7. The strategic victor glorifies God only in the eternal state, whereas the tactical victor glorifies God in time, and in a special way in eternity.
8. He who is a strategic victor only is disciplined in time. His life is characterized by great frustration and failure. For the tactical victor suffering is for blessing. He is oriented to God's will and he knows what he is doing. He has a personal sense of

destiny and has control of his life. Adversity and suffering, whether collective or individual, is always for his blessing.

9. The strategic victor makes the wrong decisions after salvation, whereas the tactical victor makes positive decisions from a position of strength. The tactical loser's wrong decisions mean that while he has eternal life, he is going to be "low on the totem pole" in eternity.

You can not have tactical victory without a pastor, a consistent teacher of the Word of God, and you have to be consistent in exposing yourself to his ministry. One of the differences between a strategic winner and a tactical winner is the fact that a tactical winner always finds the right pastor and sticks with him, but the strategic winner is running around looking for the right pastor, looking for the "second blessing," looking for something to spice up his life and compensate for his discipline, misery, frustration, and confusion.

In **Eph 4:11-12**, "*He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets [until the Canon of Scripture was completed], and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service [the purpose of the pastor-teacher], to the building up of the body of Christ.*" In other words, to turn your strategical victory into a tactical victory, you have to submit to the ministry your teacher. Paul goes on in **Eph 4:13**, "*...until we all attain the goal, and of the knowledge [epignosis] of the Son of God, to a mature man [a mature status], to the measure which belongs to the fulness of Christ. Until we all [Royal Family], attain to the unity of the faith [attain the goal].*" The goal is the tactical victory of **spiritual maturity**, and we get there because of consistency in doctrine and the *epignosis* (wisdom) of the Son of God. **Eph 4:14-16** continues, "*As a result, we are no longer to be children [immature], carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming [an immature believer is a strategical victor because he has believed in Christ, but he is a tactical failure], but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body [all believers] being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies [being categorically taught, by every joint of supply].*" The secret to strength in the body is the joint; the body can be no stronger than the joints and, of course, in this analogy the pastor is the joint. This is the logistical grace provision of a right pastor-teacher.

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