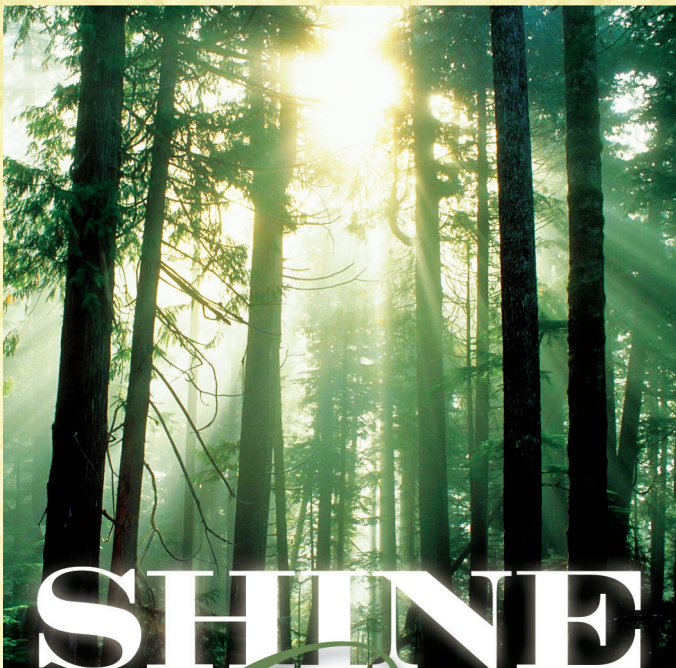


GLORIA COPELAND



SHINE

Or!

Overcoming Persecution

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Unless otherwise noted, all scripture is from the *King James Version* of the Bible.

Shine On!

Overcoming Persecution

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Shine On!

Persecution isn't a very popular subject among believers. We don't like to talk about it. We don't even like to think about it. But, the truth is, we'd better be prepared for it.

I don't say that because I have some kind of persecution complex. I just know that if you do anything for God in this world, persecution will come. It goes with the territory.

Second Timothy 3:12 leaves no room for doubt about that. It says, "*All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*"

Why is it that simply living a godly life causes so much trouble in this world? First John 5:19 tells us it's because "the whole world lieth in wickedness." We're living in a world that is ruled by the spirit of darkness. And the brighter our light becomes, the more offensive we are to that realm of darkness.

The reverse is also true. As long as we aren't doing much for God, we're not bothered with persecution. If we look like the world, talk like the world and act like the world, then worldly people will think we're all right. A little crazy maybe, but no real threat.

So you might as well know right now, if you're very turned on to God, the world won't like you

much. Actually, that's an understatement. Jesus put it this way:

If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you (John 15:18-19).

You may be thinking, *Well, I'm sure that's true, but it's also not very pleasant. Why do we have to talk about it?*

We need to prepare ourselves so that when persecution comes it doesn't stop us. That's what persecution is designed to do, you know. It's designed to discourage us and keep us from completing God's plan for our lives.

But, praise God, if we learn how to handle it in advance, it won't even slow us down.

Identify Your Real Enemy

The first thing you need to do to effectively overcome persecution is this: *Identify your real enemy*. Because persecution most often comes through people, most believers think those people are the source of their problems. But that's not true.

Mark 4 gives us insight into who is really behind persecution. There, in the parable of the sower, Jesus says:

These are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; and have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended (verses 15-17).

It's the devil himself who stirs up persecution. It's one of the strategies he uses to steal the Word out of your heart.

So when persecution comes your way, don't get sidetracked by getting angry with the people involved. They aren't operating on their own, they're being driven by the devil's influence.

Use the power and authority Jesus has given you and bind that persecuting devil. Then break the power of deception over the people he has been using, and pray that they'll be free to know the truth.

Rejoice!

Jesus gives us the next secret to overcoming persecution in Matthew 5:10-12. He says:

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

At the moment of persecution, you're not to be depressed. You're not to be angry or discouraged. You are to rejoice and be glad! Not just glad but *exceedingly* glad!

Luke 6:23 takes that command even further. It says, "Rejoice ye in that day [of persecution], and *leap for joy*: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven...."

A few days after I first noticed that instruction in the Scripture, someone came into my office and told me of something critical that had been written about our ministry. So I just took that verse literally. I got up and began to leap for joy. "Glory to God! Joy, joy, joy!" I shouted.

I'm sure the person sitting on the other side of my desk was surprised, but I didn't care because the Word worked. I found out you can't jump for joy and shout praises to God and be depressed at the same time.

Remember that the next time persecution comes your way. It will ruin the devil's whole scheme. He thinks he has figured out what that persecution will do to you. He thinks it will discourage you and stop your ministry.

But if you'll immediately begin to leap and jump for joy...if you'll believe what Jesus said and shout, "Praise God, I'm blessed!"...the tables will be turned. The devil will end up being the one who's discouraged. He sent that persecution to stop you, not to bless you. Just think how frustrated he'll be!

Don't Argue — Just Do Good

Once you've identified the enemy and rejoiced, the next thing God instructs you to do is this: Continue in your well-doing. "For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men" (1 Peter 2:15).

You're not called to argue. You're not called to defend your position or your name when men speak evil about you. Just leave all that in the

hands of the Lord and continue doing what God has called you to do.

That's what Jesus did. He didn't quit. When He was reviled, He reviled not. He just kept right on preaching the gospel, healing the sick and delivering all who were oppressed of the devil.

It's vital that we follow His example because Satan would like us to get caught up in persecution. He knows if he can get our minds off the things of God and onto how mistreated we are, we won't be out ministering to people and getting them set free from his dominion.

I know it's tough to be quiet when times of persecution come, but you can do it if you're confident that God will ultimately deliver you. That's why the Apostle Paul was able to live so triumphantly. As he said in 2 Timothy 3:10-11:

But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me.

Glory to God, we're not in this alone! When we're in the midst of persecution, God is right there with us. So rely upon Him. Spend time in

prayer. Listen to what He says.

Obeys His instructions when it seems like all of hell has broken loose upon you. He'll deliver you out of those persecutions—not just once in a while, but *every* time!

Love Not Your Life

Finally, if you want to rob persecution of every last scrap of its power, adopt the attitude Paul expresses in 2 Corinthians 4:17-18:

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Can you see Paul's attitude there? He wasn't concerned about the pressure he was experiencing down here on the earth. And, believe me, he was under tremendous pressure. He'd probably laugh at us talking about persecution these days, we've had so little of it.

Yet Paul's thoughts weren't centered on this natural life. He was thinking about that eternal weight of glory. He was looking into the realm of

the spirit. He was looking at things in the light of eternity. He was not being moved by what he could see with his natural eyes, but he was looking through the eye of faith.

So he didn't grow weary. He didn't faint under persecutions, tribulations or threats. In fact, in Acts 20:24 he said, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy..."

Once you adopt that attitude, the devil won't be able to manage you at all. He won't be able to find any persecution that will stop you.

You'll have your eyes so fixed on running your race and finishing your course, you won't even pay any attention to his junk. Instead of fussing and fuming over all the ugly things people are saying about you, you'll be busy looking forward to the day when you will stand face to face with Jesus. You'll be looking forward to hearing Him say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21).

When it gets right down to it, nothing on this earth compares to that, does it? So don't be afraid of the darkness of this world. It may persecute you but it can't overcome you. "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4).

Just turn up the light of God in your life and shine on!

Prayer for Salvation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Heavenly Father, I come to You in the Name of Jesus. Your Word says, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21). I am calling on You. I pray and ask Jesus to come into my heart and be Lord over my life according to Romans 10:9-10: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." I do that now. I confess that Jesus is Lord, and I believe in my heart that God raised Him from the dead.

I am now reborn! I am a Christian—a child of Almighty God! I am saved! You also said in Your Word, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: HOW MUCH MORE shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke 11:13). I'm also asking You to fill me with the Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit, rise up within me as I praise God. I fully expect to speak with other tongues as You give me the utterance

(Acts 2:4). In Jesus' Name. Amen!

Begin to praise God for filling you with the Holy Spirit. Speak those words and syllables you receive—not in your own language, but the language given to you by the Holy Spirit. You have to use your own voice. God will not force you to speak. Don't be concerned with how it sounds. It is a heavenly language!

Continue with the blessing God has given you and pray in the spirit every day.

You are a born-again, Spirit-filled believer. You'll never be the same!

Find a good church that boldly preaches God's Word and obeys it. Become part of a church family who will love and care for you as you love and care for them.

We need to be connected to each other. It increases our strength in God. It's God's plan for us.

Make it a habit to watch the *Believer's Voice of Victory* television broadcast and become a doer of the Word, who is blessed in his doing (James 1:22-25).

About the Author

Gloria Copeland is a noted author and minister of the gospel whose teaching ministry is known throughout the world. Believers worldwide know her through Believers' Conventions, Victory Campaigns, magazine articles, teaching audios and videos, and the daily and Sunday *Believer's Voice of Victory* television broadcast, which she hosts with her husband, Kenneth Copeland. She is known for Healing School, which she began teaching and hosting in 1979 at KCM meetings. Gloria delivers the Word of God and the keys to victorious Christian living to millions of people every year.

Gloria is author of the New York Times best-seller, *God's Master Plan for Your Life* and *Live Long, Finish Strong*, as well as numerous other favorites, including *God's Will for You*, *Walk With God*, *God's Will Is Prosperity*, *Hidden Treasures* and *To Know Him*. She has also co-authored several books with her husband, including *Family Promises*, *Healing Promises* and the best-selling daily devotionals, *From Faith to Faith* and *Pursuit of His Presence*.

She holds an honorary doctorate from Oral Roberts University. In 1994, Gloria was voted Christian Woman of the Year, an honor conferred on women whose example demonstrates outstanding Christian leadership. Gloria is also the co-founder and vice president of Kenneth Copeland Ministries in Fort Worth, Texas.

Learn more about Kenneth Copeland Ministries
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Believer's Voice of



When The LORD first spoke to Kenneth and Gloria Copeland about starting the *Believer's Voice of Victory* magazine...

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For nearly 40 years, it has been the joy of Kenneth Copeland Ministries to bring the good news to believers. Readers enjoy teaching from ministers who write from lives of living contact with God, and testimonies from believers experiencing victory through God's Word in their everyday lives.

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JESUS IS LORD



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