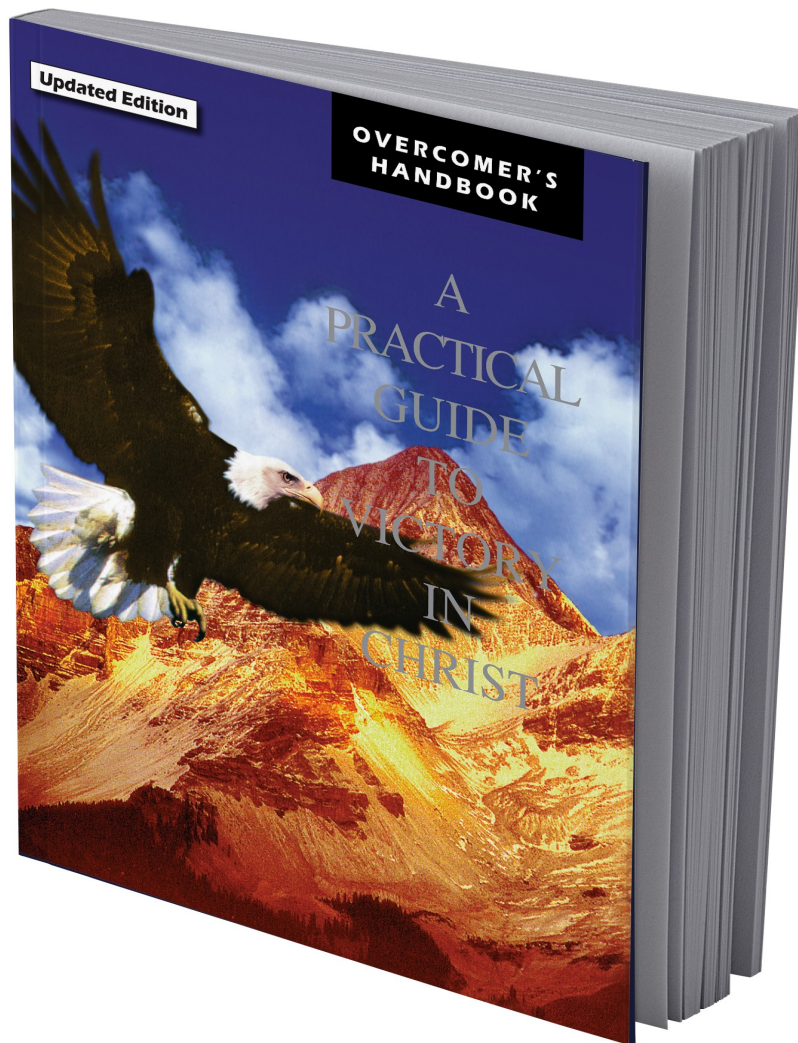


OVERCOMER'S HANDBOOK



**A Practical Guide
To Victory In Christ**

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Introduction

Overcomers In Christ

The Support Group Aftercare Model:

Overcomers offers a non-residential support Group program. All referrals that desire to participate must demonstrate a commitment to attending a small group relevant to their area of need. Implementing this process will increase the likelihood of your success in over-coming life-dominating problems. Should you have any questions please, call Mr. Bob at: **941-726-5056** or Miss Vicki at: **941- 773-7860**. Group meetings are held every Monday from 7:00 to 8:15 P.M. at:

Palma Sola Community Church
8604 - 9TH Avenue N.W. † Bradenton, FL 34209
Group Meeting Monday from 7:00 to 8:15 P.M.

Overcomers Philosophy: We provide Overcomers support groups to guide individuals with life-dominating problems on a path that will lead them to a life of fulfillment. We operate differently from traditional recovery programs by placing emphasis on regeneration. We define regeneration as a process possible through God, in which individuals are “made new” in the spirit. We recognize three levels of recovery – detoxification, rehabilitation, and regeneration. This can be better correlated respectively as the body, soul, and spirit of a person.

Overcomer's Handbook: We also instruct using the Overcomer's Handbook, a Christ-centered recovery guide that describes and promotes 12 Biblical life Goals. These along with many other proven methods result in freedom from addictions and other life-dominating problems. Overcomers In Christ has laid out the path in which anyone can fight and win the spiritual battle for their own soul. The 12 Goals found within the Overcomer's Handbook have been proven to work in The Solid Rock Road To Recovery for the last four decades.

Dealing With Feelings: The Dealing with Feelings communication card game is an invaluable tool that bridges communication gaps and builds understanding. As players get in touch with the feelings of others, relationships begin to mend from past hurts. People learn to accept and to respect one another's feelings. Dealing with Feelings releases tension by providing an outlet for pent-up emotions.



Because every card relates to feelings, this unique game promotes remarkable openness. The questions stimulate player interaction and in-depth conversation. It is exceptionally easy-to-play as there are no wrong answers.

Family Recovery Track: Chemical addiction starts with one person but eventually involves every member of the family. Statistics show that every addict negatively affects at least 4 to 6 other people. We offer this program to help family members in our community faced with the issues of substance abuse and many other life-dominating problems. The Overcomers support group classes help families to deal effectively with problems of anger, rejection, abandonment, and many other deep hurts that come along with the fight against chemical addiction. By providing education and training, the family members receive guidance on how to stop enabling the one battling chemical dependencies. Topics discussed are co-dependency, detachment, forgiveness, wholeness, and reconciliation.

Regeneration Track: This program deals specifically with the chemically addicted and involves an extensive three-part curriculum consisting of Regeneration, Inner Healing, and Discipleship. The Regeneration track runs simultaneously alongside the Family Recovery track to allow maximum results for the chemically dependent person and their family members. Biblical instruction, classroom teaching, and small groups are methods used to explore the stages of chemical dependency as well as what commitments are necessary on the road to recovery. It includes scientific information on chemical dependency as well as insights into the damage done to one's thinking processes. The lessons are also designed to expose the denial and defense mechanisms that are so prevalent in the addict's life.

Inner Healing: Lessons in this phase teach that forgiveness is the key to spiritual maturity and that the Cross is the focal point for all forgiveness. Emotional wounds are often carried throughout a person's life. Trying to forget the past and not taking steps to allow those wounds to heal will allow them to fester. We focus on learning how to deal with old hurts and emotional wounds properly so that you can move forward and have a fulfilling life without affecting new relationships.

Discipleship: In this phase the participant learns to take his/her focus off their addiction and who they used to be and learns to walk in the truth of who God says he/she is. The lessons that are taught in small support groups are meant to challenge faulty belief systems about God and their own personal relationship with Him, others and themselves.

Truth About Detoxification and Rehabilitation: Detox deals with restoring the physical body to health; rehabilitation includes restoring one's soul (mind, will, and emotions) to health. Stopping at the rehabilitation stage only returns one to their former condition, of distorted thinking. A renewing of the mind's thinking is needed! This is where the concept and importance of regeneration is crucial in recovery. Regeneration allows the chemically

dependent person to be inwardly transformed by renewing the mind and the spirit, as opposed to teaching behavioral modification, an outward temporary change. The regeneration process allows the power of Jesus Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit to break the vicious cycle of addiction. Although we acknowledge a variety of contributing factors to addiction, we place emphasis on personal responsibility and moral choice. We address root issues and teach from a Biblical perspective.

Overcomers support groups are also utilized as an excellent aftercare recovery program for any individual transitioning from a long-term residential treatment facility to help ensure one's continual sobriety in preventing relapse. The Overcomer's Handbook contains practical, Christ-centered help for every area of life: spiritual, physical, mental, emotional and social.

The Overcomers Family Recovery Process

In this session we learn how we can utilize the "Bombshell" and the "Serenity Prayer" to overcome many of life-challenges. The Overcomers In Christ Family Recovery Process can be learned at an early age. In the process of overcoming life-dominating challenges, each family member will find the love, acceptance, nurture, attention and training he or she needs to live a whole, Christ-centered, abundant, healthy life with friends, family and others.

Family OIC Recovery Process Includes Six Simple Terms:

1. **DETACHMENT:** "For in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.'" (Acts 17:28)
2. **BOMBSHELL / SERENITY PRAYER:** *"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus the Lord."* (Philippians 4: 6,7)
3. **SELF-EXAMINATION / DAILY MORAL INVENTORY:** *"Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me. Lead me in the everlasting way."* (Psalm 139: 23, 24)
4. **FORGIVENESS:** *"And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as God, in Christ, also has forgiven you."* (Ephesians 4: 32)
5. **WHOLENESS:** *"Now may the God of peace sanctify you entirely. May your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."* (1 Thessalonians. 5: 23)
6. **RECONCILIATION:** *"For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."* (Romans 5:10)

For many whose lives have become shackled to others who have abusive behavioral problems, which may include chemical dependency, the skill of detachment can mean a new life beginning. The word detachment does not mean separation or divorce, but, rather, living a life not centered on the dysfunction of another person. Detachment restores people to healthy thinking. It frees them to become responsible for themselves, instead of feeling responsible for the compulsive, abusiveness of others. They become able to respond more fully to their own emotional and physical needs. The detachment skill comes neither easily nor quickly.

We will take a close look at what each of these terms means and how we can begin to apply them to our specific life-dominating challenges, right now!

The Bombshell Theory and The Serenity Prayer

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6,7)

The Bombshell

"The Bombshell" is an extremely important component of the Family Recovery Process. Once you begin to work out this simple theory in your life, its effectiveness will dramatically change your life. It will "blow your mind!" If we will pause to look back and measure the time, energy and resources we have spent trying to change another person, we will have to admit that what we have done has NOT worked.

1. I CANNOT CHANGE ANOTHER PERSON BY DIRECT ACTION, ONLY GOD CAN DO THAT.

When the Bombshell Theory becomes a reality and sinks into our minds, our familiar thought patterns are challenged. As we seriously apply the truths in the Bombshell Theory to our own lives, we immediately begin to experience a healthier and more intimate relationship with God, others and ourselves. This produces a much less stressful relationship with the significant others in our lives who have life-dominating problems.

The emotional, spiritual and physical aspects of our lives have suffered greatly. When we realize that we can neither change nor control someone else by direct action, we take our first step out of co-dependency. Codependency involves sacrificing one's personal needs to try to meet the needs of others. People who are codependent have an extreme life focus outside of themselves. A person with codependency often tries to save others from themselves. They may get hurt trying to "cure" a loved one's abusive, life-destroying behaviors. As responsible, conscientious family members, we have been consumed with trying to fix or change the problems of another, including an addict. The majority of our mental energy has been placed on the sickest, most emotionally fragile family member.

We have hoped to cure them of their life-destroying problems. We have spent many hours, have exhausted our resources and have drained our mental energy -- hoping to change the lifestyle of our loved one. Not only did our best efforts fail to change them, but also, they made us frustrated and sick. Our thoughts and actions revolve around other people, such as spouses or relatives.

2. I CAN BE CHANGED BY THE POWER OF GOD'S GRACE.

When I finally come to the conclusion that I cannot change the loved one or addict, I am free to work on myself, the one person I can change with the power of God's Grace.

I need seriously to consider taking my mind off of the dysfunctional problems of others and to examine my own responsibilities. I am responsible for my reactions to others. In the past, I was concerned only with attempting to control the life-destroying problems of others.

When our focus in life switches from controlling others to ourselves, we begin to see the character defects within ourselves, all of which God wants to change. At this point, we can begin to admit our own problems and, through prayer, ask God to help us overcome them.

3. OTHERS HAVE A TENDENCY TOWARD BEING CHANGED IN REACTION TO MY CHANGE.

Over the years the reactions of the co-dependent have become as predictable as the actions of the self-centered loved one. The reaction of the co-dependent in the past was to try to rescue the loved one or to clean up his/her messes, to avoid shame and embarrassment of the family. The co-dependent has treated the loved one as a child, rather than as an adult.

When co-dependents make positive, healthy changes in their own lives, their reactions to their loved ones also will change. They will respond much differently to the loved one's old dysfunctional patterns of reaction. They will begin to let the loved one be responsible for himself/herself. That means that they will have to clean up their own messes and face the responsibility for their own problems. This new response, in which the loved ones are allowed to face the reality of their condition, is absolutely necessary for the recovery of both the loved one and the whole family.

Without the continuous enabling of the co-dependent, the loved ones find themselves in a unique situation. They have no one to take care of them. They have no one to clean up their messes, nor to blame for their problems. Nearly all self-centered, controlling individuals, which also includes chemically dependent people, must experience this before they will seek help.

THE SERENITY PRAYER

1. GOD, GRANT ME THE SERENITY TO ACCEPT THE THINGS I CANNOT CHANGE.

As one sees a loved one slowly deteriorating under the weight of self-centeredness and other life-destroying problems, the co-dependent must rely upon a relationship with God, to avoid insanity or nervous breakdown. When we ask God for serenity, we are asking for the peace of God that passes all understanding. Only God can give the inner peace that will enable us to accept the things that are happening to a loved one in our family. Only God can enable us to recognize that these things are beyond our control, but that they are not beyond God's control!

Our ability to accept these things that we cannot change does not come from our own human strength. It comes from God's gift of serenity that He has given to us. This gift of peace will allow us to accept and to overcome any trial in our lives. Our reliance upon God is the major step in our personal recovery process. Remember the **3-C's**: We did not **CAUSE** the problem. We cannot **CURE** the problem. We cannot **CONTROL** the problem!!!

2. THE COURAGE TO CHANGE THE THINGS THAT I CAN.

In the typical dysfunctional home, everybody is trying to change everybody else. This aspect of the Serenity Prayer forces us to focus on the things for which we are responsible and, with God's grace/help, to make the necessary change.

At the top of the list, we find OURSELVES! We naturally fear any change; however, we especially fear changing OURSELVES. As we seek God, He will reveal certain changes that we need to make in order to move out of our co-dependent lifestyle. These are positive changes in our attitudes, our motives and our actions. When we make those changes, they will bring healthy feelings, with security and freedom into our lives and into the lives of the rest of our family and loved ones.

To begin to work at making the necessary changes, we must ask God for the courage to step out in faith and to trust Him with our own lives, as well as with the lives of our families.

Let us consider the example of the co-dependent who has functioned for many years, very convinced that he or she must continue to care for a dysfunctional person. In meeting that person's every demand, the co-dependent was fulfilling duties as a faithful friend. The reasoning was that if that codependent did not take responsibility for that person's life-destroying problems every need, he/she might die.

This type of destructive, dysfunctional fear and false responsibility has ingrained itself in the co-dependent. The question in one's mind is, "**If I change, what will happen to him?**" This is where the co-dependent needs courage and strength to begin a new lifestyle.

It is God who gives us the courage to change the things we can with His power. We look to God for the courage to take new steps in our lives. As we begin this process, we slowly come to the realization that God is faithful. He will not ask us to do things with which He is not willing to help.

3. AND THE WISDOM TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE.

God's Word tells us, in James 1:5, *"But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all mankind generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him."* There is no visible line between helping and enabling. That makes it hard to define what our response should be. This is why we need God's wisdom from His Word, the power of the Holy Spirit and the Body of Christ, (Overcomers In Christ.) Understanding the distinction between what can or cannot be changed can make the difference between life and death for the loved one and his/her family.