

A MESSAGE OF HOPE, comfort and freedom in Jesus Christ

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“Overcoming” by Kyle Murphy

My wife and I recently attended the 43rd National Jail and Prison Ministry workshop hosted by NewLife Behavior Ministries. The theme this year was “More than Conquerors” and the verse that they chose (and also part of our quarterly scripture focus) was Romans 8:37. This fits well with the topic that God placed on my heart to share with you, and that is, “Overcoming.” For those who know me well, they are aware that near and dear to my heart and something that I am very passionate about is addiction recovery – or overcoming addiction.

This passion for helping others overcome addiction is largely what prompted my wife and I to start Message of Hope 4+ years ago. As someone in recovery, and as part of putting the Twelve Steps to work in my own Christian walk, I was prompted by the Holy Spirit to put Step Twelve into action. Step Twelve is about carrying the message to others.

For those who are uncomfortable with or unaware of what the Twelve Steps are about, let me take a moment to explain. The Twelve Steps are a modern-day application of the teachings of Jesus Christ. For example, Step Twelve is, more

or less, a rephrasing of what Jesus told the disciples in Mark 16:15 and what we refer to as the Great Commission. The main difference between the two is in Step Twelve we are carrying the message to those who struggle with the same addiction as we do as opposed to all creation.

When we founded Message of Hope we were very particular about the name we chose – A Message of Hope, Comfort and Freedom in Jesus Christ. This is centered on a few New Testament passages. Hebrews 6:19 discusses that hope is an anchor for the soul. 2nd Corinthians 1:3-4 tells about how we are to comfort others in the same way God has comforted us. In addition to the verses regarding hope and comfort, there are numerous New Testament passages in which we are told about the freedom that is found in Jesus Christ.

Through the hope, comfort and freedom I have found in Jesus Christ I have been able to overcome addiction in my own life. He has allowed me to be more than a conqueror. In Jesus Christ I have not only overcome my addictions but I now have peace, joy

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Quarterly Scripture Focus:

Romans 8:37-39

“No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

The
JAMES GROUP
 A Christ-centered Twelve Step Program

Testimonies from current and former members of The James Group

“James Group has enabled me to identify, focus on and work through specific areas of sin in my life. It has also caused me to take steps that have begun the healing process in some of my relationships. I believe the program has drawn me closer to God and to my fellow believers who participate in the program with me. We have had moments of amazing unity as we watch men make themselves vulnerable in sharing their deepest struggles and hurts. I have participated in many “programs” during the years of my incarceration but none of them have allowed me to deal with my past hurts, my current struggles and my future hopes, as successfully as James Group has. I thank God for James Group.”

Hunter T., current member and facilitator (Carson City)

“The James Group has provided me with the direction that I so badly needed. I drifted away from the Lord like a magnet to the world. Through this class’s direction, support of my brothers and the Lord, I now have my priorities back on track and am living for the Lord, not myself.”

Mark E., current member (Macomb)

“This class has done so much for me, it has turned my life in a direction that has taken me out of the darkness. For many years I walked in the dark but it always felt like someone had my hand and when I made it to The James Group I then knew who had my hand, it was our Lord Jesus Christ. I once heard someone say that they were in the dark so long that when they made it to the light it hurt their eyes, and that is how I felt. But The James Group has showed me so many things like compassion, humility, but what it has showed me that really stands out is how to be a servant of God.”

Earl W., former member

“I learned a lot in James Group. I’ve been in James Group for a year and a half. I have learned that God is with us all the time. To me James Group is the best and I also learned that everyone in James Group helps everyone else. I really like going each week.”

Kevin O., current member (Macomb)

“James Group is my spiritual espresso. For me James Group is where Narcotics Anonymous “NA” meets Christ, the steps become infused with God and Scripture. Through years of being involved in NA I never completed the 12 Steps. The James Group 12 Step workbook connects Christ to the steps using scripture in a way my soul desperately needed. Finally working the steps, along with the weekly fellowship with men who have similar experiences, has changed my life. Today I am not as self-centered as I used to be and the fruits of the Spirit are displayed more in my life than ever before. Thank God for the ‘Biblically-based’ 12 Steps that James Group has provided.”

Tore P., current member and facilitator (Macomb)

“In working the steps I have opened up more, knowing God has forgiven me of my sins. We need more programs like this where we learn God loves us no matter what. I give all the glory to God for the changes He has made in my life and the lives of the men taking this class.”

Danny E., former member

“I have done the James Group now for the 2nd time through and for me I even have learned a lot more about myself and how if I allow Jesus Christ to guide me I can live a clean and sober life and live a life pleasing to the Lord. This program has helped me face the real me of my past that I don’t like at all and has helped me to honestly make an amends list and to really start making the amends that needed to be made to let go of the past and to allow God to guide me into my future which is pleasing to Him. It has been hard at times to be honest with myself of how much damage I have caused to the ones I loved the most and it took God’s timing to get me ready to make the amends to my family whom I hurt the most. But I find after following the Holy Spirit’s direction in doing so that I am more at peace with myself and so very grateful for the James Group here at Carson City Correctional Facility.”

Robert C., current member (Carson City)

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and purpose in my life and I have been made complete. It is the goal of Message of Hope to help as many others as possible find this same fulfillment.

The first way we work toward this goal and help others in overcoming sin and addiction in their lives is through The James Group. The James Group is a Christ-centered Twelve Step program devoted to helping its members break the cycle of addiction in their lives. We work with anyone with any type of addiction. We desire for all members of The James Group to be more than conquerors.

The second way we help others in overcoming sin and addiction in their lives is through use of courses published by NewLife Behavior Ministries (NLB). These courses are designed to change our way of thinking in order to change our way of living. Again, by applying the truths found in the Bible and the NLB courses we are able to help others become more than conquerors. This concept of being more than conquerors that Paul discusses in Romans is pretty awesome. A conqueror is defined as someone who overcomes; is victorious; takes control of; is successful. Those who are in Jesus Christ are not just conquerors, we are MORE THAN conquerors. We are OVERWHELMINGLY victorious. We don't stop with simply overcoming addiction, or taking control of sinful desires, or being successful in our Christian walk. We do all these things, in increasing measure, and then we help others to do the same. We do all these things with the confidence, strength and power of Jesus Christ.

Whatever issue you are facing, know that in Jesus Christ, you will overcome the obstacle! And rest assured, whatever it is that comes against us, "neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."



A special THANK YOU!

We are excited to announce that since the publication of our last newsletter, in which we asked for your help with the correspondence course component of the ministry, we have added three instructors for our NLB correspondence courses!

We would like to express our gratitude and thanks to **Bob**, **Heather** and **Dave** for joining with us! Their efforts have already helped us tremendously in meeting the needs of those who desire to grow in their relationships with God. Thank you as well to those who have been diligently serving with us in this aspect of the ministry. Jen, Dan and Kim have been faithfully assisting us and sharing the love of Jesus Christ with our friends inside for quite some time now. We are so thankful that God has allowed us the opportunity to share the gospel with others and grateful to all those who have joined with us in this!

Please keep these awesome brothers and sisters in your prayers.

One Day With God camps

From time to time we volunteer for Forgiven Ministry at their "One Day With God" camps. They host these camps at facilities in Michigan, Texas, North Carolina, South Carolina, Louisiana and Tennessee.

The ODWG camps began with a vision of one day inside the prison walls where parent and child could reconcile with one another and spend time together with God-anointed mentors working beside them. These camps provide an opportunity for both parent and child to experience the love of God and find forgiveness and reconciliation.

It is truly amazing to spend time at the prison in such a relaxed, fun-filled and enjoyable environment. There are plenty of opportunities to serve with this awesome ministry both inside and outside of a prison facility. More information can be found on our website under the "Programs" section, including news coverage (live footage) from previous camps!

MESSAGE OF HOPE

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Website address:

www.messageofhope.org

Interested in receiving our
quarterly newsletter by mail
or through email?

Send your request to:
murphy_k@live.com

Message of Hope weekly schedule

The James Group: Wednesday evenings from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

@ Macomb Correctional Facility, New Haven, Michigan

The James Group: Friday evenings from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

@ Macomb County Jail, Mount Clemens, Michigan



Message of Hope:

facebook.com/messageofhopejailandprisonministry

Voices for Christ:

facebook.com/behindthenarrowwindows