
“Spiritual Warfare 9: Ways To Resist The Devil”

Tonight we're concluding our series on Spiritual Warfare and we're going to examine the subject of resisting the devil and how we do that. Let me begin by saying that I realize that not all of our problems, difficulties, and trials come from Satan and his demonic horde. Sometimes those testings come as a result of our sin-cursed world. Other times they come from our mistakes or errors in judgment. But at the same time I also acknowledge that there are other occasions when we're under attack.

C.S. Lewis wrote a book called the "Screwtape Letters" and it has a unique twist. In the book the devil is called the "high command," the human beings are the "patients," and God is referred to as "the enemy." What the book is, is a demon (Uncle Screwtape) writing to his nephew (Wormwood) on how to tempt this Christian. In letter #7 he writes this ...

"Our policy for the moment is to conceal ourselves. I do not think you will have much difficulty keeping the patient in the dark. The fact that 'devils' are predominantly comic book figures in the modern imagination will help you. If any faint suspicion of your existence begins to arise in his mind, suggest to him of something in red tights and persuade him that since he cannot believe in that he therefore cannot believe in you."

Satan would like us to think that he is a comic figure dressed in red tights and wearing horns and carrying a pitchfork. He would love for us to think that he doesn't exist at all. But the fact of the matter is that he wants to trap you and devour you. He wants to do you in!

Read: I Peter 5:8

"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."

Tonight I want to give you seven ways to resist the devil. Seven things that will help you keep your faith intact when it's under attack. Seven things to help you stand firm ...

I. We Resist The Devil By Walking In Repentance

Read: Matthew 4:17

"From that time on Jesus began to preach, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.'"

Repentance has to do with our personal response to anything that you and I might have to deal with. You and I will never come to a trial or difficulty where if we stop and think about it we're made aware of some shortcoming in our life. At that point we're aware of areas where we haven't done what we should have done. Maybe we haven't been praying like we should or reading the Bible like we know we should. (e.g. financial crisis & you didn't tithe)

Sometimes we can feel like we don't have the right approach to God. You feel somewhat disqualified and perhaps condemned. Certainly you feel overwhelmed.

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I want you to understand something tonight ... even if you are experiencing the discipline of God in your life, and that may or may not be the case, I want you to know that God never brings anything back to our minds to condemn us. He allows those times to come our way so that the Holy Spirit may bring conviction so that we can confess, repent, and have the matter cleared up so we can move forward in the power that is supposed to be characteristic of a child of God.

Repentance allows the power of God to move in our lives. If we're going to resist the devil then we must walk in an attitude of repentance. We keep the channel open between us and God when we keep our account short.

Reflection: Is there an area of your life over which you need to repent?

II. We Resist The Devil By Walking In Forgiveness

The devil has all kinds of methods, schemes, and traps but one of the most frequent is that he likes to trap people in unforgiveness. He wants to trap us in bitterness and conversations of slander.

Read: II Corinthians 2:10,11

"If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And what I have forgiven — if there was anything to forgive — I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes."

We cannot effectively resist the devil when there is unforgiveness in our hearts. What happens is that there is a two-fold effect. On the one hand they can't resist the devil and on the other hand they can't experience the freedom of God's forgiveness in their own life.

Read: Matthew 6:14,15

"For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."

Read: Ephesians 4:26,27

"In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold."

Some of you here tonight are struggling with unforgiveness and it is causing you to be attacked by the enemy. You've become bitter. I'm not saying you're not justified in your anger, hurt, or disappointment. But I am saying that the Lord does not give us the luxury or the license to harbor unforgiveness in our hearts.

Read: Colossians 3:13

"Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."

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Reflection: Is there unforgiveness in your heart?

III. We Resist The Devil Through Praise

Many times we only praise God when things are going well. We're thankful so much of the time when things are quiet and we're feeling blessed. However, praise is not just designed to be reactive. It's meant to be proactive as well! It's something you should do before you pray and before the trials come.

Read: Psalm 149:5-9

"Let the saints rejoice in this honor and sing for joy on their beds. May the praise of God be in their mouths and a double-edged sword in their hands, to inflict vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples, to bind their kings with fetters, their nobles with shackles of iron, to carry out the sentence written against them."

What I think this is saying to us, without getting too mystical, is that through praise the fortresses of the enemy are torn down. Now you know that I'm not one that's big on binding and loosing but at the same time I know that when you and I praise God there are things that happen in the supernatural realm.

Read: Proverbs 12:18

"Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing."

We all know that the tongue is very powerful. We've all been on the receiving end of slashing and cutting remarks of someone's words. It hurts our hearts. In the same way there is nothing that so affronts the enemy than when you and I praise the Lord. Praise is more than superficial expression and being exuberant. When you and I praise God, it sends the enemy packing in that area of our life. When we walk in a mindset and in an attitude of praise then the enemy is repelled because God inhabits the praises of his people.

Read: Psalm 22:3

"Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One; you are the praise of Israel."

Read: Joshua 6:5,10,15-16, 20

When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have all the people give a loud **shout**; then the wall of the city will collapse and the people will go up, every man straight in." Josh. 6:5

But Joshua had commanded the people, "Do not give a war cry, do not raise your voices, do not say a word until the day I tell you to **shout**. Then **shout!**" Josh. 6:10

On the seventh day, they got up at daybreak and marched around the city seven times in the same manner, except that on that day they circled the city seven times. The seventh time around, when the priests sounded the trumpet blast, Joshua commanded the people, "**Shout!** For the LORD has given you the city!" Josh. 6:15-16

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When the trumpets sounded, the people **shouted**, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the people gave a loud **shout**, the wall collapsed; so every man charged straight in, and they took the city. Josh. 6:20

That word "shout" is used 9 times in the Psalms and refers to exuberant praise to the Lord. It has to do with praise. When did the walls come down? The wall came down AFTER the people shouted!

Read: Psalm 47:1

"Clap your hands, all you nations; **shout** to God with cries of joy."

Read: Psalm 66:1

"**Shout** with joy to God, all the earth!"

Read: Psalm 81:1

"Sing for joy to God our strength; **shout** aloud to the God of Jacob!"

Read: Psalm 95:1

"Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us **shout** aloud to the Rock of our salvation."

Read: Psalm 98:4-6

"**Shout** for joy to the LORD, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music; make music to the LORD with the harp, with the harp and the sound of singing, with trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn — **shout** for joy before the LORD, the King."

We must resist the devil by shouting out to the Lord. He will give us the victory. That is the way it works. Satan was trying to stop the work that Paul and Silas were doing in Philippi. He had come directly against the apostles and they were in prison as a result. How did they respond? When did the doors open? Praise will help you and I resist the power of the enemy in our life.

Read: Acts 16:25

"About midnight Paul and Silas were **praying and singing hymns** to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose."

Reflection: Are you maintaining an attitude of praise? (*Praise The Lord!*)

IV. We Resist The Devil By Holding On To The Word Of God

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Read: Psalm 149:6

"May the praise of God be in their mouths and a double-edged sword in their hands ..."

It is through the Word of God that you and I are able to stand firm against the enemy. We've seen that in our study of the armor in Ephesians 6.

Read: I Timothy 1:18

"Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight, holding on to faith and a good conscience."

How do we hold on to our faith? By holding on to God's Word. It is truth and will guide us into all that God has planned for you and I. It protects us from the enemy's lies and half-truths. How do we dispel darkness? If I turned off the lights tonight and we all sat in darkness we could shout at it, we could bind it and loose it, or we could turn on the lights. The Word of God is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path!

Read: Acts:5:42

"Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ."

Read: Acts 8:4

"Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went."

The Word of God is backed by the power of the Holy Spirit and it is the light of Jesus Christ - the Gospel - that bring life into our lives and the lives of those around us.

Reflection: Are you depending on the Word of God?

V. We Resist The Devil By Submitting To God

Read: James 4:7

"Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

Submission means "to take rank under." Before you resist the devil you must submit to God. That word means that we come under the authority of God. We have to decide who is the authority in our life. We can't claim Christianity when it's convenient and then live a sinful lifestyle the rest of the time. Where is your area of weakness (cheating, lying, adultery)? When you and I challenge God's authority in our lives we step out of His protection. If you want to know the protection of God you must live under His authority!

Illustration: Joshua & Living Under My Authority

Reflection: Who is in charge of your life?

VI. We Resist The Devil By Praying In The Spirit

Read: Ephesians 6:10-14a,18

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then ... And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

Reflection: Are you actively seeking the Infilling Of The Holy Spirit? Are you actively coming to God in prayer?

VII. We Resist The Devil By Being Alert

Read: I Peter 5:8,9

"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith ..."

We need to be alert. I'm not talking about looking for a demon under every bush but we must be ready to the schemes of the devil. We need to be sensitive in our spirits. We need to ask the Lord, "Is this something in my life that the enemy is at work in?" Now is not the time to fall asleep. We must stand firm in our faith and to do that we need to be attentive.

Reflection: Are you aware of the enemy's schemes against you?

I close with this little illustration ... it reminds me of the problem several sheep ranchers had up in the Montana area. They were losing sheep right and left. One lady had lost a sheep or a lamb every week. They were losing large numbers to the coyotes. They were coming in and destroying the flock. They had tried electric fences, odors, traps, and they had even let people come in to try and hunt them down. Yet they were still unable to get rid of the coyotes in an effective manner. Then someone got the idea to put lamas out in the pastures with the sheep. The reason why they did that is because lamas have a longer neck than sheep and they're much more alert. And so when the lama would sense something he was alert to that and he would walk toward it and would deal with it. And the coyotes were such cowards they couldn't handle that and they'd run away. God wants us to be alert. I'm not saying that the devil is a coward. But I am saying that there are certain things that when we do them - it sends him packing. When you submit to God, pray in the Spirit, when you read the Word, when you praise Him, when you walk in forgiveness and repentance and when you're alert in these things - then the enemy flees! My prayer has been for these past ten weeks has been that you would be able to resist the devil and stand firm. I'd like to pray again for you all one last time tonight ... "I need power to resist the enemy."

Next Week: Angels & Demons