

How to Resist the Devil

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Scriptures (CEV)

James 4:7, "Surrender to God! Resist the devil, and he will run from you."

1 Peter 5:8-9, "Be on your guard and stay awake. Your enemy, the devil, is like a roaring lion, sneaking around to find someone to attack. But you must resist the devil and stay strong in your faith. You know that all over the world the Lord's followers are suffering just as you are."

Introduction

Jesus came to us with a mission. In the KJV, Luke 2:49 reads, "*And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?*" Jesus, the Son of God, came to us to fulfil God's plan of saving the lost.

Satan could not tempt Him; the grave could not keep Him. Revelation 1:18 reminds us, "*...I died, but now I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys to death and the world of the dead.*"

Satan is real. He is a real, personal being. He is also the source of all unbelief and every kind of moral and spiritual evil in the world. He is called by many names in the Bible: Satan (meaning "adversary"), the devil, Lucifer, the serpent, the god of this world, the evil one and others.

Satan is an influence on the ideals, opinions, goals, hopes and views of many people. He also influences the world's philosophies, education, and commerce. The thoughts, ideas, theories of false religions are under his control and have come forth from his lies and deceptions.

If you proclaim the Gospel, preach the Word, set out to make disciples, hold to a God-honouring Christian marriage etc., Satan and his henchmen will oppose and attack.

So yes, you will be attacked spiritually, which can manifest spiritually, emotionally, and physically.

Perhaps, to clarify, this message is not about how to tell when you are under attack, but how to resist so that the devil and his henchmen will flee. I will also touch on the authority of the believer in these things.

Body

James 4:7, "*Surrender to God! Resist the devil, and he will run from you*" brings 2 things to us:

1. A pattern for Christian life.
2. 2 things to do to stand in Jesus' victory over the devil.

A Pattern for Christian Life

The key to the pattern is simple, to submit to God. That means as you live this Christian life, you place God first, not self, you glorify God, not self, the purposes of God are more important than your purposes, the mission of God is your mission, the will of God, not yours is what you seek and follow, you live out your heavenly citizenship before your earthly one and so on.

Let's look at things from a different angle. The opposite of surrender is to defy and resist. Logically, if you are defying God and resisting God, you will find yourself in a very dangerous place, you will be preyed upon by Satan who "*is like a roaring lion, sneaking around to find someone to attack.*" If you are defying God and resisting God, you are organising your own trouble. You can't have it both ways, meaning you cannot defy and resist God, but at the same time lay claim to His protection over and blessing of what you are doing as you resist Him.

Let's also remind ourselves that the opposite of submission is pride. The Bible says that God, not Satan will oppose the proud. Let's read the latter half of James 4:6, "*...the Scriptures say, "God opposes everyone who is proud, but he is kind to everyone who is humble."* The NIV speaks of showing favour to the humble. The KJV speaks of giving grace to the humble.

Brothers and sisters, understand this:

- Your defiance and resisting God – the opposite of surrendering to God – will clear the path for Satan to attack, steal, and destroy.

- Your pride – the opposite of humility – will determine whether God will oppose you or show you grace.

And don't confuse God's opposition with a spiritual attack from Satan. Make sure that you surrender to God, stand before God in humility and you will never confuse the two.

2 Things to Do to Stand in Jesus' Victory over the Devil

We have already touched on this, but it's so important, let's once again highlight it:

1. Surrender to God.
2. Resist the devil.

You cannot resist the devil while standing in defiance of God; you cannot resist the devil while you are resisting God. The devil, who is a formidable rival, will not flee while you are defying God.

A disobedient or un-submissive believer will not see victory. Quite the opposite – he who came to steal and destroy; he who like a roaring lion, sneaking around to find someone to attack, will attack.

How to Resist the Devil

Satan has no true power over believers in Christ. He cannot force us to sin, he cannot possess us, and he knows that we will ultimately have victory over him because we are in Jesus who is already victorious over Satan.

To resist means to withstand, struggle against, or oppose in some manner. We do this, while in submission and complete surrender to God. Satan is going to tempt; he is going to invite you to sin; he is going to try and get your attention off Jesus.

As Christians, one consequence of our being born again is the awareness of the reality and presence of evil. When we struggle to stand firm in our faith, we can know that Satan and his henchmen are up to something and that something is not simply human ideas and influences, but real forces that come from the powers of darkness. According to Ephesians 6:12, we know that we are not fighting against humans, but against the forces, authorities and rulers of darkness and powers in the spiritual world.

Resisting can also be offensive. The only offensive weapon in the armour of God is the sword of the Spirit. The Word of God is the most effective – the only – way to expose Satan's lies and temptations. The Word of God is the most effective way to strive against and defeat them.

When Jesus was tempted, He overcame Satan and resisted temptation by quoting (rightly standing on) Scripture!

The Word of God is our best defence against Satan's temptations, and the better we know His Word, the easier it will be to stand in victory over our daily struggles. The psalmist, in chapter 119:11, tells us, "*I treasure your word above all else; it keeps me from sinning against you.*" (Psalm 119:11). Some translations speak of hiding His Word in your heart – it should be at your very core – the centre of your being!

I know that some will disagree and maybe become angry with me, but there is no biblical basis for Christians to rebuke the devil. Allow me a few sentences...there are some who argue that we should be continually rebuking the devil. I argue that our focus should always be on following Jesus, surrendering, and submitting to God and from this position, use our authority to resist the devil.

We have no authority over Satan in ourselves. We did not defeat Satan. God the Son, Jesus did. God has all authority, and He fights on our behalf. Even the angel Michael – the chief angel – did not rebuke the devil; he simply said, "*The Lord rebuke you.*" Zechariah 3:2 – clearly tells us that it is the Lord who rebukes Satan, "*The LORD said to Satan, 'The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you...'*" When Satan and his henchmen attack, we appeal to Jesus. Jesus has the victory, and we are in Jesus.

I am mindful that God has given us His full armour to stand against evil. Do not live this life un-armoured.

Brothers and sisters, also use your common sense. Don't place yourself in situations that open you to temptation or expose your weaknesses. We don't need to make things more difficult than they already are. Even though the Holy Spirit resides in our hearts, our flesh can be very weak at times. When we know something is or can be sinful, Paul warns us to flee from it. Run away, but not randomly. Flee from the temptation to your position of surrender and submission to God!

Romans 13:14 says, *"Let the Lord Jesus Christ be as near to you as the clothes you wear. Then you won't try to satisfy your selfish desires."* Our selfish desires are quite capable of allowing us to prepare to sin. Making provision for the flesh is the opposite of fleeing temptation. We make provision for our flesh when we accommodate the things that lead to sin.

Conclusion

Another way to help us resist temptation is to remember what Jesus Christ did for us on the cross. He never sinned; He was sinless and yet, He willingly endured the torture of the cross for us while we were still sinners. Every sin we've ever committed or will commit, played a part in nailing our Saviour to the cross. How we respond to Satan's temptations is an indicator as to just how much the love of Jesus Christ occupies our hearts.

We are armed with God's Spirit and the truth of His Word, and we are dressed in His armour. We are therefore well equipped to overcome Satan's attacks and temptations. No matter what trials and temptations come our way, God's Word and Spirit are infinitely more powerful than any of Satan's schemes. When we walk with the Spirit, we can look at temptations as opportunities for us to show God that He is indeed the Master of our lives.

Finally, to gain victory in spiritual matters, we must keep a clear conscience and have manage over our thoughts. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 reads, *"We live in this world, but we don't act like its people or fight our battles with the weapons of this world. Instead, we use God's power that can destroy fortresses. We destroy arguments and every bit of pride that keeps anyone from knowing God. We capture people's thoughts and make them obey Christ."*

Brothers and sisters, surrender and submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee. And never, ever stop studying His Word.

Amen.