

RESIST THE DEVIL

1 PETER 5:8, 9 & JAMES 4:7

Text: James 4:7

(James 4:7) "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

Introduction:

Have you ever known a young person who was brought up in church, attended a Christian school, lived a separated, dedicated life, whose parents had family devotions every night, and yet when he was older became rebellious, yielded to temptation, and went into sin?

I have seen it to many times. I have heard parents say, "Where did we go wrong? We never missed Sunday school. We never missed a preaching service. We tithed. Our child saw us read the Bible and pray. Now they seem to have no interest in spiritual things. How do you explain that?"

My answer to them is, "You taught them about God; you taught them about the Bible; you taught them about prayer, but you didn't teach them about their enemy."

Most battles are lost because the enemy is either unknown or underestimated.

The Bible warns in 1 Peter 5:8, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:"

I have known preachers who were well respected, served God faithfully, won souls, and now they are out of the ministry. What happened? They didn't know their enemy.

In most cases these Christians read the Bible, prayed and attended church; but they knew nothing about resisting the Devil. The promise in James 4:7, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you," is just as true as John 3:16.

1. The Enemy We Face

A. We have an Enemy named Satan who is just as real as God Himself.

Illustration:

Boxer getting beat and his trainer telling him that the enemy hasn't laid a glove on him, and he says to his trainer, well then keep an eye on the referee, because someone is beating the devil out of me.

1. The Devil is successful when he makes us think he doesn't exist.

B. The enemy is powerful, but he is not omnipotent.

1. Satan has power to take thought out of our mind.

(Matthew 13:19) "When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side."

Illustration:

Why is it that we have no problem remembering beer or cigarette jingles, but we have difficulty memorizing Scripture? The problem is, no one is trying to take the beer jingles out, but there is one trying to take the Bible verses out as fast as the seed is sown. We remember things that we shouldn't and forget things that we should remember.

2. Satan has power to put thoughts into our mind.

(Acts 5:1-3) "But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, {2} And kept back

part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it, at the apostles' feet. {3} But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?"

a. The word heart means the mind
the center of man.

(Proverbs 23:7) "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee."

C. The enemy is subtle

1. We have in our mind that the Devil is some sort of ugly creature that could be spotted for miles away, but that is not true at all.

(Genesis 3:1) "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"

(2 Corinthians 11:14) "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light."

2. The Exhortation to Fight

(James 4:7) "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

The word "resist" literally means to "fight back."

Illustration:

The police officer goes to arrest a man, and the man resists arrest. What does that mean? It means that he is doing everything in his power to keep the policeman from arresting him. He is fighting back.

A. When Satan attacks, the average Christian does everything but the right thing.

1. Some pray, and that is not bad, but that is not resisting.

Illustration:

Story of Billy Bray and his shriveled up potatoes

The Devil began to put thoughts into Billy's mind that if God really loved him that He would have let him grow nice big potatoes. Finally Billy got tired of being bothered by the Devil and he shouted out loud, "You Devil, I've got your character at home in the Book, and it says in John 8:44 that you are a liar and the father of

it. Besides that, when I served you, I didn't have any 'taters at all! Now get!"

B. There is not a single verse in the Bible that tells you to run from the Devil.

1. The Bible says to make the Devil flee from you.

C. How do you fight the Devil?

(Ephesians 6:13-17) "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. {14} Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; {15} And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; {16} Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. {17} And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:"

1. There is only one offensive weapon, "The sword of the Spirit, and it is just as sharp as it ever was.

(Hebrews 4:12) "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit,

and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

3. The Example to Follow

We have a great example to follow recorded in Matthew 4.

(Matthew 4:2-4) "And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered. {3} And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. {4} But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

(Matthew 4:5-10) "Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, {6} And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. {7} Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. {8} Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; {9} And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. {10} Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt

worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

A. The Devil attacks at our weakest point.

1. Jesus was hungry; He had fasted for forty days.

B. The Devil will quote scripture to try to get you to yield to temptation. (vss 5-6)

1. There is nothing wrong in trusting God, but is something wrong with trying to demonstrate your faith by doing foolish things and tempting God.

Illustration: Handling snakes.

C. The Devil will question the Word of God and cause us to question it as well.

(Genesis 3:1-5) "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? {2} And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: {3} But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. {4} And the serpent said unto the woman,

Ye shall not surely die: {5} For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

Illustration:

Well if God really loved people, how could He send someone to Hell if they had never heard the Gospel?

D. The Devil is consistent.

(Luke 4:13) "And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season."

Close:

Now if James 4:7 is true, the Devil will flee. And when he flees, the desire and temptation will flee with him. But remember, when he departs, he only departs for a season. He will come back later with that same desire or target some other weak area.

If one is going to be successful in resisting the Devil, he must not only be familiar with his enemy, but also his weapon. Our weapon in the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.

The Word of God is not given to decorate coffee tables or bookshelves but to use. It is the Sword of the Spirit, and you are a soldier of Jesus Christ.

One final thought: The first part of James 4:7 says, “Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you.” Before resisting the Devil, we should pray and get as close to God as we possibly can.