

Resist the Devil

So humble yourselves before God. Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:7 NLT)

A spiritual battle takes place every day of our lives. God is calling us to a life of joy and peace and blessing. The devil is seeking to destroy us through pleasure, fear, and intimidation. The tug of war goes on in our mind hour after hour. God wants us to live well so He teaches us how to be successful. It's a two part strategy: surrender to God and resist the devil. Sometimes we are better at one or the other but it takes both to be strong and healthy.

Be careful! Watch out for attacks from the Devil, your great enemy. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for some victim to devour. Take a firm stand against him, and be strong in your faith. (1 Peter 5:8,9 NLT)

The first decision for all of us is to whether or not we are going to live for God and it has to be all or nothing. We can't do some of what God says and skip the rest. We have to resolve that everything we think, do, or say will be surrendered to God's will. We have to be so strong in that commitment that we dare to ask God to examine us and make a judgment. Total commitment. Total surrender.

You have tested my thoughts and examined my heart in the night. You have scrutinized me and found nothing amiss, for I am determined not to sin in what I say. (Psalm 17:3 NLT)

We then have to prepare for how the devil will try to make us stumble. Jesus is our example. He went out into the wilderness after he was baptized and was tempted by the devil in at least three different areas: daily needs and desires, trust in God, and approval of others. When the devil suggested short cuts and human plans Jesus responded these three ways: 1. **"No! The Scriptures say, 'People need more than bread for their life; they must feed on every word of God.'** 2. **"The Scriptures also say, 'Do not test the Lord your God.'"** 3. **Get out of here, Satan," Jesus told him. "For the Scriptures say, 'You must worship the Lord your God; serve only him.'** " (From Matthew 4 NLT) Jesus first response was "No". His second response was to speak God's word. He also clearly told the devil "Get out of here." In between Jesus re-affirmed the truth that was his foundation.

We think that we need to immediately address everything we feel, every desire, every hunger, every need that speaks. Jesus hadn't eaten for forty days and was legitimately hungry. However, he knew that life was about more than meeting the need he was feeling at the moment. We will experience legitimate needs on a daily basis but they are not our first priority. Welcoming God's presence and

remembering His care for us must come first. Then, we must resist the frustration and worry that seem to come naturally when a welfare worker or a doctor isn't acting quickly enough or in the way we think they should. We must resist the habit of demanding, lying, whining, or manipulating to get things arranged in the way we want. We have to tell Satan, to go away, that we are no longer co-operating with his tactics. We re-affirm that we are committing ourselves to God care and trusting that God will meet our needs.

People will come to us with all kinds of ideas and plans. A member of the opposite sex will offer us a place to stay or the comfort of romance early in our recovery. It will feel so much more appealing than the personality challenges of living with a group of recovering addicts. A job will materialize that pays good money. We have debts to pay, families to support and a desire for independence. This must be the answer. In every area of life someone or some group will have an idea that, in a moment, seems appealing to us. With the help of a mature Christian, we need to determine if this is God's plan or merely a human idea. When Jesus' dear friend Peter made a suggestion for an easier, softer way than Jesus knew to be the truth, this was Jesus' response: **"Get away from me, Satan! You are a dangerous trap to me. You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, and not from**

God's." (Matthew 16:23 NLT) Jesus resisted and turned away from something appealing that was not God's plan. Jesus surrendered his needs to the care of God in every area of His life. We must do the same if we are to find the life we seek.

Questions for Reflection and Response

1. Where am I vulnerable to the devil's temptation?
2. What am I doing to resist?
3. What might I do to more effectively humble myself before God and resist the devil?

A Process of Resistance

1. **Cry out to God for help.** Tell yourself, out loud if it's possible that you choose for God's care and love.
2. **Say no to the devil.** If it's a lie or something negative say, "In Jesus name, I don't receive that" or "I renounce that" or simply, "Go away."
3. **Turn our heart and mind to God.** Remind myself of what is actually true. Affirm God's presence and care for me right now in this situation. Commit myself to God's care.
4. **Forgive** anyone who seems to be harming me in some way
5. **Receive healing and peace** in any area where I am experiencing discomfort.
6. **Get busy doing something that expresses the fruit of the Spirit.** Listen to uplifting music. Call a friend. Help someone in need. Read something that is encouraging. List things for which I am grateful. Enjoy something in nature.