

# SEVEN KEYS TO HAVING VICTORY OVER THE WICKED ONE

N. Sebastian Desent, Ph.D.; Th.D.; D.D.; Pastor, Historic Baptist Church  
December, 2011

God's creation has a great adversary – Satan himself. Satan and his devils are busy trying to destroy the work of God and the object of God's love. What God loves, the Satan hates; and God loves the world. Satan, who is also called the devil, cannot create anything good. He cannot cause good to come to pass. He can only pervert that which is right. He, as a great imitator and corrupter, can only confuse with alternate, fake systems that parallel in a wicked way the just systems of God. So, for everything God has created, expect to find a perversion of it. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy (John 10:10).

God's people can fall victim to Satan's devices. He is the author of confusion (among other things). The devil is a murderer from the beginning and the father of lies (John 8:44). Through deception and temptation he causes God's people to err. This satanic work provokes God to judge his people when they sin. This is also called Balaam's doctrine. The devil takes advantages of our weaknesses if we do not rely on God's grace.

Here is a brief list of the perverted systems paralleling God's systems:

## God's Way

-----

The Saviour Jesus Christ  
Gospel of Salvation  
Salvation by Grace through faith  
The Holy Bible (in English, the KJV 1611)  
True New Testament churches  
True Gospel preachers  
Truth  
Hope  
Faith  
Love  
Humility  
Children  
Creation  
Healing by Prayer, Faith, Oil  
Psalms, Hymns, Spiritual Songs  
Holiness and Sanctification  
Walk in the Spirit  
Serve God  
Marriage and monogamy  
Monotheism  
Jesus' Sacrifice being the only way to God  
Education based on the Bible  
Worship of God  
Obedience

## Devil's Perversion

-----

False christs and anti-christs  
False and perverted gospels  
Salvation be works, religion, or suffering  
Other false and modernist versions  
Romanist, Protestant, and cults churches  
False prophets  
Lies  
Despair  
Fear  
Hate, Lust  
Pride  
Abortion  
Evolution  
Treatment by Sorcery, Medicine, Cutting  
Contemporary and popular music  
Riotous living, Fleshly living  
Walk in the Flesh  
Serve Mammon  
Adultery, fornication, and polygamy  
Polytheism  
Any religion leads to God  
Humanistic education  
Entertainment  
Disobedience, rebellion, self-will

Fear of the Lord	Atheism
Prayer	Mysticism and Occult Meditation
Liberty	Bondage
Righteousness	Sin
Prosperity in Godly things	Worldly prosperity only
Righteous training and discipline	Abuse
Leadership	Oppression
Love thy neighbor	Love self, selfishness
Thankfulness to God	Murmuring, complaining

Simply put, whatever God has provided, the devil will imitate and corrupt

But Mankind also has the Great Advocate – Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us so that we might be saved. Along with this great salvation, the Lord also gave us all things that pertain to life and godliness. One of the things we have through Christ is the promise of victory over the devil.

Read how Jesus gave his disciples victory of the devil:

17 And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.

18 And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

Luke 10:17-20

But Jesus told us not to rejoice in this victorious power, for there is a greater reason to rejoice: because our names are written in heaven.

Being a child of God is a much greater reason to rejoice than simply having power over the enemy. Jesus said, Ye must be born again. For this cause Jesus came and died and resurrected. Without salvation, a person's gain in this world is without profit – it is vanity compared to the value of his soul. Imagine if we only had victory in this world, but no salvation. In the end we would be in the lake of fire with the devil for eternity; having victory now, but no victory for eternity. This is one reason why having our names written in heaven is a much greater reason to rejoice.

In the following passage you will see that challenging the devil should not be done without the power of God. You will also see that a child of God needs to be on-guard at all times, being careful that the devil does not take his armor.

14 And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered.

15 But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils.

16 And others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven.  
17 But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth.  
18 If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub.  
19 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges.  
20 But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.  
21 When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace:  
22 But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.  
23 He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.  
24 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out.  
25 And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished.  
26 Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

Luke 11:14-26

There was a group of men who tried to cast our devils without the power of God. Look what happened:

13 Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.  
14 And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so.  
15 And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?  
16 And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

Acts 19:13-16

Just because someone claims to be an exorcist does not mean he truly has the power of God. There are charlatans and deceivers in this world. *God's people* have *God's power* and know how to use it rightly. It is the Gospel that is the power of God (Romans 1:16): through salvation every soul in bondage can be liberated from the power of Satan. This is the first and greatest power we have as the children of God.

As a defensive measure, the devil tries to keep those who are lost in darkness (2 Corinthians 4:4). The lost are deceived. And if the devil can keep them in this state until death, he has them forever. While in darkness the lost have succumbed to the wiles of the wicked one. Through pride, those who will not believe blind themselves. The lost *think* they are right, but they have not the Light. They persist in a lost state because they are deceived in thinking they are right, and for some reason (in their own mind) reject the free gift. This free gift of salvation is a no-risk offer and, on the other side, it is a commandment to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who do not obey the Gospel will endure severe consequences at the judgment.

Without the power of the Gospel, those who are lost have no light. Our responsibility as believers is to bring the Light of Jesus to them so that they might be saved. This salvation *is* the

victory, praise God! And while it would seem that all would receive salvation, it is expected that some would rather choose darkness than light, because their deeds are evil (John 3:16-18). They will not come to the light lest their works be reproved.

But we who are saved love the Light. We are attracted to the Light. We want the Light of Jesus to shine in our lives. Receiving Jesus Christ is *the victory* in the grand scheme of things. No matter what, we have been translated from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light (Colossians 1:13) – delivered from the power of darkness.

Then by holy living (keeping yourself from sin), a child of God is “*untouchable.*” Look at this promise in 1 John 5:18:

We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

That is what I want. I do not want to give an occasion to the devil to get his “foot in the door.” I know any sin I practice is a handle for him to hold onto. And I should expect no mercy from him. I want an hedge around myself and my family, so that only through God can the devil have access to me and mine (Job chapter 1).

With this in mind, let’s look at the seven keys to having total victory over the devil.

## 1 ***Know you have the Victory through Jesus Christ***

Deception, wiles, and fear are the major tools of the devil to keep a child of God in defeat and doubt.

For the lost, he uses darkness (2 Corinthians 4:4) lest the glorious light of the gospel should shine unto them. As the prince and the power of the air (Ephesians 2:1-10), he keeps the lost in trespasses and sins, walking according to the course of this world, with a spirit of disobedience. Satan keeps the lost blinded to the gospel and the goodness of God, knowing that the goodness of God leads us to repentance (Romans 2).

If you are saved, Satan will try to keep you *blinded to the goodness of God*. But know that all things work together for good to them that love God. There is no “bad news” if you are saved. Most of us know Romans 8:28:

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose

As mentioned in other places, when a child of God accepts what comes his way as *good* – and is *thankful* to God – he will then see *the power* of God in his life. Contrarily, if a child of God murmurs and complains, he will simply wander in circles until he does see the goodness.

The devil will also use fear in your life to immobilize you. Fear paralyzes. Fear creates negativity. Fear is contagious. Fear is the *opposite* of faith. Fear comes when an opportunity to step out by faith is at the door. Remember how only two of the twelve Canaan spies brought back a good (victorious) report? The other ten were fearful, basing their thoughts and words on what they *perceived* rather than on the *promises* and *power* of God.

Again, know that fear is the opposite of faith. Faith please God, fear pleases the devil. Doubt is the graveyard of faith. The devil will try to get you to doubt. If he can get you to doubt (yea, hath God said...?), he knows the rest of the work is easy.

Here is the right answer: know and be fully persuaded that you have the victory through Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 15:57: But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

How do you know when you fear? *You believe evil thing will happen, rather than good things will happen.*

But faith is believing and expecting good things will happen – that all things work together for good. Faith is being fully persuaded that what God has promised he will fulfill. This calibration of the mind to align it with the word of God puts you on the path to becoming an undefeatable opponent to Satan. Faith in Jesus Christ is the victory that overcomes the world (1 John 5:4).

As a final note on this point, human nature makes us react to trials in a way opposite to what God would have us to. The natural reaction is to complain and seek a way around the pain. We look for solutions and we scramble to relieve the grief. When we encounter a problem, we want to step back, go over, go around, or run through as fast as possible. We have a natural need to experience peace and comfort. We are more likely to pray for God to remove the trial rather than ask that he supply the grace to endure it.

We look for ways *out* rather than look for the blessings of being *in*. We pray the thing will pass rather than rejoice in our infirmity. We forget that *tribulation worketh patience*.

We have a tendency to murmur and ask for help rather than to be thankful to God. I know being thankful in difficult situations is extremely hard. But I know that is what God wants. Whatever we go through it is working together for our good. When we are weak, then we are strong, because then the power of God rests on us.

7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

Here is the wisdom: when a child of God experiences weakness, he then humbly relies on God. When this happens, his strength is made perfect in weakness. Consequently, the child of God can take pleasure in necessities, and distresses, and other things; and in these things be strong in the power of God.

Be thankful, child, and know that in your weakest moments, you have the victory.

## 2 ***Stand against the Wiles of the Devil***

Let's start off with a very familiar passage:

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.  
11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.  
12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.  
13 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:  
18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;  
19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,  
20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

Ephesians 6:10-20

The first and obvious application is that we need to have our armor on and be minded to stand. The command to stand goes hand in hand with the command to put on the whole armor of God.

Many have made mention that there is no armor for the back – we are not to turn our back to the enemy, but stand firm and unmoveable: “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:53).

Have you ever thought how often we dress for an occasion? Certain jobs require certain dress. From attorneys and carpenters to firemen and astronauts, every field of work has expected apparel. We use leather when riding and spandex when swimming. We use hard hats in construction and cowboy hats at rodeos.

But what is the Christian's dress code? Some think it is a suit and tie. Some think it is a robe and a "backwards collar." But God shows us it is a spiritual suit of armor. And this suit is to be worn continually.

This spiritual armor consists of six items. Allow me to elaborate a little on each one:

#### Loins girt with truth

We must have the truth, both in written form as the word of God, the Bible; and in speech and thought. The devil loves lies and God hates a lying tongue. A child of God is disobedient and sinful when he lies, and he positions himself to reap the effect of lies. In trying to be deceitful, he himself will be a victim of it. He will be deceived.

However, with truth, we position ourselves so as not to be deceived. As the old saying goes, "you can't cheat an honest man." And the devil cannot deceive you if you know and believe the truth. Without truth, all else fails. So, have truth in your dealings, in your speech, in your efforts, in your personal relationships. Be an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile.

John wrote in 3 John 1:4: I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

#### Breastplate of righteousness

Personal righteousness and sanctification are essential in standing against the devil. It is through lust and temptation that the devil works, and it is through truth that we counteract this temptation. Remember the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness in Matthew 4? He was tempted in the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. He was victorious over the world, his flesh, and the devil. He had the victory because he responded not with earthly reason or action, but with the word of God.

David said in Psalm 119:11: Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

God's word plus obedience equals righteousness. Doing right in every situation will prevent the devil from drawing you away from God. We will be tempted, and it is not sin to be tempted; but it is a sin to yield. A child of God will be tempted on all fronts during his life, but God gives his children the strength and will to persevere

through all temptation. As we were taught to say in the Lord's Prayer: *"lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."*

### Feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel

Preach the gospel as a defense and as an offense. Personally, especially when dealing with the powers and spiritual wickedness in high places, I have used the Gospel as a great defense. Your enemy and his followers do not want to be preached to. They do not want to be exposed to the light of the Gospel. They love darkness and hate the light (John 3:16-21).

Here's another tactic: when being challenged and struggling against the devil, make time to preach the Gospel to the lost. The devil is defeated when he sees the pressure he applies provokes you to preach the Gospel.

You will notice the word "preparation." Think on that. Every believer should be prepared to preach the Gospel, being ready to give an answer for the hope that is in them. Having your "Gospel Shoes" on and laced rightly and tightly means you are ready to go. One shoe saves with compassion, making a difference; the other saves with fear, hating even the flesh-spotted garment (Jude 1:23).

### Shield of faith

Faith is the victory. Through faith you can quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. Every attack of the devil is quenched if you have faith – faith in Christ, faith in his word, faith in his promises, and faith in his blood.

There is no attack of the devil that cannot be defeated by faith. Every temptation, attack, lie – these fiery darts – are quenched by faith in Jesus Christ. Most of these attacks will be directed toward the head and torso, but the devil will attack limbs also. All parts of the body need to be shielded.

Paul wrote, "above all." This is the main defensive piece of armor, and goes back to point 1. Make sure you understand the importance of faith.

### Helmet of Salvation

The devil works on your mind. That self-talk you hear all day. He will put evil thoughts into your head if you are not vigilant. Protect your head! Keep your thoughts aligned with the word of God. Remember your salvation. Be sure you are saved, and *know* you are saved. If the devil can get you to doubt your salvation, he will be victorious, and you will struggle your entire life. You will live in fear of losing God's love and wander in double-minded instability of purpose.

You see, no matter what happens, I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him unto that day (2 Timothy



1:12). God want us to have that confidence. And if I could lose my salvation, I would have done so already a long time ago. But my salvation is not based on my goodness – it is based on Christ’s goodness. I know nothing can separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus. I know no man can pluck me out of God’s hand. I know I have been given eternal life and I shall never perish.

So, whatever the devil throws my way, I know I am a child of God. I know God is in control, I know God will be glorified. And, with that confidence, I can go forward from God, knowing by his grace and love I shall endure all things.

#### Praying always, for others and for bold speech

We are commanded to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). So much can be said about prayer that this paper cannot contain it. But realize how important keeping your heart and mind in constant communication with the Father. And pray for bold speech. Words are powerful, but often we are silent when we ought to speak, and we speak when we ought to be silent. Remember your personal testimony – this is what the apostle Paul spoke of many times when before rulers.

So, standing must be done with proper dress code. The armor of God must be in place if a child of God is going to stand and withstand in the evil day. Let’s go a step further, now.

Find the scriptural things to stand *against*:

- Evil
- Worldliness
- Unbelief
- Fear
- Apathy
- Excess

Find the scriptural things to stand *for*. Here are a few things I have realized:

- The Holy Bible – AV 1611 (2 Timothy 3:16)
- The true Gospel of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-5)
- The New Testament church – a Baptist church.
- Love Commandment Doctrine (John 15:12)
- Living holy for God (1 Thessalonians 4:3)
- Ruling well my house (1 Timothy 3:4)
- Being faithful till Jesus comes (Revelation 2:10)

There are many more, of course, but this will suffice for now. Stand for God. Be unmovable, and always abounding. Hold fast that which is good. Endure to the end. Be faithful until death.

### 3 **Resist the Devil**

Some people think they are better off not contending with the devil. They think if they leave him alone, he will leave them alone. This is not true. Others think they have no choice but to go along with temptation. They think they are powerless against him. That is not true either

God tells us to resist the devil. Read this well-know verse in scripture:

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

God's promise is that if we resist, the devil will flee. And God tells us how:

8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:  
9 Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

1 Peter 5:8, 9

Here is how to resist: submit yourself to God, be sober, be vigilant, be stedfast in the faith, and know you are not alone.

Submitting yourself to God involves humbling yourself before him, for he resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. It also involves turning to God from idols (behind many idols are devils), honoring him as Creator, knowing you have a duty to God; and seeking and being obedient to his will. The will of God for you is found in the New Testament. Jesus exemplified this when he was tempted in the wilderness: there he confirmed during his temptation that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. Jesus would not bow down but to God only, and he would not tempt God by disobedience.

Being sober means being in full control of your mental faculties. I doubt a person on psychotropic drugs (anti-depressants like Paxil, Zoloft, Prozac; or drugs like Haldol, which is used to treat psychotic disorder conditions where there is difficulty telling the difference between what is real and what is not) can be considered sober, and consequently they cannot walk circumspectly (Ephesians 5:15). Nor can people who use hallucinogenic drugs, or alcohol, or narcotics be sober. People who play certain video games or watch fantasy entertainment will also have trouble being sober. All these things affect the mind. The devil loves it. The devil wants you in a "false reality." He wants you thinking you are free when are in bondage. He wants you thinking you are lost when you are saved. He wants you thinking you are saved when you are lost. He wants you thinking you will find happiness in what he offers you.

But God wants you sober. God wants you to be able to understand the height and depth of Christ. He wants you to have that wisdom from above. He wants you to be able to see clearly what is happening around you, and have “understanding of the times.”

Being vigilant means being always on your guard. Be a watchman. Have your mind always considering your circumstances and being careful in your actions and reactions.

I remember reading an Israeli author teaching on how to survive in Arab areas in Israel. He made a careful point that posture goes a long way. If you look like you are ready and on guard, potential enemies back off. They like to go for victims who are unsuspecting.

Another author on surviving in the urban areas made a similar comment: when you are walking in places like on the street or in a parking lot, always being watching and looking around. When passing strangers look them in the eyes. (Some muggers go in pairs, and one will try to distract you while the other comes from behind.) If you look like you are ready, usually the ones looking to hurt will wait for another less ready victim. This author referred to this attitude as “the alley cat attitude.” He noted the difference between a house cat who will blindly wander into trouble, trusting everyone; and an alley cat that watches everything and always positions himself so he can escape – never getting too close to anything potentially harmful. Always on his guard, the only way for an adversary to get to him is to tempt him over a long period of time. Walk circumspectly, the Bible says. Don’t stumble, don’t fall in traps. Don’t be distracted from the objective. Have eyes full of light.

Be steadfast in the faith. Base your understanding of the Bible according to God’s method in Isaiah 29:9-13. Jesus resisted the devil’s temptation in the wilderness in Matthew chapter 4 by using the Old Testament commandments (precepts). This is the pattern he set for us. By using what God commanded we can resist the devil. You will notice however that the devil leaves only for a season. He has a tendency to return to cause grief. Resisting is a continual process.

Now, Jesus gave us the New Testament commandments. We are told to teach them to all nations (Matthew 28:18-20). We hide these in our hearts so that we do not sin against God. Doing these things puts up a resistance from which the devil will flee.

#### **4     *Neither Give Place to the Devil***

Satan is constantly seeking for territory in your life. He is looking for any weakness or undefended access to your life. Once the devil finds your weakness he will exploit that weakness until you fall from your own steadfastness. And a weak link in a chain means the rest of the links, however strong, cannot hold the chain together.

God has given each of us territory to defend for him. In 2 Samuel 23 we find the mighty men of David. In verses 11 and 12 we learn about Shammah:

11 And after him was Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite. And the Philistines were gathered together into a troop, where was a piece of ground full of lentiles: and the people fled from the Philistines.

12 But he stood in the midst of the ground, and defended it, and slew the Philistines: and the LORD wrought a great victory.

Shammah (or Shimeah) comes from the Hebrew word Shema – to hear, listen and obey. Shammah means presence (Jehovah-Shammah – The Lord is there – Ezekiel 48:35).

And, although some may look at the territory God's given me as a simple field of lentils, for the principle of thing I am determined to defend it by God's grace. It may be least, but he that is faithful in least is also faithful in much – that is the test for faithfulness: giving you something small to see how faithful you are.

As a husband, father, and pastor; I have territories and the responsibility to keep them sanctified before God. As a king and priest, I have a kingdom (of God) and a temple (my body) to care for. And by the grace of God and his strength, the devil will have no place with me.

Consider your home. Does the devil have some territory there? Is there a small place for the devil? How about your computer? How about your car? How about your cell phone or MP3 player? How about your heart? Your life? Your work? Is all the territory you have control over sanctified for the master's use?

If you want the victory, don't give place to the devil.

Imagine the folly of a person who desires spiritual victory over some area in his life, but at the same time has the enemy camped out in his home. He says he wants God to help and bless, but he has altar to Satan in his house. Should he not rather purge his house of all things that are dishonoring to God first? How about a man wanting to overcome lust, but he has his box of smutty magazines in the closet? Or someone who wants to stop swearing but listens to rap music? Hello? How can anyone want victory over the enemy and still freely give him territory in his life?

There are a lot of believers who need to serve eviction papers to the unwanted squatters. Every person is the landlord of his house, the priest of his temple, the king of his realm. When we put the evil out, we need to replace it with good. Else, there may be seven more evils that return with it.

## **5 Pull Down the Strongholds**

Let's read 2 Corinthians 10:3-6:

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:

4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

6 And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

If you are going to have full victory over Satan, you have to pull down the strongholds he has in your mind. These strongholds are programming we received over our lifetime. God gave his children mighty weapons to pull down these strongholds.

These weapons we reviewed earlier. They are called the armor of God.

The strongholds of programming come as a result of sitting in government schools, associating with the wicked, watching and listening to the media, and sometimes incorrect training from parents. They come from books, memes, friends, experiences, etc.

Here's a meme: "Once my kid turns eighteen he's on his own and I can't tell him what to do." I have heard that phrase too many times. Here is the pulling down of that stronghold, bringing it into captivity to the obedience of Christ: God said to honour thy father and mother. Children, obey your parents. In 1 Samuel 3:12-14, Eli was to be judged by God for the behavior of his sons:

12 In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end.

13 For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.

14 And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever.

Here's another stronghold, and it starts like this: "I need to go to the doctor for...." Here is the obedience of Christ:

14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

James 5:14-16

You see, your programming – every thought – has to be cast down when that thought exalts itself against the knowledge of God. You are responsible for your thoughts and you need to take control of your thoughts. You need to steer your thoughts in the right direction.

As a final illustration, I remember when I got saved and started reading the Bible. As a child I went to government schools, and was taught among other things, that the false

idea of evolution was true. I learned the evolutionary scale. My parents bought me books on the subject. I remember getting a chart showing how an ape evolved into man, showing Anthropithecus, Cro-Magnon, Neanderthal, Homo-erectus, to Homo-sapien, etc.

For twenty-five years I believed the lie of evolution. For twenty-five years I was programmed with this stronghold of the devil that infects our schools, teaching the children they are nothing more than an evolved animal and that there is no Creator, no judgment, and no perfect standard of righteousness.

For twenty-five years I was fully convinced Darwin's lie was true.

And then, as a born-again child of God, I read the book of Genesis. Twenty-five years of programming was deleted in about three seconds, and replaced with righteous programming. The devil had pushed this lie my whole life until that point. But now his lie had no place in my mind. I realized that I was created, that there was a Creator, and that I have a responsibility to my Creator.

Our weapons are mighty to pull down these strongholds. The most used weapon is the sword of the Spirit – the word of God (Hebrews 4:12). Use it daily. Cleanse the temple, cleanse the mind. Get the Satanic programming out! Replace it with the truth of God's word, and you will see the power it supplies.

## **6 *Be Not Ignorant of his Devices***

When striving for complete victory over your adversary, it helps to know what his devices are. You want to know what he has in his arsenal, and what his strategies are. Consequently, you can prepare for them and not fall victim to them.

One of the ways Satan gets the advantage in our lives is through people. If he can get you to react in a wrong way, you are weakened by sin, and usually grieved. But the joy of the Lord is our strength (Nehemiah 8:10). If you are grieved by people, you are susceptible to attacks and in danger of defeat.

Paul realized this when he wrote in 2 Corinthians 2:10, 11

10 To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ;  
11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

To me, it never ceases to amaze how important people relationships are in the work of God. God's kingdom involves people. Things are secondary. The devil will get an advantage in your life if you are not always cautious and careful in your relationships.

Especially in the ministry, a man deals with a lot of people and personalities. Many good people have their ways of doing things. It is easy to fall victim to resentment. Always

remember, your neighbor is not your enemy. If they do wrong towards you, it could likely be unintentional. And if intentional, we are told to forgive (Luke 11). Many people have been used by Satan to say something foolish, or act in a wrong way. In Matthew 16:17, Jesus said God revealed to blessed Peter who Jesus is; but then shortly thereafter, in verse 23, Jesus says to Peter, “Get thee behind me, Satan.”

No one would contend Peter is Satan, or that Peter desired to be used by Satan to try and hinder Jesus. Peter opened his mouth foolishly. And no one would contend that Peter did not love Jesus, or that Jesus did not love Peter.

But look at how Jesus dealt with the situation: “Get thee behind be, Satan.” Jesus understood the devil had temporarily used Peter’s mouth. And Jesus puts blame on who is guilty (not Peter, but Satan). He also commands the adversary victoriously, saying to “get behind me.” With a posture of Victor, Jesus commands Satan to get out of his way. He does not beg for mercy, threaten, or revenge. Jesus simply identifies the root, and goes forward for God. He was not hindered by the devil.

Here is a short list of wrong attitudes or actions toward people:

- Unforgiveness
- Envy
- Pride
- Hypocrisy
- Respect of persons
- Deceit
- Lust
- Mocking
- Apathy
- Rebellion
- Self-will
- Selfishness
- Self-centeredness
- Anger
- Discouragement
- Railing
- Malice
- Revenge
- Discourtesy
- Stumbling
- Disregard
- Hate
- Harm
- Threatening
- Harsh judgment
- Debate
- Strife
- Violence
- False accusations
- Dissembling

In a love environment, however, there is no occasion of stumbling (1 John 2:10). Love covers the multitude of sins.

Satan’s devices also include works to hinder you in your walk. Paul was hindered from his purpose to go to Rome (Romans 1:13; 15:22) and to the Thessalonians:

Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.

1 Thessalonians 2:18

Going forward for God requires a striving (Luke 13:24; Romans 15:20; 1 Corinthians 9:25; 2 Timothy 2:5). I suppose if it were the easy way, everyone would do it.

The devil will use problems, snares, fears, distractions, debts, etc., to try and get you to quit. But remember the times he fights the hardest is right before a great blessing from God. Satan wants you to quit before you see God's goodness. And many have quit, and just one stroke before hitting the mother-load.

## **7 Overcome by Word of God**

God has not only defeated the devil when he bruised his head at Calvary, but he also shows us how we can have the same victory through faith in the Son of God.

Jesus wants us to be "over-comers." It is not enough to "hold the fort" against the devil's attacks – we must storm his castle and take his territory. In the battle over souls, the mature believer goes after the lost. He is not content to stay at home and rest on laurels. He has a sincere desire to kick open the gates of hell and pull some of those in darkness out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh (Jude 1:23). Jesus promised the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church (Matthew 16:18).

So how does a babe in Christ mature to the point where he is a good soldier of Jesus Christ? He does it by building himself up on the word of God. 1 John 2:12-14:

12 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

13 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.

14 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

Young men are strong spiritually. They are strong because the word of God abides in them. They meditate, memorize, prove, and rest on the word of God.

And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

Acts 20:32

This strength can only be found in Jesus Christ and in his word. Read the Bible every day. Hide it your heart. Meditate upon it in your mind. Use it as a blessing to others. This is the way of over-comers.



## **Conclusion – the Victorious Life**

This is where you want to be. Your life's condition is due to a large part on the choices you make. Addictions, unfaithfulness, slothfulness, apathy, worldliness, etc.; all have their effect in where you are today.

Many people want the victory, but they just sit in hope that it comes automatically. It does not. It takes effort, faith, and consistency. It takes an overriding desire to achieve for God.

Secondly, the battle is ongoing. Just because you have the victory today, does not mean there will not be struggles tomorrow. God in his goodness moderates what we experience to make sure we can endure.

If you give up, it is not because you could not win, it is that you surrendered. You took the easy way out. The devil laughs, your life is not happy, and you feel defeated and unprofitable in the Lord's work.

Don't get apathetic. Don't accept today's defeat as permanent. Tomorrow is another day. God's mercies are renewed every day (Lamentations 3:22, 23). A just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again ... (Proverbs 24:16). Start over and go forward for God.

And you will find on this uphill battle called "life" that God gives us strength, joy, fellowship, and a lot of blessing. But this road is the way to life and godliness. It is a worthy walk. It is a walk directed by the Spirit of God. It is the blessed, glorious life of a strong soldier of Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 2:3). It is a life that pleases God.

The End.