

James Goll: How to Overcome Satan's 4 Favorite Tactics

You have to run over the devil before he runs over you. You are standing on a battlefield—a different one from the one you were standing on last year at this time. You may be standing in the middle of an army or you may be standing all alone.

Are you just going to stand there, waiting to see what will happen? Or are you going to do something that will allow you to get, and keep, the upper hand?

King David gave us a psalm that we should graft into ourselves so that we can be true overcomers: “I pursued my enemies and overtook them; I did not return until they were destroyed” (Ps. 18:37, MEV). He was a true overcomer—determined to make an end of his enemies, but always aware that he needed help doing it.

Many of you know my journey in the last few years. I have been knocked down in the battle ring, but I get back up again because lovers of God are not quitters. I intend to never, never, never give up!

The Book of Wars

In the book of Numbers, I found this interesting phrase: “*Therefore it is said in the Book of the Wars of the Lord ...*” (Num. 21:14, MEV). What is this book? The Book of the Wars of the Lord is not part of the canon of Scripture, nor are several other books that are mentioned in the Bible, such as the “book of remembrance” (Mal. 3:16) or the “book of tears” (Ps. 56:8). Perhaps we can construe the Book of the Wars of the Lord to be a book that has not yet been finished—and that we ourselves can help to complete as we engage the enemy, one skirmish at a time.

For each of us, the combat will not be over until the day we die. Born in the midst of battle and born for battle, we are following our Commander-in-Chief, whose mission was to destroy the works of the devil. We are not warring against our spouses, our children, our bosses or our pastors. We are battling against besetting spiritual forces of wickedness.

I like to think that our ongoing struggle is a sign of life, and proof that we have not been conquered. The Lord of life is waging warfare through us. Our efforts are—or should be—springing from the centrality of the Son of God in our personal lives.

As we engage in struggle after struggle, not only are we subjugating Satan, we are also being transformed, individually and as a body. The whole church is in metamorphosis, becoming a new creation in Christ, growing and maturing and overcoming the darkness of the old regime.

Why Is Satan Picking on You?

Do you sometimes feel as if the enemy has painted a bull's-eye on you? What did you do to attract his unwelcome attention? I have acquired a redemptive perspective on why I have gone through so many battles. Well, let me share some of the insights I have learned along the way.

For one thing, you are God's friend. God created you for His pleasure and He takes pleasure in you (Rev. 4:11). He takes so much pleasure in you that He sent His Son to redeem you from the hand of His enemy so that He could adopt you as His child. He takes so much pleasure in you that He is beautifying you and making you able to reflect His image the way you were created to do.

And since Satan cannot assault God directly, he attacks God's friends. He tries to undermine the ground beneath your feet. The devil tries to paralyze your planning, abort your dreams and dilute your hope. He opposes everything that could help

you stay close to God's heart.

The truth of the situation is that the devil is mighty jealous of you. Who do you think you are, giving glory to God, surrendering yourself to Him as your Father and Lord—and resisting evil at every turn?

What Are Satan's 4 Favorite Tactics?

He exercises his malice in certain predictable ways. With his limited repertoire, all he can do is to mix standard ingredients into variations on the same recipe. Here is a quick list of his favorite tactics against human beings:

- 1. Delay.** To weaken you and wear you out. To make you lose your way (Dan. 10:2-14).
- 2. Deceit.** To derail God's purposes by making spiritual principles into legalism. To move you from the stability of truth to the instability of error (Rev. 12:9).
- 3. Distraction.** To break your focus. To make you concentrate on a side issue. A time of great intimacy with God can turn into a time of great battle (Prov. 4:27).
- 4. Disappointment.** To magnify the weaknesses of others; to offend you and to embitter you.

Delay, deceit, distraction and disappointment—each one of these tactics is slow-acting. You may not recognize them at first. Sometimes it seems that Satan is more patient than you are as he encroaches on your peace, inch by inch. He cannot derail you instantly, although it may seem abrupt when it happens.

How Do I Overcome These Tactics?

For each of the enemy's tactics, there are distinct steps we can take in the opposite direction. Like an antidote being applied to the venom of a snake, these tactics will help you

to counteract and overcome the wiles of the devil:

1. Take action on God's promises—instead of delay. As a friend of mine says, successful people take action quickly and change their minds slowly. God's promises are true today and every day. So even though the timing of some promises is important, you can always act on what you know to be true. Declare His promises aloud until they take root in your soul. Then act on the timeless aspects of God's character that He wants to manifest in you. Focus on showing love and all the fruits of the spirit in your interactions with others; spend time in prayer; and testify of God's goodness to those around you. These are actions that are always acceptable and stymie the effects of delay.

2. Ground yourself daily in God's Word—instead of deceit. There is no substitute for having God's Word residing within you. This is one of the most important ways to recognize the subtle lies of the enemy. Bank tellers are effectively taught to recognize counterfeit money by studying the real thing. That way when something false comes, they instantly know the difference. Spend time in God's Word and hide it in your heart. Then the Spirit will more easily be able to quicken and alert you to the deception of the enemy.

3. Focus yourself on the Lord and His commands—instead of distraction. What was the last thing the Lord told you to do? Are you doing it? When we are waiting for a particular promise to be fulfilled, the more time that passes the more easily we can get distracted. A helpful antidote is to focus on the Lord himself, and then actually *do* what He has already instructed you to do. I am reminded of Jehoshaphat's petition to the Lord when the enemy was coming against him in 2 Chronicles 20:12, *"O our God, will You not render judgment on them? For we have not strength enough to stand before this great army that is coming against us. And we do not know what we should do, but our eyes are on You."*

4. Thank God for all the victories He has already won in your life— instead of disappointment. There is nothing like thanksgiving to break the spirit of depression, which is where disappointment can lead if left unchecked. God loves a thankful heart and it lightens the spirit. Don't wallow in what hasn't yet happened—recount all the ways God has already come through in the past! You will find your heart buoyed up and your soul gaining strength as each story is recalled. God loves a thankful heart!

Who Is the Overcomer Anyway?

The enemy always tries to thwart the plans of God. Even with his partial knowledge, he knows when someone is destined for greatness. In a similar way, the enemy hits desperately hard when a specific miracle is leaving the hand of God. When you make an effort to take a stand, the degree and intensity of spiritual warfare could be proportional to the territory that you are about to possess.

Day after day, clothe yourself by faith with God's spiritual armor: *"Therefore take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done all, to stand"* (Eph. 6:13, MEV).

So be on the alert! You are an overcomer; the devil is not! What you are going through is only for a season. And know this: You and I are not battling towards victory—we are enforcing the victory that has already been won. We are already overcomers in Christ Jesus!

And that means you! Take a stand! {eo}

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