

Overcoming Satanic Attacks of Discouragement

Through many years as a missionary in Asia, I have had lots of opportunity to feel the keen edge of Satan's tool of discouragement. I discovered that he keeps this particular tool in readiness at all times, and he's always sharpening it for use on the unsuspecting.

And that's what alarms me. None of us should ever be taken by surprise.

Just study the description of Satan in the Bible—he is a deceiver of the brethren, a liar, he masquerades as a harmless sheep, but he is actually a wolf in sheep's clothing, and furthermore, he is described a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. That is enough to put us on high alert!

My problem has been, and I suspect yours may be, the fact that we are lulled to sleep for various reasons and we drop our guard.

Satan is well-aware of our weaknesses, and he always takes advantage of those weak spots. Sometimes he afflicts us with sickness as in Job's case, to get our eyes off Jesus. There are times when he brings financial reverses or causes a lack of sufficient funds as in Job's case when he lost all his possessions and his children. His purpose was to bring despair into Job's heart so that he would curse God and turn his back on Him.

There are times when our children are subjected to attack while at boarding school or college in the States. That is most stressful, and if we are not living close to God, it can have devastating effects.

Such things can occur in all of our lives and can cause times

of great discouragement and despair because we see the problem rather than the Problem Solver.

There are often times of misunderstanding and criticism that sweep over us like a tidal wave. To make matters worse, the criticism often comes from fellow believers, as in Paul's case in the book of Philippians. Worry and fear may grip our hearts and sometimes produce a spiritual paralysis that neutralizes faith and immobilizes us.

The first thing we need to do is get alone with God and let His reassuring voice speak peace to our hearts. I have found that it often is at times when I am especially busy doing kingdom work that I neglect communion with God. If this condition persists, we are in danger of spiritual starvation while a spiritual feast is spread out before us. Prayer has been pushed aside to meet the urgent needs confronting us. I know this is true from personal experience. Every time I have been caught in the slough of despair, it was because I failed to take the time to be with God and in His Word.

The amazing thing I have discovered when buffeted by Satan is the power of the Word of God to lift my despairing spirit, and the power of prayer to overcome anything Satan throws at me. It has always been amazing to me how the application of His Word and the power of prayer restore me to instant victory.

There are some things we must not forget.

We cannot overcome Satan in our own strength. He will come to hound us at any moment, but we know from God's Word that we are more than conquerors through our Lord Jesus Christ. Take time to immerse yourself in God's Word daily and never neglect prayer.

We know that Satan trembles when we bow our knees in prayer, and he flees from the Word.

So know your enemy and his strengths and weaknesses as a good

general knows the enemy he faces. Be sure to put on the whole armor of God and stand in the strength of our Mighty Conqueror.

Whoever lives in the light of Christ's presence and Word will be well-able to stand every attack of the enemy and be more than a conqueror through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Anthony Bollback was born into a Christian home that always entertained missionaries. He received Christ at age 16 after a near-drowning incident at a summer youth conference. Beginning his missionary career in China, he and his wife Evelyn, were forced to evacuate when the Communists took over, and three years later began serving in Japan for five years. The remainder of his 24 years in Asia was spent in Hong Kong where he planted and directed 10 chapels and schools with 10,000 students. He served as Field Chairman of the China-Hong Kong Field of The Christian and Missionary Alliance for four years. Unexpectedly, God changed his direction and sent him to Honolulu for a most effective ministry as pastor of Kapahulu Bible Church. He retired from active ministry after serving as District Superintendent of the Mid-America District C&MA for 9 very productive years.

Following retirement in Florida, he began an active writing career and the publishing of a very popular series of 6 books based on his experiences in China for children entitled Jack and Jenny Mystery Series. His most popular adult books based on the persecution of the church in China are the two-book series entitled The Persecuted Church in China: Red Runs the River, Vol. 1 and Exiles of Hope, Vol. 2.

He continues a very active ministry of writing and speaking that includes a monthly e-letter called China Clippings. In addition he serves on the Church Board and is an Elder in the church.