

The Enemy's Secret Strategy

✘ A remarkable, amazing, extraordinary life is not restricted to certain individuals or professions. It doesn't matter who you are or how you serve in life. If you're a schoolteacher, businessperson, government leader, stay-at-home mom, athlete, factory worker, hairstylist, student, pastor, it doesn't matter because you were created for extraordinary achievements in that role. The power to accomplish remarkable feats and live an exceptional life is not tied to an occupation but to a disposition of the heart. This is not only God's will but also His great pleasure.

Hollywood, religious people, and our culture have painted a warped and limited image of God's people. What is the distortion? We have an enemy named Satan, who is called "the ruler of this world," "the prince of the power of the air," and "the god of this world." He influences the world's systems and sways the minds of those who do not belong to God. He has fallen angels and demons to help carry out his grand strategy.

The sad fact is that too often the church has limited Satan's chief strategy to certain behaviors, like trying to get people to drink alcohol or watch sex scenes in movies. He's much more crafty than that and uses a wide variety of snares and diversions. We've missed his primary purpose. Because what he fears most is Christians discovering who God's made them to be—extraordinary people with abilities to carry out remarkable and unusual feats. This should be the image society has of Christians.

In stark contrast to the present reputation of Christians, one of the great struggles the early church encountered was convincing people that they were not superheroes or gods. Cornelius, an officer in the most powerful army in the world, bowed down to worship Peter and his companions. Stunned, Peter immediately replied, "Stand up; I myself am also a man" (Acts

10:26).

In a city named Lystra, the mob “went wild, calling out in their Lyconian dialect, ‘The gods have come down! These men are gods!’” Paul sharply corrected them: “What do you think you’re doing! We’re not gods!” (Acts 14:11, 14, *The Message*). When Paul was on Malta collecting firewood, a poisonous snake bit him. He shook it off, and the inhabitants anticipated his death. “But when it was obvious he wasn’t going to, they jumped to the conclusion that he was a god!” (vs. 28:6).

Unbelievers said of the early church, “These who have turned the world upside down have come here too” (vs. 17:6). Christians were held in high esteem by their society. It’s recorded that the entire city of Jerusalem’s attitude toward the church was that “everyone had high regard for them” (5:13, NLT).

In our generation may we each live in such a way to recover that kind of respect for the church.

*Marked by boldness and passion, **John Bevere** delivers uncompromising truth through his award-winning curriculum and best-selling books now available in over sixty languages. His newest book is Extraordinary: The Life You’re Meant to Live. More information is available at .*