

You're Resisting the Devil, So Why Won't He Flee?

Either the devil isn't fleeing or one demon is lined up right after the other to take the last one's place—at least that's the thought that crosses my mind in seasons of heavy spiritual warfare. I'm resisting the devil all right, but it sure doesn't seem like he's fleeing—much less fleeing seven ways (Deut. 28:7).

Despite resisting with all my might, sometimes the enemy continues raging against me like he's deaf or oblivious to the power in the name of Jesus. Yet I know God is not a man that He should lie (Num. 23:19). The Word is absolutely 100 percent true all the time, without fail. And God's Word says every knee must bow to the name of Jesus (Phil. 2:10). So what gives?

When God's Word doesn't seem to be working, this I know: It's not God's Word that's not working. Usually, we're either missing some revelation or doing something wrong somewhere—whether we realize it or not. Either way, we need a revelation!

With that in mind, let's look at this “resist the devil” Scripture in context. The Bible actually says, “He gives more grace. Therefore He says: ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’ Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded” (James 4:6-8).

Isn't that a far cry from what you hear in some spiritual warfare circles?

Who's Resisting Whom?

First of all, that word *resist* is from the Greek word *anthístēmi*, which means to “take a complete stand against” or a “contrary position” and “refusing to be moved.” Well, we can’t take a complete stand against an enemy with whom we are standing in some measure of agreement. When you keep this Scripture in context, then, it offers a clue about why the devil may not flee: We aren’t fully submitted to God. That’s why it’s a good idea to repent and glorify God before engaging the enemy.

Here’s one example. We may be flowing in pride that’s causing God to resist us even while we’re trying to resist the devil. Indeed, we can actually take pride in our spiritual warfare skills—and many do. I came out of a spiritual warfare camp some years ago that was especially proud of its brute battle force. We considered ourselves the Navy Seals of spiritual warfare. Yet the devil rarely fled. It seemed like there was never any lasting breakthrough. Even David has seasons of rest from war (2 Sam. 7:1).

Again, pride in our spiritual warfare skills can cause us to stumble before our enemies because God resists the proud and give grace to the humble. We need the grace of God to overcome our enemies. Flaunting our spiritual warfare skills like a boastful five-star general will most certainly lead to some measure of defeat at some point.

King Ahab, Jezebel’s husband and a mighty warrior who posted many victories, was certainly full of pride. God’s prophet Micaiah clearly told him what no other false prophet on his payroll dared: that he would lose if he went to battle in Ramoth Gilead (1 Kings 22:17-23). Instead of heeding the voice of God’s prophet, proud Ahab arrested the man of God and ran to the battle line anyway. He was killed in battle.

Jesus Is Not a Magic Word

By the same token, you can’t toss around the name of Jesus

like it's some magic word. True and lasting victory comes not only through faith in the name of Jesus but also intimate relationship with Him. You can't have consistent warfare-winning faith in a God you don't really know because when the pressure is on, you need to truly know He's got your back. Our revelation of Jesus as warrior and our submission to Him as king play a role in sending the devil packing.

Remember the itinerant Jewish exorcists who took it upon themselves to use the name of Jesus to cast out demons? They proclaimed, "We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches" (Acts 19:13). No intimacy there. Also, there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who took that same approach (v. 14). The devil wasn't buying: "And the evil spirit answered and said, 'Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?' Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded" (vv. 15-16). How embarrassing!

See, these Jewish exorcists didn't have a relationship with Jesus, so they really didn't have faith in His name. They had faith in Paul's ability to use His name, but you can't cast out devils in the authority of your pastor. God has given us victory in warfare, but we need faith firmly rooted in Him before we can truly stand in our authority in Christ and enforce that victory in the face of our enemies.

Of course, there can be other reasons why the devil doesn't flee. I don't have all the answers—not by a long shot. Sometimes I really do think there's just an onslaught of demons that come one after another. You command one to flee, and there's another right there to take its place. But what I do know is this: If we worship God in the midst of the battle, He will war against our enemies. So while we shouldn't hesitate to go on the offensive against our enemies with revelation from the Holy Spirit, I believe worshipping God generates the intimacy with His heart, the faith in His name

and the humility we need to remain victorious in warfare no matter how many devils come rushing our way.

Jennifer LeClaire is news editor at Charisma. She is also the author of several books, including *The Spiritual Warrior's Guide to Defeating Jezebel*. You can email Jennifer at [@](#) or visit her website [here](#). You can also join Jennifer on Facebook or follow her on Twitter.