

The Oft-Overlooked Key to Get the Devil to Flee

Though temptation may be extremely enticing, falling to it isn't automatic. We can't avoid personal responsibility by claiming, "The devil made me do it!" No, the Bible assures that we are never tempted beyond our abilities to overcome. In fact, it promises that with each temptation, there is a way of escape (1 Cor. 10:13). One of these ways of escape is offered in the Book of James: "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7b).

The question for many is: "What does it mean to resist?" The Greek word for *resist* is *anthistemi*, which simply means to "stand against." As I explore in my book, *Activating the Power of God's Word*, there are numerous ways to stand against the enemy. Worship, fasting and declaring Scripture are some great ones for starters.

The Key to Spiritual Warfare Power

Whatever method, there's a single, crucial key to them all that's often overlooked. In fact, without this component, our spiritual warfare strategies have no power. The bookends that James provided with his promise that the devil will flee provides the answer. He opened with a charge: "Submit yourself therefore to God" (James 4:7). And he closed it with something similar: "Draw near to God and he will draw near to you" (James 4:8a). Both the opening and closing affirm the importance of the presence of God as the ultimate means of protection against the devil.

One of my favorite illustrations of the protective power of God's presence is found in David's beloved psalm about the divine shepherd: "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for you are with me;

Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me” (Ps. 23:4). When you enter God’s presence, you enter the custody of the King of kings. Who or what would dare to come against you here and incite the full force and fury of the Almighty?

Where Satan Can Look but Can’t Touch

I love what David says next: “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies” (Ps. 23:5a). This image is extraordinary! In God’s presence you have the freedom to feast without fear. The enemy may peer in and salivate, but that’s all he can do. Yes, in God’s presence, the devil can look, but he can’t touch.

I can’t stress this enough—time with God is essential for victory in spiritual battles. You can sing every battle hymn of praise, make every declaration of victory or fast for weeks, but these are all vain repetitions if they are not done out of a life that’s grounded in communion with God. After all, it is God’s presence that gives any of these actions their power.

How to Draw Near to God

Thankfully, spending time with God isn’t difficult. Unlike David, you don’t have to go to any particular place to draw near to Him. Not a temple. Not even a church building. No, Jesus opened the way for anywhere and anytime access into God’s courts. You can enter at any moment through prayer, worship or time in the Word.

Whenever and wherever you draw near to God, be assured that He draws near to you. And when He is near, you have the full power and protection of His presence, which keeps you ready and able to resist—stand against—any of Satan’s devices.

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