

1 Peter 5:8-9

1Pe 5:8 (NKJV) Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. ⁹ Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

As your pastor, I hope that you have a strong, strong belief in the God of the Bible and what He has done for you. However, I also pray that you have a strong belief in the devil and that you fully understand who he is and what he is able to do in your life. I say this because one of Satan's greatest strategies is to convince the world that he does not even exist. He is always whispering to people that "*I am not here, I do not exist.*" He is the master counterfeiter. Whatever God does, he tries to duplicate it with a diabolical replication. Religion is his greatest success story. He is thrilled to have people go to a religious church and to think that all is right between them and God.¹ Sunday religion may be the single greatest weapon he has ever devised and replicated.

We actually have a special word to give a worldly name to the "**principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this age, and spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places**" as described in [Ephesians 6:12](#). That word is the "occult" and it comes from a Latin word "*occultus*" that means that which is hidden, secret, and mysterious. The occult specializes in dealing with what is seen as supernatural, and with the presence of demonic beings. Under this heading we have witchcraft, magic, palm reading, horoscopes, fortune telling, Ouija boards, tarot cards, Satanism, Spiritism, crystal balls, astrology, black mass, fire walking, ghosts, hypnotism, parapsychology, ESP, and psychic surgery.² We can add to all of that demons and demon possession. It would be foolish not to think that there is supernatural warfare that is taking place in that realm which we cannot see. It is a battle between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan, and the location of this battle is the planet Earth. [1 John 3:8](#) declares,

1Jn 3:8 (NKJV) He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

When we read the Gospels, it is clear that Jesus dealt with both the devil and with his demons. He was constantly casting out demons.

Satan has many names that are used to describe both his character and his nature. Without any question, he is the supreme opponent. He is someone who wants to completely ruin our lives, especially eternally. The word Peter uses in v8 is "**devil**" or "*diabolos*" (Gr.) and it means a slanderer, someone who falsely accuses and defames another, and who does everything possible to divide people and destroy their lives without any reason. He is constantly accusing you in some way to your own conscience. Generally if you do something that is wrong, he will try to get you to believe that you are not really a Christian. He might say something like "*How can you be a Christian and do what you just did?*" If he can take away your assurance, then for the most part he can render you to be spiritually powerless and ineffective. This is one of those areas where you have to understand the difference between condemnation which comes from the devil and conviction which comes from the Holy Spirit. Both the devil and the Holy Spirit will

¹ McDowell, 121, 128, 133.

² McDowell, 10.

confront you about some sin in your life, but for completely different reasons. By condemning you, the devil is seeking to bring about harm and ruin in your life. He wants to cripple you. However, when the Holy Spirit convicts you, it is to restore you, to cleanse you, and to show you the power of forgiveness. You must always remember [Romans 8:1](#) which says,

Ro 8:1 (NKJV) *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.*

So, when you feel condemned, worthless, rotten for your failure, that is not the Holy Spirit. He does not condemn someone who is eternally forgiven. However, he will bring about a kind of holy remorse and a righteous troubling, but you will not feel condemned by Him. He will never condemn you. Somebody is going to ask a very reasonable and vital question. They are going to say “*Gary, how can I know the difference between the devils voice and the voice of the Holy Spirit?*” I think it is really quite easy to discern, but it takes some effort on your part. It is just a matter of spending time with him. The more time that you spend in the Word of God, the more the Holy Spirit will speak to you. He will encourage you, correct you, reprove you, and in the process you will come to know His voice and to discern the difference between His voice and the voice of the enemy. If you are rarely or never in the Word, I doubt very seriously that you will be able to have any discernment relative to who may be speaking to you.

A second name to describe him is “**Satan**” or “*Satanas*” (Gr.). and it comes from a Hebrew word for adversary. In [Revelation 9:11](#) he is called “**Abaddon**” and “**Apollyon**”, both of which refer to an angel who destroys.³ If you are going to be sober and vigilant about what Satan is trying to do in your life, then you have to understand that he will never reveal himself to you as a “**roaring lion**” – never. He is tricky, deceitful, so he comes to you as an “**angel of light**”. [2 Corinthians 11:14](#) declares,

2Co 11:14 (NKJV) *And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.*

One of his primary weapons for achieving his destructive plans for your life is that he is always tempting you in the area of pleasure. Sin can never bring you happiness, but it can bring you pleasure, and the devil knows that. He will try to convince you that what God forbids is really something that is quite good. He may say that sex outside of marriage is really very good, but it is one of the most destructive areas that two people can entertain. It is the seedbed for jealousy, resentment, and ultimately divorce. He may say that wanting to get rich is fine, but it will never bring personal satisfaction, only a thirsting for more. It will cause you to change your focus from the spiritual and eternal to that which is worldly and temporal at best. [1 Timothy 6:9](#) says,

1Ti 6:9 (NKJV) *But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.*

He may convince you that drinking and carousing are fun and enjoyable, but [Proverbs 20:1](#) says,

Pr 20:1 (NKJV) *Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise.*

The areas in which the devil may seek to deceive you are endless, and the only hope that you have to defeat his schemes against you is your rock solid belief that the Word of God is true and will always

³ Strong, *Abaddon*, 3.

yield to your life the very best possible. You must have an unwavering faith in the trustworthiness of God's Word. It is your only hope in a world that is ruled by the author of deceit and illusion.

This was the serpent's tactic in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve, and nothing has changed. If he can just get you thinking that what God asks you to do in your life is not going to be enjoyable and will leave you miserable and unsatisfied, then he has you. He has sank his hook into you, and it will be very difficult to get loose. Listen carefully. You may be struggling with something in your life right now that is painful to you, it distresses you, it anguishes and troubles you. The first decision that you have to make, and this is critical to your success, is whether or not you are going to do what God wants you to do, or are you going to forfeit God's will and do what you think will bring you relief. If you choose relief over obedience, you have made a grave error in judgment. You have to decide which path you are going to take, and the enemy is constantly tempting you to do what you want to do as opposed to what you know God wants you to do. Just stop and think for a moment about how the serpent tricked Eve in the Garden. He cast doubt on what God had commanded them to do, and made it appear that God's way was not going to benefit them at all, but that they would actually be losing a great deal if they obeyed God. Very bad choice. I am sure that it was not long after that decision that they painfully understood what had just happened to them and how the devil had deceived them. I am sure they wanted to take back that wrong decision, but that is not the way it works. If you willfully choose to disobey God and forsake His best for your life, there will be consequences that you will not enjoy. It is called the law of sowing and reaping.

The devil has many other names that we simply do not have time to discuss. He is called the tempter, the father of lies, the lord of death, Beelzebub, Belial, the evil one, the ruler of this world, and the prince of the power of the air. So, if we take all of these names together, we can say that the devil is a very formidable angelic adversary who slanders you and is seeking to destroy your life without any reason to do so other than his absolute hatred of anyone or anything associated with God. We also know that whatever he promises to you will never be fulfilling and will actually bring you to a lower place in your life. I have known people who made the wrong choices, and to this very day they have not recovered. I know one woman who on the surface appeared to be somewhat spiritual, but she had a fatal flaw in her life. She wanted sex more than she wanted God. So, she chose sex over God, and to this day she has completely abandoned Christ and is living with some guy that could be her son. She believed Satan's lies and yielded her life to his promptings. For every moment of temporary pleasure there is an eternal loss that cannot be measured. I am sure that for many people who make these kind of wrong choices that they found that their bad decision became a place of even greater dissatisfaction. I have said it many, many times, but it is a form of judgment for God to give you what you want. You can never disobey God and expect for things to get better for your life.

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