

## 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. <sup>9</sup> Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.**

This morning we want to try and determine how we can practically “**resist**” the devil. Obviously, it is not an easy task to resist someone that you cannot see and do not hear. If I were to ask you “*Where is the devil?*”, what would you see. In verse 9, Peter only gives us one way to do that when he says to be “**steadfast in the faith**”. The word “**resist**” is the Greek word “*antihistemi*” and it means to stand firm against, to oppose.<sup>1</sup> It is the same word that we find in [Ephesians 6:13](#) which says,

**Eph 6:13 (NKJV) Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.**

The same word is used in [James 4:7](#) which says,

**Jas 4:7 (NKJV) Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.**

This is a word that refers specifically to someone being in a face to face type confrontation with an enemy where they stand firm against someone else’s onset, and they oppose them with a very firm determination. It is also an aorist imperative which creates a kind of immediate urgency.

Now, what is actually critical in our understanding of this word “**resist**”, and this is very important, is that one on one you are no match for the devil. In the beginning, he was the most powerful of all of God’s angels, and he still retains much of that power and knowledge that he had then. So, the idea here is not that of actually fighting with the devil or his spiritual forces, but much more of standing your ground in the face of their attacks on your life. He will attack you, he will attack your marriage, he will attack your family, he will attack your commitment to Christ, and when he does, you have to “**withstand**” ([Ephesians 6:13](#)) his attacks on your life. Stated another way, the word “**resist**” refers much more to a defensive posture than it does an offensive posture. If you knew that someone was coming to your house to harm you, you would build up certain defenses against what you were expecting to happen.

It is almost funny to me when I listen to people commanding the devil to flee, or what they call “taking authority” over the devil or “binding the devil” as if the devil even cares about them or what they are saying. Honestly, I have no idea what either of those statements even mean spiritually. He never even knows that they say anything, and it would not matter if he did. I personally cannot find one single place where God commands believers to attack the devil with these spiritual formulas and prayers where believers find themselves speaking to the devil as if he hears them. The apostles were given special powers to cast out demons and to deal with demonic forces. [Matthew 10:1](#) says,

**Mt 10:1 (NKJV) And when He had called His twelve disciples to *Him*, He gave them power *over* unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.**

[Luke 9:1-2](#) says,

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<sup>1</sup> Zodhiates, *antihistemi*, 178.

**Lk 9:1 (NKJV) Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. <sup>2</sup> He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.**

Paul speaking about his own ministry in [2 Corinthians 12:12](#) says,

**2Co 12:12 (NKJV) Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.**

Listen. The devil is not afraid of you just because you quote some Scripture to him that you have memorized. He did not cower when Jesus resisted his temptations in [Matthew 4](#), and he actually made plans to come back and tempt Him more. If the devil had no hesitation to resist the very Son of God, why would any of us think that he was afraid of us or something that we could say to him. I think that when Christians start all of their rebuking of the devil that he just sits there and laughs at them. In fact, he wants them to think that they are making a difference – like he is afraid of what they are doing to him. You have absolutely no personal power over the devil. The power to overcome the enemy and his schemes to destroy your life is in your obedience to the Word of God.

Be assured that demonic forces will attack you in many different ways, and that is why we are told to flee immorality, to flee from idolatry, to flee from the love of money, and to flee from youthful lusts. All of these are what we would call doorways into your life, portals to enter into your life in a damaging way. [1 John 2:15](#) says,

**1Jn 2:15 (NKJV) Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.**

If you become engaged in any of these areas, you should have no expectation that you will have any kind of victory over the devil and his demonic forces. You may be an angry person, you may have bitterness in your heart, you may never spend any time in God's Word, but find time for anything and everything else in your life. If that is the case and that is how you live your life, you are deceived and are to be highly pitied. You have no understanding whatsoever of what it means to even be a Christian, nevertheless live like one. You simply cannot live in constant sin, continual spiritual neglect, or outright disobedience to what you know is contrary to what God wants you to do and be victorious over the schemes of the devil to destroy your life. He will destroy your life. You have no chance. You are his next victim under those circumstances. I am afraid for Christians who still have not figured out that they simply are not taking God seriously in their life. What an incredibly dangerous place to find yourself.

Whether you realize it or not, Satan is engaged in a constant battle with the holy angels of God. Think about that for just a second – fighting with holy angels. Listen to what was said about what happened when Satan was actually cast out of heaven. This picture is described for us in [Revelation 12:7-8](#),

**Rev 12:7 (NKJV) And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, <sup>8</sup> but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. <sup>9</sup> So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.**

Now, what is important about this word “**resist**” is that it is what God has told us to do. There are so many areas of the Christian life where each of us are totally insufficient. We really have no power at all, and especially against a very powerful and deceptive enemy that we cannot even see. Even a word like “**resist**” which is an aorist imperative verb is a word that requires a kind of supernatural enabling to accomplish. It is not something that any of us should think that we have the power in and of ourselves to accomplish. Listen very carefully. It is the Spirit of God who lives inside of you that gives you the power and the desire to obey God’s Word. If that is the case, and it is, then you **MUST** ask yourself several basic questions relative to the Holy Spirit’s work in your life. Is your life really under the control and influence of the Holy Spirit? Are you constantly being led by the Spirit of God, or are you still making all of the decisions for your life? Have you quenched and grieved the Holy Spirit by your lack of obedience and lack of commitment to Him? If your answer is “Yes” to any of these questions, then there is a very good chance that you have no power to stand against or to resist the devil when he decides to disrupt your life. Maybe you have sin in your life that you know is sin, but you are way too proud to let God deal with it.

So, what does all of that mean? Well, it means that you have no chance of resisting the attacks of the devil. He is way too smart and way too deceptive for you to be able to resist him. Peter is very clear in v9 when he simply says that you are to be “**steadfast in the faith**”. Listen carefully. You will never be able to resist the devil until you first submit your life to God and to obedience to His Word. I love what John wrote in [1 John 2:14](#) when he said,

**1Jn 2:14 (NKJV) I have written to you, fathers, because you have known Him *who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one.***

This is how you are able to “**overcome the wicked one**”. This is how you are able to prevail and be victorious and defeat all of the schemes and the wiles and the methods that the devil and his forces will use against you – but not before.

The word “**faith**” in the phrase “**steadfast in the faith**” is referring specifically to the body of the truth that we call the Bible. Notice that it says “**the faith**”, not just “**faith**”. That is a very critical observation – “**the faith**”. It refers to the Christian faith, a firm and abiding belief in Jesus, in the gospel, and in the truth of God’s Word. If you are inconsistent and always wavering, never willing to change what you know God wants you to change in your life, then be assured that you have no chance to defeat the devils schemes against your life. You are just a “sitting duck” for whatever he wants to do in your life. You have to get this right, you have to understand what we are addressing here. You resist Satan with truth, but if you do not know the truth, or if you do not obey the truth that you do know, then you will be defeated. You cannot be victorious in the Christian life by disobeying what you know God wants you to obey. You can resist that reality all that you want, but you will never overcome the enemy. Your Christian life will turn into an utter nightmare for you.

Please appreciate that Satan and his demonic forces will lie to you, they will deceive you, and they will do everything in their power to undermine your faith. You must not only be anchored in the truth of God’s Word, but you **MUST** implement what you know God wants you to do. I think that there are many Christians who seem to think that they are the exception to all of this. They hear the Word of God,

they understand the Word of God, but they refuse to do what it says. They will do anything and everything else but obey the truth of Scripture. I can preach week after week after week and you never, never implement one thing that we talk about into your life. Where do you think that will lead you? How do you think that will work out for you? It is not that you just learn sound doctrine, but that you implement that truth into your life. If you know that God does not want you to talk in a demeaning way to someone, then do not talk in a demeaning way to someone. That is your only biblical option. You may choose to say what you want, but it will not yield good fruit in your life. That is a fact. If God wants you to forgive someone for their failure, that is your only option. What is it about all of this that we simply do not get? God does not want you to curse, to have bad habits, to get drunk, to be immoral, to neglect His Word, to ignore your marriage partner, to be unfaithful to His church, to be an angry and bitter person, to look at pornography, to be spiteful with people, etc., etc., etc. We all know this. We all know what God wants, but keep finding ways to ignore God's Word and rather choose to do what we want to do. If you find yourself in that spiritual rat race, then please do not blame God when life simply does not work out the way you want it to work out. I would go so far as to not even blame the devil. You make your choices and then your choices make you. You will reap what you sow.

Now, when I read [1 Peter 5:8-9](#), I see three specific areas that are important for you to embrace. First, you must have a strong, working knowledge of “**the faith**”, and of what the Christian life is really all about. It is always about submitting your life and your will to Jesus Christ – nothing less. Anything less is a complete aberration of what it even means to be a Christian. You must know who you are in Christ and what Christ has accomplished for you. Listen to what you have in [Ephesians 1:7-14](#),

**Eph 1:7 (NKJV) In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace <sup>8</sup> which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, <sup>9</sup> having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, <sup>10</sup> that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth--in Him. <sup>11</sup> In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, <sup>12</sup> that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. <sup>13</sup> In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, <sup>14</sup> who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.**

This is who you are and what you have. [Colossians 1:13-14](#) says,

**Col 1:13 (NKJV) He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed *us* into the kingdom of the Son of His love, <sup>14</sup> in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.**

Your life must be rooted in who you are in Christ and what He has done for you. You must embrace these realities and live in a way that reflects what He has made you. You must have faith in what God has done for you. Whatever your mind accepts is what you will choose to obey. If you think that it is okay to be disobedient to God, then you will choose disobedience over obedience. If I can say it another way, you want your position to dominate and control your practice. Only you can make that decision.

The second area is that the key to be victorious in the Christian life is humility, and that comes from v5-7 where the words “**humility**” or “**humble**” are used three times. Let me say it the way that I think Peter is saying it here. If you think that you can live without being totally dependent on God to lead you and to guide your life, then you are deceived. If you think that you can get away with constantly disobeying and ignoring the Word of God, then you are terribly deceived. If you think that making choices that you know are contrary to the Scriptures will work out for you, then you are deceived. Every once in a while I hear someone say something like “*All I need in heaven is just a little dinky room, nothing fancy. I will be totally happy.*” Well, in my mind that is nothing but deep seated pride and arrogance. This is the man or woman who does not take who they are and what they have in Christ very seriously at all. This is their way of saying, “*I am going to live however I want to live and just live with the results.*” That is pure pride. It is totally contrary to how God wants to work in your life. Your attitude should be that I want to be everything that God has designed me to be, and nothing less.

Thirdly is that your position in Christ places you in a place of intense spiritual conflict. Once you know who you are in Christ and what you have in Him, at that moment the enemy wants to do everything he can do to neutralize and nullify your life. He has no limitations as to how he may choose to hurt you, and he will have no regrets in doing so. He will attack you and he will attack those you love. You must resist him with the truth. You must be obedient to God’s Word. The truth is what defeats his lies and his deception. You must be submitted fully to what you know to be the will of God for your life.

The more these three realities grip you, the more you will be sustained by them. You must know the Word of God and who you are in Christ, you must be humble before God, and you must know that you have a very real enemy who will oppose your Christian life. You do not have to live a defeated, half-hearted, disobedient Christian life. You do not have to live that way. You are in Christ, and Christ is in you. How do you resist the devil? It is by being steadfast and unwavering to the Word of God and to Christ. Humble obedience to the Word of God and faith in what it says is your protection. You must have and maintain an unwavering confidence in its authority and in its power to protect you from the wiles and schemes of the devil. May God help you to see and understand these vital truths for your life.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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