



Resist the Devil

“Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you” (James 4:7).

How are we supposed to resist the devil? Are we supposed to stand up to him day to day, approaching him boldly with confidence to rebuke his attacks against us because God has our back? There are many teachers out there today that put a lot of emphasis on us in spiritual warfare. They say we must fend off the devil, for the battle belongs to us.

And Paul does tell us to *“put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.”* (Ephesians 6:11-12).

Sounds like we’re struggling against the devil and his powers, doesn’t it? Actually, no. This armor of God consists of Truth, Righteousness, the Gospel, Faith, Salvation, and the Word of God (Ephesians 6:14-17). Most (or all) of these are things God does for us. God’s Truth keeps us upright. God’s Righteousness, Salvation, and our Faith protect us from the devil’s attacks. The Gospel makes our walk through all terrain possible, and the Word of God convicts and discerns *“the thoughts and intents of the heart”* (Hebrews 4:12b).

Some people would say this armor is entirely God’s work for us—others would agree that nearly all of it is. Either way, this armor is effective only when we fix our eyes on *“Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith,”* (Hebrews 12:2a), because He is ultimately the source of these things in our lives. We become weak and our armor ineffective when we look to what we can do on our own, for we are to

“be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might” (Ephesians 6:10), not our own strength. We need to be like young David, who told the Philistines, *“the LORD does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the LORD’S and He will give you into our hands”* (1 Samuel 17:47). Yes, the battle is the Lord’s! Throughout the Old and New Testaments, God fights the battles for His people. Even the archangel, Michael told the devil, *“The Lord rebuke you!”* (Jude 1:9b). Michael did not say, “I rebuke you!” Here, the greatest of angels submitted the situation to God because he knew the battle is the Lord’s.

You see, the devil can gain ground in our lives if he can convince us to fight him. He’s like a bully who is provoking us to come out and give him our best shot. He knows he can defeat us when we are looking at him instead of Jesus. But Jesus did not want us to fight on His behalf—He told the disciples that *“when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not worry about how or what you are to speak in your defense, or what you are to say; for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say”* (Luke 12:11-13). We are to be vessels for His Spirit, and if we submit ourselves to God, He fights the battle for us! This is our toughest struggle—to submit ourselves to God and keep our eyes fixed on Him, so that, just as Moses declared to the Israelites, *“The Lord will fight for you while you keep silent”* (Exodus 14:15), *“for the Lord your God is the one who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you”* (Deuteronomy 20:4). This doesn’t mean we always get the outcome we think is best, and this has frustrated many of us at times. We, like some of the Israelites don’t always see what God does as victory, but it is! For everything He does is for His eternal glory, which He shares with us in eternity. Amen.