

Watchman Nee:

IV. HOW TO OVERCOME THE TEMPTER

"He who overcomes will inherit these things" (Rev. 21:7).

A. Knowing That It Is Not We Who Are Fighting against the Devil, but God

The devil is in the supernatural realm, while we are in the natural realm. Furthermore, we are not warring against flesh and blood but against him who holds the authorities of darkness. For a person in the natural realm to war against spiritual forces in the supernatural realm means certain defeat. Hence, our warfare must be one in which we ask God to fight for us. We must take God's almighty strength as our strength. Every time there is a battle, we must acknowledge that this is a battle between God and the devil. We are merely choosing with our will God's victory and opposing Satan's interest. If we do this, God's supernatural, almighty strength will storm Satan, and Satan's defeat will be sure. Romans 16:20 says, "Now the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly." Satan is under the Lord Jesus' feet. If we are joined to the Lord, Satan will be under our feet also. It is not we who are crushing Satan under our feet; it is the God of peace who will crush Satan under our feet.

B. Always Hiding under the Precious Blood of Jesus to Be Saved from Condemnation

What the devil is afraid of the most is the Lord's blood. By shedding His blood, the Lord crushed the head of the devil. The word "crushed" is the proper meaning of the word "bruised" in Genesis 3:15. If the saints continually trust in the precious blood of the Lord and take the stand of Romans 6:11, the devil will be defeated. "And they overcame him [Satan] because of the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 12:11). All of our victories come because of the Lord's blood. Believers are often attacked and accused by Satan because they have given ground to sin, and this has afforded the enemy the opportunity to accuse them. The basis of Satan's attack on us is our sin. We should always take the attitude that sin has no dominion over us. But this alone will not stop the enemy's accusations nor his attacks after the accusations, for subconsciously we continue to leave ground for him. We must continuously hide under the precious blood so that we will not be attacked. It is true that we have sinned, but the blood has redeemed us from sins! Thank the Lord; His blood not only saves us but enables us to be forever victorious in our Christian life.

C. If We Have the Digested Word of God, We Will Overcome

"The word of God abides in you and you have overcome the evil one" (1 John 2:14). God's Word is His word in the Bible. If we keep God's word in our hearts, when accidents occur or dangers come, the Holy Spirit will cause us to remember one or a few verses of Scripture. These words of Scripture will then become our hiding place. If we hide behind these words and believe in the power of these words, the enemy will not be able to do anything. The Scriptures which the Holy Spirit brings to mind will increase our strength and boldness. Every word of God is powerful, living, and operative. If we have God's word dwelling in and filling our hearts, Satan will suffer loss and be defeated.

D. We Must Withstand Him by Exercising Our Will

We have a will within us. This will is like our rudder. If we exercise our will to tell Satan, "I will not allow you to come into my heart; I will not give you this right," surely Satan will retreat from us. However, we must insure that our will is indeed set in this way! If not, the result will be the opposite. On the one hand, we have to obey God, and on the other hand, we have to withstand the devil; then the devil will flee from us (James 4:7). For example, if a hawker comes to sell you merchandise and you are determined in your will that you will not buy, your resistance will naturally cause him to go away. But if you bargain with him, you will surely end up buying his merchandise. Many Christians today do not have a resolute will in resisting the devil. They bargain with him, and of course, the devil ends up selling his cargo. When we withstand the devil, we must exercise our faith (1 Pet. 5:9) and speak to Satan with God's power: "In the name of the Lord Jesus who has overcome you, I resist you." After doing this, we must exercise our faith; reckon that since we have resisted the devil, God, based on His word, will drive him away; and praise God for it. Satan has fled, and we should be more than conquerors through the Lord who loves us. When Satan tempted the Lord, He did not leave him any ground; He resisted

and rebuked him immediately (Matt. 16:23). We should be as alive in our awareness as the Lord was, and our word of resistance should be as firm as His.

E. Calling On God Immediately without Consulting the Devil

"Michael,...when he contended with the devil,...said, The Lord rebuke you" (Jude 9). Many believers are not able to call on God to rebuke Satan the moment he acts. On the contrary, they listen to the devil concerning his designs. By then it is too difficult to resist him any further. The moment Satan opens his mouth, we must call on God to rebuke him, so that he cannot even finish his sentence. We must also believe that God will rebuke him immediately and that Satan will no longer trouble us, despite his putting up a fierce front when he is rebuked. A certain believer once said, "To me, we should allow Satan to finish what he has to say, so that we will know what to answer him." Wrong! We do not have to answer Satan. We should stop him from speaking to us. Otherwise, we will be like Eve, who listened to Satan's words and answered him, with the result being many vexations and sin. Do not worry that you may lose your friendship with Satan. Do not worry that you may be too cruel to him. When he comes, ask the Lord to rebuke him. In this way, we will always be victorious in the Lord.

F. Not Giving Ground to Satan Even in the Smallest Things

Many times we are careful to guard against Satan's stratagems in the great things, yet we are often not watchful in the small things. As a result, we often fail and fall into the devil's deception through one thought or one word. Those who are faithful in small things are faithful in great things. We must be careful not to "give place to the devil" (Eph. 4:27). "Give no opportunity to the opposer for reproach" (1 Tim. 5:14). If Satan does not have a "factory," he will not be able to manufacture sin. If we leave some ground for him in our heart, even if only a small patch, he will use it to create sin. We should not neglect the small things just because they are small. We must realize that Satan is able to invade our whole being through these small things. What is it to give place to the devil? It is to have (1) unrighteousness, (2) sin, and (3) the fear of him in our hearts. It means that we do not have an active will to resist him. On the contrary, we are afraid of provoking him through our resistance. If this ground is not taken from him, the enemy will never be driven away. This reminds me of a story. A certain traveler set up his tent in the desert. A mule, which was outside freezing, asked the man to allow its head to come inside the tent. After a while, it asked him to allow its neck to come inside the tent. After a while, it asked him to allow its two feet to come in as well. Soon, its whole body was inside the tent, and the traveler had no place to stand. Now the mule would not leave, and eventually, the traveler had to leave the tent with the mule inside. Today's Christians are careless about the little things. As a result, this little leaven leavens the whole lump. The devil will try to gain an inch in order to gain a foot. We must trust in the Lord's power to destroy the devil's "factory" within us.

G. Maintaining a Love for Men

"But whom you forgive anything, I also forgive;...that we may not be taken advantage of by Satan" (2 Cor. 2:10-11). A heart that does not love men nor forgive men will give place to the devil. An unforgiving spirit opens the door to the work of the devil. If the believers were more aware of the things in the spiritual realm, they would stop being unloving and unforgiving. All the opposition and persecution seems to come from men, but actually, every heartbreaking word, every misunderstanding, and every humiliation is motivated by the evil spirits behind the scenes. We are not warring against flesh and blood but against the evil spirits. Hence, no matter what comes our way, we should ask the Lord to rebuke Satan and to destroy his work. If we love others and forgive them, we will be more than conquerors.

H. Being Particularly Careful with Our Words

"But let your word be, Yes, yes; No, no; for anything more than these is of the evil one" (Matt. 5:37). The devil does not want man's word to be "Yes, yes" or "No, no." He wants man's yes to appear as no and his no to appear as yes. I heard one zealous believer once say, "I do not seem to be able to control my mind. Sometimes unconsciously, I make yes as no and no as yes. Even when I make up my mind, I cannot free myself of this." Before a person believes in the Lord, his mind is blinded by the devil (2 Cor. 4:4), but after he believes, the Holy Spirit enters into his spirit and enlightens him. Then gradually (for no man can understand all the truth the moment he believes) He removes the veils from his mind, causing such a one to submit to the Holy Spirit and to consecrate himself. In this way, his mind is renewed and transformed (Rom. 12:2). After the old man is put off, the spirit of his mind is renewed (Eph. 4:22-23). As a result, he can speak what he intends to speak; his yes will be yes, and his no will be no. Although the believers possess a wonderful life, in their minds there are always

unclean thoughts and rebellious intentions against the truth. This is due to the evil spirits, who inject evil thoughts into the believers' minds and cause them to lodge there. Sometimes, they try to confuse the believers' minds and disable their reasonings. As a result, the believers do not say what they intend to say; their yes becomes a no, and their no becomes a yes. This sickness can only be removed by prayer and by the Holy Spirit taking over the whole being. We know that if anyone does not stumble in word, this one is a perfect man.

I. Being Especially Watchful When Contacting Others

"Looking to yourself lest you also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1). It is easy to lead others to the right path. But it is difficult to lead others to the right path without deviating in one's own thoughts, words, and conduct. Many believers desire to lead others, only to find that they are being led by others. Although they may be leading others, they themselves are led into others' sins. Hence, the workers should carefully look everywhere for Satan's deceptions, for there is not a day when we can say that we are in a position free from danger.

J. Always Declaring That the Enemy Is under Us

"I have given you the authority to tread...over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you" (Luke 10:19). All the enemy has is "power," but what we have is "authority." Although our individual "power" is not that great, we have received "authority" from the Lord to suppress the enemy. We do not have to compete with him in "power"; we need only to give him the command with our "authority." "Power" cannot prevail against "authority"! Therefore, we should first join ourselves to the Lord's death and secure this authority. We should then exercise our faith to use this authority moment by moment to overcome and subdue all the powers of darkness. If we do this, we will overcome regardless of the circumstances.