

“Resist the Devil and He Will Flee from You”

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

- A. God gave humankind free will to choose between good and evil - Deut. 30:19
- B. However, God also requires that we say “No” to some things - Titus 2:11-12
- C. Yet, we do not always say “No” when we should. Deeply ingrained habits and pervasive temptations are especially hard to break - Rom. 7:15, 19
- D. How can we learn to say “No” more consistently? Where do we get the power to resist temptation?

I. WILL POWER CAN CARRY US ONLY SO FAR

- A. There is much to be said for determining and purposing that we will not do wrong - Dan. 1:8
 - 1. Often, we are not decisive enough in our resistance to sin. Often, our decision is little more than a maybe or hope so. We do not fully make up our minds and commit to not sinning.
 - 2. We need to say a more emphatic “No” to sin.
- B. Will power alone is not enough to fight against the power of the Adversary.

II. THE POWER OF GODLY EMOTIONS

- A. There is great power in strong feelings
 - 1. In a battle between the heart and head, the heart nearly always wins
 - 2. When there is something we strongly feel we want to do, very little can stand in our way.
- B. We often take it for granted that our emotions are going to negatively influence our decision-making. We assume that the best decisions are those made on a rational, rather than emotional, basis.
- C. But God gave us a three-part mind: intellect, emotions, and will. Our emotions are just as much a part of our thinking apparatus as our intellect and will.
 - 1. We should not expect ourselves to be pure reasoning machines. We are mind, heart, and will - Mark 12:30
 - 2. We must enlist our emotions in the cause of doing what is right.
- D. Don’t just think “No” to sin; feel “No” toward sin.

III. THE DANGER OF DE-EMPHASIZING THE ROLE OF EMOTION IN RELIGION

- A. In the religious world at large, many determine what is right simply by what they feel is right. Feelings do not constitute authority
- B. Many make their commitment to God on emotions alone, but if the mind is not involved, the emotions pass and with them the commitment. Emotional commitments are not stable
- C. Denominational preachers use emotions to manipulate and control adherents. God’s word guides and directs us without manipulation or abuse
- D. In the Lords Church, we have rightly taught against these abuses of emotion.
 - 1. But have we gone to the opposite extreme, eliminating strong emotions from our service to God?

2. Have we reduced our service to God to a matter of rational argument and will power?
3. The fact is, intellect and will power alone, unaided by emotion, are no match for the Adversary. In our efforts to keep the head in control, the heart is left behind
4. We cannot leave out one third of our being in resisting the Devil. He attacks the whole person, and we must fight back with the whole person

IV. PUTTING OUR HEART BACK INTO OUR SERVICE TO GOD

- A. The Scriptures teach that the drive to resist temptation has as much to do with the heart as the head.
 1. We obey the Gospel "from the heart" - Rom. 6:17
 2. Hope purifies us - 1John 3:3
 3. The grace of God teaches us to deny ungodliness - Titus 2:11-12
 - a. It is not merely rational understanding of God's law that keeps us doing what is right. If you believe that, you are destined to fail
 - b. It is also appreciation from the heart of God's grace
- B. If we are not motivated by God's grace and love and respond to it with love and gratitude, we will quickly become self-righteous
 1. We would have no trouble living our love for God if we understood from the heart how fortunate we are to be loved by Him. Godly zeal is the product of gratitude - Luke 7:36-50
 2. If our love for the Lord is lukewarm, it is because we do not believe we have anything very serious to be forgiven. A passionate pursuit of God is only generated when we face where we are without His grace.
 3. The most powerful motivating force at our disposal in resisting the Devil is a deeply felt appreciation for the forgiveness God mercifully gives us
 - a. 1Cor. 15:9-10; 2Cor. 5:14-15
- C. The role of our hearts in resisting the Devil
 1. Humility, recognition of one's emptiness and helplessness, genuine penitence - Matt. 5:3-6
 2. The desire for God's forgiveness - Luke 15:18-19
 3. Grateful, heartfelt relief, and thankfulness - 1Tim. 1:12-15
 4. Deep love for God Who loved us first in spite of ourselves - Luke 7:47
 5. The pure delight and fulfillment of lifelong service - Eph. 3:7-8
- D. The Scriptures consistently point to love as the primary ingredient in our relationship to God.
 1. Jesus pointed to the central importance of love - Matt. 22:35-40
 2. Jesus taught that we will keep His commandments if we love Him - John 14:15; 1John 5:2
 3. It is love that fulfills the law - Rom. 13:8-10; Gal. 5:13-14
 4. Service to God does not matter if we do not have love - 1Cor. 13:1-3
 5. Love is the purpose of all gospel teaching - 1Tim. 1:5
 6. Love is the greatest of these three: love, hope, and faith - 1Cor. 13:13
 7. The commandments of God are not burdensome when we love Him - 1John 5:3; Matt. 11:28-30

8. It is the love of Christ that compels us to live for Him - 2Cor. 5:14-15
- D. Biblical love involves far more than the emotions. It is a benevolent goodwill that will do the right thing even if one does not feel like it.
1. But to leave out love is to miss the personal element that must be at the heart of our relationship to God.
 2. Joseph's firm "No" to Potiphar's wife was not merely a rational decision. He refused to sin against a God Who meant something to him personally - Gen. 39:9
 3. Joy held Paul steady in the face of death for the Lord - Acts 20:24
 4. What do you believe? It is more than just intellectually apprehending the truth; it is more than wanting to do the truth; if all we invest is our mind and our will, we will fail. We must invest mind, and will, and heart.
 5. "I know the truth and I will to do it, but something is missing." Not, "put your back into it"; put your heart into it.

V. "YES" TO GOD IS BIGGER THAN "NO" TO THE DEVIL

- A. When our hearts from deep love for God yearns to say "Yes" to Him, it will become easier to say "No" to the Adversary.
1. "Reason brings us to the foot of the mountain; it is the industrious will that focuses our eyes toward the mountain peak; but, it is the passionate heart that urges us to climb the slope." (Evelyn Underhill)
 2. Reason is the track, and will is the locomotive; but emotion is the steam that drives the train.
- B. God, Who is the object of our vision, must be a God that we not only know and believe, but also Whom we intensely love from the heart - Mark 12:33; 2John 6

Conclusion:

- A. We fight a losing battle trying to do the first works if we have left our first love
1. Rev. 2:4-5
- B. We will have the strength to say "No" to the devil when we can sincerely and from the heart say "Yes" to God - Psalm 40:8
1. Put your back into it? No, put your heart into it!
 2. Only with the heart and soul and mind working in unison will we successfully resist the Devil and watch him flee from us