

Deepening our Relationship with God

Day 15

I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. John 17:15

Key Thought: God keeps us from the EVIL ONE

For many of us, the events of September 11, 2001 caused us to have a deeper appreciation for the bravery of the men and women who serve us as First Responders. Hundreds of firefighters along with police officers gave their lives in the attempt to save the lives of others. As thousands poured out of the Twin Towers, they ran in, for they had a mission to accomplish, regardless of the difficulty and danger.

As we read John 17:15, the first words of Jesus remind us that He has left us in this world to accomplish a mission...one that is often difficult and for some, dangerous. Jesus very intentionally leaves us in this world to be the Salt that seasons the relationships and situations around us with the presence of Christ and the Light that reveals Christ in the spiritual darkness around us. We looked at this mission in Day 13. Rather than running away from the world, we are to be the presence and voice of Jesus in the world.

But the world around us is not our greatest challenge, neither the people nor the culture. The greatest challenge we face is the one presented by our fierce enemy, Satan. Jesus refers to him as 'the evil one.' Peter warns us of the threat Satan presents in 1 Peter 5:8-9. He refers to Satan as an adversary who acts like a prowling lion, looking for the opportunity to pounce and kill. With this in mind, we are to be sober-minded (self-disciplined, cool-headed) and watchful so he cannot catch us by surprise. Satan will often wear us down and tempt us at our points of weakness. More of us are caught up in sin through the slow 'frog in a kettle' approach than a sudden moment of temptation. Many believers have seen their lives shattered and witness for Christ destroyed through a slow slide into a major sin and moral defeat.

In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus instructs us to ask the Father to, "deliver us from evil (lit. Evil One.)" Here in John 17:15 we see Jesus praying that for us as He asks the Father to 'keep them from the evil one.' James 4:7 tells us that we are to humbly submit ourselves to God and then resist the devil, who will flee from us. Perhaps the most extensive passage on dealing with Satan is Ephesians 6:10-18, and Paul's teaching on the Armor of God. By prayerfully

putting on God's truth, God's righteousness, a commitment to fulfilling the Great Commission, trusting faith at all times, a mind renewed by the Gospel and carrying the Word as a sword we will be able to stand against the attacks Satan sends our way. All of this starts in our prayer closet, as we ask the Father to 'deliver us from evil' and to 'keep us from the evil one.'

We have a mission to accomplish... running into this world with the love and compassion of Jesus Christ, sharing the life giving Gospel through our lives and testimony. By the grace of God, even Satan is unable to stop us!

Questions to Ponder

1. How are you fulfilling your mission to be the salt and light of Jesus Christ? How does this play out at work? At home? In the community?
2. Where is Satan most likely to tempt you? How has he done this in the past? Where do you need to improve your defenses against him?
3. How are you at using the Armor of God in your daily life?
How can you grow in using it?
4. Do you ask the Father to deliver you from 'the Evil One' during your daily prayer time?
Do you ask God to put His armor on you one piece at a time?

Possible Prayer Points

1. Ask God to enable you to live out 1 Peter 5:8-9, being alert and prepared for Satan and his attacks.
2. Pray through Ephesians 6:10-18, asking God to put each piece of armor on you.
3. Ask God to show you how to be a witness for Christ in all areas of your life.

How do you think you should relate with God as a result of Him trying to relate to you in this way?