

How Do You Stop The Devil? (Part 2)

A group of ladies met together for a luncheon. The hostess had asked a Christian friend to present a lesson for spiritual encouragement. In the course of her lesson she talked about *how* to live the Christian life. When asked to explain a couple of verses in the Bible that described God's assistance, she corrected with an explanation that went something like, "You don't understand, you just have to try harder."

My friend who related this story was stunned; I was stunned. It sounded as if God gave us his Holy Word and then left every thing else up to us. If anyone failed, it was because he/she did not *try hard enough*. Is that really the case?

In John 14 we read how Jesus encouraged his disciples just before his arrest and crucifixion:

¹⁶I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that he may be with you forever; ¹⁷that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive....

¹⁸I will not leave you as orphans.

It sure sounds like divine help would follow after Jesus had left the earth.

In Acts 2 we read about Peter presenting the gospel to a large crowd of Jews. Many were pierced to the heart because they realized that they had killed the promised Messiah. They asked what they should do.

³⁸Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as man as the Lord our God will call to Himself.

It sure sounds like assistance from the Holy Spirit was promised to ALL who would make a proper response to Jesus Christ, not just apostles.

So, Christians DO have present-day help, the Holy Spirit. We might not be able to describe 'how' the Spirit helps, but God promised help.

Now, on to the point of today's article. In my January 14th article, I emphasized the need to use self-restraint and say, "No!" to our desires (lusts). In the book of James (4:7) we read:

Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

Is it simply by force of will that we stop the devil? It reminds me of the lesson of the ladies' luncheon lecturer. *If you fall to temptation, you just didn't resist enough. Try harder!!*

However, the key to understanding and to overcoming temptation is found in the words preceding this instruction. Here's the full text:

Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

If I have not submitted to God, then I really am ON MY OWN. If I fail, it is because 'I' have not achieved; because 'I' have not resisted enough! Yet, when I submit to God, I am assured of divine assistance.

I must submit my desires (yes, even my lusts) to God. Instead of depending upon myself to satisfy my urges and longings and needs, I give them up to God trusting that he will fulfill my needs. For example, if I lack career satisfaction, lack financial satisfaction, lack satisfaction in my marriage, or lack satisfaction in other areas of life; I must surrender my desires for satisfaction to God. I must stop striving to fulfill my longings and allow God to satisfy my life.

I must have *faith* in God's promises. I must choose to be *content*.

I can then expect the Spirit's assistance.