

When The Devil Won't Stop

There are times when living the Christian life seems difficult and it is not a problem with temptation. You face challenges that discourage. You are doing your best, but there seems to be little progress. You don't want to give up, and you're NOT giving up, but things can sure become tiresome and frustrating.

This may help...

Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. —2 Cor. 12:7-8

This was a statement written by the Apostle Paul when he was being tormented by a 'thorn in the flesh,' also called 'a messenger of Satan.' It appears to have adversely affected his mission. And what was the central focus of Paul's life?

I do all things for the sake of the gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it. — 2 Corinthians 9:23

Paul's 'thorn in the flesh' was interfering with his ministry, but God assured him that His grace was sufficient. So, Paul accepted God's decision to allow the 'thorn in the flesh' to remain and he declared his *contentment* with God's decision.

Paul was being hampered by insult and persecution; by distress and difficulties and weakness.

Now, think for a moment...

What if Paul had decided to take things into his own hands and personally take action against his persecutors? What if Paul had not been *content* with weakness and difficulty? What if he had taken action to outwit, overpower, and out maneuver his adversary, this *messenger of Satan*? What if Paul operated under HIS own power???

We might speculate, but we know that Paul did not engage in battle against Satan. Look at his solution in verses 9 & 10:

And He [Jesus] said to me [Paul], "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for the sake of Christ; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

Paul had a laser sharp focus on the will of God. He recognized...

- God never promised a life free of difficulties;
- He would have to endure weakness, insults, distress, persecution and difficulties;
- He could be content in his circumstances;
- The power of God was strong when he was weak.

So, what do we draw from this example?

The devil sometimes makes trouble in our lives by putting obstacles in our way. The answer is not to mount an attack on Satan, but rather to...

- Maintain a laser sharp focus on the will of God;
- Be content in our circumstances...even if God does not remove the difficulty;
- Rely on the grace of God to get you through;
- Rely on the power of God to accomplish His will.

When Satan brings difficulties into our life, our joy is in the Lord knowing that he has an eternal home prepared for those who remain faithful to him.

As for Paul, it would seem that difficulties chased him throughout his life on the earth...but not after that!