

Resistance Is Futile

Push Back Against Satan's Schemes

Any loyal *Star Trek* fan knows the terror of the Borg. As they bring their unstoppable and overwhelming technological advantages against the rest of the universe, they announce the foolishness of fighting for freedom, repeating with emotionless certainty: "Resistance is futile." We're in a fight of our own against an enemy that — at times — can seem just as overwhelming. Is it futile to resist evil?

We're modeling our watchfulness after Jesus' watchfulness as we continue our [Cross Training](#) journey. Watchfulness comes when we're spiritually aware, living with readiness, resisting the devil, and full of wisdom. So, what does the Lord want us to know and do to overcome the evil one?

What You Need to Know

Near the beginning of the Bible, we're introduced to a "*crafty*" figure called "*the serpent*" (Gen. 3:1) who cunningly converses with Eve, blurring lines and twisting the truth. That conversation led to humanity's banishment from Eden and a lasting enmity between the woman and the Serpent (Gen. 3:15,23-24). Toward the end of the Bible, John identified the serpent with several of his other aliases: "*the great dragon ... that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world*" (Rev. 12:9).

After his baptism, Jesus faced the devil's temptations for forty days in the wilderness (Luke 4:1-2). Unlike humanity's first meeting with Satan, Jesus met each of the devil's crafty challenges with an accurate word from Scripture (Luke 4:4, 8, 12). And then, "*when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time*" (Luke 4:13).

Today, Christ's followers still face this ancient enemy, who wants to enslave us in fear and darkness (Heb. 2:14-15). Using the language of warfare, James tells us to "*submit*" or surrender to God, and to "*resist the devil*" — to stand against him in fierce opposition (James 4:7). With our dangerous adversary on the prowl, Christians have to stay clear-headed and alert (1 Peter 5:8), resisting with a firm faith and the recognition that we aren't alone in this fight — other believers the world over are standing with us through similar attacks (1 Peter 5:9).

We need to understand Satan's tactics so that we won't be "*outwitted*" through our ignorance of his designs (2 Cor. 2:11). Satan slanders and accuses us (1 Tim. 5:14; Rev. 12:10), brings hardship in times of testing (Rev. 2:10), and snatches up the word before it can take root in the heart (Mark 4:15). Ultimately, he wants to deceptively lead us from our sincere devotion to Christ (2 Cor. 11:2-3).

What You Need to Do

Take bold, decisive action to thwart each attempt of Satan to worm his evil plans into your life. If we aren't vigilant, we can let dangerous habits and influences into our fortified walls like a Trojan Horse. So "*make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires*" (Rom. 13:14). Cut out any danger you can

avoid (Matt. 5:29-30). We can take away some of Satan's power when we forgive others (2 Cor. 2:10-11) and deal with anger and conflict before the devil can seize it as an opportunity (Eph. 4:26-27). We can steal some of his thunder by confessing our sins to each other and keep them from festering in the dark (James 5:16).

Meet temptation with prayer and Scripture (Eph. 6:17-18; Matt. 4:1-11). We need to recognize the limits of our enemy's power, but also recognize our own limitations. We can't naively take this struggle lightly or expect to "foil the tempter's power" (as the hymn says) by ourselves, with our own willpower and wisdom alone (cf. 1 Cor. 10:12). Yet the devil has already been defeated (Heb. 2:14) along with his horde of other evil spiritual powers (Col. 2:15). Those who stand with the Lord are already victors with no need to live afraid (Rom. 8:31-37). And we *can* stand in temptation when we arm ourselves with hope and faith in his ability to save, with his mighty word as our sword, and with righteousness covering our heart (Eph. 6:13-18). Remember that you stand, not by your own strength, but by his (Eph. 6:10).

Look for the way out of the temptation to sin, confident that it is there, even if it's not immediately clear (1 Cor. 10:13). Sin can have a destructive inertia, so whatever it takes, you have to find the way out. As the Lord told Cain, "*if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it*" (Gen. 4:6-7). Resistance can be hard, especially when sinful habits have become ingrained, but it is not futile. Hold onto the Lord, and truly, you are "*able to stand against the schemes of the devil*" (Eph. 6:11).

Through the Week

- **Read** — Matt. 4:1-11; Gen. 3:1-15; Eph. 6:10-18; James 4:4-10; Rev. 12:1-17
- **Reflect** — Ask yourself, "*How has Satan tried to attack me lately?*"
- **Request** — Pray, "*Lord, May I stand in the strength of your might today*" (cf. Eph. 6:10).
- **Respond** — Ask a friend if you can pray for each other to have strength in trial today.
- **Reach Out** — Ask someone, "*What has helped you overcome temptation?*"