

## Resistance – Just Say No.

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**Genesis 39:6** Thus he left all that he (Potiphar) had in Joseph's hand, and he did not know what he had except for the bread which he ate. Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me." But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, my master does not know what *is* with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand. *There is* no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you *are* his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her *or* to be with her. But it happened about this time, when Joseph went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house *was* inside, that she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside.

Joseph had a calling from God. This made a difference to how he responded when tempted. While the temptation was through a woman, the instigator was the enemy of our souls, Satan.

**Daniel 3:8** Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and accused the Jews. They spoke and said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever! You, O king, have made a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, *and* psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the gold image; and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego; these men, O king, have not paid due regard to you. They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up." Then Nebuchadnezzar, in rage and fury, gave the command to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. So they brought these men before the king. Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, "*Is it* true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, *that* you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up? Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, *and* psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, *good!* But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who *is* the god who will deliver you from my hands?" Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and

said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that *is the case*, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver *us* from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.” Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression on his face changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. He spoke and commanded that they heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated. And he commanded certain mighty men of valour who *were* in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, *and cast them* into the burning fiery furnace. Then these men were bound in their coats, their trousers, their turbans, and their *other* garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Therefore, because the king's command was urgent, and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste *and* spoke, saying to his counsellors, “Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?” They answered and said to the king, “True, O king.” “Look!” he answered, “I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.” Then Nebuchadnezzar went near the mouth of the burning fiery furnace *and* spoke, saying, “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come *here*.” Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego came from the midst of the fire. And the satraps, administrators, governors, and the king's counsellors gathered together, and they saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them. Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God! Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this.” Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego in the province of Babylon.

These three young captives from the land of Judea had a clear choice before them that they could not ignore or side-step. Bow down and worship the King's idol or be thrown into the furnace. Sometimes a temptation is presented as the only reasonable option. Who wouldn't want to avoid a fiery death? This was at its heart a simple choice between submitting to God or submitting to a man, albeit a powerful king. To the three Hebrew children the consequences didn't matter – they were happy to leave that to God. They would submit to God and resist the Devil at work in the King and his counsellors. By submitting to God they came through this dire temptation to bring glory and respect to the name of their God.

**Luke 4:1** Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being tempted for forty days by the devil. And in those days He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry. And the devil said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.” But Jesus answered him, saying, “*It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.’*” Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of

time. And the devil said to Him, “All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for *this* has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours.” And Jesus answered and said to him, “**Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.’**” Then he brought Him to Jerusalem, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here. For it is written: *‘He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you,’* and, *‘In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.’*” And Jesus answered and said to him, “**It has been said, ‘You shall not tempt the LORD your God.’**” Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time. Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region.

By coming in a body of flesh and blood, Jesus was subject to usual constraints of this body like hunger and thirst. Satan aimed his temptations at the normal workings of the body – hunger – to get Jesus to misuse His authority to satisfy His own needs. He had come from His Father to do the Father’s will, not His own. Being the ruler of this present age Satan could dangle the prospect of becoming ruler of the world without the cross. The option of descending miraculously from the pinnacle of the temple would be a way to be accepted by the rulers of Israel as the Messiah. However the man Jesus of Nazareth chose to submit to the will of His Father and to oppose the ‘reasonable’ suggestions and provocations of Satan. The consequence of Christ’s resisting Satan was that he fed multitudes, was made Lord and King and was seen ascending up to heaven to reign.

**Acts 5:25** So one came and told them, saying, “Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!” Then the captain went with the officers and brought them without violence, for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned. And when they had brought them, they set *them* before the council. And the high priest asked them, saying, “Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!” But Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said: “We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. Him God has exalted to His right hand *to be* Prince and Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins. And we are His witnesses to these things, and *so also is* the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.”

Submission to God will result in opposition from those, who perhaps unwittingly, serve the God of this world. Flesh and blood will persecute those of the Spirit. The apostles were not preaching the message of repentance and remission of sins through the name of Jesus the Messiah just to annoy the rulers of the people. If folks were annoyed, angry or upset at the preaching of the apostles then that was not really relevant to them. What was relevant to the apostles was that they should obey Him Who commanded them to go into all the world and make disciples. In submitting to Christ’s commands the apostles were opposed to and overcame Satan’s intimidation

**1 Corinthians 10:1** Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of

that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. But with most of them God was not well pleased, for *their bodies* were scattered in the wilderness. Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. And do not become idolaters as *were* some of them. As it is written, "*The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.*" Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God *is* faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear *it*.

The way of escape from temptation is to submit to God. If our bodies are presented to Him as a living sacrifice (which is His will) then we will be better placed to resist the Devil.

**Ephesians 6:10** Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

From this advice of Paul's we should be aware that we are in a war with our enemy, Satan, who will use our bodies, the opinions of others and our own vanity to hinder us from obeying Him who has called us. Satan himself may not be obvious as the one behind the temptations and provocations to disobey and dishonour the God Who bought us with His own Flesh and Blood. We should look beyond the situation and the people Satan may be using so that we do not attempt to fight the situation or person but submit to God and become enabled by Him to wage a successful war against the enemy of our souls. Thankfully God equips us to war in the spiritual realms with all we need.

**Hebrews 11:24** By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.

Moses knew he was chosen to help deliver the people of God from the servitude of Pharaoh. He said no to the privilege and comfort of his Egyptian status as member of the royal household by adoption. Moses by faith saw the reward of intimacy with God and endured all the trouble and opposition that this attracted, both from the enemy and from God's chosen people.

**James 4:7** Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *you* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and *your* joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

Here is the key to victory over temptation; active submission to God daily. Forsaking the stuff of this present age that can be so attractive or intrusive, taking up our cross and following Jesus Christ. In so doing we will still encounter opposition, attempts to divert and hinder our progress. But in proportion to our continued submission to Christ our King through the Spirit we are enabled to actively resist the devil and his temptations.

**1 Peter 5:5** Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to *your* elders. Yes, all of *you* be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for “*God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.*” Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle *you*. To Him *be* the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Those who are humble before God are also humble before men and their brethren. There is great strength and victory to be gained by exercising humility.

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