

Set Free: Knowing Our Enemy

In **II Timothy 2:24-26**, Paul wrote:

And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will (ESV).

If we really want to be set free from our bondage to sin, we have to know who our enemy really is. Sadly, I fear I have lost sight of that at times.

Sometimes, we think other people are the enemies. When we see others in sin, we often get out our big guns to shoot them down as traitors. They are not the enemy; they are captives of the enemy. On the other hand, when we sin, we again see others as the enemy. Like Adam who pointed at Eve when God confronted him with his sin (**Genesis 3:12**), we start looking at our wives, husbands, parents, children, employees, employers, neighbors, friends, and brethren to explain how they are at fault. They are the ones who caused us to sin. If they sinned, provoking us to sin, they are still not the enemy. They are captives as we are now too.

The enemy is Satan. He is a roaring lion seeking someone to devour (**I Peter 5:8**). That someone is us. If we will be delivered from him, we have to know he is the enemy. We must do everything to overcome. We need to see ourselves in the Lord's army fighting Satan every day of our lives.

Sadly, we sometimes subconsciously see God as the enemy. Too often, instead of fighting the battle against Satan, we are busy discussing contract negotiations with God. "Alright Lord, I want the benefit of heaven. Exactly how much praying do I need to do to get that? Exactly how much Bible reading do I need to do to get that? Which tv shows am I allowed to watch, songs am I allowed to listen to, movies am I allowed to attend? How many times do I actually have to make it to the assembly?"

God hasn't set up the assembly, His word, prayer and worship as contract prerequisites to get into heaven. He has simply told us what it will take to overcome the onslaught of the devil. We must not view them as items on a contract checklist, but God's defense against our enemy. How much defense do we need against Satan?

One thing that has helped me is a mindset switch. Instead of figuring how much praying, Bible study, and other spiritual activity I have to do to please God, I am figuring how much I have to do to escape the devil. When I have realized that I am in a fight for my eternal life against Satan, those activities don't seem like chores. They are necessities I am happy to do because I want to win. Only through God can we win.

More on this to come.

—Edwin L. Crozier