

# Resisting the Enemy

by David Ravenhill

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*God allows us to face difficulties to teach us how to fight and to mature us spiritually, and we must recognize the enemy, resist him, and stand on our own two feet to overcome him.*

**Duration:** 1:01:10

**Scripture:** 2 Chronicles 32:1

**Topics:** "Enemy", "Overcoming Adversity", "Spiritual Warfare"

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## Description

David Ravenhill emphasizes the necessity of recognizing and resisting the enemy in our spiritual lives, drawing parallels from the life of King Hezekiah. Hezekiah's proactive measures against the Assyrian king Sennacherib illustrate the importance of cutting off the enemy's resources, rebuilding defenses, and being vigilant in prayer and action. Ravenhill encourages believers to understand their identity as overcomers and to rely on God's strength to face adversities, reminding them that spiritual maturity often comes through challenges. He concludes by highlighting the need for community support and the power of God's Word in overcoming the enemy's attacks.

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## Transcript

Thank you this morning for the offering. I just want to testify to God's faithfulness. About a year ago now, God spoke to my wife and I that we were to move and to give up our church.

We were up in the Seattle area, had a church of over 500 people on a regular basis, people standing around the back, beautiful property, 16 acres, building that was valued at over a million dollars, a school with a waiting list of students wanting to get in. All the blessings that came with that, the insurance package and everything else, and then God spoke to us and said, I want you to give all that up and I want you to step out in full-time service. And we were glad to do that.

I'd known for many, many years that that was the direction that God had for my life. And yet we had no idea what God was going to do this year, how he was going to open doors, how he was going to provide for us. And I'm so grateful to be able to testify that God is faithful.

And one of the things I've never, ever done is stipulate any amount of money or any size congregation I'll go to. I figured if Jesus went to the woman at the well as well as feeding the 5,000, who am I to question whether I go to a large church or a small church? I've had a couple of calls lately from a church that I'm going to in about a month or so from now. And I'm only there for one service.

It's sort of a big conference, and somebody told me my picture was in Charisma magazine. I don't get it any longer. Tired of paying for all the ads and no substance.

But anyway, I've been called by them and they say, Listen, we need to know how much you want. You're going to be here for two days and two services, and we want to know how much to pay you. And I say, Well, you've got the wrong person.

I don't do that. I don't operate that way. And I don't care if you don't give me anything.

God's faithful in what I lack in one place. God makes up in another place. And I think we've turned a wrong corner somewhere in the ministry where we've now got to the place where we put a price tag on the Word of God.

What a tragedy. Anyway, that's not my message. But thank you again this morning for your faithfulness.

Let's just pray. Father, once again, we look to you, Father, for your quickening upon your Word, your anointing. Again, Lord, we confess our need of you.

Acknowledge, Lord, apart from you, we can do absolutely nothing. And so, Father, just open our eyes, open our understanding again. Just hover over this meeting, Lord, brood, even as you did in the beginning.

Father, out of nothing, bring forth, Father, substance that would glorify you. And so, Lord, we just confess again. Lord, unless you build a house, all our labors are in vain.

And so, Lord, come and do what you said you would do, Lord, build your church, that the gates of hell would not prevail against it. In Jesus' name, amen. If you have your Bible this morning, I'd like you to turn with me to 2 Chronicles 32.

We looked at 2 Chronicles 29 a few days ago. I think it was on Friday night. But this morning I want to talk about living a victorious Christian life.

Living a victorious Christian life. I find there are so many Christians that are defeated. So many Christians that do not know how to overcome.

They don't know how to take back again what the enemy has stolen from them. And we need to know what it is, as the Word of God says, what it is to triumph in every situation. Who always causes us to triumph.

Not sometimes causes us to triumph. But who always causes us to triumph. In our Lord Jesus Christ or through our Lord Jesus Christ.

And let me read this portion of Scripture. Let me begin in Chapter 31, first of all. And verse 20.

And it says, Thus Hezekiah did throughout all Judah. He did what was good and right and true before the Lord his God. And every work which he began in the service of the house of the Lord, in law and in commandments, seeking his God, he did with all of his heart, and he prospered.

Now, here is a summary of this man's life. Hezekiah, a king who brought about tremendous reformation in the nation of Israel. He was the one that we looked at the other day who opened up the house of God after

it had been boarded up by his father Ahaz.

He brought about just cleansing, restoration of the praise and worship that David had instituted. He celebrated the Passover and so on. He was the one that burned the brazen serpent that Moses had made because here it was now, six or seven hundred years later, and the nation of Israel is worshipping this brazen serpent.

It becomes a fetish. It becomes an idol. It was called Nahashtan.

They were burning incense to it. And Hezekiah says, You know, this thing has got to go. Thou shall have no other gods before me.

As good as it was in the years gone by, as much as a blessing it was to the nation of Israel hundreds of years prior to that, it had now become a curse. And so Hezekiah was the one that understood the mind of God. And his life is basically summarized here.

It says, Hezekiah did throughout all Judah what was good and right and true before the Lord his God. And it says, Every work that he began in the service of the house of the Lord, in law and in commandments, seeking his God, he did with all of his heart and he prospered. Now, I would love if, you know, if the day comes when I die or if I precede the coming of the Lord on my tombstone, I would love those two verses.

And instead of the word Hezekiah, it simply says David. And David did, again, throughout all America, what was good and right and true before the Lord his God. And every work that he began in the house of the Lord, in the law and in the commandments, seeking his God, he did with all of his heart and he prospered.

That's a pretty good summary of a man's life, don't you think, or a woman's life, whatever the case may be. And then it says in chapter 32, And after these acts of faithfulness, Sennacherib king of Assyria came and invaded Judah, besieged the fortified cities and thought to break into them for himself. Notice, after these acts of faithfulness, not after these acts of sinfulness.

You see, we tend to think that it's sin that allows the enemy to come in and harass us and so on. But let me assure you, a good measure of your spiritual maturity is going to be the measure of adversity that you're facing. In other words, the enemy always comes to those that are spiritually moving on with God.

Somebody coined the little phrase, new levels, new devils. And that's true, isn't it? That as we move on in God and we come to new levels of maturity, there are new devils that confront us. It's rather like school.

In first grade, you have first grade exams. In twelfth grade, you have twelfth grade exams. The exams get more and more difficult as you mature.

And the problems that you face get more and more difficult, in one sense, as you mature spiritually. It is a good sign. And so after these acts of faithfulness, the enemy comes.

And notice the design of the enemy. The enemy wanted to break into these cities for himself. In other words, the design of the enemy for your life and my life is to recapture your life for his purpose, just as God captured you in the first place for his purpose.

Paul says, I want to apprehend that which I've been apprehended of by God. God apprehended me, now I need to understand why did he apprehend me. And the enemy wants to apprehend you.

The enemy wants to claim you once again for his purpose. He wants to break into your life for himself. And we've got to learn to stand against the strategies and the plans of the enemy.

We've got to understand what the enemy is up to. The Bible says we're not to be ignorant concerning his devices. And we've got to learn to resist the enemy.

And so this portion of Scripture teaches us how to resist, how to overcome. How many of you know that God is looking for a company of overcomers? All the way through Revelation, at least the first few chapters there, to him that overcometh, to him that overcometh, to him that overcometh. You see, God is wanting us to overcome.

In fact, if you study the book of Revelation, you know that there's a chapter there that deals with the New Jerusalem. And it says that that New Jerusalem, it's got 12 gates. And those 12 gates are made of pearl.

And in other words, the only entrance, the only way you can get into the New Jerusalem, the city of God, the bride of Christ, the only means of entrance is to go through those gates. And those gates are made of pearl. What is so significant about that? Why aren't they made of gold? Why aren't they made of diamonds? Why aren't they made of some other precious substance? Because God is teaching us the only way in to what God is wanting us to enter into is through facing problems and overcoming those problems.

You see, a pearl, a genuine pearl, has a problem at the center of it. Every pearl is produced by a problem. That little piece of grit gets into the oyster.

And that oyster then has that thing that constantly bugs it, if you like, and irritates it and, you know, torments it or whatever an oyster feels. And it has a choice. It can either allow that irritant to just go on and on and on and live a life of, you know, just being in pain and so on, or it can decide to overcome.

And so it begins to overcome the problem. And as it overcomes the problem, a pearl is produced. And God, in His infinite wisdom, is saying that God is looking for a company of overcomers.

And the only way in, again, to that New Jerusalem, into the place that God has prepared for you and I, again, is through those that are going to overcome. And so God allows problems to come into our life. Now, I know that you didn't come this morning to hear that, you know.

But it's true, isn't it? God will allow us to be subject to the attack of the enemy in order to bring about maturity. Now, before we look at the Scripture, let me have you turn for a moment into Exodus chapter 13. I want to show you something here that I believe will establish the principle that we need to understand.

Exodus chapter 13 and verse 17. Now, the children of Israel have just come out of their bondage in Egypt. And God has a purpose for them.

That purpose is to take them from Egypt through the wilderness into the promised land. And so they're on this journey. God knows exactly where He wants them to go.

And notice what it says in verse 17. It came about when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God did not lead them by the way of the land of the Philistines, even though it was nearer. For God said, lest the people change their minds when they see war and they return to Egypt.

So God looked ahead. Here's a nation of Israel. They come out of Egypt.

And God looks ahead and He says, There's two ways of getting to where I want them to go. One is a shortcut. One is the most direct route necessitates going right through the land of Israel.

But if I take them that way, even though it's shorter, once they encounter the Philistines and there is war, they are going to hightail it back into Egypt. Why? Because they are not mature enough. They're not ready to fight yet.

In typology, they'd just been saved. In typology, they were just children. They weren't mature soldiers.

They didn't understand God. They didn't understand the ways of God. They were just redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

And that was the extent of their knowledge. And so they would encounter, again, conflict and not know how to handle it. And therefore, they would run back to Egypt.

And so God says, I'm going to bypass the Philistines. Now how many of you know that a sign of immaturity is when God delivers us out of our problems. He will cause us to bypass certain things.

Those of you who are parents, my wife and I have raised three daughters. And when they were smaller, you protect them. If you're a good parent, you know you get a one-year-old or a two-year-old, and you know you're crossing over the busy lanes of traffic or whatever, you don't say, you know, Suzy or whatever, go ahead of me there and I'll follow you.

You know, you pick that little child up and you cradle that child in your arms, and you walk it through all the problems that it's going to encounter, right? And if there's a dog coming, you know, a great big Rottweiler or something or other, and, you know, you snatch that child up and you protect it from the danger. But when's the last time you picked up your 17-year-old? You know, hopefully by the age of 16, 17, or whatever, they've got enough sense to be able to navigate, you know, across the busy highway and so on and so forth, you see. But when they are small, you protect them from problems.

Now go over then into the book of Judges for a moment, in Judges chapter 3 and verse 1. Now these are the nations which the Lord left to test Israel by them. That is, all who had not experienced any of the wars of Canaan, in order that the generation of the sons of Israel might be taught war, those who had not experienced it formally. These are the nations, or the nations are the five lords of the Philistines, the Canaanites, the Sidonians, the Hivites, and so on and so forth.

Now isn't it interesting that the first person, or the first group that God left was the Philistines? And God says, I have left the Philistines in the land for a reason, because some of you have never learned how to fight. And I want you to learn war. And therefore, I've left problems to teach you how to fight.

I'm not going to remove those problems. I could, God could just sort of speak the word and every Philistine would just sort of dissolve and disappear and so on. But God says, no, I've left these nations in the land because some of you have never learned war.

And you've got to learn how to fight. Now this is the same group that God says, listen, I'm going to bypass the Philistines. Now He says, I'm leaving the Philistines.

You see, God wants us to grow up. He wants us to learn how to fight. When my children were smaller, our children, I remember them coming home.

Lisa is our oldest. She's in China right now. And I remember her coming home from school with her first assignment in math.

And it was a major problem for her. One plus one equals. Two plus two equals.

Three plus one equals. Three plus two equals. And so on.

Four minus one equals. And I could have looked at that list and then literally in ten seconds, just done it. Handed it back to Lisa and said, Lisa, go out and play.

It's all done. Instead, she had to now face the enemy. And I say, okay, Lisa, what's one on one? I don't know, Daddy.

I don't know. And after, you know, several minutes, one plus one, how many is that? I don't know. Finally, two.

Okay. Okay. Two plus two.

I don't know, Daddy. I don't know. You see, and about an hour later, the problem was solved.

Now, you see, if I'd have never done that, our youngest now has just graduated from college, she'd have been sending me in the mail my assignment. Dad, here is, you know, the assignment in English. You've got to summarize Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and it's got to be done in at least, you know, 1,500 words or more.

It's got to be double spaced. It's, you know, blah, blah, blah, blah. And, Dad, I need to have it in by next Thursday.

And, by the way, you know, I've already put in the mail, you know, the next physics test and there's got to be a, you know. You see, I'd still be doing that. She would have never matured.

She would have never grown. Why? Because I solved all her problems for her. And God doesn't do that.

God allows us to face difficulties. He allows us to face problems. And we've got to learn, then, how do I handle this situation? And in this portion of Scripture, if we can go back to it now, in 2 Chronicles 32, Hezekiah is faced with the enemy.

And it says in verse 2, Now, when Hezekiah saw that the enemy, Sennacherib, had come and that he intended to make war on Jerusalem, he decided with his officers and his warriors. Now, the first thing he recognized, he recognized he had an enemy. You and I need to recognize we have an enemy.

It's your adversary, the devil, the Bible says. Not the person on the left of you, the person on the right of you. Your adversary, the devil, goes around seeking whom he may devour.

And the Bible says we are not to be ignorant concerning his devices, the way in which he operates. And so we've got to recognize, again, that there is an enemy, an adversary, and his design is, again, to break into your life. Now, there's two mistakes we can make concerning the enemy.

One is to magnify him to the point where he has got all power and all authority. The other is that we look at him as though he doesn't exist at all. And, of course, we have those two schools today.

We have those that adopt the higher criticism realm, those intellectual theological minds who begin to look around, and, of course, you can't see the devil, and there's no substance there, and so on. And so they come up with all sorts of fancy philosophies to explain that the devil really doesn't exist anymore. In fact, the devil never really did exist at all.

It was just in the New Testament they didn't have any understanding of mental illness. They didn't have any understanding of, you know, these sicknesses that we have today, and so on. And so they came up with this sort of mythical figure, and they blamed everything on him, and they called him the devil, you see.

And so they excuse the devil as though he never existed. That's one extreme. The other is, of course, that you give him too much credit, that every time you sneeze, it's the devil, you see.

Every time you get a flat tire, it's the devil, you know. Somebody said that the devil was sitting by the side of the road one day, weeping, sobbing. And a well-meaning Christian came up and took pity on him, put his arm around him, and said, devil, what's wrong? And between the sobs, the devil says, you know, it's you, Christians, you blame me for all the things I'd love to do, and I don't have time to do them.

You see, that's the other extreme, that, you know, we give him too much credit. We give him, you know, we say everything's the devil's fault. But between those two, there is a balance.

The enemy will seek to devour your life. He will seek to undermine the grace of God and what God is doing in your life. And so, Sennacherib, first of all, he recognized that he had an enemy.

The second thing Sennacherib decided to do, he decided he was going to resist. In other words, he could have just said, hey, come on in. You know, here's the gate.

In fact, rather than have you break down the wall and so on and so forth, I'll speak a word to the guardsmen there. And whenever you want to come in, just knock, and we'll open up and take whatever you want. Now, some Christians live that way.

You see, they just allow, again, the enemy to plunder them time after time after time after time after time. There's no resistance. They've never learned to overcome.

They've never learned to stand on their own two feet, so to speak. And by the grace of God, ward off the attack of the enemy. And so Hezekiah says, I'm going to do something about this.

It says he saw that Sennacherib had come, that he intended to make war on Jerusalem again. He's in a warfare situation. And he decided, you and I need to decide.

It is a decision. It says of the Lord Jesus Christ, he set his face like a flint to go to Jerusalem. He made a decision.

Moses chose to suffer affliction with the people of God rather than choose all the pleasures of Egypt. And we've got men who made decisions. I will.

As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. Choose you this day who you will serve. The decisions that you have to make.

And those decisions determine your destiny. And it's how we stand against the enemy that ultimately is going to determine our destiny, our spiritual maturity. And so Hezekiah is not a wimp here.

He doesn't run and take cover. He says, listen, we're going to do something about this. Now notice what he did in verse 3. He decided with his officers and the warriors to cut off the supply of water from the springs which were outside the city.

And so they helped him. Now what a strange thing. The very first thing that Hezekiah does after he recognizes that the enemy is coming, that he's determined to take over the city.

He decides that he will cut off the supply of water. You see, there was a river that flowed through that region. And no doubt, maybe the source of that river was from inside the city and it flowed out to the outside of the city.

I don't know. The Bible doesn't give us any detail. But Hezekiah knew something.

If the enemy comes and there is life there, there's water, he will be able to sustain himself. In other words, he can come with his army and one of the essential things for life in the natural, obviously, is water. We can go without food for many, many days, 40 days or more than that.

But you can't go without water for many days at all, you see. Ultimately, you're going to die, dehydrate. And so he knew that if the enemy comes and there is an abundant supply of water, we will never ever get rid of the enemy.

Therefore, we have to remove what the enemy can feed on. And the same thing is true in your life and my life. We have got to be conscious of things that the enemy can feed on.

And we have to cut off the supply that keeps him around. How many of you ever made the mistake of, well, you don't have severe winters here, I guess. I was asking Richard about the winters and he said about 50 or 60 degrees.

So, you know, that's not a winter. But anyway, I lived in Minnesota for seven years so I'm qualified to speak. But, you know, you open the door on a snowy morning where it's, you know, just freezing cold.

And there, as you take out the garbage, you hear that pitiful little meow. And you look down and here's this little, you know, ball of fluff. And it's a little kitten that somehow has got lost.

It's strayed and it looks up at you, you know, with that just pitiful look. And all of a sudden you move with compassion. And you go to the refrigerator and even though you don't like cats, again, the compassion gets you.

And you pour a bowl of milk and you take it there and you put it down. And that little thing, the tail sort of wags a little bit and it looks, oh, you know, you've done your good deed for the day. The problem is when you go out two hours later, guess what? You've got a problem on your hands.

And you go out the next day and there's still the same problem. Why? You fed it and it won't go away. And you see, what you've got to do, you've got to be a little more drastic.

You've got to cut off the supply. I think it was Bob Mumford many years ago, he said there's different ways of getting rid of the devil. One is to cast it out, the other is to starve him to death.

I think both work. In other words, cut off the supply. Whatever it is that he's issuing out of your life that the enemy can feed on.

And he feeds on sin, he feeds on uncleanness, he feeds on that which is in opposition to the Word of God. The bitterness, the anger, the resentment, the pride, the uncleanness. Anything that's coming out of your life has to be cut off.

Now notice what he does. It says in verse 4, he assembled the people and they stopped up all the springs and the stream which flowed through the region. Saying, why should the king of Assyria come and find an abundance of water? Now have you ever tried to stop up a spring or a stream that is flowing? You know, you go out here somewhere into the hills and you pack a picnic lunch and you take the children along.

And you spread out the lunch there and you eat and then the kids want to play and here's this little sort of brook. And you decide that you're going to dam up some of it so the kids can have a little place to sort of splash around in. And so you take the stones and you begin to pile them one on top of another.

And you try and stop flowing water. It's pretty hard, isn't it? No matter what you do, it seems that the water somehow works its way through. And you can work for hours and it's hard to get sort of any real depth there.

In other words, what I'm saying here is that it's not easy to do what I'm telling you to do. There's no quick answers when it comes to spiritual maturity, when it comes to overcoming. You see, but it does take a concentrated effort on your part.

Hezekiah made up his mind, I don't care how long it takes. I don't care how strenuous it may be. I am not going to permit the enemy to sustain himself around my city.

And therefore, I'm going to do all that is necessary. You see, the Bible says in the book of Proverbs, you are like a city. You're like a city.

Like a city that is broken into and without walls is a man who has no control over his own spirit. And so the Bible says every single one of us here, we have what? You know, 75 cities represented here this morning. You are a city.

And the Bible says you're either a city with walls or without walls. Or the walls are broken down. And you see, in those days, of course, the walls protected the inhabitants of the city.

The walls were the thing that provided the security. And it provided safety from the attack of the enemy. And you could go to sleep at night knowing that as long as the walls were around that city, you could lie down in peace.

Because why? You were in control. And the people that you associated with, your city, again, was in control. But if the walls were broken down, again, the enemy had access.

Now, I passed it long enough, 30 years, to know that there are men and women in every congregation that I can point to. And I can tell you the condition of their city. Because they've come to me and they say, Pastor, I'm battling with this.

I'm battling with that. And I know that somehow they've been invaded by lust. They've been invaded by anger.

They've been invaded by some outside force that now rules their city. They don't rule their city. They can't control themselves.

They've succumbed, again, to the enemy. And so the enemy controls that city. He invaded, again, that area of their life many, many years ago.

And he still reigns, if you like, and controls that city. He determines what goes on in that city. And what we've got to do, we've got to learn to resist the enemy.

And we'll come to this in a moment. But the first thing he has to do, he has to stop the springs. Now, spring, again, has got force behind it.

And a river that flows, again, has got force behind it. And you've got to now totally eradicate all of that. Not a very easy thing.

You see, one of the strategies of the enemy in the Old Testament, in the natural warfare, was what they would do. They would go and they would find an area where they wanted to establish a city. And it was always around a source of water.

Because, you know, we get so used to just turning on the faucet and we can be hundreds of miles away from the source. But the water flows through the pipeline and so on. We get so accustomed to that.

But, you know, most of the world doesn't operate that way. You go to places like India and so on, they will walk for miles. Or there's a pump in the middle of the city.

You go down to Jamaica and Haiti and other places like that. And the place is dependent upon that supply of water. And you've got to go to where that water is.

And so one of the strategies of the enemy is to go in and they would fill in the wells. It says they filled in the wells of Abraham. And because there was no ability to quickly excavate and re-dig that well, then the person would have to move in search of water.

And then they would take over and they would possess that area and re-dig the well. And that was the way they took over somebody's land. And it says that Isaac had to dig again the wells of his father Abraham because the Philistines had filled them in.

And so this is one of the strategies of war again. And so Hezekiah decides, again, he's going to block up. And he's going to cut off the supply of water.

Why should the enemy come and find an abundance of water? And I'm here to tell you this morning, you need to destroy whatever the enemy is feeding us. Again, if your weakness is in the area of pornography, then you better cut off the supply. Whether it's cable television, whether it's the Playboy magazine, whether it's the Internet service that you've got or whatever it is.

But wherever that source is, there has to be a cutting off of that supply. Otherwise, the enemy is going to be there constantly hanging around your life. Now the next thing he does, he begins to rebuild the wall in verse 5. And he took courage and he rebuilt the wall that had been broken down.

In other words, Hezekiah assesses the situation. He knows the king is coming. He knows the enemy is coming.

He's been forewarned that the enemy is coming. And so he is preparing now to come against the enemy. And the first thing again, he cuts off the supply of water.

And then now, he goes around the walls and he assesses the vulnerability. Where am I most vulnerable? There's an area right there where there's a weakness. The wall's been broken down.

We've never rebuilt that area. He goes around a little bit further. He sees another weak spot.

We've got to do something about that. He goes a little bit further. There's a weak spot here.

There's a weak spot there. You see, that's honesty in our life. We've got to look at our life and be honest before God and say, Listen, where are the weak areas of my life? Where am I most vulnerable? You see, what is a temptation to one is not necessarily a temptation to another person.

What is a weakness to one person is not necessarily a weakness to another person. And we've got to be honest and say, God, that's the area where I'm the weakest. I get rejected very easily.

Rejection is one of my weaknesses. Somebody else, anger is one of my weaknesses. I fly off the handle the slightest provocation and I lose it.

Lying is one of my weaknesses. I'm always lying my way out of situations. Somebody else, lust is my problem.

I'm constantly plagued with lust. Bitterness is my problem. I've got so many people I'm just, man, if I could only get even.

I just seethe again with bitterness. Whatever it is, we need to be honest. There's a weakness there and the enemy consistently comes in through that area of weakness into my life.

He doesn't have to worry about any other area. He's already found out where my weakness is and he constantly harasses me in that particular area. And so Hezekiah looks and he sees that there's certain areas that are broken down and he rebuilds.

He rebuilds. Now, rebuilding a wall is difficult, isn't it? It's easier sometimes just to start from scratch. To rebuild, you've got all these jagged pieces, you've got to fit everything in, there's the rebuilding process.

And what I'm trying to say today is this, that this is not an easy thing to do. I remember as a young boy, 16, 17 years of age, battling in my mind with lust like most young people do. And I remember being in Bible school at the time or at least living at a Bible school.

I can't remember now if I was actually enrolled there or not. I was maybe in high school or maybe it was my last year of high school or the summer after. But anyway, I remember sitting there at a drafting table and I was doing some artwork and I remember thinking, you know, I'm going to do something about this.

I am so tired of being constantly tripped up and defeated in my Christian life. As soon as I make some sort of progress, all of a sudden I'd find myself again, just consumed with evil thoughts and so on. And I remember deciding, God, I'm going to do something.

I'm going to start rebuking the enemy. And, you know, the first day I must have rebuked the devil 999 times. And, you know, the second day I rebuked him 998 times.

And the third day 997 times. And the fourth day 996 times. In other words, it was not easy, but I decided that I'm going to exercise, again, the right that I have as a believer to rebuke the devil.

And I can honestly say, by the grace of God today, that there is almost just an automatic reflex that when a temptation comes, I find myself just like that. Satan, I rebuke you. Why? Because I've done it so often.

You see, what we give ourselves to, it becomes a habit after a while. And I'm saying this, that it didn't happen overnight. It wasn't as though, you know, I made up my mind that afternoon that I'm going to resist the devil and he left me alone from there on.

I'd love to testify that that was true. That wasn't true. Again, there were 998 attacks that day.

997 the next day. And I'm not saying that the attacks ever stop in one sense, but again, my ability to resist them, you see. And I found that there was an area in my life of weakness where I was vulnerable and the enemy was constantly coming in in that area, you see.

Now, how do you rebuild a wall? Let me give you an idea of how you rebuild a wall over in the book of Ephesians. Keep your finger in the Chronicles, but in the book of Ephesians. Verse 25.

Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth, each one of you, to his neighbor. Now, you see, it is not enough just to lay aside falsehood, lies. That's not enough.

You now have to go in the opposite spirit. You have to begin to speak truth. And it says, verse 28.

Let him that steals, steal no longer. In other words, here's a problem. His weakness is in the area of stealing.

He can't go into the 7-Eleven without, you know, slipping a couple of packets of gum or whatever into his pocket and walking out without paying for it. He's got a problem. He lives by stealing from other people.

And Paul, writing this, knows again that, you know, Christianity in those days was surrounded by a sea of paganism. And these pagans are getting saved. They've got a lifestyle that they've been accustomed to all of their life.

And some of them were continuing on. And Paul says, listen, there are people in the congregation you're stealing. You've got to stop stealing.

But not only that, he says, but rather let him labor. In other words, the way he's been deriving a living is being at somebody else's expense. If he wants a television, he simply helps himself to his neighbor's.

You know, if he wants some food, he goes into his neighbor's garden in the middle of the night, digs it up and, you know, steals. If he wants some money, he, you know, rifles through some lady's purse or something when she's at work or whatever the case may be. And he's using other people to satisfy his own needs.

Why should I get a job? This is a great way of living. And Paul says, stop stealing, get a job. But then not only that, but he says, in order that you may have something to share with those that have got a need.

Now that's rebuilding the wall. Here's a guy that has been making other people's lives miserable by stealing. So they've got to go out now and work extra hard in order to replenish what has been taken from them.

And this man now goes out and he gets a job. He now has got the means to supply his own needs. But he's also got a surplus.

And Paul says, now that you've got a surplus, look around and see where there are some needs. And why don't you now minister to that person's need? In other words, you are now blessing the very people that you were cursing before by your actions. That's how we rebuild the wall.

We don't just stop doing something. We minister again in the opposite spirit. Verse 29, let no unwholesome word proceed out of your mouth.

Here's a person that's got a problem with unwholesome words. They're always criticizing, always tearing people down. They're always the first ones to come up with the latest gossip in the church and so on and so forth.

My father used to say, the tongue, being in a wet place, is very apt to slip. And some of us have got that problem, don't we? That our tongue slips. Whoops, I shouldn't have said that.

Please don't say anything to anybody else. And, of course, we always say that, don't we? And then they say, you know, I heard, don't repeat this. Meaning, you know, go ahead, but don't tell them where you heard it from.

I mean, we want everybody to know that the pastor's whatever, you know. But it says, let no unwholesome word proceed out of your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification. In other words, you've been tearing people down because of your word.

You've been spreading rumors. You've been sowing discord among the brethren. Now what do you do? You edify, you build up.

You speak life instead of death. Death and life are in the power of the tongue, you see. And you work in the opposite spirit.

That's how you rebuild an area of weakness. You don't just say, God, I've got a problem with my tongue. I want you to stop me from speaking and tearing people down and being critical and so on.

That's a good beginning. But don't stop there. Go now and begin to be a blessing and edify and build up, you see.

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor, verse 31, and slander be put away from you along with all malice. And what? And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving. You see, bitterness and wrath and anger is just the opposite of being kind and tenderhearted and forgiving.

The fact that you've got bitterness, you will not release that person. And so again, the way in which we rebuild the wall is to find out what the Word of God says is the opposite of what you were doing. If it's uncleanness, then start being clean.

And so Hezekiah again now, he begins to assess the situation. Where am I the most vulnerable? Where are the weaknesses? And this is where honesty comes in. I've got to be honest with God.

You see, we will never ever mature spiritually until we begin to take an inventory of where we are at. God, I've had this problem for 5 years, 10 years, 20 years. Which means I have not moved from the state I was

in 20 years ago or 5 years ago.

I'm still plagued with lust. I still have anger. I still suffer from rejection.

I still have this problem or that problem. Which means I've never really grown and developed. Which really means, God, your grace is not sufficient.

Now all of us in the natural, those of us who have got children, you know, we would be deeply concerned if our child never grew. Thank God for the stage of infancy, you know, a little baby. There's nothing more wonderful than a little baby, you know, cooing and awing and smiling and so on and so forth.

But if it's 20 years old and it's still doing that, you've got a problem on your hands. And Paul's great grief, as he writes to the Corinthians, is over this area of immaturity. He said, Word to God that I could give you meat, but I've got to give you the bottle again.

You know, writing to the Hebrews, by this time you ought to be instructors yourself, but you have need for somebody to teach you. You should have graduated from school and you should be a school teacher, but instead you're still in first grade, he says. So he had to rebuild the walls.

The second thing he does, or third or fourth or wherever we're at in verse 5 anyway, he erected towers on it. He rebuilds the walls and he erects towers. Now what are towers? Towers are the equivalent of our radar system.

How many of you know that all the strategic points all across America, we have a radar system, a defense system. In case the Russians or the Chinese or whoever it may be launch an attack. And long before that missile ever arrives, that radar picks up the little blip on the screen there that we're in danger.

Something has been launched from Moscow or something has been launched from this country or that country or whatever. And therefore we can address that situation long before it ever damages us. And so the watchman, again, he stood in the towers around the city and he scanned constantly the horizon.

He was always looking out. He'd see a little puff of smoke up in the distance or some dust being stirred up or something. And he'd keep his eye on that thing.

And sure enough, as he kept his eye on it, he would see that there was more and more dust being stirred up. That there is an army approaching or somebody's approaching. And he had to discern, is this good or bad or whatever it is the situation.

And then he would warn the city. And the watchman then would warn the gatekeepers. And the gatekeepers would close the gates.

It may be in the middle of the day. But they would close the gates. So in case it was some invading force, at least they were prepared and they were ready to handle it.

Now the Bible says that we are to watch and pray. Be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, goes around as a roaring lion, seeking who may devour.

And so we have to, in that sense, we've got to constantly be on the alert. Not just occasionally, but constantly. You see, it's not as though they turn on that radar system, you know, once a week just to test it out.

That wouldn't do much good, would it? Those things are alert 24 hours a day. Protecting the inhabitants, if you like, of the United States. And likewise, Jesus said, Peter, watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation.

Be alert. Your adversary, the devil, goes around as a roaring lion. And so you and I have got to build a watchtower, if you like.

We've got to man that thing. We've got to constantly be alert to the strategies of the enemy. Maybe in a telephone conversation and you know the individual and you know that something is going to come and you've got to guard yourself.

I can very easily get sucked in now to all of this criticism that I know that this sister or brother is going to talk about. Or I'm going into this place right now. And I know there's going to be temptation and billboards everywhere and so on and so forth.

And I've got to know how to overcome that. There's a program on tonight. But I know also that there's going to be commercials in between that, you know, it's going to cause, again, my weakness to come out.

I'm susceptible to these particular areas, whatever it is. And we've always got to be alert, you see. It's not something we just do occasionally.

We don't just sort of check the system once a week to see. That's not good enough. You see, if Peter would have listened to the admonition of the Lord there in the garden, maybe he would have never succumbed to the temptation.

But Peter bragged, didn't he? Lord, everybody else may forsake you. Not me. I'm ready to go even to death.

In other words, you know, Peter wanted the headlines. I'll be a martyr. You know, they can crucify me alongside you, Lord.

I don't care. You know, I'm sort of that macho image. Jesus said twice, or was it three times, he comes to him in the garden.

Peter, watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. What does Peter do? Falls asleep again. See, it's the little things.

Or if they'd have said, listen, you prepare to suffer for your master and be burned at the stake. Yes, sir. That'll make the headlines.

But just a little girl who points the finger, you're one of his disciples. You see, he wasn't watching. He wasn't alert.

It's the little foxes, isn't it, that spoil the vine. We've got to guard against those things. So there has to be, again, the towers that are erected.

And then it says that he made weapons and shields in great number, verse 5. In other words, not only does he defend the city, he now goes on the offensive. There is a lady right now this week, starting tomorrow, who is going to be ministering in the Brownsville School. The summer session is called Suzette Hattie.

And Suzette, some of you may know, used to work for Reinhard Bonnke for about 17 or 18 years. She went ahead of all his major crusades around the world and got the churches together and taught intercession and prayer. And she's a wonderful woman of God that just has a genuine ministry of intercession.

And my wife and I were in Malaysia a number of years ago ministering there and staying with a Chinese doctor. Very beautiful home. And one afternoon we were sitting there and he said, Listen, would you like to do something? Would you like to watch a video or something? And he put a video on of this lady, Suzette.

And it was on spiritual warfare. And it was on putting on the armor of God. It was done in a church in London.

And she's acting out, again, coming against the enemy. And she has the associate pastor come up and she dresses him up. She puts a little sort of plastic helmet on him and gives him a shield and then gives him a sword.

And, you know, dresses him up in the armor of God. And she said, Now you're the Christian. I'm going to be the devil.

And she reaches over and she picks up a sort of a knife, a plastic knife or a sword. And she says, Okay, let's fight. And she begins to stab away at this guy.

And, you know, he just moves his shield all over the place. And she keeps on stabbing and he moves the shield everywhere. And it goes on for maybe 30 seconds or a minute.

And finally she says, Okay, stop, stop. And she turns to the congregation. She says, See, he's like most Christians.

He never used the sword, only the shield. You see, most of us just defend ourselves. We never go on the offensive.

And it's one thing to protect yourself. But it's another thing then to take on the enemy. And Hezekiah decides not only to rebuild the walls and cut off the supply of water and so on.

He takes all the defensive moves that are necessary. But now he goes on the offensive. He makes weapons as well as shields.

In other words, he is determined to bring down the enemy. The Bible says the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God. To the pulling down of strongholds, you see.

And you and I have got to learn to use the sword of the Spirit. As Jesus was confronted there in the wilderness by the enemy. He says, It is written, it is written, it is written.

He takes out the sword and he counterattacks the enemy. And every time the enemy brings something to him, he resists it with the Word of God. See, the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.

And you and I have got to learn to do that. We've got to learn our rights as believers. The greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world.

And that we have the Word of God. And that Word of God is the thing that causes the enemy to tremble. And so there are certain weapons that we have.

The blood of the Lamb. They overcame by the blood of the Lamb. The Word of our Testament.

And so we've got to learn to fight. And then in verse 6, it says, He appointed military officers over the people. And He gathered them to the square or gathered them in the square at the city gate.

And He spoke encouragingly to them saying, Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be dismayed because of the king of Assyria. Nor because of all the multitude which is with him.

For the one that is with us is greater than the one with him. With him only is an arm of flesh. But with us is the Lord our God to help us to fight our battles.

And the people relied upon the words of Hezekiah, the king of Judah. And notice, He gathers the people together and He speaks the Word of God to them. He speaks encouragement to them.

The Bible says that through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. Through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. I have a good friend, some of you may know him, Winky Prattney.

He's a New Zealander. Well known in a lot of youth circles. And Winky has a saying.

He says, You know the Bible is full of mistakes. How many believe that? That's true. It begins with Eve's mistake.

And then Adam's mistake. And then Noah's mistake. The Bible is full of mistakes.

Noah got drunk. Eve succumbed to the temptation of the devil. Adam followed.

The Bible is full of mistakes. And I'm so glad it is. Why? Because through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

Imagine if the Word of God from Genesis to Revelation didn't have one single person. Male, female, old, young, boy, girl, whatever. That ever made a mistake.

That ever doubted God. That ever sinned. That ever questioned God.

Every single individual was absolutely perfect. How many of you would get encouraged by reading that? I should have known. You see, I can be encouraged if I've committed adultery.

By going into the life of David. I can be encouraged through the life of Jonah if I've disobeyed God. Because the Bible says, The Word of the Lord, what? Came a second time to Jonah.

While he blew it the first time, Thank God for the grace of God. I can be encouraged if I study the life of Peter. And I'm always putting my foot in my mouth and getting myself into trouble.

Because what? After the resurrection, Jesus comes to Peter. And three times he challenges him. Do you love me, Peter? Yes, I do.

Do you love me? Yes, I do. Do you love me? Yes, I do. And for every denial, the three denials, He has an opportunity to make up.

By confessing. I'm not going to deny you this time. I love you.

I'm not going to deny you. I love you. And all we've got to do is read through the Word of God.

And it is encouraging, isn't it? We sing a song. You sing it, obviously. Went into the enemy's camp and I took back what he stole from me.

Where does that come from? The life of David. David went off to battle. When he came back, Ziklag, the city that he was living in, Along with all the wives and children, about 600 men, and then wives.

So it was a city of maybe 2,000 or 3,000 people with all the children. And the enemy comes in and absolutely destroys everything. Carries off the wives.

Carries off the property. All of their possession. And so on.

And then the people talk about stoning David. David gets down on his face before God. And it says he encouraged himself in the Lord.

And God says, Pursue them and you shall recover everything. You shall recover all. And David goes out and he fights.

And he recovers everything that the enemy took from him. So he went into the enemy's camp and he took back what the enemy stole from him. And that's encouraging.

Through the encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope. And so what he does here, he encourages the people. He reads them the Word of God.

Listen, you don't have to be afraid. God is on our side. Greater is He that is in us.

Notice, greater is the one that is with us than the one that is against us. With Him only is the arm of flesh. But with us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles.

And so the people relied upon the words of Hezekiah. We need to read the Word of God on a regular basis to strengthen ourselves. To have the encouragement of the Scriptures.

To know how to counteract all the accusations of the enemy. When he comes and he says, You know, God doesn't really love you. We've got to have a word then to say, Listen, He does.

Because it is written, I love you with an everlasting love. Or whatever it may be. You're not really forgiven.

Yes, I am. Because the Bible says if I confess my sin, He's faithful and just to forgive me my sin. Whatever it is.

We need to be encouraged by the Word of God. But the enemy keeps on. I don't have time.

Our time is gone. But the enemy keeps on. And you'll notice the enemy eventually arrives and he begins to harass them.

And he begins to bring all sorts of accusations against them. Notice the way in which he operates in verse 13. Do you not know that I and my fathers... This is the enemy now.

He's arrived. Do you not know that I and my fathers have done what we have done to all the people of the lands? Were the gods of the nations of the lands able at all to deliver their land from my hand? Who was there among the gods of those nations which my fathers utterly destroyed who could deliver his people out of my hand that your God should be able to deliver you out of my hand? In other words, he says, listen, there isn't a single nation that we haven't successfully defeated. Who do you think your God is that He can keep you? See, and the enemy will come with all sorts of accusations.

He is the accuser of the brethren. And so often he magnifies himself. Look how great I am.

I took down Jimmy Swaggart. I took down this person. I took down that person.

Who do you think you are? And he begins to recite all his exploits and all his victories. And then he says, you think you can stand against me? After I took down this man of God and that woman of God and this movement and that movement or whatever it may be. Verse 15.

Now, therefore, do not let Hezekiah deceive you or mislead you like this. Do not believe him, for no God of any nation or kingdom was able to deliver his people from my hands or from the hands of my fathers. How much less shall your God deliver you from my hands? It's pretty strong language, isn't it? I mean, the enemy is bent on destroying your city this morning.

We need to get that message. He is determined to undermine your life, undermine your faith. And he will do everything within his power to undermine what God has done, what God has accomplished in your life.

And we've got to know how to, again, encourage ourselves in the Word of God. Isn't it interesting that right before that, he's already told them, don't be afraid. With Him only is the arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to fight for us.

And that's the very strategies that he begins to use. Who do you think your God is? Of course, they could look back to previous victories as they look back to their wonderful deliverance. Out of the greatest nation on earth at that time, one of the greatest nations, out of Egypt.

And God's mighty hand as He brought them out and buried the Egyptian army in the sea and so on. But eventually, notice what happens. It says in Hezekiah, verse 20.

Now, Hezekiah eventually recognizes, listen, even I need help. And he goes to this man of God, Hezekiah, to Isaiah the prophet, and together they begin to pray. They agree together.

You know, there are times when you and I need to go to a brother or sister that we've got confidence in. And say, listen, I have just been under such an incredible attack this week. I mean, the enemy has just been unrelenting.

And I want you to agree with me in prayer that God would do something in this situation. And it says, they cried out to heaven, verse 20. Verse 21, You know the way I'd love to read this portion of scripture? I'd love to change it.

I'd love it to read something like this. Now, when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib king of Assyria came and that he intended to make war on Jerusalem, he cried out to heaven and God sent an angel and destroyed

every mighty warrior. That's the way I would like to read it.

You know, I'm tired of having to block up streams. And I'm tired of having to rebuild walls. And I'm tired of having to be on the alert all the time.

And I'm tired of having to read the word of God. I have to encourage myself. And I'd just like to say, God, if you really loved me, you'd take care of all those things.

It doesn't work that way, does it? You see, that's when God does our homework for us. He's wanting us to grow. He's wanting us to overcome.

There are times when God will intervene. Thank God for that. But He says to us, listen, you resist the devil and he'll flee from you.

You are the one that has to wrestle against principalities and powers and so on. You have to, are the one that have to, you have to solve the problems. That doesn't really sound like a loving father, does it? But you see, He knows what's good for us.

See, there's an incident there in the Gospels where it says that there was a knock on the door one morning. I'm embellishing this a little bit. But there was a knock on the door one morning.

And Jesus went to the door and opened it. And there's the devil. Peter comes down to breakfast that morning.

And he says, Lord, did I hear somebody, you know, about 4 o'clock, 5 o'clock this morning. Did I hear somebody knocking at the door? Yeah, you sure did. Who was it? I mean, good grief, you know, we had a late night last night.

And, you know, I mean, what was it? Well, it was the devil. The devil? You are kidding me. Jesus said, no, it was the devil.

No kidding. Man, what did he want? Actually, he came about you. Me? You know, I mean, I can imagine, you know, if we're, you know, the Bible is possibly, doesn't put in all the words that were stated at that particular moment in time.

Me. What did he want? Well, he actually wanted to grind you and sift you like wheat. You know, in those days, they had these humongous millstones with a little hole.

They pour the wheat in and just the pressure would crush it and make flour out of it. And he says, you know, the devil had this plan. He wanted to sort of pour you into one of these holes there and just grind on you for a while.

Oh, Lord, I am so glad you answered the door. I am so glad. What did you tell him? I said, go ahead.

You what? I mean, I can imagine the reaction of Peter. Yeah, I told him, go ahead. And listen, when you're converted, you'll be able to strengthen others.

You know, you're going to gain something from this experience, Peter. And you're going to have compassion. You're going to have empathy for others.

And you're going to be able to say, listen, I went through that situation. That's what Paul says in Corinthians. He said, the God of all comfort, the God that comforted us in our affliction is now able to comfort you.

Because I've been through that. I've lost a child. I've had a husband die of cancer.

I've been in a car wreck. You know, I'm not suggesting that God does those things necessarily. But God uses every single situation because ultimately, he's looking for mature men and women of God.

And he will allow things periodically in our lives. And we think, God, if you really loved me, you wouldn't do that. If you really loved me, you'd have told the devil to go back where he came from.

But you didn't. See, God's concerned about our spiritual life and spiritual maturity, that we might be conformed to the image of his Son. That's what it's all about.

At the end of the day, that we might be conformed to the image of his Son. God created man in the beginning in his likeness, in his image. He wants to recreate you in his likeness, in his image.

Sometimes the potter has to put pressure on the vessel in order to form it, in order to mold it. And he allows pressures and he allows things to come. But it's the making of a man of God or a woman of God.

God wants you to be victorious this week. God bless you.

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