

Evil is Someone



How to Overcome Evil (Part 1)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you at the beginning of a new week, sharing with you Keys to Successful Living which God has placed in my hand through many years of personal experience and Christian ministry.

My theme for this week is one which vitally concerns all of us, without exception: "How to Overcome Evil."

But first, let me say thank you to those of you who've been writing to me. Before I finish this talk, we'll be giving you a mailing address to which you may write. It means a great deal to me to hear how this radio ministry of mine has been helping you and blessing you. So please take time to write, even if it's only a brief personal note.

Now, back to our theme, How To Overcome Evil.

Everyone of us is confronted everyday by the presence and the power of evil in various forms, some from without, some from within ourselves. It must be admitted that many of us do not always succeed in overcoming this force of evil, not because we do not want to, but because we do not know how to. In my talks this week, I'm going to share with you, out of Scripture, the all-important "how to": How You Can Actually Overcome Evil.

First of all, we need to see that there is no room for neutrality. We have two, and only two, alternatives: we either overcome evil or we are overcome by it.

Paul presents these alternatives very concisely in Romans, Chapter 12, verse 21 when he says this:

> "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (NIV)

You see, there are just two alternatives. We can overcome evil but if we do not overcome evil, then evil will overcome us. There is no state of neutrality where we neither overcome are overcome. That just isn't a possibility in actual experience. Paul says, "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." It's important to see that there's only one power in the universe strong enough to overcome evil, and that is good. We have to meet evil with good, with a good that is more powerful than the evil that confronts us. Now the only

source of that goodness is God Himself. So, in order to overcome evil, we have to be alive with God. We have to have access to God's resources, to God's wisdom, to God's power, to the means that God has placed at our disposal.

Now, the goodness of God and all that goes with it, all the resources that flow from His goodness, are revealed to us and made available to us through God's Word, the Bible. That's why, in order to overcome evil, we have to be acquainted with the Bible. We have to know what the Bible teaches about it and the provision that God has made for us which is revealed only in the Bible and in any other book, of course, that's based on the Bible.

Now when we confront evil and we look to the Bible for guidance and wisdom, we find there one revelation of God's Word which is a key to our whole conflict with evil. If we do not grasp this key and use it, we will be continually frustrated and ultimately defeated. Now listen carefully because I'm going to put in your hand now this key, this revelation of Scripture which is so vital, so essential. The key is this: Evil is not something, it is someone. I'm going to say that again. Evil is not something, it is someone. I can remember when I read that simple sentence in a book, the revelation and the transformation that came to me through it. Let me briefly relate a personal experience, not in great detail.

For many years, as a preacher, I had a tremendous ongoing struggle with depression. I'm sure none of you have never had that struggle, or have you? And I used every means I knew. I used prayer. I used fasting. I used Bible study. I made resolutions but I never gained full and enduring victory until a revelation came to me by the Holy Spirit out of the Word of God. The revelation came from a verse in the Prophet Isaiah, Isaiah chapter 61, verse 3 where the Lord promises that He will give His people the garment of praise in place of the spirit of heaviness. And when I read that phrase, "the spirit of heaviness," something came to me by revelation, by a flash of insight. I saw that my problem was a person, an invisible but very real person, a person without a body, a spirit, a spirit of heaviness or depression that was systematically attacking me. And when I realized that I was not dealing with something, but with someone, I was 80% of the way to victory. Almost immediately after that I gained complete victory over that awful force of depression which was seeking actually to destroy me and to ruin my ministry. But the victory didn't come without the revelation, that I was dealing not with something, but with someone. And this is consistent with the whole revelation of Scripture. Behind all evil, there is a person, and the Bible clearly reveals the identify of that person. That person has two main names or titles. In the Old Testament he's called Satan and in the New Testament he's called the Devil. Each of those names has a meaning which is significant. The name Satan means "the one who resists or opposes," the one who resists and opposes God, God's purposes and God's people. So as the people of God, we have one who opposes us, Satan, the adversary, the resister.

In the New Testament the title, the Devil, means the "slanderer or the accuser." So one main weapon that Satan uses against us is slander or accusation.

Now where did Satan come from? That's a profound question. I can't answer it fully in a few moments, but let me say that at one time Satan was not Satan. He was Lucifer, one of the chief archangels of God, outstanding both for his beauty and for his wisdom. Apparently he was in charge of one third of all the created angels. But his heart became proud because of his beauty and his wisdom and he determined to seek equality with God and he led the one third of the angels under his charge in rebellion against Almighty God. For that rebellion he was cast down from the heaven of God's dwelling but instead of that, he set up his own rival kingdom of rebellious angels in another area of the universe, still in the heavenlies, an area which is sometimes called, the mid-heaven, somewhere between earth and the heaven of God's throne and God's presence. And so that's Satan's headquarters today. It's in the heavenlies and there he rules over a company of rebellious angels and his supreme purpose is indicated by his name, to resist and to thwart God's purposes and God's people.

The New Testament gives us a clear picture of Satan's rival kingdom, where it's located, how it operates, and the spiritual beings that are members of that kingdom. One of the clearest passages is Ephesians, chapter 6, and verse 12. I'm going to read this in two versions, first of all in the New International Version, then in the Living Bible. We'll begin with the New International Version, Ephesians 6:12:

> "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." (NIV)

Notice there are spiritual forces of evil and they're associated with rulers, with persons who have authority and seek to exercise it and to dominate and to rule. Now in the Living Bible, this is the translation:

> "For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against persons without bodies [lay hold of that phrase, persons without bodies,spirit beings who are in opposition to God and His people. The Living

> Bible then goes on to specify these persons without bodies. It says:] The evil rulers of the unseen world, those mighty satanic beings and great evil princes of darkness who rule this world; and against huge numbers of wicked spirits in the spirit world." (TLB)

So, our enemies are persons without bodies. They're led by one person without a body, Satan, and they are located in the spirit world. That's the nature of our warfare. That's the conflict we're engaged in. Unless we understand it, we cannot possibly be fully successful in it.

Let me in closing just make a few brief comments on that statement of Paul. First of all, our conflict is cosmic. That is to say, it involves the whole universe, not just earth, but heaven and earth. It's a cosmic conflict. Secondly, it's not in the realm of the senses. We don't know the nature of the conflict by what we see or hear, but it comes to us by revelation, through the Holy Spirit and out of Scripture. Thirdly, this conflict and it's nature is unrecognized by the majority of people. They just are not aware that this is what they're up against. They know they're struggling against something but they can't see it and they can't understand it. They don't know how to define it. They don't know how to deal with it.

And the fourth point I want to make is that the outcome of this conflict, in the spiritual realm is ultimately decisive. The result in the spirit realm, whether it's victory or defeat, will determine the result in every other area of our lives.

Well our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll be speaking about the various ways Satan works against us.

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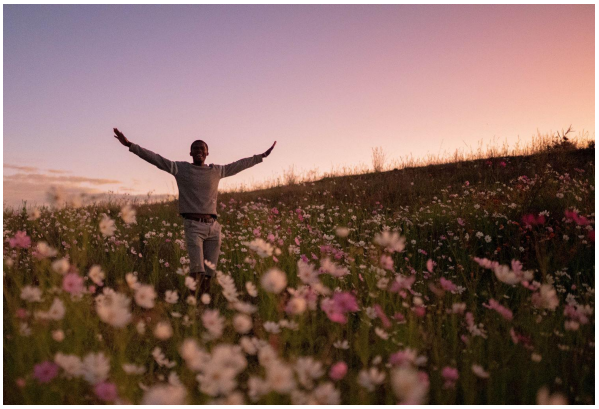

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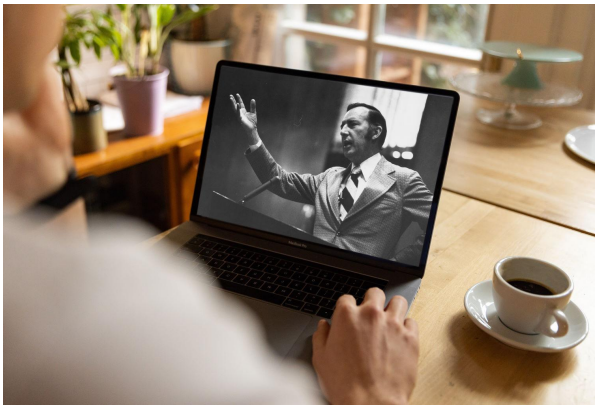

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