



VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

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Study 14: OVERCOMING THE DEVIL

Nehemiah 4:7-15

Just like diamond has many faces and coins have two sides, so also there are different phases of the same truth. Behind the circumstances Nehemiah faced were the invisible hands of the devil. ***The conspiracy of the enemies and the condescension of Judah were manipulations of the devil to frustrate the progress of the work.*** Our text shows that when the enemies knew that Nehemiah was aware of their plot, they abandoned their plan. Brother Andrew in his book "And God changed His mind..." clearly shows that potential outcomes of situations and circumstances, when viewed in the light of God's plan could give vital clues as to whether the devil is behind them, and of the nature of his objectives / activities. Such clues could inform the believers' prayers. The devil may employ various strategies in its onslaught but the believer will always overcome if he is "NOT IGNORANT OF THE DEVICES OF THE DEVIL" (2 Corinthians 2:11)

1. STRATEGY OF THE TEMPTER: Nehemiah 4:11; Matthew 4:1-11

In the last study, we learnt that the devil often attacks at times of successes. He persists in the attacks, varies the techniques as well as attack from within and without. ***In this text we also see another subtle strategy he commonly employs in various shades and tones to defeat and ruin many – capitalizing on ignorance. So long as he can keep people ignorant of his wiles or of the purpose and promises of God, he can easily ruin and defeat them.*** This is why Jesus emphasized the statement "YE SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH AND THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE" (John 8:32). In the temptation of Christ the devil misquoted and misapplied scriptures. Should Christ have been ignorant of the true meaning of those scriptures, He could have been defeated instantly. When believers misinterpret or believe / follow misinterpreted scriptures they inadvertently expose themselves to demonic oppression and attacks. Similar consequences results when believers' views, thoughts, opinions and lifestyles deviate from God's word.

People sometimes say that there are many ways to skin a cat. The devil adopts that philosophy in trying to get believers. To effectively capitalise on ignorance, the devil often:

1. uses pride and religious bigotry to despise the scripture (Numbers 12:1-7; Matthew 21:31,32; Hosea 8:12);
2. makes people despise small beginnings (Zechariah 4:10),
3. makes people despise the physical appearance, reputation, conduct and manners of true and faithful gospel ministers / preachers – where these differ from their expectations (2 Corinthians 5:16)
4. try to prevent true ministers from preaching (Amos 7:12-15; 2 Corinthians 10:10);
5. uses familiarity to breed contempt (Matt 13:54-58)
6. makes the fervent in spirit appear foolish to the secularly minded (Mark 3:21).

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7. makes people to exalt position above piety (Deuteronomy 17:18-20; 2 Samuel 6:20-23), sacrifice above scripture (Ecclesiastes 5:1; 1 Samuel 15:22), visions, miracles, signs and wonders above the word of God (1 Kings 13:1-24; Deuteronomy 13:1-5).
8. causes people to place higher priorities on temporal, physical and material things at the expense of divine objectives and true spirituality (Luke 14:16-24; Ezekiel 20:13).
9. makes people despise the pathway of faithfulness if it brings persecution, but in turn favour the pathway of fun, pleasure and ease under the guise of "wisdom".
10. makes people follow legalistic religion based on logic and craftiness of man's wisdom rather heart experience of Christ.
11. makes people downplay on the seriousness of divine justice by overemphasis of divine grace.
12. giving people tingling ears that keeps them running to and fro for every wind of doctrine and religious feelings rather than settling down to implement the "Thus saith the Lord".

2. **SECRETS OF TRIUMPH:** Nehemiah 4:14,15; John 8:32; Isaiah 34:16; Proverbs 4:7,8; 16:16; Joshua 1:7-9; Ezekiel 14:1-10; Ezra 7:10; Revelation 2:24,25

Knowledge is power. Nehemiah's knowledge of the enemies' strategy and of the faithfulness of God made him invulnerable to their plots. Christ defeated the devil by simply repeating, "It is written". The devil is rendered powerless whenever the believer wields the sword of the spirit (Ephesians 6:17). ***We cannot know God too much. We cannot study the Bible too much.*** The wise believer would always make the best use of every opportunity to enrich himself with the word of God through personal devotion, online materials, seasoned literature, attending conferences, regularity in bible study and worship services. In addition, a resolute resolve to obey every scripture, resist the devil and manifest absolute confidence in the supremacy of God's power and the sufficiency of His grace are indispensable to triumph (James 4:7; Romans 8:31; 2 Corinthians 12:9). ***God takes no delight in half measures.*** IF YE KNOW THESE THINGS HAPPY ARE YE IF YE DO THEM (John 13:17).