

Dog on a Leash

Ready:

“Therefore, submit to God. But resist the Devil, and he will flee from you.”

- James 4:7

Set

No matter what the conditions, I love to get in a morning run. If I don't do it early, it won't happen, especially when I'm traveling.

Several years ago, I was in Korea doing an FCA sports camp in the mountains. I would get out really early to get in my run before camp started. I found a good loop down some back streets and trails that made me a bit nervous being in a foreign country and running in the dim light of the early morning. The first day, I was running down a back road and, out of nowhere, a dog charged at me. I practically came out of my shoes as I jumped away from the attacking dog. Fortunately, the dog made it only to the edge of the street and then stopped. For a moment, I wondered why he hadn't charged further, but then I realized that he was on a leash. That changed everything. I immediately calmed down and began to run again with confidence, chuckling to myself.

The next morning, I was ready. I approached the spot with confidence, and, sure enough, the exact same dog did what he was good at: charging hard with lots of bark. But this time, my perspective was completely different. It was just a dog on a leash. I respected the dog, but I did not fear the dog like I had before. It made a huge difference in my response and attitude, and it continued the following days as I ran.

It occurred to me recently that Satan is just like that dog. He is a dog on a leash. Unfortunately many Christians respond to him like I did that first day with the dog. They never notice that God has him on a leash. They are surprised by Satan, and they fear and worry how he is attacking and impacting their lives.

Yes, Satan is real, just like the dog I encountered. It wasn't a tape recorder of a dog barking that scared me. It was a real, scary dog that wanted to maul me. And, if he was not on a leash, I wouldn't be writing this devo. And, just like that dog, but on a much larger scale, Satan wants to harm us and destroy us. John 10:10 reminds us that he will steal, kill and destroy!

While we must recognize the power and evil of our spiritual opponent, we must keep him in perspective. When I ran the following days, I respected the dog, but I did not fear the dog. He had his boundaries, so I made sure that I did not run on the side of the road that put me in his range. I ran with confidence knowing that he had limits, but I did not try to get as close as possible to provoke the dog. In the same way, we as Christians can't live our lives seeing how close we can get to Satan without getting bit. Instead of asking ourselves how close we can

get to the line without sinning, we must ask how close we can get to the Lord.

Do you respect Satan and realize that he is gunning for you? If you are having an impact for Christ, you have a big bull's-eye on your chest. He doesn't want you to experience joy in your life. If he can't take you to Hell because you are a disciple of Christ, he will make sure that he does everything in his power to make sure your life does not reflect Christ and that you don't draw others to Jesus.

So, how are you doing? Do you have a good understanding of Satan and how he tries to work in your life? Do you realize that Satan is a dog on a leash? Yes, respect him, but do not fear him. If he gets us to live in fear, then we become ineffective as believers. Don't let Satan have victory in your life. Jesus has already won for us, so let's live in that victory! Come on, let's do His work, His way!

Go

1. Do you know the top three plays Satan runs against you? Why do we act so surprised when he runs them over and over again in our lives?
2. What does it mean that as Christians we fight from the position of victory that Christ has already won? How does that change your view of spiritual warfare?
3. As an athlete or coach, how does Satan try to put fear in your life?
4. What does it mean for you to respect Satan but not fear him?

Workout

2 Kings 6:15-19

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

Ephesians 6:10-18

Overtime

"Jesus, thank You for Your victory. I ask You to give me Your eyes so I can correctly see the battle that rages in the spiritual realm. I know that, at times, I give Satan too much credit and other times not enough. Help me, Lord, to have the right perspective. Thank You, Jesus, for protecting me and already giving me victory because of what You did on the cross. In Your name I pray. Amen."



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