

“Your Adversary, the Devil”

Dub McClish

An adversary is an avowed, obvious enemy. He (or she) makes things adverse as often as he can. He opposes, contradicts, discourages, thwarts, and belittles everything that doesn't please him. Such is the devil, old Satan, to the Christian. He despises those who serve God, and he is out to destroy every one of us if we will let him. There are some traits in God's people that he especially hates.

1. **He hates boldness and courage.** This is why James wrote, “resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (Jam. 4:7). When we don't take a stand, when we compromise, when we let the ungodly influences and people of the world cause us to cower and retreat, he jumps with joy. But you speak out boldly and take a stand on something that is true, right, and good and watch him stir up the opposition. Boldness and courage are hallmarks of true leadership. “The righteous are bold as a lion” (Pro. 28:1). With Paul, let us say, “I am not ashamed of the Gospel...” (Rom. 1:16).
2. **He hates zeal and enthusiasm.** When we get depressed and discouraged in the Lord's work, our adversary has gained a victory. He loves to get brethren to talk against the work God's people are doing. He becomes ecstatic over spiritual anemia that seems to affect so many. But those who are “zealous of good works” (Tit. 2:14) scare him to death. Any time a person or a church starts showing a little zeal, watch out. The devil will do his best to destroy it because he knows its power.
3. **He hates great plans and goals.** He isn't concerned about pew warming, \$1-a-week brethren who would be relieved if the church dried up and died so they wouldn't have to go any more. He doesn't bother those who are content for the church to sit in idleness, not saving any souls, not working or aiming to grow. But let a church make some plans, start some work, set some goals, promote the greatest work in the world and spend some money, then you're going to see the devil come out in all his fury because he knows he's going to lose some followers.

Every time we compromise, grow discouraged, and draw into a shell of contentment, we have surrendered to our adversary.

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in *The Edifier*, weekly bulletin of Pearl Street Church of Christ, Denton, TX December 2, 1982, of which I was editor.]

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