

SATAN THE ACCUSER

Satan is the accuser. However, unlike the characters in Bunyan's book, Satan does not accuse us face to face. His strategies are much more deceptive. I believe that Satan accuses us in three ways. First, he denounces us by encouraging us to accuse ourselves.

Some Christians have a problem with perpetual introspection. This constant self-examination is dangerous because it often leads to self-accusation. The devil knows that if he can get you to accuse yourself -to dwell on the memories of past sins- then he has won the battle.

If you do not put on the *breastplate of righteousness* every day, your memory is going to accuse you day and night. If you dwell on these memories, you will end up putting yourself on a shelf, and God will not be able to use you. You will lose ground to the devil.

Besides our memories of past mistakes, Satan also uses our feelings to accuse us. When we are run down from lack of sleep, poor eating habits, a lack of exercise, or an illness, we have a tendency to give in to feelings of depression, self-pity, or anger. It is at these times, when we are feeling depressed, that the devil comes to us and says, "That is right! Keep throwing fuel on the fire. You have a right to feel sorry for yourself. Remember all the things you have done and all the things people have done to you." Before you know it, you are defeated.

What is the answer when we begin to accuse ourselves? The *breastplate of righteousness*. God knows our struggles better than we do or Satan does. We can take these memories and feelings to Him. What does the Lord do about them? He puts them under the blood of Jesus Christ. They are gone. He buries them in the depths of the sea (see Micah 7:19). He blots them out like a thick cloud (see Isaiah 44:22). He takes them off the record. We are made righteous and worthy in His eyes. Nothing Satan can say or do will change our position in Christ. And the devil can take the joy out of the Christian life only when we allow him to.

It is important to distinguish between Satan's accusations and God's convictions. God convicts us in love; Satan accuses us in hatred. The Holy Spirit uses the Word to convict us. Satan uses feelings and memories to accuse us. When God convicts us, it draws us closer to Him; but when Satan accuses us, it pulls us away from the Lord. God's conviction leads to discipline and devotion. Satan's accusations lead to depression and discouragement. When God convicts, it is so we might look ahead and have hope. When Satan accuses, he wants us to look back and to give up.

Satan encourages us to accuse ourselves. Put on the *breastplate of righteousness* by faith and claim the righteousness of Christ. Your sins are forgiven. Your record is clean. The Lord ceases to remember your sins, and you should do likewise.