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## A Way of Escape

My Battle Plan When The Days Are Evil

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I don't have enough fingers and toes to tell you how many times I have counted Ephesians 5:15-17 as my great escape from Satan's temptations. When tempted, God promised me that He would "provide a way of escape" (I Cor. 10:13). Many times I have turned to Ephesians to find my backdoor getaway. While I have certainly fallen to sin more times than I care to remember, I can truthfully say that just as Jesus resisted Satan's temptations with His three-fold "It is written... It is written... It is written..." (Matt. 4:1-11), so I have often quoted scriptures to "resist the devil and he will flee from you" (Jam. 4:7). Let me share with you one such passage I can scream at the Devil.

"See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise but understand what the will of the Lord is."

While on the surface that might not seem like a verse that would scare Satan, it has many times given me boldness and courage "to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Eph. 6:11). It is my "armor of God" in which I wrestle against "principalities and powers and rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:10-12). As a Christian soldier I am required to "withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand!" (Eph. 6:13). In my arsenal of defensive weapons is my "shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one." (Eph. 6:16).

Infantry soldiers (and that is what Christians are) do a lot of walking. Paul's epistle to the Ephesians had as its theme: "**walk** worthy of the calling with which you were called" (4:1).

They were commanded to "**walk in love**" (5:1)

and **walk as children of light**" (5:8)

and "**walk circumspectly**" (5:15).

He had previously said we are "*God's workmanship created in Christ for good works which God prepared beforehand that we should **walk** in them*" (2:10).

Walk, walk, walk, walk, walk! That's what infantry does. We put on our battle armor and walk toward the enemy to fight for Christ's honor.

Infantrymen in the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan had to "*walk circumspectly.*" Look at that word and break it down. *Circum* is where we get our word circle, or around. *Spectly* is where we get our word spectacles for seeing clearly. So it has the idea of walking in such a way as to carefully look around you. The foot soldiers in these recent wars were trained to be very cautious. IED's (*Improvised Explosive Device*) lurked all around them. Every step was potentially fatal. They were trained to be vigilant as they patrolled both the combat zones and city streets. The enemy was notorious for planting IED's in the most improbable areas. A misstep could cost you, and your fellow soldiers, a leg or a life.

Believe me, when my next step could be fatal I will walk circumspectly, or as the ESV says it, "*look carefully how you walk.*" He quickly adds, "*not as unwise but as wise.*" When your life (or in this case your soul) depends on every step, you will wisely walk with the greatest of care.

How do I do that? Paul says our every step should be "*redeeming the time for the days are evil.*" Again the ESV sheds light on that: "*making the best use of the time because the days are evil.*"

Do you think the American infantrymen walking through the streets of Baghdad in Iraq or Kandahar in Afghanistan knew *"the days are evil?"* When Islamic militant terrorist roamed the cities trying to kill Americans, these foot soldiers daily had to look evil in the face, and walk accordingly. At no time did they let their guard down or walk the streets without their weapons ready. Every moment of every day is treated with searching eyes for the least hint of danger.

Oh that Christians would walk with the same soberness and vigilance as the soldier in war (I Thess. 5:6,8).

Oh that we would treat each day as a sacred day, a holy day, as we *"fight the good fight of faith"* (I Tim. 6:12).

Oh that we would see the evil lurking at every corner as an IED set by Satan to destroy us (I Pet. 5:8).

This leads me to my ultimate weapon of defense, the Word of God. Just as Jesus shook His fist in the Devil's face by repeatedly saying, *"It is written,"* so I now resist Satan's temptations the same way. Each day I *walk circumspectly*, I *redeem the time* as I study my Bible to *understand what the will of the Lord is*.

David, perhaps the greatest soldier who ever lived (*"David has slain his ten thousands"*), was also one of the godliest men who ever lived (*"a man after God's own heart"*). What was his battle plan? Psalm 119:11 *"Your word I have hidden in my heart that I might not sin against you."* By not being ignorant of Satan's schemes (2 Cor. 2:11), we immediately can recognize the landmines and boobytraps (IED's) he has set to spiritually injure or kill us.

Such as...

When tempted to lust, I cry out, *"It is written... whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart"* (Matt. 5:28).

When tempted to lie, I cry out, *"It is written... all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death"* (Rev. 21:8).

When tempted to be lazy and bury my talent, I cry out, *"It is written... 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown'"* (Matt. 25:26).

Pick any temptation that the Evil One has chosen to attack you, whether the *lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, or pride of life* (I Jn. 2:15). Do you have a battle plan and battle cry to resist him? What verse(s) do you have ready? What verses have you hidden in your heart? If they are not ready-at-hand when the Serpent strikes (Gen. 3), or when the roaring lion leaps (I Pet. 5:7), you will be bitten with his deadly venom and crushed by his powerful teeth.

Yes, the days are evil, for Satan is evil. But now I have a battle plan, for Christ is good.

Onward Christian soldiers, marching as to war.