**Are you working harder than your opponent?**

*1 Peter 5:8-9*

**Introduction**

1. Coaches have often motivated their players to work hard by saying their opponents are working hard at the very moment.
2. It is only logical that we set ourselves up for defeat if we are not working as hard as our opponent.
3. It is also logical that we set ourselves up for victory if we are working harder than our opponent.
4. Our ultimate opponent is Satan, and he is a hard, relentless worker. But we must work harder – **1 Peter 5:8-9**
   1. He is constant in his work – he does not take days off and does not slow down one bit.
   2. Notice the response Peter would have for his audience to give – **(v. 9**) – RESIST HIM.
   3. Steadfast in the faith – Satan is not an unstoppable force, BUT IN CHRIST WE ARE AN IMMOVABLE OBJECT.
      1. **John 10:27-29** – God is greater than all and will not allow us to be snatched out of His hand – conditional upon our allowing Him to protect us.
      2. **Romans 8:35-39** – nothing can separate us from the love of Christ.
5. Consider that Satan, our great opponent, is hard at work. Are you working harder than your opponent?
6. Satan is Working Hard to…but We Must Work Harder
7. Fill Our Heart
   1. Satan was set on wreaking havoc on the faith of the disciples – **Luke 22:31-32** – example of Peter. (Sift as wheat – separate chaff from grain – reveal true character)
      1. Jesus was seeking to protect them – prayed for Peter.
         1. PETER DIDN’T WORK HARDER THAN SATAN – **Luke 22:40, 45-46** (one of those disciples who didn’t watch and pray)
      2. **John 17:12** – Jesus kept them – ONE LOST – Judas.
         1. Even though Peter and others would forsake Jesus, they were not entirely converted against Him. ***(“when you have returned to Me” – Luke 22:32)***
         2. One was.
   2. Satan had entered Judas’ heart – **Luke 22:1-6; John 13:2, 26-27, 30**
      1. This is not a literal consideration – **1 Corinthians 10:13** – considering temptation, and that common to man.
      2. **1 John 2:16** – lust of flesh, eyes, and pride of life. (At least got Judas with lust of flesh and eyes.)
      3. Satan tried to enter Jesus’ heart, but it didn’t work – **Matthew 4:3, 6, 8-9** – Jesus was without sin – **Hebrews 4:15** ***(“as we are”*** – including the type Judas experienced)
      4. Problem – Satan worked harder than Judas did, and eventually won his heart! (Judas never repented – **Matthew 27:5**)
   3. Same happened to Ananias and Sapphira – **Acts 5:1-4**
   4. We need to work harder by giving our heart to God:
      1. **Matthew 22:37-38** – loving God with all our heart.
      2. **Galatians 2:20** – letting Christ enter us instead.
      3. **Colossians 3:16** – letting Christ’s word dwell in us richly.
8. Waste Our Time
   1. We are told to redeem the time – **Ephesians 5:15-16** – since the days are evil.
      1. I.e. we need to buy up the time we have – make good use of opportunities for good – because there are plenty of opportunities for evil to take their place.
   2. The devil seeks to distract us with various matters in life so that we leave God out of the picture:
      1. **Hebrews 5:12-14** – wasted time leading to immaturity.
      2. **James 4:13-17** – time taken for granted and misused in planning leading to negligence in obedience.
      3. **Revelation 2:4-5** – an untended flame of love for Christ dies down, and our actions lose their substance.
   3. The devil seeks to waste our time with:
      1. Distractions of work, pleasure, entertainment, fun, etc. – **Ecclesiastes 3:9-13; 11:9; 2 Timothy 3:4** – for these things God will bring us into judgment.
      2. Worries over physical matters that God will provide if we trust in Him – **Matthew 6:19-25, 33**
   4. We need to redeem the time by pursuing the knowledge of God’s will, and taking advantage of all opportunities to obey it – **Ephesians 5:17-18; Colossians 4:2-6** (specific action speaking of evangelism/spreading God’s word to others)
      1. **2 Timothy 2:15** – making diligent use of our time in study to be approved of God.
      2. **1 Timothy 4:13, 15-16** – giving attention to God’s word.
9. Convince Us of Lies
   1. The devil is the father of lies – **John 8:42-47** (Speaking to Jews who rejected the truth of Jesus)
      1. We need to abide in the word, the truth, as the devil spreads lies – **John 8:31-32**
      2. This will only be accomplished through time in God’s word, and application.
   2. Lies he tells are being believed upon, and souls are dying – **2 Thessalonians 2:9-12** (especially false doctrine); **Romans 1:24-25** (especially that an idol is anything in the world – **1 Corinthians 8:4**) (idolatry in the sense of valuing anything above God – **Colossians 3:5**)
      1. Error – Satan is the author, and none of us are greater than the threat.
         1. We must make sure we prepare for it to not be moved by it.
         2. Untaught and unstable people are affected – **2 Peter 3:16**
         3. Those growing to maturity are equipped against it – **Ephesians 4:11-14; 2 Peter 3:18**
      2. Sin – Satan is constantly tempting us to sin. We must say no to the temptation.
         1. **James 1:13-15** – lures us with what he knows we struggle with.
         2. **James 4:7-8** – we must resist him.

**Conclusion**

1. Let us never convince ourselves that there is time for relaxation spiritually.
2. The devil takes no time off but is constantly hard at work seeking to destroy us.
3. If our opponent of great power is hard at work, we must be working even harder!
4. Are you working harder than your opponent?