

## SATAN, GET BEHIND ME!

Seems there was this preacher's wife who decided along with her husband that they really had to save more and spend less starting in the New Year. Well, she went shopping and found the dress of her dreams. It cost way too much, but she had to have it.

When she showed it to her husband, he exclaimed, "After all we said about spending less money, how could you?"

She replied, "The devil made me do it."

"Didn't you tell him 'Get thee behind me, Satan'?" asked the exasperated preacher.

"I certainly did," she replied, "But he said, 'It really looks great from the back too!!!!'"

I am sure that you chuckled a little when reading this as I did, but then reflecting upon it again, I remembered that as a young Christian, Mark 8:33 was a powerful scripture in my life. – "But when He (Jesus) had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, "**Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.**" I quoted it many times as the enemy came to torment me with Satan's deception and lies of my past and my future. Satan was always trying to turn me aside from God's plans and pull me back into the old ways—the sinful world of lies and deception. Satan's plans—keep me under his control, and I knew where that would take me as the Word of God tells us that Satan came to steal, kill and destroy God's people. Telling, *Satan to get behind me* was an everyday occurrence for years to come.

I had been caught in the web of the devil's lies and deception more often than I would care to remember. I learned early in my Christian walk that Satan is skilled at perverting the truth into lies. He would use a truth, then cover it cleverly with lies so as to capture a person's attention with the truth first, and if you continued to believe and walk in it, then the lie subtly took you over. You were often caught in Satan's trap before you realized it and asking yourself, "What happened? How in the world did I end up in this place?"

Satan's goal is to entangle God's people, young and old alike, in lies filled with deception. Often times what I believed to be truth was in reality a lie. I believed the lie many times because accepting God's truth could be painful and meant I would need to make changes. I hated changes! I avoided changes at any cost and whenever I could. Therefore, I made poor choices and would not listen until it was too late; I was trapped. But God did not give up on me! The Holy Spirit kept wooing me into the place of repentance.

The hardest thing for this rebellious heart and stubborn will to do was to listen! I had to learn to listen to the Holy Spirit's teachings—not make wisecracks, run away or put my head in the sand like an ostrich, but I had to really listen. Making changes was a given, not a choice, if I was to have a right relationship with God. I used to think that stapling my lips together would have been a blessing as many times I spoke before I listened, and hurts and rejections occurred. My impulsiveness often got me into big trouble! But God is gracious and merciful. He was patient with me. He brought wisdom, understanding, strength and healing into my life and wonderful, lifesaving changes did occur.

Eventually, I matured in the Lord! (Yes! I did!) I learned to listen with my heart and with the ears of the Spirit that lives within me. I learned to discern whose voice was talking to me. Was it God or Satan or self? I learned to make wiser choices and walk in God's truth that brought joy and peace into my life. When I accepted that my identity was in Christ Jesus, I was able to love myself and therefore, able to love others; trust was no longer an issue of pain.

I was taught some wonderful principles that led me into a stronger and deeper relationship with God; principles that I want to share with you today. I know that many of you are already moving in these truths. And to you, I say, "Well done!"

I divide my quiet time into three powerful segments: *preparation, passage and plan*. In applying these principles I learned the effective way of hearing God speak to my heart and spirit through the Bible; His holy Word.

**PREPARATION** is the first step. It helps me purify my heart and present myself to the Lord. Psalm 46:10 – "*Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations. I will be exalted in the earth!*" and 1 John 1:9 – "*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" are key passages for me. The promises of God found in scripture never run out. I search for new ones to apply to my life daily.

**PASSAGE** is the Word that I chose for the day. I often rewrite the passage in my own words; personalizing it. I read the passage(s) out loud. I write down any promises I can claim. Then I write out the principles I am instructed to obey. It is a powerful and effective way to train yourself in use of the Word.

**PLAN** involves how I will put the truth into action, into practice. It is applying, by the help of the Holy Spirit, those truths of God that will change and help me conform into His image.

Then I close with a prayer of commitment.

Read and apply Jeremiah 15:16, *“When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart’s delight, for I bear your name, O Lord God Almighty.”*