



DON'T BACK DOWN

8 Guideposts
to Follow

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Introduction

The presence of God within us empowers us to resist and destroy whatever doesn't belong.

Our bodies continually resist what doesn't belong to them. They reject any foreign object, whether in our eyes, lungs, bloodstream or sometimes even on our skin. This resistance is what keeps us healthy. We are designed to accept only what belongs and reject anything that tries to hurt, harm or kill us.

The same principle applies to things that are not of a physical nature. We must learn to maintain this powerful, positive resistance against anything that doesn't belong in our lives according to God's Word.

As beings with free will, what we reject or accept is our choice. But problems develop if we start basing this acceptance or rejection on non-Biblical doctrine. For example, I've had believers tell me, "Pastor, I don't know why I got this disease, but I can see God in all of this so I've accepted it." They'll even begin to own it, referring to it as "my cancer" or "my diabetes."

But the Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil.

1 John 3:8 (NLT)

The truth is, **God won't bring something into your life that He's already defeated through Jesus' sacrifice!** Just as our bodies do by God-given design, we must learn to resist what doesn't belong and submit to God's will for us in Him—which is victory over every adversity.

As believers, the **presence of God within us empowers us to resist and destroy whatever doesn't belong.** Jesus Christ inside of us is resisting sickness, disease, poverty, addiction, unhealthy desires and anything that is not God's best for us, **but we need to get into agreement with His will.**

God's promises show us what's ours in Christ. Let's take a look at eight guideposts to help you resist anything that goes against His Word and never back down!

Know When to Submit or Resist

Learn to submit to God and resist what *isn't* from Him.

Sometimes we as believers resist what God is trying to do in our lives.

In Acts 7:51 (NLT), Stephen says, "You stubborn people! ...Must you forever resist the Holy Spirit?" There are times we choose to resist God's efforts as He tries to take us somewhere new—whether it be softening our hearts, getting us to work on our marriages or teaching us how to walk in love. In doing so, we begin to not only resist God, but we also submit to wrong attitudes. This is when we open our lives to pain and heartache.

It is critical to learn what to submit to and what to resist.

Now, as we *submit* to Holy Spirit and follow His guidance, we begin to develop an internal resistance to anything ungodly. We grow in our understanding of God's will and our authority in Him, and our hearts also learn to recognize and resist the enemy's lies and tactics.

Do not quench [subdue, or be unresponsive to the working and guidance of] the [Holy] Spirit.

1 Thessalonians 5:19 (AMP)

For example, as we start to understand the curse that we've been freed from in Christ, we build a resistance to anything under that curse. If disease pushes at us, something rises within us to resist it. Why? Because **the more we are convinced of what doesn't hold power over us, the more our hearts refuse to submit to it.**

Stay responsive to Holy Spirit working in your life, and through Him, **you'll learn to submit to God and resist what *isn't* from Him.** God loves you deeply, and while He doesn't promise that life will always be easy, you can be confident that He never orchestrates sickness and pain. He only leads you to what's best!

Know When It's Good to Get Into a Fight

Submitting to a slothful, “good-enough” attitude robs us of our drive, joy and passion.

If a lion was chasing you in the streets, your first thought should be to start running, not instantly resign yourself to being taken down!

Yet as believers, all too often we take this defeatist attitude in different areas of our lives. “It’s a tough year in the economy. I guess I’ll lose my job.” “My kids are out doing drugs, but that’s just how it is these days.” “Our marriage is as good as it’s going to get.” “I get every flu that comes around.” These are things we submit to without even realizing it!

The lazy man says, “There is a lion outside! I shall be slain in the streets!”

Proverbs 22:13 (NKJV)

This is the lazy mentality that Proverbs 22:13 highlights. As believers we need to examine what we’re accepting and what we’re resisting in our lives. **We must submit to God’s good will for our lives and resist any tendency to give in to something that isn’t from Him**—whether it’s temptation, mediocrity, sickness or negativity.

I’ve discovered that handling multiple companies and leadership teams involves constant issues and struggles. There’s always an opportunity to quit or think, “I’ve done enough.” In fact, if not careful, we can adopt the same lackadaisical attitude toward our marriage, kids, church and career.

The trouble is, **submitting to a slothful, “good-enough” attitude robs us of our drive, joy and passion.**

Don’t instantly give in to the lion, whatever form that lion is taking in your life. Maybe it’s an ongoing health issue, a strained relationship or financial hardship. Don’t give up! **Submit to what God says instead, and it will strengthen and protect you from giving in to anything less than His best!**

Don't Listen to the "Soft-Talk"

It's the little things we submit to or resist every day that matter.

I remember watching a scene in a war movie where one soldier falls on his back while in close combat with the enemy. The enemy jumps on top and tries to drive a knife into his chest. Deadlocked, the enemy suddenly starts speaking soothing words to the young soldier on the ground, who slowly gives in as the knife sinks in and kills him.

Watching that horrible scene, it occurred to me: that's what Satan is like in our lives. **He tries to "soft-talk" us** into doing something wrong or allowing negative thoughts and beliefs to come into our lives. In fact, the enemy is often more effective at talking us into distancing ourselves from God and His will than he is at getting us to give in to his schemes.

Because Jesus destroyed all of Satan's works at the cross (1 John 3:8), **the devil has no power to destroy your life.** He walks about *like* a lion, but he *isn't* one. He's simply a deceitful, fallen angel. So all he can do is try to deceive you into submitting to *his* thinking rather than God's.

Every day, we're subjected to countless ideas, thoughts, and beliefs. **Resist whatever slips in casually because the enemy just might be trying to "soft-talk" you into something:** "Hey, it's okay. Relax, it's no big deal."

...Be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith...

1 Peter 5:8-9 (NKJV)

It's the little things we submit to or resist every day that matter. Resist listening to any of the devil's lies, pedalled off as the truth. Submit only to God's Word and what He says is yours in Christ!

Stop Grumbling!

When we grumble about something and do nothing about it, we're actually tolerating it.

...Nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer.

1 Corinthians 10:10 (ESV)

We often think if we're grumbling about something, that we're resisting it. **But when we grumble about an issue and do nothing about it, we're actually tolerating it.**

Simply put: it's easier to complain than to get up and do something to change the situation. And the danger of complaining is it can drive a wedge between relationships.

For example, when our five kids were little, I could have easily walked into our house and grumbled, "Oh man, this house is a mess. I wish these kids would fix their beds or clean up after themselves. I'm so sick and tired of this messy house." While complaining away, I could have put my feet up, watched TV and begun to resent the kids causing the mess.

Now, **complaining is a deceitful thing**: you think you're standing against dirtiness and disorganization, but your inaction shows otherwise.

Instead of complaining, Sally and I worked at training our kids. It required putting some systems in place. We needed to enforce consequences. It involved confrontation, discipline and energy, and it was tough—much tougher than sitting on the couch complaining about the mess!

Similarly, complaining about someone won't change the relationship. We need to be willing to work at it, saying, "Hey, can we talk? There's something I'd like to work out with you."

The Bible instructs us to teach, equip, rebuke and love. (See 2 Timothy 3:16–17, Proverbs 9:9, 22:6, Colossians 3:16.) It takes more work, but it's productive and holds far greater reward in the end.

Resist Compromise

When you resist anything from the enemy, the power of God within you is resisting it too.

Daniel is an incredible example in the Bible of someone who exhibited positive resistance. Nothing derailed him from his relationship with God, even hardship. He simply refused to cave in during hard times.

Despite the king passing a law forbidding it, Daniel resisted giving in and continued praying daily to God. Arrested and marched to certain death in the lions' den, his confidence remained in God. And God protected Daniel by closing the lions' mouths yet when the king threw the evil advisors to those lions the same day, they were torn to shreds before even hitting the floor!

Not a scratch was found on him for he had trusted in his God.

Daniel 6:23 (NLT)

Life's issues can be exhausting. As Daniel experienced, **resisting something doesn't mean we'll never have to walk out trials.** It doesn't mean we won't experience failures or have to ride out hard months or maybe even years.

I've found that **holding onto the powerful resistance found in Christ—one that never submits, even in the midst of trouble—is what takes me through.** Regardless of how long it takes, it's about deciding deep down: "I will not submit to it."

Daniel understood he had been **designed by God to resist compromising.** He resisted any tactic the enemy tried to use against him. We need the same heart attitude. As believers, when we face trials, we can boldly claim Philippians 4:13 as our personal promise, believing we've already made it through, empowered supernaturally by Christ's strength working in us. We aren't alone; **He is resisting the storm with us.**

You see, **when you resist anything from the enemy, the power of God within you is resisting it too.** In the midst of a storm, trust confidently in the One who closes lions' mouths for His people. Tether onto His resistance as it empowers you to overcome and walk out hard seasons.

Build Your Relationship With God

In God you'll find all the strength, wisdom and guidance you need to continually resist the enemy.

Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

James 4:7 (NKJV)

The three parts to this verse are in a distinct order. **We are to submit to God first.**

When we grow our relationship with God by laying claim to His promises and submitting to the truths in His Word, **it strengthens us internally**. It's like being hooked up to an IV and receiving an infusion of His joy, peace, love and power!

This internal strength comes by spending time with Him and plugging into a life-giving church or even an online community of like-minded believers. Even reading a good Christian teaching book or listening to worship music with Biblical lyrics provides opportunities to submit your heart to Him.

That's because **when we're submitted to God, we're better empowered to resist the enemy**. If we want to go through life enjoying God's promises and His presence while keeping the enemy at bay, **our heart needs to hold a firm, ongoing resistance against the enemy**. That comes by daily fuelling our hearts and minds with what God says.

Then, when we stand firm against the devil's deceitful lies, he flees. It doesn't say "in some cases," "hopefully," or "usually." **It simply states a fact: he will flee.**

The Oxford Dictionary defines fleeing as "running away from someone, as from danger." **We hold powerful resistance against Satan's lies when we're submitted to God first.** How powerful? Well, the Oxford Dictionary's synonyms for "flee" paint a strong picture: "to bolt, to beat a hasty retreat, to leave hastily."

Submit to God first, and **in Him you'll find all the strength, wisdom and guidance you need to continually resist the enemy and send him running in terror.**

Choose Your Influencers With Wisdom

Spend time with God; He will keep you in good company and help you to choose your inner circle wisely!

As believers, we come across people all the time who don't believe what we believe. Following Jesus' example, we are to remain open to these people, showing them unconditional love and friendship.

However, we do have to be careful. As Solomon discovered with his foreign wives, **the enemy may use these people to try and tempt us to submit to things that are wrong.**

That's why we need to be careful when choosing our close relationships. It's far harder to stay focused and submitted to God, His power and His promises if there's someone in your inner circle trying to derail your beliefs.

The **Bible repeatedly warns us to stay away from bad company for our own good** (1 Corinthians 15:33, Proverbs 13:20, Proverbs 14:7). For example, if your best friends constantly complain about their spouses, it can affect the way you think about yours. Resist thinking like them and recognize the value, blessing and amazing gift your spouse is. If your friends' attitudes are starting to influence you negatively and you can't seem to turn it around, you have a difficult decision to make, because **those wrong attitudes and beliefs** will begin to affect your whole life.

The Lord had clearly instructed the people of Israel, "You must not marry them, because they will turn your hearts to their gods." Yet Solomon insisted on loving them anyway... And in fact, they did turn his heart away from the Lord.

1 Kings 11:2-3 (NLT)

The close company you keep will influence you toward like-minded attitudes. Solomon learned the hard way why God tells us to resist keeping bad company, but we can spare ourselves a world of pain if we heed His advice.

Spend time with God; He will keep you in good company and help you to choose your inner circle wisely!

Don't Believe Your Feelings

Feelings are fickle and a poor indicator of truth.

It's shocking how **many people believe their feelings are truth.**

Now, we know that feelings are real. By that, I mean that our feelings exist. But if I lived according to my feelings, I wouldn't get up and preach half the time! I love Sundays, but sometimes I wake up feeling tired and think, "It'd be nice to just go out for breakfast with Sally instead." I've learned **to not submit to feelings that don't match up with what God's Word says and His call on my life.**

And you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.
John 8:32 (ESV)

For example, sometimes I might *feel* unappreciated. Meanwhile, it's not true. My wife, kids and friends appreciate me. I might *feel* unloved some days, but that's also untrue. I'm deeply loved! *It's just a feeling.*

Feelings are fickle and a poor indicator of truth. Now, I understand the power and depth of feelings, but we need to be able to judge and assess when they're based on a lie. If we live governed by fickle emotions, it'll take us down wrong paths.

Feelings can destroy relationships, our drive to succeed and our relationship with God. They can cause us to submit to demonic traps as the enemy whispers lies to us that threaten to make us misjudge others or choose actions that damage our lives.

The world teaches, "Understand your feelings and then you will be free." But that's not what the Bible teaches. **God's Word says to seek truth, and it's *the truth* that will set you free.**

Let the truths in God's Word govern your life, not your feelings. His truths are liberating and always trustworthy!

Conclusion

We need to adopt this military-like resistance to keep going, especially when life gets gritty.

While addressing a conference, a speaker from the Navy Seals once told everyone to raise their hands above their head as high as they could. The crowd obliged, but then he said, "Alright, now raise them a little farther," and everyone raised them a few more inches. His point? **We can always go further than we think.**

What I love about Navy Seals is their **relentless, diehard resistance to giving up and giving in**. If there's only one Seal member left in a mission, he'll still resist the enemy until the end. Even gravely wounded, he will think of ways to take out the enemy and shut him down because this resistance has been ingrained into him. This comes from a militaristic mindset that refuses to go complacently into defeat. **Believers need to be the same way.**

So put on God's armor now! Then when the evil day comes, you will be able to resist the enemy's attacks; and after fighting to the end, you will still hold your ground.

Ephesians 6:13 (GNT)

What are you wavering on the edge of giving in to? Keeping poor company? An addiction? Suicidal thoughts? A bad diagnosis?

We need to adopt this military-like resistance in order to keep going, especially when life gets gritty. After all, Jesus *already* defeated our enemy for us. We don't need to cave in or accept his lies any longer.

Remember, you can go further than you think. Learn to submit to God—who *He* says you are, how much *He* says you're capable of and what *He's* won for you—because He has defeated our enemy. He'll take you all the way to victory!