

Satan's Foiled Attempts

As most of you know, for the past year I have been diligently working on a second devotional book. The writing and updating the stories are the result of many years of research and writing. Publishing a book is a monumental task, involving many steps and the assistance of numerous people. Some of the support efforts of friends included:

- Two YMCA directors who are close friends read and evaluated 150 stories to help me select the stories that would be included in the book. These two friends also provided valuable advice on the scope of the book. Their spirit-filled insight was very valuable to me.
- Eleven friends of mine from Y's all around the country each authored a guest story for the book. These friends are some of the giants of the YMCA Christian mission movement. This was a critical step because the book is dedicated to the national Christian mission of the YMCA.
- Earlier this summer a professional photographer and I took the cover photo – children praying at the YMCA's outdoor chapel. The Kernersville Y day camp staff cooperated with the taking of the photo during their opening chapel.
- To prepare for the photo the Y's facility director stained all the benches and the cross at the chapel.
- The proofreader, another family friend, completed the laborious task of editing hundreds of pages of my writings.

By July the preparation work was accomplished. It was now time to assemble everything together and send it to the publisher. All the segments of everyone's efforts were carefully organized on my computer. Then it happened.

As I was nearing my submission deadline Satan reared his ugly head. Two days before I was to send the text and photo files to the publisher, lightning struck – literally. A sudden summer storm raced into our community. I frantically tried to close down open files but couldn't get off the computer fast enough. There was a loud clap of thunder just outside the house and the room lit up like a Christmas tree. Our house had become the epicenter of the storm. Instantly I could hear the sizzle of something burning in my computer. Bright vivid colors flashed on my monitor, the screen went blank and the computer shut down automatically. I stared at what was left of my book – a disabled computer, with the wrath of a major electrical storm still raging outside the house. It seemed like the storm was taunting me. I had time for an extensive prayer as I nervously waited for the storm to pass.

There is a backstory leading up to the lightning strike. A month prior my subscription to a cloud-based backup program expired, and for some reason, they didn't inform me before deleting all my files in the cloud. Coupled with some summer travel it took time to re-enroll the on-line backup and start uploading my computer files to the cloud. With a large amount of data and massive photo files to back up this process would take weeks. The computer froze up when I was out-of-town, so I lost valuable time before I could reboot the computer. Needless to say, the backup process was not complete when lightning struck the internet cable coming into house.

When the storm had passed I reluctantly turned the computer back on. Thankfully, the monitor did come on and my computer limped back to life – in safe mode. There was no internet service and I knew there was internal



Front cover of my new devotional book

damage to the computer. As I surveyed the hard drive I discovered the data was still intact. But, evaluating my computer I was advised to replace the aging computer, rather than repair it. Before delivering my old computer to my computer tech guy I copied the files related to the book. I knew I would be a week or more before getting a new computer and I would have to learn how to use a new operating system. The cable company informed me it would take several days to restore internet service to the house. To keep moving forward during the interim I had to pull data from multiple places and use Kathy's laptop for a week. But, I was able to put the pieces back together.

Why did all this happen right at this critical time? Satan's enemy is God. Satan clearly doesn't want people to grow in their faith and he will do anything to sabotage efforts to win souls for Christ. My devotional book is intended to do both: be a motivational reinforcement for people of faith and to plant the seeds of faith in others. The book is designed as a devotional for meetings where people not of faith might attend. The stories soften their hearts and open their minds, and then the Holy Spirit takes over. The ultimate goal is for people searching for faith to want God to be part of their lives, too. Hearing or reading the stories is my way of sharing the faith with them. Satan wanted to destroy that opportunity. So, he tried to obliterate my book and my spirit.

Satan took great efforts to place me in a vulnerable position and then strike a death blow. He went to great lengths to create a seemingly impossible situation. He weakened my backup system, and before I could re-establish files he brought on the sudden show of force. He also struck at a time when I was physically weakened from the beginning of a fitness/weight loss effort and emotionally drained from a recent personal disappointment. And, Kathy was away on the church mission trip so I was facing all this by myself. I was ripe for a fall. If Satan could destroy years of work he thought he could destroy my spirit. But, God saw to it that wouldn't happen. Satan is all around each of us, ready to strike when we are most vulnerable. God is more powerful and He is my strength and my shield. Satan strikes us when we are weak but that is also when God, if we let Him, will help us the most.

Perhaps you have had an experience like this. When you are really down, don't let Satan have a chance to finish you off. Be aware of your vulnerability and ask God to carry you above, around and through your challenges. When everything seems stacked against you resist the urge the defeated rationalization that "it wasn't meant to be." That is exactly what Satan wants you to think, and then throw in the towel. Instead, trust the Lord to see you through whatever you face. He has done that repeatedly for me, and He will for you too. Don't think for a moment that Satan has any love for you. But, God is love – for me and for you. God didn't bring me this far to let me fail.

It took me a week to put the pieces back together, but with God's help, I did it. In recent weeks I have completed the final proof and made the final approval to print the book. It will be in my hands within the next couple of weeks. Despite Satan's spiteful efforts it is my hope and prayer it inspire the faithful and whet the appetite of others to seek the Lord. To God be the glory!

Question: When you are feeling down, defeated and vulnerable, what do you do to turn to God for strength?

Scripture Verses:

God is our protection and our strength. He always helps in times of trouble ... The Lord All-Powerful is with us; the God of Jacob is our defender (Psalm 46:1, 11).

He gives strength to those who are tired and more power to those who are weak ... But the people who trust the Lord will become strong again. They will rise up as an eagle in the sky; they will run and not need rest; they will walk and not become tired (Isaiah 40:29, 31).

Prayer: Heavenly Father. It is easy to get discouraged when things are not going well. There are times when issues keep building up on top of each other, especially when we are trying to do something good. We pray that we will turn to you for strength to overcome the issues we face, so we can serve You. Amen.