



## Searching for a Winner: Axioms of Warfare: The Offensive; Exception: The Believer Never Takes the Offensive against Lucifer, 1 Pet 5:8-9

### 2. The Offensive:

- 1) Offensive action is the only means by which a decision is gained in warfare. When successful, the offensive brings victory whereas the defense can only avoid defeat.
- 2) Sun-tzu \sund-zu´\, a 4th century B.C. Chinese writer and author of *The Art of War*, one of the first works on military strategy, stated the principle this way:

Security against defeat implies defensive tactics; ability to defeat the enemy means taking the offensive.

- 3) In the Christian way of life the believer is equipped to exert offensive action by executing the means which the God of nature has placed in his power: the four spiritual mechanics that result in Pivot power and invisible hero status.
- 4) This does not, however, provide us the power to take on Lucifer and his demonic army.
- 5) We must always be on the defensive against the Dark Side since our spiritual assets do not enable us to engage him offensively. In fact, the assumption of a defensive posture is mandated in:

**1 Peter 5:8 - Be of sober spirit [ νήφω, *nēphō* ]. Become vigilant [ γρηγορέω, *grēgoreō* ]. Your adversary the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.**

The verb for “sober” is νήφω, *nēphō*. It is in the imperative mood and refers literally to a person who is free of any influence from alcoholic beverages. The legalist would teach that the way to take a stand against the devil is by simply being a teetotaler. But νήφω, *nēphō* is never used literally in the New Testament but figuratively for the stability and tranquility of soul brought about by an ascetic advance to spiritual adulthood. It refers to the spiritual stability that characterizes the adult believer. It denotes the mental clarity that provides both confidence and courage under pressure and the absence of such emotions as anger and fear.

The verb “vigilant” is γρηγορέω, *grēgoreō* and is also in the imperative mood demanding alertness and watchfulness regarding demonic attack. The adult believer must be constantly aware that he is a target for demon influence.

Peter characterizes Lucifer as a roaring lion who prowls about seeking someone to devour. In the appeal trail those believers who are prime targets are the ones winning tactical victories in the plan of God. Thus, any sign of weakness on the part of the adult believer is going to be exploited. These opportunities are provided by a failure to rebound, making poor decisions from a position of weakness, and involvement in human good and evil. The weakened believer sends signals to the observing demons that he is a prime target for demon influence.



The lion is used to represent this assault. In fact the most proficient hunter is the lioness. She preys on everything from insects to antelopes and giraffes. She is very patient and seeks out the weak member of a target population, stalks it until an opportunity arrives, and then runs him down in a short, rapid charge [*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 6:248].

In order to defend yourself against the devil you must be spiritually stable and constantly alert to demon influence. Failure to continue the advance is to become equivalent to the person who drinks too much and becomes unstable physically and thus unaware of dangerous situations. In the spiritual life, the person who is not ascetic with regard to his spiritual life becomes weak and disengaged and thus a target of the Dark Side's demonic forces. These must be resisted:

**1 Peter 5:9 - Whom you must resist [ ἀνθίστημι, *anthistēmi* ], stabilized in doctrine, fully aware your fellow believers are undergoing these same sufferings.**

The word “resist” is yet another imperative mood and this one is the mandate to take up a defensive stand against demon influence. This is defense, not offense. We are not equipped to go on the offensive with the fallen angels. When they attack us we are to “resist.” This requires us to utilize our spiritual assets to defend our soul from the influence the doctrines of demons seek to impart.

- 6) Although we are noting the military principle of offense being superior to defense, it is extremely important that I stress to you how this illustration refers to our spiritual advance with regard to our battle with the flesh and the world. It does not imply that we are to go on offense with Lucifer.
- 7) From 1 Peter 5:8-9 we can suggest certain attitudes that support the adult believer's successful offensive against the flesh and the world:
  1. Spiritual self-esteem which is the beginning of the sophisticated spiritual life. This supplies self-confidence and courage based on a doctrinal inventory.
  2. Reciprocal love for God which provides the motivation for continuing the advance in times of either prosperity or testing.
  3. A high inventory of doctrinal rationales which can be called upon in time of testing.
  4. Spiritual asceticism which demands consistent inculcation of Bible doctrine in order to maintain momentum.
  5. With these doctrines you will have the wisdom to discern divine viewpoint from human viewpoint and thus perceive the pseudo-spiritual categories of human good and evil.
  6. By submission to the standards of absolute righteousness you are able to avoid emotional reactions to circumstances and instead respond with honor and integrity.