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The Doe and the Devil

I live out in the countryside, and I'm grateful every day for the natural beauty that surrounds me. But it does mean dealing with some wildlife issues: an occasional bear raiding garbage cans, cougar and coyote sightings, and lots of deer. Deer are beautiful creatures, but as much as I enjoy seeing them in the neighborhood, I hate seeing them in my yard. In fact, we've gone to great trouble to fence them out, so that I can grow things that deer will decimate, given half a chance.

We hadn't had any trouble for a few years, so I began to relax. Then this spring, a doe started getting in somehow, enticed by the smorgasbord of my front yard. Soon, she had a fawn with her too. So I belatedly went out to patrol the perimeter and do some fence repair. But it seemed I no more than got one gap closed when the crafty, determined deer found another weak spot to come in. Before I knew it, my fruit trees had been thoroughly "deer pruned" and all that remained of my rose bushes were ugly bare stems.

Finally, be strong in the Lord... Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against... the spiritual forces of evil... Stand firm with the belt of truth...the breastplate of righteousness...the gospel of peace... the shield of faith... the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (Eph. 6:10-17)

Are you tracking with me here? We're told that the devil is crafty (Gen. 3:1), that he is a murderer and a liar (John 8:44). Although he may disguise himself as a beautiful angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14), he is really our mortal enemy, prowling around like a roaring lion determined to devour and destroy (1 Pet. 5:8). So we must remain ever vigilant. We must stay *strong in the Lord*, for Satan will exploit any spiritual weakness, use any little chink in our armor as an invitation to wreak havoc.

It may sound flippant to compare my troublesome deer to the devil, but here's my point. That doe only got into my yard in the first place because I became complacent. I forgot about the danger and let down my guard. I wasn't vigilant. As a result, I'll likely have problems for years to come – with this habitual offender and with her offspring, who she has now trained where to find food. If only I had kept my fence mended instead! How much more imperative is it to keep our spiritual armor in good repair?

S. Johnson