

## What in the World is the Devil Doing?

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If you go to Wartburg, they will show you a dark spot on the old walls, which they say was caused by the breaking of an ink bottle that Martin Luther supposedly threw at the devil. Skeptics say it was just the rats inside of the wall that Luther heard. Whether the Evil one caused the actual physical disturbance, we do not know. What is important is that Luther recognized that Satan sets himself in opposition to those who champion the Word, and that he never hesitated in fighting him. Do you know that the same is true today? The devil never likes to hesitate in his efforts to fight you and me as believers who are actively serving the Lord. The devil never takes a coffee break!

Our series of messages that we are beginning today is entitled, "What in the world is the devil doing?" What is the devil really doing in this world today? That's what we want to find out as we embark on this journey or study. We are going to unmask Satan in these messages and the schemes or tricks that he uses to trap people in order to bring their lives under his own power and bondage. We are going to see exactly how Satan is working today. What is the devil really doing in our world today and in our own lives?

Ephesians 6:11 says:

"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

The word "wiles" (methodeia) speaks of the cunning arts, trickery and travesty of the devil. The devil has a bag full of tricks that he has always used on people in order to bring their lives under bondage. That old cereal commercial that says "tricks are for kids" is not true after all. Tricks are for the devil! You can be sure that the devil will use plenty of tricks in order to get your life as a Christian off target spiritually. He wants to throw a monkey wrench into the grinding gears of your spiritual life. We must simply understand today that the devil will try to do anything in order to bring sin into our lives and destroy our effectiveness for God.

2 Timothy 2:26 reminds us:

"And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will."

The word for "snare" (pagis) actually does speak of a snare, trap or noose. It depicts the type of trap that was used to entangle birds unexpectedly and suddenly. Satan has his traps or snares that he places in front of our lives. One small turn in the wrong direction may mean spiritual defeat and our downfall.

My daughter came into the bedroom at 3:00 a.m. the other morning and woke us up from a deep sleep. She said, "Daddy, there's a mouse eating my candy in my bedroom. I can hear him walking over my colored pencils on my desk and eating the candy that I left on the desk." Well, I didn't really believe her at the time. But sure enough, when I went to check out the story, there was a mouse sitting on her desk. The next step was to set the mousetrap and try to catch the mouse. I will have you know that I caught the mouse the next day. All of us want to catch those pesky mice that invade our home in the fall season and winter.

Let me say today that we are really the mice in Satan's trap. Many times we only see the bait that Satan is putting on the trap and we fail to look at the wire and powerful spring behind the trap itself. We become ignorant of the way Satan is baiting our life and what the ultimate outcome will be if we take his bait. Many times we are simply ignorant of the way that Satan is trying to work within our lives. We turn a blind eye to what the devil is doing and how he is trying to trap us. We must know when the cheese is placed in front of our nose and what the consequences are when we bite into the cheese.

Remember that behind the trap is the trapper! This does not necessarily mean that every time you are tempted that it is the devil himself tempting you. The devil tempts our lives either directly or indirectly. We can experience direct confrontation with the devil or his indirect approach to our lives. We must understand that the devil has many other angelic beings that he has recruited in order to tempt us. Satan is head over all the demonic spirits which he sends our way to tempt us and harass our lives, trying to bring us down in our lives. Satan is not omnipresent which means that he cannot be everywhere at the same time like God can be. This is why he is forced to use a large army of angelic followers to help him in his war on mankind.

Ephesians 6:12

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

Wicked spirits roam the "high" or heavenly atmosphere. Within the celestial atmosphere there is the world or realm of invisible spirits. We can't really begin to comprehend with our finite earthly minds what kind of invisible world exists outside our eyesight, but we know that it does exist. We know this because the Bible says so and because we experience the temptation from this world of wicked spirits, which are headed up by Satan. So the believer is tempted directly by Satan and many times indirectly by the world of wicked spirits which Satan heads up and programs to tempt and defeat our lives. In any event, we know that Satan is the personal being behind all of the tricks and temptations that come our way. He is the head of a rebel order that is

out to get our lives away from the God and God's plan for our lives. Satan's aim is to bring us down in life! We must never forget this. We cannot live in a dream world of illusion and forget what the devil is trying to do to our lives.

1 Peter 5:8 says:

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."

It's the desire of Satan to devour our spiritual lives. He wants to swallow us up or defeat our lives by getting us to follow his schemes and snares, which he places before us. Some of us today are in the belly of the lion! We have allowed the devil to devour our lives and bring us to the place where we are not following God's program for our lives. Instead, we are following our own program and have given Satan a foothold in our lives in some way. Satan's craftiness, trickery and schemes must not go unnoticed today. We must wake up to the ways that the devil is working today even within our own lives. Any good soldier must know what the enemy's strategies are and the weapons that he is using against him. So it is within the Christian life. We must understand the strategies and ammunition that the devil is using in order to bring havoc into our lives.

Martin Luther wrote in that beloved hymn:

"For still our ancient foe  
Doth seek to work us woe;  
His craft and power are great,  
And, armed with cruel hate,  
On earth is not his equal."

2 Corinthians 2:11

"Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices."

Satan can defraud our lives or take advantage of us very easily. He knows how to roll the dice and play the game. Satan knows how to win and take advantage of our lives! He has been doing it since the days of Eden. The word for "devices" (noema) means the perception or thinking of the devil. Satan has his own way of thinking and his own evil purpose for this world and for our own lives as believers. We must begin to get into the mind of the devil or the way that he is thinking. I must be honest with you today. If you do not get into the mind of the devil, then the devil will get into your mind! We must understand how the devil is working today and never underestimate how he is working.

I think that we have an over reaction to what the devil is doing today and at the same time a certain under reaction to what the devil is doing. I know that sounds like a

statement from some politician but let me explain. The Charismatic church seems to blame the devil for everything, even burning the Sunday roast in the kitchen oven. Actually it was the preacher who burned the roast because he preached too long! It was not the devil who burned the roast. The devil isn't in the cooking business. In some measure the devil gets the blame or bum rap for things that he is not doing. On the other hand, there are believers who act as if the devil is almost nonexistent. They have forgotten how the devil really works and what he is doing in this world today. They even fail to see what he is doing in their own lives. What we need to find out in this series of messages is what the devil is really doing.

## **What in the world is the devil doing?**

### **1. The devil is shifting the believer's devotion away from Christ.**

We must remember where the real battleground is at in our lives before we can see what the devil is really doing. The real battleground is in our mind. Paul spoke about the mind tactics of the devil and what Satan did in the Garden of Eden.

2 Corinthians 11:3

“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.”

Paul compared the danger facing the Corinthian church to Eve's deception by Satan. He feared that the Corinthians, like Eve, would fall prey to satanic lies and have their minds corrupted. Satan's teachers were doing the work and bidding of Satan over the lives of these people. Following their lies would be following Satan. Both Satan's workers and Satan himself have a way of transforming themselves into the disguise of snakes. They come to us in a very subtle, sly and deceiving manner. They always disguise themselves and play what we might term as make believe. Only the discerning believer can see through the snake and angelic disguise of Satan and his coworkers.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 says:

“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”

This is how Satan came to Eve and how he comes to us today. Satan approaches us either directly or indirectly through false teachers, who have a false message about living, which contradicts the way we are to really live for Christ. The point that we cannot miss is that the Evil one and his workers always disguise themselves. The word “transforming” means to masquerade and implies the art of deception. They take on

the outward appearance that they are very holy and godly and want to offer you something that will be for your benefit. But in reality, Satan and his workers are really out to send you false messages and phony directions on how to live and what to believe. A false teacher may not realize it, but he is really a pawn in the hands of the devil, doing his work. He is sending false messages to lead God's children down the wrong path in life. Beware! The messengers are everywhere today. We must remember that not every message carrier has the right message.

J. N. Darby has said:

"Satan is no more satanic then when he carries a Bible."

Dear friend, the devil, as he is represented by his followers, comes to your front porch and knocks on the door. You open the door and there he is. There stands the devil's representative. He is from the Mormon Church or Jehovah Witness group. There he is. He is standing on your front porch with a suitcoat on, wearing shiny shoes and has every hair in place. He looks like he is ready to go to church. But don't be fooled! The bottom line of their message is deception and error. Underneath their disguise is falseness and damnable heresies dealing with Christ and salvation. Underneath their disguise is Satan! We must be able to see through the devil's disguises today. It's through these satanic messengers that the Evil one tries to send false messages into our minds and thinking. However, when the devil sends wrong messages and beguiling thoughts into our minds like he did to Eve, we must be able to detect that the devil is playing with our mind and do something about it. Well, what are we to do and what can we do?

2 Corinthians 10:5

"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

Every thought that we think must be linked with what is right to do and which promotes a life of obedience to Christ. It must not counteract what Christ wants us to do in life. Our thoughts must be Christ centered and not devil centered. We have got to wake up and begin to understand how the devil really operates in our own lives. The fact is this. The devil operates in our minds. He is a deceiver within the realm of our thinking. He is a deceiver within the realm of our decision making. And many times we go through life and never really stop to analyze how the devil places wrong thoughts in our mind in order to try and get us off track in our spiritual lives. So how can we get rid of the devil's thoughts that he races through our minds? The answer is so simply that many times we miss it. We must cast them out of our mind or thinking process ("casting down imaginations"). The literal Greek rendering means "demolishing the reasonings of the mind or intellect."

One day I was watching a wrecking crew demolishing a building with explosives. After all was hooked up and in place, one man pushed the button and the whole building caved in. They called this demolishing act an implosion. The Christian must in one sense demolish all of the thoughts that the devil places in their mind. We must blow them up within our mind and create what I call the devil's debris, so that there is nothing left of these thoughts, which would potentially lead us astray.

I remember talking to Mrs. Abram Gish many years ago. I went to her home to pick up some literature and tapes by her husband who had recently passed away. He taught the Scofield Bible Course for many years. Mrs. Gish helped him in his work and was a godly testimony and help to him. Mrs. Gish was talking to me about all that they had accomplished together through the years. As she reflected on it she stopped and said, "You know, I sense that the devil placed a thought of pride in my mind just now." And recognizing it, she demolished the thought from her thinking and praised God for all that He did through their lives.

2 Corinthians 11:3

"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."

Paul was concerned about the corruption of our minds by Satan and his workers. What is the mind anyway? Is it merely the brain that sits inside your skull? My friend, the mind according to Scripture is not a physical entity. It is a spiritual entity. Our minds or the area of our thinking processes are not a physical substance. Our minds are really a spiritual substance. All the thoughts that we think come from our unseen control center (the heart) which is within all of us.

Mark 7:21-22

"For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness."

We think from within our heart, which is the unseen spiritual makeup with man. The heart is a spiritual entity that God created so we could have contact with the world of the unseen. Because we have a heart we can have contact with God, who is a spirit (John 4:24). We also can be connected with the spirit world and be tempted because we have a mind that is spiritual in nature. The human brain is simply the vehicle that is used to give us a thought pattern through the human existence of the body. However, the real thinking or thoughts are generated from within the spiritual heart of a person, which is the real control center of thinking. It is this inward spiritual nature of a man that is accessible to Satan and his temptations. So Satan tries to tempt us from within, through the unseen realm, called the heart. He wants to get our heart away from God. God is looking for your heart but so is Satan.

2 Corinthians 11:3 says that Satan came to Eve in the form of a serpent and deceived her. He came in a disguised manner and a very sly and subtle way. This is the same way that he approaches us today. He comes to us in the snake disguise in order to try and take on the appearance that he is wise and smart. Yes, even smarter than God! And what does Satan do? He sends beguiling messages or deceiving messages into our “minds” in order to corrupt our clear thinking about the Word of God. This in return leads us away from what God really says and wants for our life. Satan wants to lead us away from what the Bible calls our “simplicity that is in Christ.” This means that Satan wants to confuse our minds about what is right in order to lead our thinking and life away from our dedication and devotion to Christ.

The word “simplicity” speaks of the dedication and devotion we are to have to Christ because we are in Christ. The devil wants to get us away from Christ and His will for our life. Let me tell you what Satan wants to really do today. He wants you to follow his plans instead of Christ’s plans for your life. That’s the bottom line of it. Satan wants to manipulate your mind and sway you in every direction except God’s direction for your life. By placing wrong thoughts within your mind, the devil can direct you to do evil things, think upon wrong things, listen to wrong things and go places that will lead you away from Christ and His will for your life. Mark it down, the devil is out to get you. He is out to get your mind because when he has your mind, then he has you! If Satan can sell his thoughts to you, then you will act upon them and break your fellowship with Christ and move in the wrong direction in life. You will no longer be dedicated to Christ and what He has for you. Your “simplicity” or devotion and dedication to Christ will be broken. Simplicity means devotion to Christ. Whatever God wants us to do, the devil does not want us to do. So he tries to take us away from our devotion to Christ.

In the widest and most practical sense, we must realize that Satan tries to disrupt our own personal devotional life in the Word of God, so we cannot be affective for Christ and no longer devoted to Him. If he can keep us from our personal devotional life with Christ, then we are already in his hands. Satan’s business is simply to keep God’s people from their devotional life in Christ. Satan’s business card says this, “Professional Devotional Wrecker.” How would you like to have a card like that?

Someone has said:

“Satan rocks the cradle when we sleep at our devotions.”

A sign appeared in the office of a businessman who had a tendency to skip devotions because of his very busy schedule. He wanted to remind himself of the devil’s tactics to try and steer his attention away from God’s eternal truth and his devotion to Him.

The sign read like this:

“When you're faced with a busy day, save precious time by skipping your devotions”

Signed, Satan

I want to say something today that only the preacher can say at times. But it's the preacher's job to say it because he is responsible for his flock. What I want to say is this. Some of you are simply not devoted or dedicated to Christ. And it breaks my heart to see it. Some of you folks sitting out here in churchland had better realize what the devil is doing in your life. You don't think the devil is doing anything. I want to say today that he is doing something. The devil is always up to something! He is deceiving your mind! The devil has you dedicated to everything else but Christ. The devil has you dedicated to other programs instead of God's programs. The devil has stolen your devotion to Christ, church and spiritual things and replaced it with other programs and practices that supersede what Christ really wants you to do. And I want to say something else while I'm saying it. In the end or down the road, nothing else will matter in your life or in the life of your children but your simplicity or devotional life in Christ. The most important things in life are not how much you make per hour on the job or how shiny your new car is. The most important things in life have to do with Christ and what he wants you to do with your life.

Some of you Christians are walking down a back alley somewhere wondering what is going on or has happened in your lives. You are wondering why there is no fire, zeal of passion for the things of Christ anymore or why you scrapped your devotional time in the Bible and prayer meeting from your schedule. Some say it's the preacher's fault. Some others say it's the fault of the church and others blame their wife like Adam did. Others blame their job and how much time it takes up. I'll tell you what is going on in your life and whose fault it is. It's your own fault because you have allowed the devil to get a foothold in your life. You may say, “Oh no, not me!” Oh yes, you! Why can't the devil get a hold of your life? Are you exempt from the devil's schemes? None of us are exempt from the “works of the devil” (1 John 3:8). The “works of the devil” speak about the devil's employment or business. I told you already that the devil has a business card! These “works” speak about those very tricks or schemes that the devil uses upon our lives to promote sin and break our devotional life with Christ. The devil will try to take us under and keep us from this simplicity or devotional life that we are to have in Christ.

What in the world is the devil doing? I will tell you in nutshell what he is doing today. He is stealing our hearts and lives and children away from our devotion to Jesus Christ! He is robbing our lives of our spiritual devotion and dedication to Christ and those things that will matter most in our children's lives and those things that will last for eternity! This is the underlying premise of all that he does in the lives of Christians today. The devil takes us away from our devotional life that we are to have in Christ. Satan is robbing us of our devotional life of fellowship with Christ and our faithfulness



to Him. He is shifting our life away from commitment and devotion to Christ. This is his number one strategy and underlying purpose with all the rest of his schemes. That's what he did to Adam and Eve. He manipulated both of them to break their devotional fellowship with God and their obedience before God. You can be sure that this is the devil's number one aim for your life today. If he can keep you from walking with Christ in sweet fellowship and keep you from being faithful and dedicated to God, then he has won the battle. There are many Christians walking around in a type of spiritual insensitive stupor who have no idea what it is to really fellowship with Christ and walk with Christ through consistent prayer and meditation. There are many believers who straddle the fence and never dedicate their lives to the Lord. They never become a real disciple or follower of the Lord and surrender to His complete will for their lives. Why is this? I will tell you why. It's because the devil has fed them the stories of the world that say there are more important things in life. There are more important matters to deal with and occupy our minds with than Christ. But let me say today, Christ is still the answer to what really counts in life! Anything that matters most in life has to do with Christ.

The devil is stealing our hearts away from prayer. He is stealing our hearts away from personal devotional reading, the family altar and dedication to God's house. We pass off God's Word and Church attendance as something that is secondary. We think that skipping prayer meeting, church and personal devotions doesn't matter. Let me ask you, who do you think places those thoughts in your mind? It's not God, it's the devil!

2 Corinthians 11:3 says:

"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."

I fear for some of you people today as Paul did for the Corinthians. I fear that the devil has in some measure stolen your dedication and devotional life away from Christ. And I fear that your children will grow up not knowing this dedication to Christ and what Christ wants them to do because the devil has stolen it from you.

A particular man who was following one of those new waves of Christian thought called "Classic Christianity" was talking on the radio. He was saying that he was free to skip church whenever he thought it was necessary because he was free from all rules and regulations. He called this a form of "Classic Christianity." I will tell you what this way of life and thinking should be called. It should be called "Classic Uncommitment" to Christ. Let me say something today that will put spiritual brush burns on many of our lives. If we are frequent church skippers then we are not dedicated to Christ. The devil has deceived us like he has deceived this man. Many believers think that they can actually be a "Classic Christian" dedicated to Christ without doing the things that He wants them to do.

Paul says, I “fear” that the devil will bring a mental deception into your minds like he did to Eve. He will in some measure get us to detour from what God wants us to do. He will get us listening to his thoughts within our mind instead of what God wants us to think. Some of us had better clean out our minds. We had better do some early spring house cleaning and realize that the way we are thinking is wrong. We have been fed some manipulative snake story from the devil that is keeping us from being devoted to Christ. What can we do to rescue ourselves from all the mind tactics of the Evil one?

Romans 12:2

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

This is how we can get back on track once again. How do we renew or literally “renovate” our minds? It’s by getting back into the Word of God. The book is the answer! What does the Bible say we are to do? How does the Bible say we are to live? What does the Bible say about dedication to Christ. What did Christ say in the Bible about this “simplicity” or devotion to Christ? I can tell you what Jesus said.

Luke 9:23

“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me (follow me), let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.”

Jesus said that we are to deny ourselves of our own agenda in life that is taking us away from His. We are to sacrifice our own life for Christ and surrender our time, talents and treasure to Him. We are to live the “cross” way of life, the way of surrender and sacrifice. What are you doing with your life? There comes a time when you as man in the home must say, “Enough is enough.” You must get sick and tired of the devil sweeping your household away from their devotion and dedication to Christ. You must take the reigns and stop playing games in life. You must rededicate yourself and family to Christ. You must get busy in the Master’s work again.

As we will see in the ongoing studies within this series, the devil is out to get your family. Is there a man in your house that will stand up and do what is right? Is there a man in your house that will say enough is enough and start family devotions and see to it that his family is in church when the doors are open? Is there a man in the house that will wake up to the snake’s deceptive ways over his own life and the members of his family? Rise up oh men of God, for there is a snake in your garden. And we all know who the snake is!

## **2. The devil is sending doubt upon the Word of God.**

Donald Barnhouse said:

“The third chapter of Genesis has become one of the great battlegrounds of human thought. Satan must hate it more than any other page in the history of writing.”

Now why does Satan hate Genesis chapter three? It's because it preserves for us today a detailed exposure of his seductive schemes.

Genesis 3:1 says:

“Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?”

Here we see the beginning of the devil's work as he indwells the serpent and approaches Eve in a sly and crafty manner. The very first words that come from the slimy lips of the devil have to do with God's Word (“Yea hath God said”). This is a suggestive statement by the devil. The devil sends a question in Eve's mind about God's Word or what God had originally said. Satan always aims the attack at our spiritual lifeline – the Word of God. In essence, the devil asked, “Did God really say what He said and did God really mean what he said?”

Well, we must recall what God originally said? When the devil sends doubt in your mind concerning the truth of the Word of God, then you must go back to what God has originally said and place your finger on the text reclaiming the truth of His eternal Word. God had clearly said that Adam and Eve could not eat of all the trees of the garden (see Genesis 1:16-17). There was one tree that they could not eat from and Adam knew it, Eve knew it and the devil knew it. But the cunning serpent begins to try and question what God has said and in doing so he tries to place doubt in our minds concerning what God has said. The devil puts a question mark where God points a period.

We must understand that the first scheme or trick that the devil uses must be his best one. Satan's best trick, scheme or snare is to get our minds to doubt God's Word. Dear friend, if the devil can get us to doubt God's Word, then he has his foot sticking inside the door. There is a serpent in the garden of our own life today! He is the same old serpent of Eden and he is doing the same old things. He is sending doubt into our minds concerning what God has said. Today Satan tries to place doubt in our own minds about God's Word (“Yea hath God said”). He places confusing thoughts in our mind about the truth. He tries to confuse our mind about whether or not God meant what He said or really did say what we originally thought He said. The fact is, God has said it! God said it, I believe it, and that settles it for me. Well, we sing this song, but it's amazing how Satan strategically hoodwinks us. The devil has a way of manipulating the mind and bringing ultimate deception into our mind concerning what God has said. If the devil can get us to cloud the issue of truth in our mind, then we are on the first

step down the spiral stairway of defeat. We will be defeated in life without the truth of the Word of God in our minds and hearts concerning the error of personal sins and the promise of personal victory that we can have in Christ.

Satan in his slimy, slithering and snaky way comes along our path in life. And what does he do? He places the racing thoughts in our mind, “Yea, hath God really said that you should not worry or get angry? Has God really said that you have no right to blow off some steam.” Satan may place the thought in your mind, “Yea, hath God really said that you can never experiment with sex and lust outside of marriage?” “Yea, hath God said that drinking a few cold beers will harm you?” Satan comes along and says in our minds, “Yea, hath God really said that taking drugs is wrong?” “Yea, hath God really said that it’s wrong to feel proud because of who you are and what you have done?” “Yea, hath God really said that you must not look at this particular picture on TV just because there is some nudity and swearing on the screen?” “Yea, hath God really said that you should go to church faithfully and support a local ministry?” Yea, hath God said that you should not smoke that cigarette?” “Yea, hath God really said that you should not listen to this kind of music?” “Yea, hath God said that you must forgive your wife?” “Yea, hath God said that you must have your devotions?”

Dear Christian friend, Satan has been trying to get man to doubt God’s Word and keep man from following the truth since the Garden of Eden. And he is still in the doubting business today. Satan loves to create suspicion and doubt concerning what God has said. We had better wake up to the serpent’s subtle and sly suggestions in our mind as he tries to get us to doubt God’s Word and cloud the truth in our thinking. Our only defense against his tactics of doubt is the sword of the spirit. We must know the truth of the Bible and never turn to the right or to the left. The eternal truth of the Scriptures is the only hope we have against such deception and doubt.

Ephesians 6:17

“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

The helmet protects our minds from the doubts that Satan places within our thinking processes. The helmet of salvation speaks of a mind that is protected from Satan’s deceptive thoughts. The way we can keep our minds protected is through the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. We must never forget that battling with Satan is a truth encounter. We must counteract the doubts that Satan places in our minds concerning the Word of God with the absolute truth of the Word of God. That’s why we need to memorize those Bible passages that will help us counteract the lies that Satan tempts us with. When he tempts us to worry, be angry, lust or inflate our ego, we need to know the truth of the Scriptures that will help us to counteract these satanic lies.

There is something else that we need to be aware of today. When we start to wonder what God's will is for our life concerning a job change, church change or important decision that we must make, we must first determine whose thoughts are being placed within our minds. Does this statement alarm you? We need to beware of the fact that Satan can try to get our minds going in a wrong direction when it comes to the will of God for our life. He wants to detour us away from the will of God in any way he can. Satan sometimes will try to disguise God's will or veil God's will from your life by sending the seed thoughts of change in order to distract your minds from really doing God's will. Remember, we can stray from the will of God when we do not seek the truth of His Word and first ask ourselves these questions: "Is what I am thinking about going contrary to the truth of God's Word in any way?" Second, "Why am I doing it?" Third, "Have I earnestly prayed for God's wisdom while seeking to discover His will in this particular area of my life (James 1:5)?"

We must beware of Satan's messages. All our thinking without searching for the truth in the Bible and without earnestly praying for God's wisdom may take our life in a wrong direction and give Satan victory over our minds. I believe that many of us unknowingly fall victim to the devil's suggestions instead of God's suggestions. We must be very careful of the serpent's subtle ways to detour us from doing what is right. We cannot allow Satan to get into our head! We must get into his head and understand how he works and may be working in our own lives.

The devil casts doubt upon God's Word today as he did in Eden. He also denies and distorts the truth of God's word as he did in Eden. We will look at what Satan was actually trying to teach by these statements in a later message. For now, let us clearly see that Satan always progressively moves from doubt to outright denial and then to distortion. And all the while he is casting suspicion, doubt, lies and speculation upon the Word of God.

Genesis 3:4-5 goes on to say:

"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

When the devil said, "Yea hath God said," he casts doubt upon the Word of God. When the devil said, "Ye shall not surely die," he denied what God had said. God had said, "Thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17). When the devil said, "ye shall become as God's," he distorted or diluted God's Word by adding to what God had originally said. He wanted Eve to fall into the same prideful sin that had caused his own downfall. He added to what God had originally said! In doing this, he distorted or diluted the Word of God.

Satan always substitutes confusion where there should be clear understanding. Isn't that what the devil is up to today? He tries to confuse believers about the clearly stated facts and unchanging truths of the Bible. He does this by getting believers to doubt, deny and even distort the Word of God. And all of this doubt, denial and distortion is done within the realm of our minds! Beware of his Edenic schemes that are still used on Christians today. We actually have the reenactment of Eden going on in our minds and lives today. This is why we have such confusion today concerning worldliness and what God's Word clearly says about unholy things. That's why we hear all of this talk about gray areas in the Bible today. I think it is the scheme of the devil to bring the church into an unseparated position because of their refusal to believe in the clear statements of the Bible. Satan always tries to breed confusion where there is to be no confusion. Satan always tries to cloud the clarity of God's Word within the minds of Christians. The sad result of Satan's number one scheme to cast doubt on the Scriptures is that he can get us to doubt the true and original meaning of Scripture. This is what happened to Eve.

### Genesis 3:3

"But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die."

Satan challenged Eve's memory concerning what God had originally said. The problem is that she did not have a very good memory. She had forgotten exactly what God had said because she misquoted what God had originally said. God never did say that they could not "touch" the fruit on the tree. Eve played into the exaggeration of the devil and added her own distortion to what God had originally said. This happened because Eve did not hide God's Word in her heart as we are told to do (Psalms 119:11). When we don't properly remember what God has said, we will find ourselves very easily distorting or diluting what God has said in His Word. In effect, we will be a pawn in the hands of the devil.

The devil approaches Eve in Genesis 3:1 and asks, "Did God really say that you cannot eat of every tree? Come on, let's get real about this. Lets get a real life." Satan comes with the tone of scorn and cynicism and seems to send the underlying message that God was holding out on Eve and preventing her from having something that was good and beneficial for her life.

So what happens? Eve picks up on this attitude of Satan toward the Word of God and God's goodness in what He had originally said. And what does Eve then do? She then exaggerates along with the devil concerning the lack of God's goodness and kindness demonstrated to her. Eve does this by misquoting what God had originally said, thereby proving that she was forming within her own mind some real concern that God may have been holding out on her. God may not have had her best interest in mind when He told her to not eat of the fruit. We will study this out in our next point. Satan

tries to get us to doubt God's goodness. Satan wants to get us to think that God is holding out on our lives.

Of course, we play into the devil's game plan when we doubt the goodness of God. Eve shows that she was beginning to form the opinion within her own mind that God was holding out on her and neglecting her best interests in life. We can see that Eve's mind was affected by Satan's scheme to doubt God's Word and His original goodness to her. We know this is true because Eve added to what God originally had said. In essence, Eve answered Satan, "No, we cannot even touch the fruit on the tree (vs. 4). I mean, what fun can you possibly have when you cannot touch the fruit?" Do you see the scheme of the devil? Do you see what he did to Eve's mind and what he does within our own minds today? Satan caused Eve to doubt God's Word along with His plan of original goodness for her in that Word which He had originally given to her.

The snake is in the garden of your life today as well. And what is he doing? He is trying to get us to doubt the truth of what God has really said. He wants us to doubt what God's Word has said and that God's Word is always good and right for our lives. In essence, Satan wants to get us thinking that what God's Word says is unusually fair and that true fulfillment lies outside the realm of the will of God for our lives. Satan wants us to doubt God's Word in some measure and in some way and cause us to become dissatisfied with God's will for our lives. Dear Christian friend, we had better wake up and realize what Satan is up to in our minds.

Someone has said:

"Our adversary is a master strategist, forever fogging up our minds with smokescreens."

I remember driving to Bedford Pennsylvania. I was invited to speak at an anniversary service within the mountain area of Bedford. As I drove up into the mountainous area I faced heavy rain and fog. I wanted to see the mountains, but the fog blocked my vision. I was literally driving through the clouds because they had lowered themselves to the level or height of the mountain area that I was driving through. Call them clouds, fog or whatever. I know one thing; my vision or sight was blocked from seeing the mountains and even the car in front of me.

In a similar fashion, Satan tries to lower the clouds or fog within the realm of our mind or thinking. He tries to keep us from seeing the mountain of God's eternal Word that is right in front of us. He tries to send fog into our minds and cloud the truth of what God has said. And Satan does this by sending doubt, distortion and even denial within our minds concerning what God has really said in His Word. Beware of the fog! If you cannot see the mountain of God's Word in front of you, you had better turn on the fog lights of God's clear truth and cut through the blurred vision that Satan is sending into your mind. Furthermore, let me say that when we face the Satanic fog within our

minds, only then can the sunlight of God's truth clear away the fog of uncertainties that the devil has placed there. Dear friend, we must turn on the lights today, the lights of truth!

So there you have his number one scheme and strategy today. Satan is in the business of doubting God's eternal Word. And this doubt progressively leads to the denial and distortion of God's Word. This is what Satan is still doing today. He sends the seeds of doubt into our minds concerning the final truth of God's word.

May I say that this is why we have the very blatant errors in the modern Bible versions. You may be holding one in your hands today. You may say today, "Well, I don't take a stand against the modern versions." Why not? Cannot you see what the devil has been up to in these modern versions as he seeks to cast doubt, denial, distortion and delusion upon the Word of God. I think some believers need to wake up and open their eyes. When Bibles remove the blood of Christ from their pages and the deity of Christ from their pages, when Bibles want to erase whole sections and chapters of the Word of God from their pages, then something is up! And I will tell you what is up. The devil is working the printing press and the marketing of the Bibles today. The serpent is doing his number one work today. He is trying to send doubt, denial and distortion concerning the final truth of God's Word. The devil was the first higher critic to attack the Word of God. Since Eden, man has been playing into the hands of the devil and has become a critic of the Bible, trying to figure out what is true and what is not true or what should be included in the Bible and what should not be included in the Bible.

It's very interesting that the New International Version of the Bible actually released a gender free (inclusive language) or neutral version of the Bible in order to accommodate those who wanted a Bible such as this. It was released in another country and was actually rejected by the majority of the people. Thank God that they rejected it. Zondervan Publishing House tries to make the Bible fit into the modern culture and wants to market the Bible for money purposes. Dear friend, cannot we take a stand on the absolute inspiration and preservation of the Bible today? These people who are changing the Bible to fit into the modern culture are playing right into the scheme of the devil. Furthermore, these people who are always saying, "The Bible was only inspired in the original manuscripts and is no longer inspired today" are also playing into the hands of the devil who is sending doubt, denial and delusion into the minds of many about the inspiration and preservation of the Scriptures. When we sit in judgment upon the Word of God, then we have stooped to the lowest level of heresy and rebellion. I want to say today that the devil is criticizing the Bible out of existence! But Jesus said that the Word of God would never pass away!

Matthew 24:35

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."



If the Word of God is no longer inspired and preserved, then the Bible has passed away. Furthermore, Jesus lied when He said it would never pass away! Who are you going to believe? The devil's lie or the Lord's word! If you really believe that the Bible is not inspired today and kept pure and free from contamination, then you have bought into the lie of the serpent. I want to say that the serpent's tactics are still the same. They are as old as Eden. He wants to place doubt upon the Word of God in some way. It's doubt that ultimately leads to the denial and the diluting of the Bible. The results are devastating and harmful to a person's belief in the absolute and unchanging truth of God's Word. Many Christians today cannot hold any Bible in their hand and say with confidence that it is the absolutely inspired, inerrant and preserved Scripture for their lives today. Why is this happening? It's because there is a serpent in the garden! Beware!

### **3. The devil is sowing deceptive lies in the minds of people.**

While visiting the ocean one day, the famous English art critic Duveen was unable to persuade his little daughter to join him in the chilly water. So he built a fire, heated a teakettle of water, and with a great flourish poured the steaming liquid into the ocean. Then the child ran gleefully into the water without further hesitation. This father's trick, while harmless, is an illustration of how Satan often works. He mixes a small amount of truth into an ocean of falsehood, and people wade into it, not realizing how they are being deceived.

The believer must familiarize themselves with the devil's schemes or tactics. We must understand that the devil mixes a little truth with all of his deceptive lies in order to lead us astray. And he does this within our own minds.

The mind is the devil's workshop! Satan's target is your mind. As we have already seen, the devil and his emissaries place the seed thoughts within our mind to doubt the Word of God. This of course means that the devil replaces the truth of the word of God with deceptive lies. We are now going to zero in on some of the specific lies that the devil places within the minds of people in order to replace the truth of the Word of God. These are the thoughts that can lead people away from truth, God and His purpose for their lives.

John 8:44

“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”

This verse unmasks Satan for what he really is. Satan is a liar. Jesus says that he was a liar from the very beginning. This obviously means that the devil lied to Eve within the

Garden of Eden. Lies formed a part of the devil's very existence ("when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar and the father of it"). He is a lying deceiver. He is the original father of lying because he deceived Eve with his lies. The devil today seeks to send his lies into our mind or thinking. We must be aware of this in our daily life as a Christian. I want us to understand today that the devil is the enemy of truth ("and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him"). The Evil one will try anything and everything to move our lives away from the truth. He gives half trues and deceptive thoughts within our mind that lead us away from the truth of God's Word and will for our lives. He will do anything to cloud the issue of truth in our minds. This is exactly what the devil did to Eve's mind. He exchanged truth for lies.

During my college days we used to have what we called tie swaps. A tie swap was when all of the guys in our dorm would get our neckties together and seek to trade them off. I used to make out like a bandit on these tie swaps. I would trade some skinny looking tie for a real nice tie that some fellow had. He thought he was raking me over the coals and I thought I was raking him over the coals. Well, Satan tries to swap the truth for lies. He is a master at doing this. In one sense, Satan is trying to rake us over the coals. Do you understand that if Satan can get you to believe a lie, then he can begin to work in your life and lead you into sin? This is why he attacks our minds with his deceptive lies. Satan knows the tremendous power of your mind and he tries to capture it for himself.

Philippians 4:8

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

We must remember to combat Satan's lies by only allowing the good things of God's Word to enter our minds. If something is not true, then we must shut the door of our mind. We must not allow the false claim to enter our mind to the point where we become captured by it. Satan always wins his victories within our mind. We must learn to detect Satan's lies, which he is trying to place within our minds. If Satan wants us to doubt God's Word ("Yea hath God said?"), then he must replace God's Word with many other deceptive lies. Satan is the master of replacement. There are many deceptive lies that Satan places within our minds.

The only way that God's people can be rescued from these deceptive lies is by hearing the truth of God's Word clearly taught. When encountering the truth, they must once again face the truth instead of the deceptive lies of Satan. God cannot free a believer from ignorance and the blindness of the devil unless they first repent of their sins and open their heart to truth. Truth is the only point of rescue. Truth is the beacon light that can penetrate through the fog or mist of Satan's lies.

2 Timothy 2:24-26 says:

“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.”

There are several key lies that Satan has placed within the minds of people throughout the ages.

### A. There is the lie about God's goodness.

Genesis 3:1

“Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?”

The lie is this. God is not so good after all. He is a cosmic killjoy sitting up in the Heaven trying to deprive us of good things. Do you really see what Satan was doing? He was trying to pervert Eve's opinion of God. He was attacking God's very character! Satan was trying to get Eve to doubt the goodness of God in her life. He wanted Eve to see God as a somewhat uncaring and mean individual. In essence, the devil was saying, “Do you mean that God has not given you the privilege and right to eat of every tree within the garden? That is preposterous.” This is the first lie that the devil brings into Eve's mind. He wants Eve to begin doubting the goodness of God toward her life. How many times does the devil slip these types of deceptive thoughts into our own minds? We are bedridden in the hospital and find ourselves wondering what God is really doing and why He would ever allow such a thing to take place within our lives. If we are not careful, we might begin to doubt God's goodness within our lives.

Sometimes when we are having a bad day and when the heat is on within our lives, we may begin to wonder where God is. Suddenly we begin to question why God is allowing these things to take place within our lives. We had a flat tire going to work. We cut our hand and had to go to the hospital for stitches. The muffler fell off the car while driving home from the hospital. God, where are you and why are allowing these things to take place all at once. As we begin to question God, we are really questioning God's goodness and we can be sure that the devil is behind all of this thinking within the realm of our mind. He wants us to question God's goodness. The devil wants us to believe that God is holding out on us or that God is some type of unkind person who does not want us to live life to the fullest. I want to say today that Satan is a con-artist. He knows how to get our attention away from the goodness of God. Satan will try to plant the seeds of doubt, suspicion and speculation within our mind concerning God's goodness toward our life.

The person who views God through the eyeglasses of the devil will curse God when earthquakes take place and tornadoes rip through a town destroying homes and peoples lives. They will look up into Heaven and wonder how a loving God could ever allow a flood to wipe out a place like Johnstown Pennsylvania. However, the believer who views God correctly always knows that God is in control of the events of their lives and that God is always good to them. The trusting believer never allows the disappointments of life to bring doubt into his mind about God's goodness.

“The trusting heart to Jesus clings,  
Nor any ill forbodes,  
But at the cross of Calvary sings,  
Praise God for lifted loads.”

In the context of temptation, Satan can get us to focus on the one tree that God says we cannot have! Think of all the luxurious trees in the garden that Eve could center her attention and attraction upon. God had been so good to her because she had all of these wonderful and beautiful trees that she could use for food. But what does Satan do? He gets Eve to center her attention on the one tree that she could not have.

It's like the boy who had a jar full of jellybeans. There was one black jellybean on the bottom of the jar. The mother told the boy that he could have any jellybean in the top part of the jar, but he was not to dig down to the bottom of the jar and get the black jellybean. Well, the boy's eyes were looking at that one jellybean. After a while, the mother found the boy with his elbow in the jar reaching down into the jar for the black jellybean. The devil wants us to see only the black jellybean in life. He wants to draw our attention away from all the other sparkling gems that God has given to us and brings our attention to the one thing in the jar of life that God has said we cannot have.

What did the devil really do? He blinded Eve's mind to the goodness of God, which was clearly seen in all of the trees that God had given to her. God was so good, yet Satan wants Eve to think that God is not good since He limited her in one particular area. This is what the devil gets us to do as well. He tries to blind our eyes to the goodness of God that is surrounding our lives. God has saved us from hell, God has given to us His abiding peace and joy and many good years on earth. God loves me and cares for me. God is concerned about my condition in life. God is in control as the Shepherd of my life. I'm going to Heaven when I die. God has provided a way of victory for our lives over sin because sin is what makes our lives miserable.

All of these are good things, but Satan tries to get our mind off of the good things about God and center them upon the one thing that we cannot have or should not do. He tries to present God as being unfair and holding back something that is really good for our lives. And what do we do many times? We play into his trap. We believe his lie! This is why we sin. We feel that God has forbid us to do something that will actually be

good for us and beneficial for our lives in some way. Doubting God's goodness is the beginning of defeat within our lives. When we look at the broad picture, we always know that God is good! Satan simply wants us to break down our loyalty and trust in God's goodness.

I remember going to a teen fellowship following a church service in Michigan. Several of the young ladies played a song on the piano and did a masterful job. Then a little girl wanted to take her turn at the piano. She sat down and began to play with her two little fingers that old familiar chorus that we all know.

“God is so good  
God is so good  
God is so good  
He's so good to me.”

### B. There is the lie about God's will & authority.

Genesis 3:2-3

“And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.”

This is the lie that says true enrichment and enjoyment in life will not be reached within the boundaries of God's wise plan or will. We see that Eve was playing into the hands of Satan by her response. When Eve added to God's Word by saying that she could not “touch” the fruit, she was beginning to accept Satan's lie about God's goodness. Remember, God never did say that Eve could not touch the fruit. However, her response demonstrates how Satan was winning the battle over her mind. Therefore, she began to mentally believe that God's will was not the best for her life. She plays into his hands by responding to Satan that she could not even touch the fruit. It's as if Eve had bought into the lie that God was not so good after all and that His plan or will for her life was not the best after all. What good is a tree if you can't touch it! Satan tries to get us dissatisfied with God's will and become suspicious about the will of God.

Maybe God is holding out on us. What He says in His Word is not the best for our life at this particular time. Maybe I will just do it on my own. Maybe I should just go my own way this one time. Satan always tries to establish discontent in our hearts with the will of God by trying to make God's will appear overly restrictive. He wants us to come to the place where we actually believe that God is not so wise after all and what He says is not for our best benefit. You can be sure of this one thing. Before Satan tries to lure you out of the will of God for your life, he will always try to make you feel that there is a better life and better way to do things outside the will of God.

This is what one writer has called “the suspicion of Eden.” The suspicion of Eden was the satanic suggestion that the Evil one placed in Eve’s mind concerning God’s will. Satan placed within her mind the idea that God’s wisdom and will was not sufficient for her life and that she needed to venture outside the realm of God’s plan in order to find fulfillment. What a lie! But this is exactly the way that Satan operates in our own minds and lives today. He suggests to us in his own snaky and subtle way that the fruit on the one tree is for our benefit and blessing in some way. Therefore, we should seek to experiment outside the realm of God’s ordered plan or authority. “There is something better for you and God knows it. So, go ahead.” This is how the devil seeks to lead us away from God’s plan and will for our life. He tries to get us to believe that we have been shortchanged if we remain within the program of God’s will for our lives! Therefore, we should seek the full life and good life outside of God’s will. This is the suspicion of Eden.

Many times we become conned by the devil and believe that there is something better for us outside the realm of God’s authority and will for our lives. How does the devil really do this? Well, he comes before us with a smoke screen of hypocritical compassion. The devil wants it to appear like he is interested in our lives and is concerned about our best interests. But all along the devil is trying to break down our loyalty to God’s will and purpose for our life.

For example, Satan comes along and suggests to us that missing church will help us clear the cobwebs out of our mind so we can better serve God, when all along God wants you to be in church to hear His Word. Satan comes along and suggests within our mind that we would be better off trying to solve the problem in our own way instead of God’s way. Satan places the suggestion in our mind that we can be sidetracked from what God wants us to really be doing and still be spiritual. Satan suggests in our mind that we can forget about the will of God for our lives in one area and still go to church and sing in the choir and God will overlook the areas in which we have failed. He makes the subtle suggestions that we can be angry and unforgiving to someone because of their actions against us. He places the suggestions in our mind that a little gossip or some other forbidden fruit will never hurt us. In fact, it may help us to see things in a clearer light. How foolish we are to fall into Satan’s trap. Dear friend, the will of God or what is right to do is always best for our life. What happens when we replace God’s will with these other thoughts? The Bible says that we receive the wisdom of the world, which is devilish or demonic in its origin. We become deceived by demonic influence.

James 3:14-15

“But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.”

The wisdom of the world that people are inflicted with comes from satanic activity and is nothing more than satanic qualities! There can be no doubt about it. Don't fool yourself. The sins of envy and division are church wreckers, which have their source in the devil. How sad when we allow Satan's lies to deceive us and we begin to allow our lives to be full of jealousy and promote division. How sad it is when we give into his wisdom which says to go outside the will of God and get some real life. How sad when we follow our own carnal self-determined nature and think that we are spiritual in doing it.

What has happened when this occurs? Dear friend, what happens is that we have been deceived by the devil's lie! I fear that Satan's wisdom is often present in believer's lives and they do not even know it. I think we have all been guilty of this and must bow our heads in shame for buying into the lie of Satan (the suspicion of Eden) which says that there is fulfillment in life by doing something contrary and outside God's will. We have adopted the devil's philosophy or wisdom when we think we can do something wrong and still be holy and righteous in what we do. We have been blindsided by the devil when we think that we can detour our life from God's will and find more knowledge and fulfillment outside His will.

Someone has said:

"No one is as blind as the person who has been deceived into believing that he now sees!"

The trouble is that we can be totally blinded by demonic wisdom and not even know it until we open our hearts to the ministry of the Word and the Holy Spirit. Dear friend, we must learn to detect and defeat Satan within our lives. We must get rid of the devilish wisdom that can invade our thinking and minds. We must rid our lives from worldly wisdom, which tries to deceive our minds from God's wisdom and what he really wants for our life. This is what happened in Peter's life. Satan blinded Peter to God's wisdom about the cross. Jesus recognized how Satan works within the mind of mankind. Satan was playing with Peter's mind and Jesus knew it.

Matthew 16:21-23

"From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

Peter did not believe what Jesus had been saying about His coming death. Peter wanted to rebel against the Word of God. Instead of believing the Word of God he believed his own human wisdom about the situation. Jesus recognized that this

wisdom implanted within Peter's mind to stop the crucifixion from happening, according to God's timetable, was from Satan. Jesus recognized that Satan had sold to Peter his own wisdom instead of God's wisdom. In fact, Jesus suggested that Peter was being a mouthpiece or instrument for Satan by what he was saying and by his actions. The devil loves to keep people man-centered in their thinking and what they think needs to be done.

I personally believe that Satan is actually running churches through this demonic wisdom, which promotes jealousy, division and disruptions within the local church. Satan comes to church! He brings his own worldly wisdom into the church through the lives of God's people. And if every pastor were Jesus, he would have to say at times, "Get thee behind me Satan." The old serpent gets people to follow his agenda and then moves into the church. Satan's wisdom can gradually effect Christian lives and eventually an entire church ministry. Before long, Satan is in control! This is why pastors resign and churches lose their power and blessing from God. Only the praying pastor and praying church can defeat this type of wisdom.

Warren Wiersbe, who might be considered the pastor's pastor, has written a book about Satan and his activities in the local church. In this little book he describes how Satan comes to church by infiltrating his own wisdom into the church. He talks about how people left the church because he did not preach a "Mother's Day" sermon one-year and how other people sulked for weeks because something was not going their way within the church. He talks about angry disruptions in business meetings and unforgiving spirits. He realized what Satan had been doing in these situations and how many times people did not even realize that they had swallowed the wisdom of the world, which is devilish in its origin and qualities. In the closing chapter of his book

Warren Wiersbe said:

"I know the joy and blessing that comes when Satan has been evicted!"

Satan does not live within the lives of Christians, but his devilish wisdom can. And all of us must be on guard about this type of wisdom. We can fall victim to the suspicion of Eden, which is to believe the lie that we can move outside the realm of God's will and find greater fulfillment in life and still be spiritual in doing it. This is the lie of all lies!

### **C. There is the lie about psychological needs.**

This is the lie that the devil places in our minds which says that we have needs in our life that the Word of God cannot meet. This has long been the deceptive way that Satan works. He tries to sow within our minds the thought that we have felt needs which God and His Word cannot meet. People are saying today, "I have a need that God and His Word are not meeting." Listen, this is the lie of the devil! Satan wanted to get Eve's mind on the lie that God was holding out on her. She began to see the devil's



viewpoint. By the way, when you start to see the devil's viewpoint, then you are in deep trouble. Your ship is about to sink! What kind of thoughts did Eve have parading through her mind? She was thinking that God has not given me every tree of the garden to eat. She was thinking that God has restricted me. She was thinking that this really is not fair. Then Eve says that she cannot even touch the fruit. In saying this she was beginning to form the opinion that God was holding out on her. So the devil begins to sow the seeds of discontentment and ungratefulness in her heart. Somehow and in some way God's original Word to her was not good enough. What God had originally said to her in His Word about refusing to eat of this one tree was no longer capable of meeting this newfound need that had erupted through the devil's delusion.

What had happened? The devil had taken Eve to the place where she began to focus on herself. I have a need. I need that fruit for my benefit. This of course was a false need but Satan got Eve to the point where she honestly felt that she needed to have this false need met in her life. She did not need the fruit for any kind of fulfillment or enrichment in life. Satan had systematically created a false need in her heart. In fact, she began to focus on herself long enough and became convinced that she had some need in her life that God was not meeting nor intended to meet. God would not let her eat of this tree. In essence, she was thinking in her mind, "God will not meet my need because His Word forbids me to do the one thing that I need to do."

Eve began to think, "This matter of eating the fruit on the forbidden tree is obviously a need that I have, but God is holding out on me. Therefore, this need must be met." You see what had happened? Eve bought into the devil's lie and developed the mentality that she had a need that God could no longer meet. She had a need that went contrary to the original Word of God, which was given to her. What happened? It's what happens in churches and our own personal lives if we are not careful. We become stuck on ourselves. We fall into the quicksand of self-esteem and center our attention on ourselves and personal felt needs. The church today is stuck on themselves. We have become glued to our own self-interests and actually believe that God and His Word, which He gives to us, are no longer meeting our apparent needs and doing the job. God's Word is no longer relevant to meet our needs. We believe that God and what He has said is not enough to challenge our lives and transform our lives. The devil has gotten man to the place where he actually believes that he has certain psychological needs that must be met in his life before he can actively serve God or really mean business with God.

Dear friend, we had better wake up! We must realize that all of this man-centered preaching is playing right into the devil's lie. Eden is still taking place. The devil wants us to believe that we have certain needs within our lives that God and His Word cannot meet. The Word of God is available to give us all that we need to live for God.

## 2 Timothy 3:16-17

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished (fully equipped) unto all good works.”

The Word of God or what God has already said is sufficient to meet all of our needs in life! We need to be a man and woman of the Word today. We must allow the Bible to change our lives and reshape our lives. The problem with the church today is that many people don't want the reproof and correction of the Word of God any longer! That's what happened in Eve's life. She no longer wanted to be restricted by the truth. This is what is happening today in many churches. People want preaching that is going to fix their own little world of make believe false needs.

Someone has remarked:

“Many Christians are so stuffed with spiritual junk food that they have lost their appetite for sound biblical preaching.”

We must remember that God speaks to us today through His Word and meets all of our needs through the truth of His Word. Whenever you say that you have needs in your life that are not being met, then watch out! You are in the devil's trap. Like Eve, the devil tries to get man's attention off of the word of God long enough so that they can focus on themselves. As it was in Eden, so it is today. Satan wants us to develop false psychological needs that cannot be met through the Word of God. He sidetracks us from what God says in His Word and gets our attention upon ourselves and these felt needs that God cannot meet through His original truth. This is exactly what he did to Eve and he is still doing the same thing today in the church. This is why we have the whole Christian psychological movement, which is catering to the apparent psychological needs of people. We must have something that is man-centered in order to help people. We must talk about their left brain and right brain and how they respond to the impulses being sent from the brain. Satan wants to try and get your thoughts, feelings and opinions to be more valid then God's Word which has already been established. Once you stop listening to what God has clearly said, Satan will be right there to give you plenty of advice. This is what the devil did to Eve. The result was that Eve formed certain opinions and feelings or felt needs that could not be met by the truth of God's original Word.

Someone has said:

“Satan has been all too effective at luring the church to worship at the altar of felt needs.”

So what happens in the church? People begin to assert their rights to have their false needs met in the way that they want to see them met. Churches and preachers begin to change their preaching in order to fit into this little man-made need game. People

say, "Pastor, meet my needs." Every pastor has heard this in his ministry. But I want to say to you today that no preacher can meet your needs. Only the unchanging and eternal Word of God can meet your needs. What has happened in many churches today? Preachers begin to change their preaching in order to tickle the ears of people as they try to meet the false needs of everyone. They begin to reshape the preaching ministry. I want to tell you people today that Satan loves to attack the Word of God. I'm convinced that the devil wants preaching to become man-centered (anthropocentric) instead of God-centered (Theocentric)! Wouldn't Satan love and delight in possessing a controlling influence over the pulpits of churches that proclaim the Word of God? If the devil can get preachers to buy into this lie that people have needs that the Word of God cannot meet, then the preaching will change. The preaching will become man-centered instead of God-centered.

Pastor Steven Cornell from Millersville Bible Church spoke of this very serious problem invading the churches today. He analyzed what Satan is doing in the church today through a systematic step process:

- Satan creates false needs and discontentment in the hearts of the people.
- The people begin to whine and grumble about the fact that in-depth Bible teaching is not meeting their felt needs.
- They announce their felt needs and dissatisfaction and put pressure on pastors and church leaders.
- They demand special programs and sermons focusing on their needs. The whole thing results in weak pulpits where careful in depth teaching of the Word of God is replaced with superficial solutions.
- This may happen because pastors get all caught up running around trying to meet everyone's felt needs.
- Meanwhile back at the study, the sermon lacks of time and quality, and Satan and his demons sit back and throw a party, watching the undiscerning church fall right into their trap. Satan loves it when church leaders buy the lie in one form or another that the Bible is no longer relevant.

2 Timothy 4:3

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears."

This means that the people within the pews actually have the itching ears and the preachers will scratch their ears by giving them watered down preaching that is not offensive to the people and easy for the people to accept and listen to. I call it easy listening FM 101 preaching! "Meet my needs," they will say! Center your preaching on self-esteem and those things that directly meet my own personal felt needs. What God says in His Word is not enough. What the eternal life-changing Scriptures say are not enough. Give me a dose of need preaching. It is a sad day for the church when the felt

needs of the people take over as the authoritative guide for church ministry and even pulpit ministry.

One writer said:

“Let me tell you what people want today. They want uncomplicated teaching, a non-threatening environment, and contemporary relevancy. The quest for relevancy has led the church to kick aside virtually every conventional expression of worship.

Sunday services are first-class musical-comedy-drama productions – no Bible teaching or expository preaching. The offertory is more likely to be a theme from Rocky than music with a spiritual message. Everything possible is done to cater to the appetites of the unchurched. Nothing is permitted that would challenge them or make them uncomfortable.

This approach has proved so successful in drawing crowds that hundreds, perhaps thousands, of churches nationwide have now adopted the same philosophy. Those churches have turned to merchandising schemes and entertainment media in an effort to appeal to people. Simply preaching the Word is out. That’s too confrontive, and the unvarnished gospel is too offensive.”

Meet my needs. Let’s meet the needs and wants of the people of the world in any way that we can. Let’s become a friend of the philosophies and music of the world in order to meet the false needs of those who are unchurched. What does the Bible say about all this?

James 4:4

“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”

People today really believe that the Bible no longer can bring people to Christ. It takes the barking and howling of a preacher or the watered down preaching of the Bible (anthropocentric preaching) to meet these needs of people. It takes the rock music of a perverted culture to meet the needs of people. It takes plays, dramas and Bible Bingo clubs to see people saved. God’s Word is no longer sufficient. There needs to be something else along side of the Gospel in order to win people to Christ. God help the church! God help the church because man and his worldly entertainment cannot win people to Christ. Only the power of the Gospel can save people (Romans 1:16). Furthermore, no person or program outside the Bible can meet the true needs of God’s people. Only God can!

Today many people go to church to be entertained instead of wanting to hear clear instruction from the Word of God. They want to sit down with their can of popcorn and say, “Go ahead and entertain me preacher. Go ahead and try and meet my needs with

your acting, shouting and comedy. I want you to do something for me today.” This is man centered preaching. The emphasis has shifted from the Word of God to the personality of preachers and programs centered upon man’s inventions.

Genesis 3:1-3 says:

“Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.”

What in the world is the devil doing? He is creating false psychological needs in the minds of people. Eve didn’t really need the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but when the devil pressed her and presented Eve with the bait that God was holding out on her, she began to create a false need in her mind. “God, I need something more then the restriction of your Word. I need something more then what your Word has instructed me to do. There is a need in my life that You or Your Word cannot meet.”

So what happens? You begin to come to church and tune out the preacher and stop taking notes. You sit, soak and sour realizing that nobody knows my needs and nobody knows the trouble I’ve seen and the Bible is no longer relevant. Satan wants you to focus on yourself and a particular need that God or the preacher is not meeting in your life. Satan wants you to feel sorry for yourself. This is what he did to Eve. Then the devil wants you to press others to meet your false need in the way that you think it should be met.

Let me say today that when you start allowing Satan tell you what your needs are, you are headed for spiritual trouble and ultimate disaster in your Christian life! If we will come to the Word of God with an open heart and allow God to meet the real needs of our lives, then we will not allow these false needs to be stirred up in our hearts by the devil. How ungrateful we are when we fail to come to God’s Word and the sufficiency of His own power to meet our true needs in life. Dear friend, the need for satisfaction, peace, joy and victory are all proper and normal needs that can be met by the Word of God and His power. And if you will allow God to meet these true needs in your life, then you will not believe the ancient lie of Eden, which says God and His word, can no longer meet my needs.

Christian people today are looking for other gimmicks to meet their needs. We live in an age where Bible believing Christians are really Bible believing doubters. No longer do they really feel that God and the simple teaching of His Word can meet their needs. Meeting their needs and hurts in life becomes man-centered instead of God-centered. Man cannot meet your true needs in life, only God can!

Philippians 4:19 says:

“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 4:13 also promises:

“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

My friend, when God cannot do it, then nothing else is going to work! Likewise, when you begin to form other needs that cannot be met by the Word of God, watch out! They are the devil’s delusion. When you begin to walk around and say that people are not meeting your needs in life and that you have certain needs that are not being met in your life, then you are playing into the hands of the devil. My friend, if God and His Word cannot meet your need, then no person and nothing in all the world can ever meet your need. All of the canned preaching on self-esteem and corny books on man-centered psychological needs will never give you rest and fulfillment in life. Christians, stop flirting with the devil. Beware of false needs that he creates in your mind and heart, which God cannot meet.

I say again for emphasis:

“Satan has been all too effective at luring the church to worship at the altar of felt needs.”

So many Christians run their lives today by their moods and feelings. This is a dangerous matter for believers can fall into the devil’s trap of felt needs, which are based upon an emotional response that is not regulated by the word of God. Beware of feelings! You cannot base your actions and thoughts upon what you feel! You must base them upon the truth of the Word of God! Feelings fluctuate, but the truth does not.

The little poem goes like this:

“For feelings come and feelings go,  
And feelings are deceiving;  
My warrant is the Word of God,  
Naught else is worth believing.”

#### **D. There is the lie of humanism.**

The lie is basically this. Man needs to choose to live his life independent of God. He is to seek his full potential in life apart from a relationship with God. This is the age-old lie of humanism. Man is basically good and is to live independent of God. There is a document signed by men and women with prestigious degrees from universities around the world, which they want to be the basis for all education. The document is

called "The Humanist Manifesto II. The section on ethics in this document makes the following comment:

"Human life has meaning because we create it and create our futures.... We strive for the good of life here and now. As in 1933, humanists still believe that traditional theism, especially faith in a prayer-hearing God.... is an unapproved and outmoded faith. Salvationism, based upon mere affirmation, still appears as harmful, diverting people with false hopes of heaven hereafter. Reasonable minds look to other means for survival."

This is still the humanistic philosophy parading our secular colleges today and the entire world. Humanism has been around for a long time. In fact, humanism is as old as Eden! The roots of humanism can be found in Eden. The devil is the founder of the humanist movement, which says that the full potential of life can be achieved apart from any relationship with the true Creator who is God. Man is basically good and his life should be lived under his own control instead of God's control. This is the way that Satan sidetracked Eve. He deceived her into thinking that she could move and live independently from God. The devil began to get Eve to focus on herself instead of God. He led her away from the Creator. This is really the core of what humanism tries to do. Humanism is man living away from the Creator. Satan planted the thoughts within the mind of Eve that she could live a life independent of God's regulations.

Genesis 3:1

"Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"

Satan came and appeared to Eve as a snake full of compassion. He wanted Eve to believe that he was looking out for her best interests. So he gets her to believe that God was not so good after all and that there was a better way for the human race to go. What happened next was that the philosophy and acts of humanism established itself within the human race. Here is the first Humanist Manifesto.

Genesis 3:6

"And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."

Here we see humanism in action. Eve bought into the devil's lie that God was not so good after all. He was withholding good things from His creation. This led her to give the fruit to Adam resulting in the original humanistic act of seeking to live contrary to God's design and wishes. Adam and Eve were acting independent of God because the devil actually sold them the humanistic philosophy that they could move in their own

direction in life, independent of God. This has always been the lie of humanism. Man is to look out for his own self-interests and own agenda in life. Man should be able to pick his own fruit off of any tree that he chooses. He should be able to live his own life, even if it's contrary to God the Creator.

I want to say today that the lie of humanism has totally saturated the world of mankind. Man thinks that he must go his own way in life because he has great human potential that is far better than what God has established. He can make it without God's help and without God's laws. The devil is saying to the world, "You deserve a break today. So go ahead and live as you please and achieve your goals in life apart from any real relationship to God." What a lie this is. But the world has accepted the lie! That is why that song came out several years ago, which says, "We are the world." How utterly independent and humanistic man is! We live in a completely humanistic world that has swallowed this lie. And man has been picking his own fruit off of the trees since the Garden of Eden. Man has gone his own self-determined way, which is apart from God. That is why the Bible says:

Romans 3:11

"There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God."

Man in his humanistic unsaved state lives his own life and wants to roam around like a lost dog looking for a bone. He wants to do his own thing and live his life without God. And yes, even within our own Christian walk we must beware of the humanistic pull to take our life away from God and what He wants us to do. The devil will try to get our hands on the fruit that we want instead of the fruit that God wants us to have. We must be on guard within the garden of our own life. You must personally ask yourself some soul-searching questions. "Have I been hoodwinked by the devil? Has the devil in some fashion taken my life away from the pattern of living that God wants me to have and live?" Have I been humanistic in my own manner of conduct? Have I left God out of the picture far too much? Have I been picking the wrong fruit? What direction is my life really going?

### **E. There is the lie about the consequences of sin.**

Genesis 3:4

"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die."

This is the lie of the ages. Satan denied what God had originally said in Genesis 2:17. God had already said that man would die when he eats the fruit on this particular tree but the devil comes along and says that he would not die. The literal Hebrew rendering in Genesis 2:17 means, "dying thou shalt surely die. This suggests that when man would eat of the fruit he would first of all die spiritually and become lost in his sins. But also, he would eventually die physically as a result of his sins. It would be a double



death that occurs if man chooses to sin. This is what God said would happen. Man would die spiritually and come under the judgment of God for their sins. Also, man would eventually die physically to enter the specific future spiritual judgment connected with his sins. This is what God said would happen if man would choose to sin. Who do you believe, the devil or God?

Romans 3:4 says:

“God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar ...”

What God says is true. What man and the devil says is always a lie. What was the particular lie in this situation? The lie said that there would be no consequences for their act of sin. There would be no death or dying if they would partake of the fruit. I want to tell you that this has been the lie of the devil down through the ages of time. Sin does not have any consequences attached to it. You can sin and get away with it. “Go ahead, try it, you’ll like it. Don’t worry about it. You can take an Alka-Seltzer afterward. The world of mankind has bought into this lie. Homosexuals who have come out of the closet think that they can live as they please and that God will overlook their so-called alternative lifestyle. God will not judge them for their sinful acts against God. But I want to say that God will judge a lost sinful race for all of their acts of sin. That includes all the sins in your life if you are here today and are unsaved.

Revelation 21:8

“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable (detestable), and murderers, and whoremongers (male prostitute), and sorcerers (occult workers of magic), and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”

This is a solemn and serious warning about the kinds of people who will be outcasts from the new heaven and the new earth. The devil wants people to believe that they will not die and suffer the judgment of God. This is what the liberal preachers teach and say today. We are all going to go to Heaven in the end. That’s why the liberal preacher has men in Heaven at the funeral home when in reality they are in hell. I remember seeing one preacher walk into the funeral home. He was wearing a robe and a great big cross around his neck. The cross was so big that it seemed to make his head bend forward as he walked. In his speech, he proceeded to tell how everybody goes to Heaven when they die. This man had believed the devil’s lie! The world has adopted the lie of the devil, which says there is no God of judgment. However, the Bible warns us that there are eternal consequences connected with sin.

God says that if you are lost, unforgiven and living your life apart from God, you will suffer the consequences for your sins. If you are lost today and have not accepted the salvation that God has provided for you through the Son of God, then you will not escape the consequences of your own sins. In fact, you will be judged for every one of

your sins and be finally cast into the lake of Fire, where you will eternally die both physically and spiritually in the fires of Gehenna. Throughout eternity you will be judged in relationship to the sins of your unsaved life. You may think that somehow God is going to overlook the sins of your life and that the scales will be turned in your favor within the next life. I've got bad news for you my friend, God will not pass over your sins. God will see to it that you are judged for every one of your sins. Don't believe the lie of the devil. The devil says, "Ye shall not surely die." But God says, "Thou shalt surely die." Who will you believe, God or the devil? If you go into eternity believing the lie of the devil, then you will be sorry throughout eternity.

Malachi 2:17 says:

"Ye have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?"

God's people in the day of Malachi were crying the blues. They were wondering why God seemingly was blessing the evil people who were against Israel. They believed that God was not going to judge these people for their sins. The problem was that God's own people were also sinful and needed to wake up to the sins in their own lives. It is interesting to note how God's own children believed that He would not judge these people for their wickedness and sins. Where did they get this philosophy or idea? It surely wasn't from God. It came to them through the age-old lie of the devil. The devil wants people to believe that they can get away with their sin and not suffer any consequences for their sin. He wants us to believe that God is not so mean after all. The devil wants us to ask the question, "Where is the God of judgment?" It's amazing how the devil can also deceive Christians into thinking these very thoughts in connection with our own personal lives. Even as Christians, we sometimes think that we can get away with sin. The devil comes along and says, "It's all right. It's just a little one. Nobody will see it and only you will know about it." But God says we cannot get away with sin without that sin having some kind of direct influence and adverse effect upon our lives.

Numbers 32:23

"But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out."

This is one of those forgotten verses in the Bible! When you turn to this verse in your Bible the dust is probably covering it up. Well, blow off the dust so we can expose Satan's lie, which says that sin, does not have any consequences. Sin always effects our lives even as Christians. Sin will always "find us out." This means that God's appropriate punishment for their sin would be meted out upon their lives. In other words, they would not get away with their sin. And neither will you in spite of what the devil whispers in your ears. Sin always has its consequences attached to it.

Hebrews 12:6-8

“For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.”

When we sin, God chastens His own children through conviction, particular circumstances and many other avenues. This chastening process by God is done in order to get our attention. This is God’s way of letting us know that we cannot sin and get away with it. We sense God’s hand of discipline and chastisement upon our lives when we knowingly sin. We can hear God’s ringing bell of judgment going off in our lives.

Galatians 6:7-8 reminds us:

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

God never leaves sin go unchecked within our lives as believers. God has devised the law of diminishing return for the way that we live and act. The more we sow to our flesh or old nature, the more that we will reap corruption or decay. This is true both in this life and the next life. If we live for ourselves and sin, then what we do will not last. However, if we live for God and serve Him, then what we have done will last for eternity. In fact, we will reap a quality of life consisting of reward and eternal blessing that will last forever (“life everlasting”). How you live today always effects your life! Only eternity will reveal how faithful you have been to the Lord.

The old spiritual says, "He sees all you do; He hears all you say. My Lord is writin' all the time." It is a startling fact that God knows all about us. Nothing, absolutely nothing escapes His all-seeing eye!

Dr. Paul Van Gorder relates this incident:

"A man driving a yellow Thunderbird had just passed me, and unconsciously I increased my speed, staying close behind him. A glance in my rearview mirror told me that we were being followed by another car. Soon it swung out into the left lane alongside of us, and we both obeyed the patrolman's compelling signal to pull over. Waiting until the fellow ahead of me had been ticketed and had resumed his journey, I climbed out of my car. I was casually dressed in a sport shirt and slacks with no distinguishing mark on my automobile to indicate I was a minister.

As the officer greeted me, he said, 'Preacher, you were traveling a little too fast!' Surprised that he knew my occupation, I inquired if we had met previously. He said we

had not. 'Then, how did you know I was a minister?' I asked. He replied, 'I seldom miss. I've learned to size up a person and can usually tell what he does just by looking at him. And you're a preacher!' Believe me, I was really impressed!"

This little incident reveals to us how God cannot miss any detail of our lives. When we sin the siren goes off! We can see the lights of God's chastisement in the rear view mirror of our lives. We know that God can see our lives and that He will pull us over and get our attention in life. God will give us a ticket of some kind that we will have to pay. Sometimes the price is very small. Thank the Lord. Sometimes we have to get out our wallet and write a check! We can be sure that sin will not go unchecked.

The eyes of God are upon me; He sees everything I do! We cannot escape His all-seeing eye or the consequences of our sins. Be sure, your sin will find you out! Don't allow the devil to sell you his lie that your sin will go unnoticed and not affect your life in any way or the lives of others. Satan wants you to believe that sin will not cost you anything, but in reality, sin is the most expensive thing in the universe. The old devil wants us to believe what Eve believed. He wants us to believe the lie that God does not punish sin. The world has bought into this lie to a great degree, even the so-called religious community. How often do you hear sermons about God's judgment these days? When was the last time you heard a sermon on Hell? The modern church has bought this lie. Preachers are afraid to preach on Hell or either don't believe in a literal Hell of burning fire.

How does Satan push this lie which says that sin does not have any consequences?

### 1. The devil redefines God.

How does the devil push his lie, which says that sin does not have any consequences? He does this by redefining God. The old devil wants people to believe that the God upstairs is only a God of love and mercy without any righteous justice or wrath connected to His character. He wants you to only hear and believe that God is a sentimental God of love without any indignation or wrath. The devil wants you to believe that God is all one-sided. He wants you to have an insufficient view of God. But the Bible says that God is a God of judgment.

Deuteronomy 9:3

"Understand therefore this day, that the LORD thy God is he which goeth over before thee; as a consuming fire he shall destroy them, and he shall bring them down before thy face: so shalt thou drive them out, and destroy them quickly, as the LORD hath said unto thee."

Hebrews 12:29

"For our God is a consuming fire."

Romans 2:5

“But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.”

Revelation 20:15

“And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

If you are lost in your sins, God will judge you some day. You cannot spurn or reject the grace of God forever and get away with it. Don't believe the devil's lie. Don't walk out of this auditorium believing the devil's lie. Don't go to sleep tonight believing the devil's lie. Do you know why? It's because you may wake up in Hell. I want to say on the authority of God's word that if you die in your sins today you will go straight to Hell. God is a God of judgment. The Bible declares it and God has said it. Who will you believe today? I honestly ask you, “Who will you believe, the devil or God?”

Someone has said:

“God has been recast as Santa Clause – an updated Santa Clause who never leaves coal in a naughty boy's stocking.”

## 2. The devil redefines sin.

Satan is so very subtle. “Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field.” Satan wants man to believe today that sin is simply a mistake. Sin is no different than forgetting to add flour to the cake mix or putting a stamp on a letter before you send it. One sports announcer said that a particular athlete had made a mistake by taking drugs and then added that we all make mistakes in life. It seems that everything is a mistake today instead of a sin. The devil wants people to believe the present day philosophy, which is trying to play down sin. People who are termed as “struggle theologians” promote this philosophy. This philosophy basically says that we all have our problems and God understands. One-size-fits-all when it comes to sin. After all, nobody is perfect. Then too, we must remember that the nature of sin comes from complex, deep-seated psychological issues within the life. Dear friend, do you see what the devil is doing with sin? The devil is trying to redefine sin as mistakes, problems and psychological malfunction. There is a need today within our society and within the church to take sin seriously. It's obvious that Washington and our government does not take sin seriously. They can't even define what adultery is anymore. They are debating about what constitutes a real lie. Great confusion has been brought into our world by the devil.

What in the world is the devil doing? I'll tell you exactly what he is doing. He is redefining what sin is. And it's happening within the church today. And if you are not careful it can happen within your own Christian life. Satan will try and water down the

horrible blackness of sin. He will try and rob sin of its evil character. I fear something in all of our lives today as Christians. What I fear is that we have become too soft on sin. We have lost the utter hatred and agony over sin within our lives. I am afraid that Satan is trying to maneuver the church into the position so that they will accept impurity and sin as a normal way of life. God help us! God save us from such a devilish trap as this. Sin is not the result of psychological malfunctions or low self-esteem. Sin is the result of the old nature and the devil that is out to defeat our lives.

The “struggle theologians” who suggest that we all struggle in life and have problems seem to suggest that sin is like a disease caused by poor self-esteem, genetic deficiencies and outside environmental influences. In one sense, we are not to hate sin; we are to understand it. Dear friend, we are not to understand sin, we are to hate sin. We must despise sin. And the only way we will once again see the blackness of sin in our lives is to get a fresh look at the holiness of God. The holiness of God will not reveal us as some psychological mishap or genetically deficient person. The holiness of God will reveal us as a sinner before God who has willingly and willfully strayed from God. The holiness of God will reveal to us that we need God’s grace for both salvation and then living the Christian life. I want to tell you why you sin. It’s because you are a sinner. Isn’t that a profound statement? It’s because you love your sin. It’s because you have accepted the devil’s lie that sin will not affect you and your family. But it does. It was true in Eve’s life and its true in your own life.

God said to Moses in Exodus 3:5 says:

“...Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.”

Why was the ground holy? It’s because God was present there. Wherever God is present, there is to be the demonstration of holiness in His presence. Today God is present in our lives and He expects us to be holy in all of our living and conduct. God is infinitely holy! Unworthy sinners cannot stand in the presence of an Almighty holy God. They recognize the sinfulness of their life before God and will begin to detest sin. Sin will become so black to their lives that they will forsake their sin. They will know that God cannot put up with sin. They will know that a holy God cannot leave sin go unpunished. They will have to remove their shoes and bow before the holiness of God in confession of sin and repentance. This is true within the Christian life. Christians need to get a fresh glimpse of the holiness of God. It will keep them from watching the suggestive things on television and on videos. It will keep them hating sin and getting rid of sin within their lives.

When Peter saw the great catch of fish he suddenly understood that Jesus was the Messiah standing in his presence. His words, which came from his lips, were words of deep concern about his own sinful life.

Luke 5:8 says:

“When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”

The presence of Almighty God makes sin to be terrible your sight. It makes the sinner shrink in his utter unworthiness before the Lord. It makes the sinner feel unclean in God’s sight without repentance and the forsaking of sin. I want to say today that if you will get a fresh glimpse of the holiness of God, you will start removing your shoes in life and realize that you are living in the presence of an absolutely Holy God. In light of God’s holiness, you will start dumping the sins that may have kept you in bondage for a long time. Some of you need to take off your shoes today and see God in all of His holiness and majesty. When we see God in His holiness, then we will not be conned by the lie of the devil, which tries to distort the evil of sin and play down the awful character of sin.

Pastor Steven Cornell has summed up the way that the devil tries to play down the serious character of sin within our own lives:

- Christians aren't perfect, we all have our weaknesses, yours just happens to be lust, so don't be so hard on yourself.
- If you do sin, all you have to do is confess it to God and he will forgive you - it's that easy. (I John 1:9 study "sin" in I John before abusing this verse)
- God understands. He knows that deep down inside you really mean well. He expects us all to fall now and then.
- Other people do things worse than this - even people who profess to be Christians. You know some!
- Nobody will find out and if they did, who would ever believe that you would do such a thing.
- God wouldn't have given you such strong desires and then expect you not to fulfill them.
- You have to have some fun and excitement in your life. After all, God doesn't expect you to live in boredom. You're too hard on yourself.
- Lots of Christians out there don't even think it's wrong and some of them are involved in it and don't seem to suffer any consequences.
- You can't keep being so narrow minded - you'll never know how to relate to the real world until you get out there and experience what they experience. Nothing in moderation is wrong. Just don't get caught up in doing it all the time. A few times won't hurt anyone.

This is a good summary of how the devil gets us to redefine sin, tone down the seriousness of sin and live in such a defeated and unholy manner within our lives as Christians. The devil simply redefines God and redefines sin by sending all of these

rationalizing thoughts into our mind about the true nature of sin. Don't believe the lie! The lie that says sin will not cost you anything in life.

The Bible still says in Proverbs 28:13:

“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.”

The devil always tries to hide or cover the consequences of our sins, whether those consequences are broken fellowship with God, guilt, family disruption, health, lost joy and peace in life or many other consequences that we must face because of our sin. In the case of this momentous sin in Eden, the human race would be alienated from God (Genesis 2:17). Also, the entire planet would face death, decay, suffering and sickness through the Genesis curse (Genesis 3:14-19). There would be shame and guilt associated with this sin (Genesis 3:7). The marriage harmony would be broken (3:12). Rebellion, envy, jealousy, anger and even murder would result in Genesis 4, when Eve's own son Cain rises up to kill Abel (4:8). Sin always bears with it certain consequences. Many times, your sin can become a domino effect, especially if you are not willing to confess that sin before God. Satan never reveals the consequences for sin. He deceives us and hides the consequences. He says, “Go ahead, enjoy” and then whispers as you leave “I'll send you the bill later.”

#### E. There is the lie about reincarnation.

A New Age couple kissed each other before they jumped off the Golden Gate Bridge. They left a note in the car in which the man wrote, “I love you all; I wish I could stay, but I must hurry. The suspense is killing me.” This man was obviously deceived by the devil. He had swallowed the lie that he would be reincarnated into another life form. Therefore, he was ready to jump off the Golden Gate Bridge and enter into the next life form.

Reincarnation has been around for a long time. The roots of this Eastern Philosophy go back to the Garden of Eden. The devil came to Eve with the basic lie of reincarnationism. What did he say?

Genesis 3:4

“And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die.”

There you have the seed form of reincarnation. The lie, which Satan had given to Eve, has been remade or reinterpreted in the doctrine of reincarnation. The devil promised Eve that she would not die if she eats the fruit. Satan has been selling this lie to the world down through the ages of time. It's especially true in the area of Eastern Philosophy. Reincarnation is the basic teaching that a person will never die. Their soul



plays musical chairs with various bodies in the world. You never really die. You just go into a different life form within your next life and keep advancing.

The sister teaching of the transmigration of the soul is interlocked with the teaching of reincarnation. It says that your soul simply moves from one life form into the next developing into higher forms of life depending on how you have lived. Reincarnationism teaches that everything has a soul, even the corn in the farmer's field. Hinduism reincarnationism teaches that you can even jump from one life form to another. You may be a plant in the next life or a thistle or worm. The idea is that we should attempt to keep on advancing from one life form to the next.

One man said:

"I've got to recycle myself. I am energy, I don't know if I will be a flashlight battery in my next life, but I believe I will go on."

We may wonder how some people are familiar with certain events, times and places within the lives of different people. Is it true that their soul had lived in a different life form previously? Is this how some individuals can know about certain events within the lives of people that they never had an acquaintance with in this life? Dear friend, the transmigration of the soul is not going on today, it's the transmigration of demons working in the minds of these people.

The doctrine or law of karma also suggests that everyone gets what is coming to them or what they deserve. The evil that you do in the present life form is always punished in the next life form to come. The teaching of karma, which is related to the subject of reincarnation, says that every human being begins their earthly lives at different levels due to how they lived in a previous form of life. There is no injustice in the world. Even children who are abused are simply getting paid back for their previous life of evil, which they have lived. The doctrine of karma is a ruthless and unbiblical teaching. The goal of karma is "nirvana" when the salvation of the soul is absorbed into one eternal reality. This is the final release from the cycle of reincarnation. It results in the final extinction of all hatred and delusion.

"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die."

Shirley MacLaine a leading teacher of this Eastern thought said:

"Death simply does not exist."

Reincarnation is the devils lie reshaped. The fact is that the Bible does not teach reincarnation. The Bible teaches that man will die!

Hebrews 9:27

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."

There is no reincarnation in this verse. Man does die and he only dies once. His soul is not passed on to other life forms. The Bible does not teach such nonsense. Reincarnation is a lie. It is the devil's lie of Eden. The truth is on our side my friend. We must shout it from the housetops and let the whole world know. The United States and world at large has swallowed this lie. That is why we have this belief being taught and promoted in our schools and colleges. Satan has tried to get people to swallow this lie of reincarnationism so that they can be deceived about what they truly will face in the next life, which is judgment without Christ and His salvation. Reincarnation is appealing because it encourages people to live the way they are without having to admit their sin and hopelessness before God. There is no personal accountability or judgment from God when following this philosophy and lie from the devil. The old serpent will do everything that he can to distort the truth of God's Word concerning death and judgment. If humanism does not work then he will move to reincarnationism. Satan's main goal is to damn your soul in Hell for all eternity by getting you to believe his lie: "Ye shall not surely die."

#### F. There is the lie about religious experience.

The absent-minded professor walked into his freshman zoology class with a brown bag in his hand and a twinkle in his eye. His broad grin projected the delight he felt in knowing he was about to initiate his rather squeamish students in the methods of animal dissection. In his typical stilted English and professorial style he proudly announced, "For you I have brought, fresh from the pond, a frog, that we might together study its outer appearance and later dissect it." With that he opened the bag and carefully unwrapped the contents. To his complete puzzlement, there was a ham-on-rye sandwich in the bag. "That's strange," he said. "Quite distinctly I do remember eating my lunch."

In a sense, Adam and Eve were like that professor. They also found out what they had eaten after it was too late. They thought they were biting into the fruit of truth, but instead they had swallowed Satan's lie and its bitter consequences. What was this lie? You can eat the fruit and have a religious experience that is outside the will of God.

Genesis 3:5

"For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

There is this religious and fascinating experience. "Your eyes will be opened." You will have some kind of new knowledge or new enlightenment. You will receive some kind of hidden knowledge unknown to you before. It's very interesting to realize that the New Age literature teaches that we need to reach what is called enlightenment. Their literature is filled with the concepts of light and enlightenment. Millions of people claim

today to have had an opening of their eyes or an experience of enlightenment which is apart from God's Word or added to God's truth. This is the lie and work of the devil. You can have your eyes opened and go through some mystical experience that is above and beyond what God's Word offers to you. Eve's experience of enlightenment would be more reliable than the bare command of God. We might call it esotericism. This speaks of the revelation of hidden knowledge to a select group of people through some mystical means or practice. Satan wanted Eve to be brainwashed into believing that there was something better for her than God's word. There is a religious experience, an added enlightenment that God did not talk to you about. And this experience that you will get when you eat of the fruit will open your eyes to a whole new world and New Age! You will be better off if you just eat the fruit and allow your mind to be open and receive this new conscious knowledge. Satan is saying today in his own snaky way, "The truth is out there! Outside God's will and what God says in His Word! Truth is found in some other religious experience that is rated above the truth of God's Word for guidance and wisdom. The truth is found in experience!"

I want to say today that the truth is not out there in some religious spiritual experience, the truth is in God's Word! And when you begin to step outside the bounds of God's Word for better enlightenment and knowledge, then look out! You will open your mind to demonic workings which are designed to lead you into some kind of experience that is outside of God's Word. Enlightenment is obtained by searching the depths of one's soul and releasing yourself. In reality it involves an encounter not with your soul, but with another spiritual being.

"Your eyes shall be opened." Transcendental Meditation (TM) practices this kind of enlightenment. A person is to suspend all normal reasoning. Their soul must be united with the one unified force of the universe. You must tap into this god-force of the universe. The occult says that we must have an experience that shifts us away from all the objects of this world, including our own self. Their claim is that as long as we are thinking of some other object, then we are making ourselves distinct from this object. What we need to do is think about nothing and move into a time of enlightenment where we are lost in the vast ocean of impersonal energy.

Stick with the Word of God my friend and not the vast ocean of impersonal energy! Don't open yourselves up to mystical experiences. Stay away from TM. It's not of God. You are to open yourself up to the eternal and unchanging truth of God's Word and not to some mystical experience. You are to meditate upon something and that something is the Word of God!

Joshua 1:8 says:

"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."

America and the world has believed the lie of the devil. This is the lie that says our eyes can be opened to something better than what God has to offer to us in the Bible. We can have a religious or spiritual experience that will bring us into some secret knowledge that will move us into a better direction in life. This is why we have millions and millions of people seeking hidden experiences that are not supported by the Word of God. This is why we have horoscopes, astrology and crystals being promoted today, which promise to give mystical insights to people. This is to be insight which is better than what God's Word offers. Satan wants people to believe that there is some religious experience out there, which is better, far better than the Word of God.

Erwin Lutzer has said:

"This experience of enlightenment is a satanic conversion or counterfeit new birth experience."

We must beware with Satan's work in the realm of the supernatural experience. Satan is a master of manipulation. Experiences that are being attributed to God today are actually coming from the working of Satan and his demonic helpers as they promote counterfeit new birth experiences and try to lead people away from the truth of the Word of God.

I firmly believe that the devil is highly active in the modern charismatic movement today. People are claiming to have the tongues gift of the early church, which has ceased (1 Cor. 13:10). These same people do not even speak in a real language, which tongues actually were during the infant days of the church. Therefore, I say on the authority of the Word of God that there tongue experiences are not of the Holy Spirit. If they are not of the Spirit then they must be either of self or Satan. But remember that Satan can do the miraculous. He wants to open the eyes of people to new experiences and truth outside the realm of the Word of God.

This by the way has always been the core teaching on the occult. The occult has always wanted to find hidden or secret knowledge outside the Bible by demonic powers. The word occult comes from the Latin and literally means secret or hidden. The occult claims to receive secret messages from spirit guides. This is called trafficking in the spirits. Of course this is black magic. Religious charlatans today practice a form of white magic where they use the name of God and the Holy Spirit in the place of other spirits who are really working behind the scenes. If you don't believe me then believe the Word of God.

2 Corinthians 11:3-4

"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit,

which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.”

The possibility was very real that the Corinthians could be lead by “another spirit” other than the Holy Spirit. Paul feared that these people would receive the deception of evil spirits that would deceive them in some manner. It could have been that these evil spirits were deceiving the people by mimicking the early gifts of tongues and prophecy, which would cause the people to abuse certain gifts. This in return would create disorder and division within the body. Perhaps they were opening up their minds in order to receive information on the highway of spirits. The people were opening themselves up to demonic intervention once again as they tried to go back to the emotionalism associated with the pagan mystery religions. I want to say that many are unknowingly receiving other spirits today within the Charismatic movement. They are opening themselves up in search of receiving messages outside the Bible. Whenever you do this there is the very real danger of receiving messages from false spirits. People today pass through hypnotic states where they leave their minds open to these false spirits.

We must remember that Satan and his emissaries can do miracles (see Revelation 16:14). They can duplicate many things that Christ can do (Exodus 7:10-12; 8:7). They can also mimic the gifts (1 Cor. 12:3). We must also remember that Satan can deceive our minds through false messages (2 Cor. 11:3, 14). Satan and his evil forces can send messages into our minds that are designed to lead us astray. We must also remember that evil spirits can also make Scriptural statements in order to deceive us in some way (see Mark 3:11). Some of these statements may be impressed upon our minds so that we can misinterpret them to support our own way and sin. Other messages to our mind may be distorted much like the devil distorted the Scriptures when he spoke to Jesus (Matt. 4:6). I believe Satan can answer certain prayers, perform many miracles and relay helpful messages to people. We cannot underestimate his deceptive measures. Satan is the god of this world that even enjoys bringing seemingly good gifts into our lives in order to deceive us and lead us down a wrong path. We must be aware of his devilish schemes. Satan tries to trap people in the world of the occult. For instance, if he can help them in some way through horoscopes, astrology and fortunetellers, then they will want to return to these places for more help and assistance. Satan lures people into his satanic web in this fashion.

The same is true about many of these charismatic experiences and healings. Satan may very well attempt to help people by creating certain healings and by sending messages into the minds of people that may actually come true. Satan may give messages to people that appear to be helpful to other people and their own personal lives. This is simply the old psychic phenomenon going on within the minds of people today, which is demon inspired. This begins an endless quest in the lives of people where they open their minds and attempt to receive revelation apart from the Word of

God. This is a dangerous and misleading way of life. It leaves our minds open to the mental suggestions of wicked spirits. God is not revealing revelation to our lives apart from the Word of God.

Satan can also heal people in order to get their attention on the miraculous. He wants them to avoid living the normal Christian life through the Word of God, will of God and wisdom of God. Thousands of people are confessing that they are being healed through the energy flow from crystals and other occult objects. The fact is that many people are really being healed. One man at a “harmonic convergence” meeting of the New Age said he was healed when the people got together to experience the surge of a shifting energy cycle due to the planets converging together. His exact words were:

“I was healed, thank you, whoever you are!”

You can be sure that Satan is working miracles today. But he is also mimicking the gifts of the early church, which have long ceased and went out of the church with the completion of the Scriptures. If Satan could duplicate the gifts in the days of Corinth, then he can do it today. This evidently began to take place in their meetings as some were cursing Jesus to Hell and damnation through the use of a satanically duplicated gift of tongues.

1 Corinthians 12:3 says:

“Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.”

Satan spends a lot of time in church! Nowhere is he more anxious to pervert God’s people than where they are worshiping. Some members of the church at Corinth apparently became very fleshly and confused. Their worship became so paganized and full of frenzy that they even allowed the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to be cursed within their own congregation. The word “accursed” means that these people were beginning to tell Jesus to go to Hell and be devoted to destruction forever. Paul rebukes the entire church for allowing such ungodliness and for being so undiscerning about what is spiritual and what is demonic. This is what is wrong with the church today. We have lost our will to discern. We wonder how far the modernized church will go in these experiences (“your eyes shall be opened”).

I want to say that Satan can duplicate mystical experiences and do the miraculous. He can and is working with a great arsenal of wicked spirits that are deceiving multitudes of Christians who were like the Corinthians. The counterfeit new birth experiences of falling backward and shaking around on the floor are opening people up to demonic activity and they do not even realize it. They are trying to open their eyes and minds to these kind of esoteric experiences, which are promoted by wicked spirits. This reality is

very true for all of our lives, especially when we begin to open our minds to experiences that the Word of God does not condone. Demonic spirits are deceptive today. If we open the door to them they can deceive us.

The Bible teaches that magical occultism and the deception of evil spirits will be on the rise in the end time. As we approach the tribulation period we will see a great increase in satanic activity.

1 Timothy 4:1 says:

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.”

Yes, deceiving demonic spirits (“seducing spirits”) will be on the rise prior to the coming of Christ. Dear friend, we know that we are living in the last days; therefore, we should beware of this satanic deception going on today. Wicked spirits are leading people into end-time deception through many of these dreams and experiences that people are having. Demons will bring mass deception upon people as the coming of Christ approaches.

Matthew 24:24 says:

“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”

During the tribulation days there will be an overabundance of demonic deception. And it's only understandable that a gigantic build up of demonic deception and delusion is taking place right now in these last days before the tribulation comes upon this world. I can't help but realize that this is what is going on today in some of these healing services. I know there is such a thing as psychosomatic healing and plain down fraud going on in these meetings. I once witnessed a fakehealer attempting to heal a man of some chronic disease. When the fakehealer asked if he was healed the answer of the man floored him. The honest man said, “Well, I feel a little better!” There are many fakehealers today. This happens many times today. And yet, there are many people being healed today apart from God's intervention.

What in the world is the devil doing today? The devil is coming to church. I know that some of these men are attempting to practice the age-old occultic practice of black magic, which is now disguised as white magic. We have a form of “charismatic witchcraft” taking place today. We are witnessing modernized witchdoctors working with people. They are actually tapping the spirit world of demons for help and passing off any miraculous healings that do occur as being from God. This is simply white magic. It's as old as the occult world. The great fatal blunder of our day is mistaking

the work of the devil for the Holy Spirit! We must remember that the Holy Spirit never works through that which is used in the realm of the occult.

1 Corinthians 10:20 says:

“But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.”

These faith healers that claim to have the apostolic gift of healing are totally foolish and being misled by demons. In fact, I believe that Satan is actually in the healing business today because the Word of God says he can and will do miraculous signs and wonders in the end time. The Antichrist will be able to do miracles through the power of Satan.

2 Thessalonians 2:9

“Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.”

I think we had better wake up and smell the coffee that Satan is brewing today. Are we going to be so naive like the Corinthians that we cannot distinguish between what is of the Spirit, what is of Satan and what is of self? We are to try or test the spirits today (1 John 4:1).

We have Christians within the deception of the charismatic movement attempting to open up their eyes to new mystical experiences which demons are more than happy to give to them. These Christians want to find out something new and exciting for their lives and so they open their minds to whatever is out there. They simply want to have their eyes opened to some new truth apart from the revelation of the Word. They stand there in these services and open up their minds to receive some kind of supernatural tongue experience believed to be from the Holy Spirit. They try to tap into the experiences that others are going through and bring their mind into a state of openness to receive something that is out there which is supposedly of God. They wait for a feeling to come through their body so that they can move to the beat of the drums playing in the auditorium. They are saying, “God speak to me. God speak to me through some kind of experience. I want to feel something. I want to know something I have never known before. I want to have my eyes opened like some of these other people. God, I’m opening myself up. God, I’m opening my mind.” Be careful my friend. Be careful.

Dear friend, God is not involved in mystical experiences! God is not enlightening people through mystical encounters. God is not playing the same drumbeat as the devil. I want to say that we are living in some of the most deceptive times that man has ever encountered upon the face of the earth. Mankind believes the lie of the devil that says we can find truth in experience, which is outside the realm of God’s word.



Satan comes along as he did to Eve and says, "Your eyes shall be opened." Satan has always tried to fascinate man with some kind of enlightenment or experience instead of getting man to look into the Word of God alone for guidance and significance. This is what he did to Eve in the garden. Why does the devil do this? It's because he wants man to live his life apart from the word of God. He wants man to focus on the feelings of experience and the thrill of finding out what something is like. I have had plenty of charismatics tell me, "Well, you just don't understand. You just don't know what it's like." Dear friend, I don't want to know! I don't want to open myself up to an ocean of mystical experiences that take the place of the Word of God. I don't want to believe the devil's lie that I can have my eyes opened to truth outside the Word of God.

We must wake up and realize how the demonic world is behind these mystical experiences that are going on today. Christians need to beware of the devil's lie that the truth is out there somewhere in some kind of mystical experience outside the Word of God. We must remember that Satan and his demons can manipulate people through esoteric religious experiences. Demons are liars who receive a perverted type of satisfaction through deceiving people. I believe it happens more than we realize. Satan is most deceptive through these types of encounters. He opens up the eyes of people to some kind of new experience or truth, which is accompanied by good feelings. He gets them to seek something outside the Word of God. That's why many Christians today end up trying to live the Christian life by seeking one experience after another. They must have their eyes opened to new things outside the Word of God in order to feel good again. According to many, spirituality becomes an endless search or quest into the next enlightenment or experience. The lie of Eden has taken hold of this generation. We must beware that it does not take hold of our own lives. Our spirituality is not gauged by experiences. Spiritual living is gauged by the filling and fruit of the Holy Spirit in our life (Eph. 5:18; Gal. 5:22 -24).

So what is really going on today? The ecumenical movement in our day and the New Age movement are trying to unite all religions and faiths through the experience of Eden. Everybody knows that a universal theology is not possible. However, the religions of the world can unite on a universal experience! We can all feel the same thing! Satan's plan has not changed. He wants the religious world to be united under the mask of counterfeit religious experiences. Experience will be the key factor in bringing the world church together. This is exactly what is bringing the ecumenical movement together today. They are meeting on the common ground of experience. This is paving the way for the apostate church to be teamed together after the tribulation period. Christians caught up in the ecumenical movement of today do not realize what they are doing and what in the world the devil is really doing! Christians today, through their involvement in the ecumenical movement, are becoming the forerunners of the apostate church of the tribulation period. They are helping to pave the way for what shall be in the future. The combining together with apostate churches

and those who do not preach the true Gospel becomes a forerunner of what is going to take place in the tribulation period.

Revelation 17:5 talks about the future ecumenical church:

“And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.”

The New Age Movement of today will be involved with the final end-time Babylon. This is a religious prostitute of churches and religions that will come together to form a superchurch during the tribulation period. The ecumenical movement and New Age Movement wants this to occur. Satan’s plan is to unite the world religions through the deceptive religious experiences such as tongues and miraculous healings. These experiences will unite different belief systems. There will be a common bond in the same experiences that will evidently pull the apostate religious masses together. The final Babylon (apostate church of rebellion) will practice the same form of religion as the ancient Babylon. This is why the false, ecumenical and apostate church is associated with the name of Babylon. It will be a form of the old Babylon who is labeled the Mother of harlots. This means that historical Babylon of Genesis is like a mother who has given birth to all of the occultic things that are going on in the world today and those things that will be going on in the tribulation. A study of ancient Babylon will reveal that everything from TM, reincarnation and ecstatic religious experiences took place in Babylon. The religion of ancient Babylon taught that mystical experiences were important for spirituality. In these experiences the ancient people of Babylon could have secrets revealed to them. This is what was called the “mystery religions” of ancient Babylon and why the future Babylon of all false religions will bear this same name. And they will all unite under the umbrella of experience.

“MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT”

The future Babylon of world religions united together will revert back to the ancient practice of Babylon, where the people practiced what was known as the Mystery Religions. These were the mysterious teachings only revealed to those who would pass through certain experiences that were filled with emotionalism, frenzy and enthusiasm. This was called a “divine frenzy.” These ancient people of Babylon would pass through states of ecstasy where they would allow their mind to be opened up to some higher force. They would open their mind for something to happen to them. As they were initiated into receiving these secret messages, the people would pass through experiences where their brain would go into neutral and their emotions would take over. Through their experience they would then receive some kind of message that was their very own. Only then could they be initiated into the mystery religions.

What utter paganism this was! The frightening thing is that this kind of religious experience will once again be revived in the future. John envisions all of this taking

place in the end-time when he talks about “MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS.” John is envisioning a day when the old Babylon will be revived in the end-time Babylon (apostate ecumenicalism), which will once again follow the ancient Mystery Religions. This same kind of paganism is being practiced even today within the charismatic circles. People are doing the same thing that they were doing in ancient Babylon. The ancient religion of Babylon is being practiced today within the broad ranks of the Charismatic church and is preparing the world for the Mystery Babylon of the tribulation period. People today are falling on the floor in a divine frenzy of emotionalism. They are being swept away in states of ecstasy where their minds go into a neutral state and they open up their minds for secret revelations, which are supposed to be from God.

I had the opportunity to sit under some of the teaching of the late George Gardiner who pastored the large Calvary Church in Grand Rapids Michigan. George Gardiner was delivered from these types of Babylonian experiences and wrote a book entitled, “The Corinthian Catastrophe.” Pastor George Gardiner painfully reviewed his past when he said:

“The enemy of the soul is ever ready to take an advantage of an out of control situation and thousands of Christians can testify with regret to the end results. Sometimes the bizarre is introduced. I have seen people run around a room until they were exhausted, climb tent poles, laugh hysterically, go into trances for days and do other weird things as the high sought became more elusive. Such experiences not only give Satan an opening he is quick to exploit, they can be psychologically damaging to the individual. The seeker for experience goes back through the ritual again and again, but begins to discover something; ecstatic experience, like drug addiction, requires larger and larger doses to satisfy.”

People in Charismatic services are actually practicing the ancient religion of Babylon where emotional experiences overtake their lives and they leave themselves open for the working of false spirits.

“For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened...”

When the serpent can get people to believe that their eyes can be opened to new truth by passing through a spiritual adventure in some kind of experience, then he has sold them the ancient lie of Eden. This is the lie that says we can find wisdom and understanding in mystical encounters outside the Word of God. This of course downgrades the Bible and its supreme importance within our lives and its ability to be our sole guide throughout life (2 Timothy 3:16). Beware of Satanic substitutes!

“The B-i-b-l-e, yes that’s the book for me,  
I stand alone on the Word of God,  
The B-i-b-l-e.”

## G. There is the lie about pantheism.

Several years ago someone handed to me a newspaper article that the Unitarian Universalist Church preacher had written in the Sunday News. The article was shocking but promoted the view of New Age pantheism. Here are some of the comments in this article.

“What if God is a part of an evolving process? What if God is like your mind or your whole nervous system in relationship to your body. God is with us in all things. God is with and in us as we scream at the seemingly senseless stars. When we are injured, God is with us and in our cells as they scream for healing and as they heal. We are also adults of the universe within us (our thinking, our reason, our compassion, our love)...”

This lost and clueless preacher has adopted the teaching of the New Age Movement that has bought into the old view of pantheism, which says that everything in the universe is God. God is in your mind and within the cells of your own body because you are God. Did you know that whatever exists in this world and universe is God? This is the true teaching of Pantheism, which says that everything is God in one sense. Your own person, pickle and poodle are all God. The god of Pantheism and the New Age Movement in the world represents God as only an impersonal force instead of a person with real intellect, mind and emotions. Pantheists already believe that they are divine or in a state of godhood. This is why it's rather difficult to evangelize these people. They see no need for salvation because they are not sinners. The only salvation that these people need is their unification with what they call the cosmic force of the universe. Instead of making God the absolute Creator of everything, the New Age pantheists make God to be part of the creation. In other words, everything is part of a one essence within the universe. God is also part of this one essence and so is each one of us. In fact, everything is part of this one universal essence. Therefore, we can be gods as well. We are all intertwined with God or this universal force. We are all God in one sense and are on the road of reincarnation being reborn until we reach that perfect state of godhood. This is the ultimate goal of pantheism.

You may wonder how many people have adopted these false claims. Recent statistics tell us that one fourth of the world's population adopts this Old Age and now New Age philosophy of Pantheism. This is an alarming statistic. The devil is doing a good job at peddling his lie. For this is the lie of Eden. The serpent sold this lie to the world back in the Garden of Eden and has been promoting this lie down through the ages of time. This is why even the Charismatic Faith Movement has adopted this lie in some of their teachings. One leading advocate Kenneth Copeland has said:

“God’s reason for creating Adam was His desire to reproduce Himself... He (Adam) was not a little like God. He was not almost like God. He was not subordinate to God even. Man was created on terms of equality with God, and he could stand in God’s presence without any consciousness of inferiority.”

Morris Cerullo said:

“And when we stand up here, brother, your not looking at Morris Cerullo; your looking at God. Your looking at Jesus.”

These men are following the teaching of Charles Capps who is nothing more then a mixed up New Age teacher. More then this, they are following the age-old lie of the devil, which he promoted in the Garden of Eden.

Genesis 3:5 says:

“For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.”

Pantheism basically says that everything is God. The planets, stars, trees, people and this pulpit that is in front of me is God. The bench you are sitting on is God. Your dog is God. Your dog’s dog food is God. Your dog’s fleas are God. The concept of pantheistic teaching says that “God is all and all is God.” It denies the existence of the material universe and redefines everything as spiritual. Pantheism teaches that man did not fall into sin and does not need a Savior. It was actually God who fell. This is the god who is nothing more then a united force of spirit and matter. God at one time was unified as spirit and matter, but one day this spirit and matter were separated. God fell. Now we who are part of this God force must reunite this spirit and matter through the process of salvation. This involves meditation, which seeks to deny the existence of anything material, good or evil, and brings everything back to this spirit force operating within the universe. Through Transcendental Meditation, we are told to lose ourselves in the “eternal nothingness of God.” This is because we are all God! Therefore we are in charge of our own destiny. We are redeemed or saved by bringing back our “fallen god” of spirit and matter back together. The New Age teaching says that some day we all enter into a state of Utopia upon the earth called the “Age of Aquarius” which is the time of the total and complete liberation of man’s mind, when he will be absorbed in the force of spirit and matter.

One writer said:

“It is not God who will save us, it is we who will save God, by battling, by creating and transmuting matter into spirit.”

Well, the devil wants man to believe that he is God. (“ye shall be as gods”). The implication of the devil’s lie is that these other gods would be equal to the God who Adam and Eve knew. This was the devil’s number one dream. He wanted to be like

God (see Isaiah 14:12-15). However, the devil soon discovered that he could never be like God. Nevertheless, he has been trying to sell this notion to the world since Eden and man is still buying into this lie. Satan wants to recruit other people to buy into the same failure that he himself went through or experienced. He has been plaguing the minds of people down through the centuries to accept the lie that man himself can become like God. The devil has always taught that man can become as God.

This is exactly what the New Age philosophy is. New Age teaching believes that when Adam and Eve fell they actually received a pull in the upward direction to attain the state of a god. However, in their own blindness these people fail to understand that Adam and Eve did not attain the state of god as a result of their fall into sin. Adam and Eve actually would die spiritually and would then die physically. This is unlike God. God cannot die spiritually or physically. What happened to Adam and Eve was the direct opposite of what the devil had said would happen (vs. 4). Furthermore, we don't become like God by experiencing evil as the New Age movement suggests. The kind of knowledge that Adam and Eve experienced after eating the forbidden fruit was a terrible and horrifying knowledge that they were unlike God and separated from His holy presence.

Genesis 3:7-8

“And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.”

Satan fed them the lie that their eyes would be opened to new truth so that they could be like God in understanding and receive the blue ribbon that says “First prize for being like God” (vs. 5). The sad result was that their eyes were opened to some new truth. It was the truth about their alienation before God. They discovered that they were actually unlike God because they now possessed a sin nature. They did receive an experience of enlightenment, but it was not as the serpent made it out to be. They actually became conscience to the fact that their lives were now polluted with sin. Their spiritual nakedness before God centered upon their physical nakedness. When they tried to hide their physical nakedness from God, they were really trying to hide their spiritual nakedness from God. They actually knew and felt their alienation from God instead of being like God. Satan's lies never come true! They never pan out. Then God asked Adam where he was hiding. God was not suggesting that he did not know where Adam was hiding. God was suggesting by this question that Adam was lost from God's presence and fellowship. Satan had accomplished his goal. Man was lost and in the hands of the deceiver.

Today the New Age Movement says that we are all working toward the ultimate state of godhood. Someday there will be the Age of Aquarius. Of course, this lie of the deification of man (man is God) is being propagated today. This philosophy is actually paving the way for the New World order to accept the ultimate end-time god called the Antichrist. If we are all gods today in some degree, then why cannot this one man of the future be thought of as the supreme manifestation of God? The world will be ready to receive the man who made it all the way. The Antichrist will be considered to be God Himself. He will in one sense be the culmination or product of the New Age system of belief.

2 Thessalonians 2:4 says:

“Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.”

The Antichrist will claim to be the final product of the New Age Movement. He will be the master god of the universe and will want all the people of the world to bow down before him. This godhood stage of the Antichrist will be promoted through a worldwide system of worship. An image of the Antichrist will be erected in the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem so all the world can worship the New Age Antichrist through the image of the beast.

Revelation 13:8 says:

“And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”

The devil is setting the stage for the New World order. He is spreading the lie that we are all gods on the road to the ultimate experience of godhood. Someday there will be a man who will have reached the final frontier and destiny. He will be the Antichrist, who will deify Himself and claim to be the ultimate New Age god. And so the lie of Eden is heard around the world today and will be believed during the coming tribulation period. In fact, Satan who wanted to be God and have the universe worship him will actually have his dream come true when all the world falls down to worship the Antichrist. Satan will achieve in some measure what he wanted to achieve in the beginning of time. He will get the host of God's created beings to worship him through the Antichrist.

“For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.”

#### **H. There is the lie about relativism.**

Relativism teaches that truth is always according to your own individual thinking. Truth is different depending upon your environment, culture and setting in life. No moral truth

or belief is superior to another belief system. Truth is what you make it out to be. This is the ancient lie of the devil. The old saying of relativism goes like this: "What is true for me may not be true for you." The educator John Dewey is actually credited with giving this teaching on relativism its basis in America. But actually, this teaching goes much farther than John Dewey and the Dewey decimal system! It goes back to the Garden of Eden where the serpent promised Eve that she could have her own personal sense of awareness about what was good and evil.

Genesis 3:5 says:

"For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

Satan promised Eve that she could have a new awareness of what was right and wrong if she eats the forbidden fruit. In other words, Satan was selling her the philosophy that she could come into a personal awareness of what truth was and what evil was. Eve could develop a newfound sense of knowledge concerning what was right and what was evil or wrong for her own life. Satan through the snake was saying, "Eve, you will be able to determine for yourself or for your own life what is right and what is wrong." Doesn't that sound inviting and good? And do you know what? Eve fell for this masqueraded lie. She actually believed that by eating the fruit that she could develop her own sense of awareness about what is right and what is wrong for her own life. Satan was saying to Eve, "God doesn't want you to partake of the fruit because He does not want you to find out what is really right and wrong for your own life. Instead, God wants to be a cosmic killjoy in Heaven and tell you what He thinks is right and wrong for His own life. Don't listen to God. What's true for God may not be true for you! Go ahead and discover for yourself what is really right and wrong for your own life."

It's very interesting to see how Satan sold this lie to Eve. First, he said that Eve could be her own god. Out of pantheism comes the next lie. If you are your own god, then you are free to write your own rulebook. This is the lie that Satan is selling to the world today. We can know for ourselves what is right and what is wrong. We can in one sense make up our own mind concerning what truth really is instead of listening to God's eternal truth as found in the Bible. What a deceptive lie this is. Develop your own worldview about truth. Truth is flexible instead of concrete. What is right for you and wrong for you may be totally different for me. What is the sad result of such a lie as this? The tragedy is that there is no absolute truth and truth is what you make it out to be instead of what God says it really is. It's the worldly philosophy that all roads lead to truth.

Yen Men, one of the great Eastern teachers said:

"If you wish the plain truth, be not concerned about right or wrong. The conflict between right and wrong is the sickness of the mind."



This man is teaching relativism, which says that there are no absolutes when it comes to right and wrong. Truth and evil are basically what we make them out to be. We should not create sickness within our mind by trying to follow a concrete guide for truth in life. What really happens when we get away from God's absolute standards? What happens is that America turns into an absolute godless and immoral nation without any kinds of standards. This philosophy that there is no right and wrong is why we have abortions. This is why they cannot define what a lie is any longer in Washington. This is why they are debating what adultery really is. It's because there is no right and wrong in any concrete form. What is right or wrong for you may not be right or wrong for another person. Truth is relative. It is flexible. People are saying that the day's of old fashioned rules for living are gone. We must open up our own rulebook and make up our own mind about truth and evil or right and wrong. Man is writing his own rulebook instead of following God's rulebook, the Bible. Everybody is saying that truth is flexible like a rubberband and can vary according to culture, lifestyle and a person's liking.

Now Eve did discover what was right and wrong when she ate of the fruit. When eating the fruit Eve did "know good and evil." In her state of innocence, Eve had no mental conception between good and evil because she had never committed any acts of sin to know what evil was. Likewise, Eve could not know what goodness was because she always did good and could not compare it to evil. Both Adam and Eve lived in an innocent state free from moral contamination. However, when Eve ate of this fruit she discovered that the lie of Satan did not turn out like she expected. This knowledge of good and evil that the devil promised to her actually became a curse and not a blessing. It became an eternal nightmare that she would have to face the rest of her life. Her conscience would be aroused to the fact that she was not right before God. Man would now have to cope with a guilty conscience and spend his energies trying to make amends with God and live a godly life over an evil life. The knowledge that the devil promised Eve was really a curse upon her life and all of mankind's future lives. Instead of making up her own sense of right and wrong God developed a conscience within her that gave her His own established pattern of right and wrong that God wanted her to know about it.

However, the devil has still been selling the lie that we can develop our own sense of right and wrong or our own value system apart from God's truth. The devil wants you and me to draw up our own set of blueprints. He wants us to rewrite the Bible and go above and beyond what God's Word says about good and evil. If the devil can get us to buy into his lie that we can develop our own sense of right and wrong, then we will be swallowed up in his satanic trap. Think of this for a moment. What guide do you use as you seek to make important decisions in your life? Do you use the guidebooks of friends, psychology and feelings or do you seek to really use the guidebook of God's Word? If we are not careful we can develop other guides to help us along the way. When we do, then we have fallen into the trap of relativism where we form our own

conclusions and base our decisions in life on the way that we feel or what we think. Don't base your decisions in life by looking around at others or looking at your own feelings or set of standards. You must come back to what the Bible says. The Bible is our final authority and standard. I must say it again. The Bible is our final authority and standard. You must open your heart up to the eternal and unchanging truth of God's standards. If you have another standard and base your decision upon that standard, then you are going to be moving in the wrong direction in life.

Where is truth really found today? Truth is found in three places.

- Truth is found in the person of Jesus Christ.

John 14:6

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

Jesus is the only trustworthy and reliable way to Heaven. He is the absolute standard of truth when it comes to the way of salvation and eternal life.

- Truth is found in the written revelation of the Word of God.

John 17:17

“ Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”

Psalms 138:2 says:

“I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.”

- Truth is found in the inward God-given conscience.

Romans 2:14-15

“For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;”)”

The Bible teaches that every person born into this world is born with a God given conscience, which gives them a sense of morals and right and wrong. Without this conscience or sense of right and wrong, the world of mankind would be just like the animals. The fact is that man is warping his God given conscience and is starting to revert back to the actions of the animals. Man wants to live without restraints. He keeps trying to erase the boundaries of the conscience that God has established. And yet God has built into every person a certain moral awareness and mental written code

of conduct. Without this written inner code upon the hearts of men, the world would be like one big dog kennel.

Relativism goes contrary to the God given conscience that still resides in every human being. God has intuitively placed within every person the conscious knowledge about right and wrong and good and evil. This is why even the unsaved or lost people of this world can do good things. There is a standard of conscience that God has designed within man. Of course, this conscience can become defiled and seared like a hot iron (1 Timothy 4:2) and defiled or corrupted (Titus 1:15). Nevertheless, God has placed within man a true sense of right and wrong. This is why our nation was founded upon Biblical principles and had some kind of foundation that was moral. Mankind had a moral conscience that was not so polluted as it is today. Today mankind is allowing the light of God's conscience or lamp to go out (Prov. 20:27) and therefore we have many disturbing and godless actions going on in America today. We have gay rallies where Sodomites are demanding special rights as they choose to live in their sinful lifestyle. Doctors are performing abortions or killing babies by the millions. We have sexual promiscuity being promoted among the school system.

What happens when man gets away from God's inward conscience or God's truth as seen in the Bible? The results are devastating when the conscience is erased within man. Morals are lost and mankind moves far away from God.

Judges 17:6 says:

"In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

Judges 21:25 also concludes:

"In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

This is the sad result of relativism or when man makes up his own standard of truth and morality. When there is no law or absolute truth, then man is left to himself and goes astray in a miserable fashion.

Genesis 6:5 says:

"And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

This dispensational period of conscience reminds us of what happens when unsaved man is left alone without any moral standard or written code to live by. Sooner or later his conscience becomes warped. You will remember that man without any law is left to himself. This always results in deterioration and moral collapse because man will create his own standard and measure himself by his own standard. History proves this

to be true time and time again. That is why America is headed in the terrible direction that it is. It is because the absolute standard of God's eternal truth does not matter any longer.

Erwin Lutzer has remarked:

“Without an objective standard of morality, the most hideous crimes can be justified.”

Relativism has set into our land. America has believed the lie of the devil that says that you can have your own knowledge about good and evil. You can develop your own set of blueprints about what is right and wrong. Forget about God's standards. Do what is right in your own eyes. This is the philosophy of relativism. We must beware of this subtle lie taking shape within our own personal lives. Satan is always trying to get believers to try and establish their own rulebook. He wants Christians to develop their own way of thinking about truth. If Satan can get us to formulate our own opinions and conclusions about what is right and wrong, then he has sold his lie of relativism to us.

“In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.”

We might translate this verse into the present day setting and say “that in these days there is no pastor who has any boldness to say what is right in the church: every church member did that which was right in his own eyes.” When we form our own mindset on certain issues and the decisions we must make, then we can find ourselves doing that which is right in our own eyes. When we collapse the code of truth which is God's Word and our God directed conscience from this Word, then we can find ourselves doing what is right in our own eyes instead of what is right in God's eyes. The tragedy is this. When we do what is right in our own eyes, then we ultimately do not follow God's will for our lives and become like the wondering zebras roaming across the African plain in search of food. In other words, we are moving about without any aim or direction in life.

The old serpent wants believers to develop their own pattern and sense concerning what is right and wrong. That is why we have Christians saying today, “This is what I feel is right.” Beware of this kind of mentality. This is why we have the rock culture invading the church today and many other worldly amusements finding inroads into the church. Do you know why? It's because every man wants to do what is right in his own eyes! The devil is selling his lie of relativism to the church today in a big fashion. However, we have forgotten something through all the deceptive lies of the devil. What we feel may not be truth. It may be relativism or the formulation of our own set of truth. The devil wants us to stop viewing truth as it is found in the word of God. The devil wants us to start to see what he calls our side of the matter. He wants you and me to rewrite what God has said and develop our own sense of what is right and wrong. Dear friend, we must get back to the Bible. Without the Bible we are left open to the lie of

relativism. We have no guide and blueprint to follow. If Satan can get you to start doing what is right in your own eyes, then he will have won a great victory in your life.

## I. There is the lie about true happiness in life.

Genesis 3:6

“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”

We cannot help but see the three enemies of the soul in this garden account. Eve “saw” (lust of the eyes); Eve entertained the thought that the fruit was very beautiful to look upon or “pleasant to the eyes” (lust of the flesh) and Eve also contemplated that the tree would make her wise (pride of life). These are the same three worldly enemies that try to overtake our lives today. The way that the devil tempts us has not changed, as we will see in our next point.

What we witness in this section of Scripture is the lie that the devil tries to push in the lives of all people. It is the lie that true happiness in life is found by following your feelings. This lie becomes entrenched in our mind and thinking as we are overcome with the temptation that is on the table before us. We suddenly believe that we can find true happiness apart from what God has originally said. So the devil comes along and whispers in our ear, “If it feels good, do it.”

This lie is sometimes called Hedonism in its broad definition. Hedonism is when you act on your feelings because you want the best for your own life. This hedonistic philosophy is all over our land today. It says, “Feel, don’t think!” It’s the playboy philosophy of our land today. Do what you feel is right. If it looks good and you desire it, then take it. How utterly deceptive the devil is!

The teaching or relativism which basically says that there is no right or wrong breeds other types of philosophies like this hedonism or existentialism, which says that whatever feels good to you is truth. Whatever feels good is right for you. People say today that it can’t be wrong if it feels so right! But God says that it is wrong! When you base your decisions upon what feels right, then you are headed toward disaster! You must base your decisions upon eternal truth. Many people are saying that truth, as found in the Bible, is too cold and insensitive to people’s true needs; therefore, we must base our decisions upon the right feelings and right sensations. Dear friend, if you develop this mentality, then you will be sucked into the deception of the devil. His lie that he wants you to believe is this. Go ahead and act upon your feelings and do something that you feel you want to do. It will be good and you will be happy for doing it. This is hedonism. What a lie! When you act upon feeling instead of truth, you will bite into the devil’s apple and find out that there is a worm in the center of the apple.

The devil would want us to believe that true happiness and fulfillment in life is based on feelings and not the absolute standard of God's word. When we buy into this age-old lie, then we have left the door of our life open to the working of the devil. Dear friend, don't believe these lies of the devil. May God give us discernment today to be able to see what the devil is trying to do within the realm of our own minds and thinking. If we are not careful, we too will believe the lies of the devil.

On Thanksgiving many of us have had turkey to eat. This is all well and good! I enjoy a good turkey dinner as much as the next person. The problem arises when we try to use up the remaining turkey in the week to follow. The next day we usually have turkey sandwiches. After this, we usually find ourselves eating turkey and rice. Then we might have turkey salad sandwiches the next day. Finally, we look at each other when we are eating all of these turkey delicacies and say, "I'm tired of turkey. I'm tired of the same old stuff." Did you know that the devil is still using the same old stuff that he has always used? The devil's turkey sandwiches or lies are still the same old stuff. They have not changed. Only the discerning Christian will be able to see the same old turkey dishes that the devil is trying to serve up today. Don't be fooled by his same old turkey dinners or lies. They are as old as the Garden of Eden.

#### **4. The devil is stimulating lust within our hearts.**

Monkey trappers in North Africa have a clever method of catching their prey. A number of gourds are filled with nuts and firmly fastened to a branch of a tree. Each has a hole just large enough for the unwary monkey to stick his forepaw into it. When the hungry animal discovers this, he quickly grasps a handful of nuts, but the hole is too small for him to withdraw his clenched fist. And he doesn't have enough sense to open up his hand and let go in order to escape, so he is easily taken captive.

This is a picture of many Christians today. The devil with his crafty devices tries to ensnare you and me as believers. The devil appeals to the appetites of the flesh within us, which can lead to our spiritual defeat and downfall. As long as we hold on to the worldly bait, we cannot escape from Satan's trap. But he keeps on urging, "Don't let go! Enjoy the pleasure of your sin just a little bit longer!" Many times we listen to the tempter's alluring voice and continue on in our own evil way.

Dwight Lyman Moody said:

"I believe Satan to exist for two reasons: first, the Bible says so; and second, I've done business with him."

Genesis 3:6 says:

“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”

When Eve “saw” the Scripture is suggesting that she was being tempted by the devil through the eyegate. This is the old lust of the eyes routine. Truthfully, anything looks good if you look at it long enough! This temptation through the eyegate is also seen in the words “pleasant to the eyes” (lust of the eyes). From this point Eve entertained the thought in her mind and heart that the fruit was very good to eat and in doing so she formed lust within her heart (“good for food”). Temptation began through the eyegate and went to the mind and heart so that she lusted or desired to eat the food on the tree. The text goes on to say that she wanted to eat the fruit (for the fruit What she felt overtook her heart and life. As she lusted for this fruit, Eve also contemplated that the tree would also make her wise (pride of life).

Of course, the serpent was right there stimulating this lust within her heart. At this point, Eve did not possess a fallen nature that the devil could work with to help stimulate this lust within her heart. She had not yet fallen and received the indwelling presence of sin that all of us must face today. However, the devil was still there to help initially promote lust within her heart even without a fallen nature. We can be sure that he was tempting Eve through the lust of her flesh, the lust of eyes and the pride of life (1 John 2:15-17). Satan tempted Eve through his lies, now he was tempting her from within her own heart. He does the same thing to us as well. He tempts us by trying to stimulate lust within our heart. This is what Satan did to Jesus in the wilderness temptation. He tempted Jesus by trying to stimulate lust within his heart about eating the bread.

Matthew 4:3 says:

“And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.”

God had wanted the angels to minister to Jesus. It was not in the plan of God for Jesus to make those stones into bread and the devil knew it. But Jesus was hungry and the devil surely knows how to hit us with temptation when we are low. Beware of the tempter’s tricks! Beware of the serpent’s poison. The poison that the serpent tries to spread within our heart is lust. We can lust for material things, sex, position and money. Satan knows what are weaknesses are when to hit us with his temptation.

1 Peter 5:8 says:

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”

The serpent can turn into the lion and pounce upon our lives with what seems to be overwhelming temptation. Sometimes he acts in a subtle fashion like the serpent. The next time he can come to us as a lion that is hungry and ready for his evening meal! The devil is seeking to devour us spiritually by his temptation. He wants to stimulate lust within our heart so that it overtakes our lives and leads us down the wrong path in life. We are living in a lust-crazed world today. The god of America today is sex. Take what you want when you want it. Satan wants us to think that we can have what we want, but God has a different message. God says, you cannot have the forbidden fruit. You cannot covet your neighbors wife (Exodus 20:17). What is the forbidden fruit that God has speaking to your own heart about? We may be tempted to smoke cigarettes and be controlled by nicotine instead of being under the control of God. We may be tempted to look at certain things, which are bringing us under bondage. Christians can be tempted to look at wrong magazines and read wrong books, which promote worldly lust. We may be tempted to lust after material things and accumulate those things that God does not want us to have. We may be tempted to gossip or hold a grudge against certain people. We may be tempted to leave God out of our lives by failing to attend church regularly or having devotions regularly. Satan hits us with all kinds of temptations. For the most part, Satan is ever seeking to stimulate lust within our heart and lead us away from what God really wants for our life. Beware of the serpent's poison!

James 4:7 says:

“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

Here is the way to win the battle! We must submit to God's power within us and trust in His provision of victory for our lives. Victory over the devil can only come when we humbly submit or subject ourselves to the grace of God.

James 4:6

“But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.”

God's strengthening grace is the answer for victory. If you try to overcome the serpent or the lion on your own power, then you will be hit with a Mack truck. God's strengthening and sustaining grace will help us to resist the devil's stimulating temptations to lust. We must cast ourselves before the God of all grace in the time of temptation. When the devil has us looking at the forbidden tree, then we must look to God's grace for victory. We must close the door when Satan comes knocking. God's grace will enable us to close the door.

1 Timothy 6:11

“But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.”



Some of you need to wake up and realize how Satan and his demonic helpers can really work within your mind and are working within your life today. We have fallen into the trap of the devil and no longer are willing to admit it! I would like you to honestly evaluate your life today and see if the devil has been stimulating wrong choices and actions within your life. We can become blind to what is going on in our lives and live in some kind of spiritual make believe world. We can be deceived that we are on the right track when in reality we are off the track and out of the race. What in the world is the devil doing? Let's simplify this question even more. What in my life is the devil doing?

“Search me, O God,  
And know my heart today;  
Try me, O Savior,  
Know my thoughts, I pray.  
See if there be;  
Some wicked way in me.  
Cleanse me from every sin,  
and set me free.”

## **5. The devil is spreading disruption within the family.**

Do you realize that Satan is out to get the family? Satan targets you personally, then he targets your family and wins the battle in the home. And if Satan can win the battle in the home then he can win the battle in the church. In other words, the victory will be his the whole way if he can bring a wedge into our homes. Some of us have forgotten to lock the spiritual doors of our home. We have not devil-proofed our homes. We must remember that the serpent tries to strike at our homes and spread his deadly poison within our lives. How does Satan attack the home? What in the world is the devil doing within the home?

### **I. The devil disrupts the leadership within the home.**

Genesis 3:6 declares:

“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”

Adam, who was probably standing with Eve, watched her pluck off the fruit from the tree, but did not say anything. Men, we must be the spiritual leader of our wife. We are to point her in a spiritual direction in life. There comes a time when it is a sin not to say anything! Then Eve actually gave the fruit to Adam and took on the leadership role that Adam was to have. In other words, Eve became a leader in the home instead of allowing Adam to lead. Eve led when Adam should have been leading. We can see

that immediately Satan tried to disrupt the family design, which God had established. By creation, God intended the man to be the ruler within the family. This is evident in that Eve was created to be a helper to Adam.

Genesis 2:18,22

“And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.”

God’s original design was that Adam would lead and that Eve would be his helper. The woman was brought “unto the man” in order to be his helper and back him up as he would lead the family unit. Paul goes back to the original creation account to clarify that the man was to be the leader.

1 Corinthians 11:3,7

“But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.”

Man was created to originally reflect a particular aspect of God’s image that the woman did not reflect. The woman was created in the image of God as well, but the man was created to reflect God’s image in a special way. The image of God that man was to reflect was the ruling authority of God. Man was created to possess the ruling authority of God in the sense that he would rule his wife and be a guide to her. Man was created to be the leader of the family unit.

Ephesians 5:23

“For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.”

God had originally established that the man would be the spiritual leader within the home. Adam should have stuck to his leadership responsibility and stopped Eve from picking the fruit and eating the fruit that God had said they could not have. Instead, Adam allowed Eve to lead him and the results were the Genesis curse! Satan almost destroyed the first home by getting Eve to lead and causing Adam to fail in his spiritual leadership. When the design of leadership becomes distorted within the home, then the serpent is working! When the wife wants to take the fruit off of the trees and give it to her husband without any questions asked, then there is trouble in the home. When the wife wants to take the reigns and run with them, then look out! The man is to be the spiritual leader within the home and the wife must fall under his leading authority. When this design is disrupted, then the family is not going to be blessed by God.

1 Timothy 2:12-14

“But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.”

Paul argues that the ladies are not to have a teaching role within the church assembly. They are not to usurp the authority, which God gave to men. This was the leading authority to teach the Word of God within the church assembly when all the people came together. And I must say that the modern church today has certainly thrown the Word of God into the wastebasket when it comes to what it says about woman preachers and teachers. What in the world is the devil doing? I can say one thing, the devil is behind all of these woman preachers today that are usurping the teaching authority over the man. He is having a heyday as women rise to teaching roles within the assembly. Satan is ever trying to upset God’s ordered design of male leadership in the church and in the home. What does God think when he sees women out of order within the church? To think that the modern church is broadcasting women preachers before millions of people across America through the media of television is a travesty upon the Word of God and a mockery to God’s roles for women. Women preachers within the gathered assemblies are a disgrace to God’s design and I would tell that to any lady without reservation. You simply can’t be right when you are wrong! And God says that women are wrong when they stand in the place where God has said they cannot stand.

Now Paul uses the illustration of woman preachers, who are out of place and taking on a leadership role, to demonstrate what God had originally designed in Eden.

“For Adam was first formed, then Eve.”

The order significantly suggests that Adam was first formed to be the leader over the woman. Women are not to have a leading teaching role within the church or any role that has authority over men because Adam was first formed. Paul goes back to Genesis and says that man was created as the leader and authority figure. Man was to be in the lead so the home can function. God says, I gave man the leading position and he is to take his responsibilities seriously and lead the family unit. Then Paul adds:

“And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.”

The Bible says that Adam was not the person who was deceived by the serpent in the garden. He also knew what he was doing when he took the fruit and ate it. Eve was the person who was deceived and ate the fruit in deception. Why did Paul add this statement? Was it because women are more prone to be deceived than men down through the ages of time? Was it because women are not as smart as men? None of

these reasons have anything to do with what Paul is saying here. Paul simply goes back to Genesis to remind the people about the original example of the wife attempting to lead the man. God had originally said that man was to be the leader. Don't forget the original failure in Genesis, when Eve became the leader and Adam followed. Satan turned the tables upside down on the family unit. So Paul simply uses the Genesis account as an original illustration of how Satan works to get the woman leading the home instead of the man. This is why there were woman preacher's rising up in the church in Paul's day and even much more today. It's because the devil is working to destroy God's design. This is why Eve gave the fruit to Adam and led Adam instead of allowing Adam to direct Eve. Women leading in the church, women leading in the home are sure signs that Satan has upset the fruit basket!

We must take God's Word seriously today when it comes to His design for the home. If we do not, then our homes will not have any Biblical stability and they surely will not be pleasing to God. Ladies, you must take your submissive place and allow your man to lead. Men, you must address your wife if she is seeking to lead the household. And God be with you, but you must do it. I have had many people become disturbed and mad at me when I have spoken on the roles within the home. In fact, here is an alarming statistic. More people have become disturbed over this Biblical teaching than when I have shared messages on hell and damnation. What I am saying today is that something is wrong. What is wrong is that the devil is having victory within our homes. That's what is wrong. There is a snake in your home! The devil is working. Folks, we must get back to Genesis. We must go back and see what God has originally said, so we can sift through all the fog of feminism that is going up today. Ladies, don't become lost in this fog. And don't become mad at this preacher. Your battle is not with me; it's with God.

Men, what kind of leader have you been within the home unit? Have you been leading your family in devotions? Have you been getting your family to church? Have you been dedicating your family to the things of the Lord? Have you been the spiritual example in your home as you should be? You will remember that when Adam and Eve sinned by eating the fruit, God came looking for Adam!

Genesis 3:9

"And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?"

Why did God come calling for Adam? It's because Adam was responsible for his wife. Adam was the spiritual leader and protector for Eve. When there is disruption in the home, God comes looking for the man. This is because man is to be the leader and director of the home unit. I believe God has been looking for some husbands these days. He is asking what you have been doing in your home. Now God knows what you are doing, even more so, what you are not doing. And in one sense, God is seeking after you so that you will get your act together as the husband and leader of the

household. God must speak to your heart. I cannot catch up with you men and get to your heart, but God can. When God comes calling, then there will be some fireworks! Men, it's time to stand up and become the spiritual man of the household. Rise up oh men of God.

Joshua 24:15

“And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

## II. The devil disrupts the harmony within the home.

Genesis 3:11-13

“And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.”

### a. Satan disrupts the harmony between the man and wife.

If the fall would not have been as tragic as it was, then we can almost see something comical in these verses. Everyone began passing the blame on everyone else. This is called passing the buck. Adam blames Eve. However, Adam could not come up with the lame excuse that he married the wrong woman!

Sometimes women are overly suspicious of their husbands. Someone said that when Adam stayed out very late for a few nights, Eve became upset. "You're running around with other women," she charged. "You're being unreasonable," Adam responded. "You're the only woman on earth." The quarrel continued until Adam fell asleep, only to be awakened by someone poking him in the chest. It was Eve. "What do you think you're doing?" Adam demanded. "I'm Counting your ribs," said Eve.

Adam blamed Eve. Then Eve blames the devil for the problem. It's the old T-shirt philosophy, which says, "the devil made me do it." In other words, it's everyone else's fault, but your own. This is the old devilish trick that gets people to blame others for their own failures and sins. We all have been the scapegoat for the sins that other people have committed. This is what happens in the home as well. The wife blames the man and the man blames the husband. After a while they can't figure out whose fault it is after ten counseling sessions, so they blame the devil and never change anything in their marriage.

Dear friend, one of the lessons that we must learn within the home life is to look at ourselves and see where we can change. We must not be so quick to blame everyone else. Remember, when you are pointing a finger in one direction, there are three pointing back at you. The devil tries to create rifts in the home by shifting blame on other people when you are really part of the problem.

I'm told that in Philadelphia there is a wall which has graffiti written on it. It says, "Humpty Dumpty was pushed." People today do not want to admit their own sins. They attempt to say that the havoc, which they create in their homes and lives, is always the fault of someone else. Let me tell you today, the fault is your own. And Satan will disrupt the harmony within our homes by getting us to blame everyone else for the problems at hand. We must look at our own hearts today and our own hole, which we have dug. Satan spreads disruption when we begin to pass the blame on everyone else.

### **b. Satan disrupts the harmony between the children.**

Genesis 4:7-8

"If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him."

Here is disharmony between two brothers. Although they were older brothers, the principle is still seen that Satan wants to wreck the home. He wants to work on your children. Cain rises up in jealousy and kills his brother Abel because God accepted Abel's sacrifice. If Cain had decided to do what God originally said, then God would accept Cain and have no disrespect toward him. Cain, just do what I say! There is the end to all Christian psychology and multitudes of counseling sessions with people. In essence, God is saying, "Just do what I say! Just do right and your life will be blessed and you will be a blessing to me." But Cain was not interested in what God had to say. My friend, if you are not interested in what God has to say, then you can't expect to solve your problems. Well, Satan spreads disruption in the home by causing jealousy over others within the family. This is what happened between these two brothers. The devil was a murderer from the beginning (John 8:44) because he inspired this jealousy and murderous act in Cain's heart.

1 John 3:12

"Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous."

Jealousy has always been a root problem within the home life. Brothers and sisters are jealous over each other's accomplishments. Husbands and wives are at each other's

throats because of the glory one gets over the other. We must remember what the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 13:4: “Love envieth not.” Jealousy is not a love maker, it’s a home wrecker. Quit trying to push yourself to the top of the ladder all the time.

Charles L. Allen in the book “The Miracle of Love” writes of a fisherman friend who told him that one never needs a top for his crab basket. If one of the crabs starts to climb up the sides of the basket, the other crabs will reach up and pull it back down. Some homes are a lot like crabs. We pull one another down because of jealousy. God must deliver us from such a spirit as this. Our homes will be wrecked if we think that we must always be on top.

Proverbs 27:4

“Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?”

### c. Satan disrupts the harmony of homemaking.

1Timothy 5:14-15

“I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. For some are already turned aside after Satan.”

God has been challenging me recently to share this with the ladies. There is a desperate need for the mothers to take their place within the ranks of the home life. I know that the working woman with children is the accepted norm today and the common practice of society, but I must ask you ladies to understand what God’s Word really says about this. God’s Word teaches that the mother with children is to be in the home with the children. She is to be there to guide the house and fulfill her motherly duties. When a woman with children seeks to leave her children with other people as she goes out to do her own thing in the work place, then she is abandoning God’s role for her life. You may think that this is old-fashioned. Well, it is old-fashioned. It’s as old-fashioned as the Bible.

Titus 2:5

“To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.”

God expects a mother to be with her children (“at home”) and not in the work world. God could not have made it any clearer than He did. The contemporary view that children are an inconvenience that cramps the mother’s lifestyle and dreams is repulsive to the Lord. Children are the heritage of the Lord (Psalm 127:3). The woman is to be the mother in the home or at home. The whole concept of motherhood is designed around the home and has nothing to do with working in the secular world. You cannot be the kind of mother that God wants you to be to your children when they

are at home and you are at work. I ask you to consider the Word of God instead of ignore the Word of God on this most important subject. The mother is to be the daycare for her children and their guide while they are in the home. The yielded Christian mother finds joy and fulfillment in the home.

1 Timothy 5:14

“I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.”

The word “occasion” is a military term that means “a base of operations.” A Christian wife who is not doing her job at home gives Satan a beachhead for his operations within the home, and the results can become tragic. Mother, have you been faithfully raising your children and committing your life to your children?

What happens when you as a mother begin to shirk your roles and responsibilities within the home? First, the devil gets a foothold and can begin to systematically wreck your home and children. Second, the devil gets the opportunity to speak to God about your lack of motherly practices and care. And the devil has much to say about you before God. Satan is always on the lookout for charges that he can hurl up to God because of the unscriptural and disobedient ways that a mother lives. When a mother is running everywhere but to her children’s side within the home, then the devil talks to God for he is the accuser of the brethren. I’m not sure what he says, but he probably says, “Look at that God. One of your Christian mothers is on the run again. Little Johnny is at home with the baby sitter and little Joey is at daycare. She is running all over the creation and not getting her responsibilities done within the home.”

What does God’s Word say about the mother who does not raise her children within the home and who seems to be more content with her own life than with the lives of her children. What does the Bible say about the mother who pawns her children off for others to raise them?

1 Timothy 5:15 says:

“For some are already turned aside after Satan.”

Paul may be instructing Timothy that some of the younger widows on the church list had not married and they became gossiping troublemakers in the church (vs13). Instead of remarrying and becoming a mother once again, these widows turned to Satan’s temptation to gossip and became troublemakers in the church. On the other hand, it’s equally true that the widowed mothers who did marry but failed to do their home responsibilities can also fall into the trap of Satan. Mother’s can also turn aside after Satan’s deceptive allurements to take them away from the home and their responsibilities.



The Bible concludes that in a very subtle way Satan has his way within the life of a mother who skips out on the home and her motherly responsibilities. Dear friend, I didn't come here this morning to debate the Word of God and flatter people with pious platitudes. I came here to preach the truth. And the truth is that a mother who is out of the home has turned aside to the leading and scheme of the Satan. "For some are already turned aside after Satan."

Satan is anxious to get the mother away from the home and become interested in exciting experiences that are away from the children and husband. What in the world is the devil doing? What he is doing is shifting our mothers away from the place that God has designed for them. Satan wants to get the wife and mother busy outside the home.

Warren Wiersbe has said:

"When outside the home is more inviting and exciting than inside the home, then you can be sure that Satan is at work to wreck that marriage."

#### d. Satan disrupts the home by sowing anger within our hearts.

Ephesians 4:26-27

"Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil."

When you are mad and angry within the home, then the devil is having his way in your heart and house! Paul follows up his statement about anger with a warning about the devil, because the devil can be behind anger many times. Men who are angry and bitter often devastate their children, wife and marriages. Anger destroys a marriage. I'm not going to pull any punch lines today. An angry spirit is a devastating blow upon the marriage and home. The devil knows this but so does God. This is why we are told to not allow the sun to set on our wrath. When you are sitting in your rocking chair in the evening or driving home from work with an angry mouthful to give to your wife, then look at the sun setting in the west. It will remind you to ask God to forgive you of your anger and give you a chance to get your heart right.

The couple had just been married several months when they had an argument one night. The man stomped out of the room to the guest room. He slammed that door so hard that the little plaque on the outside of the door flew off and tumbled down the stair steps. It was one of those plaques which read, "Lord, Bless This Home." The point is that God cannot bless our homes when we are angrily out of control and doing the devil's bidding.

#### e. The devil disrupts the sexual fulfillment within the marriage.

## 1 Corinthians 7:2-5

“Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.”

Marriage partners are never to use each other selfishly within the physical marriage relationship. They must sacrifice their bodies in the realm of the physical relationship in order to satisfy the sexual desires of the other. If the marriage partners consented together to depart from one another's company for some spiritual matter, then there must not be a longer separation. Why is this? Because Satan knows how to tempt us to permit extramarital affairs when we are not fulfilled physically. The word “incontinency” means a lack of self-control. When the two people within the marriage are separated and not fulfilled in the physical realm, then they are very open to Satan's temptation, which is to find fulfillment elsewhere.

Husbands and wives who use sex as a weapon to fight one another open up their marriage to satanic temptation. They are opening up a door and allowing Satan to come into their marriage. Satan can bring sexual temptation into the marriage and wreck the home when marriage partners are not submissive to one another. Marriage is to be a self-control mechanism for outside temptation in the area of sex. Proper fulfillment in the marriage relationship usually means that both the wife and husband will not seek fulfillment outside the marriage bond.

The devil is seeking to invade the home and destroy it any way he can. He will try to destroy it through a lack of leadership or reversal of the marriage roles. He will try to sow disharmony of all kinds within the home. He will try to create anger and bitterness within our hearts. He will tempt us in the area of sex in order to destroy the home. Satan is out to get our home. I just thought I would let you know!

Have we forgotten?  
“Christ is the head of this house,  
The unseen guest at every meal,  
The unseen listener to every conversation.”

A reporter came to a fire one day where a house was steadily burning down to the ground. He noticed that there was a little lad standing by with his mom and dad. The reporter said, "Son, it looks like you don't have a home any more." The little boy answered courageously, "We have a home--we just don't have a house to put it in."

We have now studied about what Satan is doing in the family unit. Satan has always been out to get the family for one reason or another. History proves this to be true. When Satan was trying to corrupt the line through which Christ was to be born, he attacked the family. Yes, he attacked the whole human race, but in attacking the human race he attacked the family. Satan gets the human race by attacking the family institution.

#### Genesis 6:1-2

“And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.”

This historical incident was a strike of Satan against society and the family in order to destroy the line of Christ. The serpent’s plan was to destroy God’s witness in the world through the family unit and to ultimately pollute the line of Christ. It is not within this scope of this paper to deal with all the scenarios and interpretive problems with the title “sons of God.” You can further your study on this subject by studying another reference work entitled, “The Sons of God.” However, the implication is that these people who were born to this giant race of humans called the “sons of God” became a race of giant people themselves who were simply demon influenced to such a degree that the human race began to topple spiritually. The sons of God were not demonic beings; they were demon-indwelt and demon-controlled people. Once again, this term “sons of God” would indicate that the human race was being polluted by satanic means. This race of giant warrior like people would grow and try to overthrow and rule the world and any godliness within the world (“the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown” – Genesis 6:4).

The point is this. This population explosion of demonically inspired people would in time corrupt all the families of the world and ultimately corrupt the pure line of Seth through which Christ was to come by doing away with the genealogical and godly distinctions among the people. In addition, these men who were demonically influenced were “mighty men” who were well known throughout the world because of the supernatural things that they could do through demonic control and influence upon their lives. It would be these demonically inspired men that originally created polygamy and would continue to create harems by choosing many wives to lust after (Gen. 6:2). The marrying of many women would also include the intermingling with the Sethite line. This would eventually rule out the promise of Christ’s coming through this chosen line and seed. The Sethite line was to remain pure and be able to keep accurate genealogical ties or roots to the future Messiah.

In any event, Satan made a direct strike against society and targeted the families of the world. He knows that if he can harm the family, then he can get his agenda accomplished on earth. It’s staggering to think about what Satan was up to prior to the

flood. His demonic workers were busy corrupting society through demonic influence and had the entire world corrupted in sin so that the line of Seth would eventually have faded out of existence.

Genesis 6:5 says:

“And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”

Satan’s master plan with the family almost worked! But there remained a godly man named Noah who was still a preacher of righteousness. God said that he would spare him and his family from the approaching storm of the worldwide flood. When Noah went into that ark the Lord did something to assure that Satan could not get into that ark and take Noah’s family, through which the promised seed of Christ would eventually come.

Genesis 7:16

“And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the LORD shut him in.”

God shut the door and Satan could not enter into the ark and cause harm and pollution to this family. God shut the door and indicated that Noah would be safe and his ship would not sink. Do you realize that if the ark had sunk to the bottom of the cold water, then the promise of God would have drowned with it? There would be no coming Redeemer and salvation. The plan and program of God to save souls would be thwarted. But God shut the door of the ark. And when God shuts the door then Satan cannot enter. God had protected His plan and purpose for mankind. That’s why there is a Savior today. None the less, we can see Satan’s historical attack on the family.

Today, Satan is still attacking the family. In one sense, Satan wants to get back to God for not allowing him to defeat the coming seed in the past human race. He knows that he cannot destroy the seed any longer because Christ has already come. But the serpent can still create havoc in the family and try to destroy God’s witness in the world as he attempted to do in the past. Imagine this. The crawling serpent had succeeded in destroying the godly witness of the world by attacking all the families within society. He had won the victory in every family but one! This family was Noah’s. He preached and lived righteousness. By God’s grace, may we be that one family today that Satan will not disrupt, because we have been standing on truth and living godly lives. Dear friend, Satan is simply out to get your family and you must realize it as a Christian father or dad and become a Noah in your own day and time. Husbands and fathers must stand firm as Noah did and rise above the Satanic attacks on the family life. God is looking for a Noah today. He is looking for a father who is willing to go against the grain of a wicked society and follow what God says about sin and righteousness.

Genesis 6:9

“These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.”

There is the secret to victory within the family line. Men, God wants you to walk with God today instead of allowing the devil to get the victory in your family. Walking with God is the way to keep your family on track.

Genesis 5:22

“And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters.”

When you walk with God you will keep your own family on track. When you walk with God then you will take your own family into the ark of your home and God will keep your family safe from the onslaughts of the enemy. I want to say that if you do not walk with God as the man of the house and do what's right, then you should not expect your children and wife to walk with God. The answer to the family who is victorious over Satan's tactics is found in the man of the house that walks with God. If you fail to really walk with God, then your family will wind up in Satan's trap. What an incentive to live for God today. Rise up, O men of God!

“Rise up, O men of God!  
Have done with lesser things;  
Give heart and soul and mind and strength,  
To serve the King of kings.”

## **6. The devil is secretly directing world governments.**

The Scriptures clearly teach that the heads of human governments are affected by demonic influence. Satan has his own way of effecting governmental officials. Satan can very easily influence the leading officials of the world in the decisions that they make. Demonism is behind world leadership today. Satan wants to direct world affairs. Man is in rebellion against God and therefore places himself in league with evil spirits who are headed up by Satan. There is a titanic conflict going on within the spirit world. We do not have an awareness of what is happening all around us. The Bible explains that demons are headed up by Satan are stationed in certain governments of the world. This is why there is such upheaval in the world today. The Pharaoh of Egypt was an idolater who was evidently under the control of evil spirits.

Exodus 12:12

“For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD.”

The word “gods” can be better rendered as “princes” and suggests that Egypt had certain princes ruling over its land. Who were these princes? It may very well have reference to the demonic princes that ruled within the land of Egypt in this day. Demons are seen in Scripture to be princes that rule over certain governments, principalities and lands. Pharaoh leaned upon his gods for guidance. However, his gods were really demons who were misguiding him and causing him to act contrary to God’s dealings with him and God’s revealed truth.

In Egypt, certain animals represented their gods. Obviously, those deities whose representatives were linked with beasts were dealt direct blows by God’s judgment. This occurred when the death angel passed through Egypt. All the first born of the bulls, cows, goats, jackals, lions, baboons and rams were destroyed. This would indicate that the gods represented by these animals were also destroyed. With the sudden death of these sacred representatives, there could be little doubt that it would be interpreted as a direct blow to the gods of Egypt themselves. Of course, the gods that Egypt worshipped were really demons. This indicates that Egypt was heavily influenced by demonism. They had many gods whom they worshipped, but they were actually the hidden gods or princes of demons that they depended upon for guidance and wisdom. When the animals died which represented these Gods, Egyptians mourned. We can readily see that the demonic princes of Egypt were certainly working to deceive and lead the great ruling monarch astray. This is why Pharaoh boldly stood up and said in Exodus 5:2:

“And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.”

Pharaoh also turned to the working of evil spirits during his times of crisis, when the plagues of God’s judgment were being unleashed against his nation (Exodus 7:10-13). Pharaoh trusted in the occult, which wicked spirits were behind. He sought for the help of demons, which he actually thought were gods. Here is an earthly ruler and nation deceived by these princes of demons. Our own nation today within the ranks of government is beginning to turn to psychics for projection into the future. The United States is becoming more interested in what the world of the occult knows. This is a sure sign that the nation is becoming more dependent upon demonic guidance. Even our presidents have been interested in the stars in order to discover the future. They lean upon the demons for guidance and demons themselves can deceive and mislead government leaders and officials.

This is why we have all of this world chaos today. There are demonic workings behind many of our world leaders. The influence and direction that demons give to these evil leaders is causing worldwide turmoil and strife. We can only see the “flesh and the blood” but behind the men and the world scenes is really demonic activity and this

activity is on the rise. This is why we have the evil things going on in government that we do today. Why is government so crooked? Why do we have so much lying and corruption going on in government today? Why are the national leaders unwilling to take a stand on issues of morality, abortion and decency? It's because the devil is working overtime in our government structure today. This is why we have madmen trying to create weapons of mass destruction. They do these things to deliberately kill and bring destruction and chaos into the world. The destroyer is behind all of this end-time turmoil and tactics (John 8:44).

I recall having to wait for one of our Bible conference speakers at the airport. I was somewhat pressed for time and thought I would get at the airport right about the time his airplane was expected to arrive. To my surprise, the speaker's flight was delayed. When I read the news at the airport it said, "Late arrival." Did you know that there was one angel that was commissioned by God to give a message to Daniel. But this angel actually had a late arrival.

Daniel 10:12-13

"Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia."

The angelic visitor had come to give Daniel a vision about the future. But the angel had a late arrival because of the spiritual battles he had to encounter with other demonic entities. The angel says that the "prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me." This has reference to the ruling demon over the kingdom of Persia. Certainly no human prince like Cyrus could stop an angel who was on God's mission. Evidently there are spirit forces that play a prominent part in the affairs of world government. Here we are introduced to a demon who was in charge of the kingdom of Persia. The visiting angel spoke about how Michael, who was the mighty archangel, came to assist in the spiritual battle that was going on against this demonic force of Persia. The angel also remarked about other spiritual entities that he would encounter as he returns to the spiritual battlefields of the world.

Daniel 10:20

"Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come.'

The angelic visitor now informs Daniel how the demonic prince of Greece would also join the battle. This tells us that there was a leading demonic prince over the regions of Greece. Satan evidently assigns evil angels to different nations within the world.

Therefore, they have the designation of princes over certain lands and governments. There is a constant conflict going on in the spirit world. This is a rare glimpse that we have of the unseen spirit world. It tells us that demonic prince's rule and influence the governments of our world trying to create havoc with the decisions that world rulers make. Demons can have a direct influence and bearing upon the moral climate of the world and its spiritual downfall as they effect those in leadership within the world governments. This is apparently what Paul meant in the New Testament when he talked about the rulership of demonic angels.

Ephesians 6:12 says:

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

These wicked spirits, who are under the devil's leading, have their own jurisdiction and responsibilities within this world. This is why they are called principalities, powers and rulers. Demons have a ruling effect upon this world. They rule the false systems of thought within this world and make the rulers of the world their targets by controlling their minds and actions. It would be a valid conclusion from Scripture that every nation within the world has a ruling prince over its land, which influences the direction of the nation. There may be other demons under these leading demonic princes or rulers mentioned in Ephesians chapter six, which are assigned to the lower levels of governments within the context of the world nations. Whatever the case may be, we see that there are powerful forces of evil at work through the nations. We cannot deny this as we study Scripture. Satan has his own set of rulers that are ruling behind the world scenes of government and are effecting the trends of society. This is why we have such demoralizing and deterioration within this land today. There is a prince for America. There is also a prince for Palestine ruling the Jews and promoting unbelief among this land. And you can be sure that Satan has a host of helpers working with him to upset the government and godliness within this nation.

Satan is actually the “prince of demons” (Matt. 9:34; 12:24). This means that he has control over all the demonic forces or other princes within government and throughout the nations of mankind. The devil assigns certain demons to rule in particular provinces and principalities. We might also understand that there is a prince for Ephrata and a prince for Akron and a prince for Denver. Demonic influence is also at the lower levels of the government structure as well as at the higher levels. This is why Satan is called the “prince of this world” (John 12:31; 16:11). Satan rules over this world through his own hierarchy of princes, which in return do his bidding. Many leaders don't realize that they are tools in the hands of demons, which were sent by the devil to cause havoc within the world. Many politicians are puppets controlled by demonic influence. This is why we have sex scandals, pay-offs, lying and cheating going on in our government today.



Dr. Lehman Strauss has said:

“The entire political environment, apart from God and His Word, is full of demonism.”

This is why we have Watergate and Whitewater scandals today. This is why our president is under impeachment hearings right now as I am writing. Dear friend, before this world will ever be straightened out and we have a time of wholesome government, there will need to be a worldwide exorcism that occurs. And this will happen someday.

Revelation 20:1-2

“And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.”

Isaiah 24:21 prophetically anticipates this same exorcism:

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth.”

Satan along with his demonic princes and rulers of darkness will be withdrawn from the world government scene and cast into the bottomless pit. This will occur in the Day of the Lord when Jesus returns to earth to establish His kingdom of peace. Only when this exorcism occurs can the world expect to have real peace and stability.

Zechariah 13:2 says:

“And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land.”

This passage prophetically anticipates the day when Jesus will return and sweep the false prophets and unclean spirits out of the land of Palestine. These were the demonic rulers of this world who inspired all of all this corruption. In fact, there will be a worldwide exorcism that occurs in this day. What a day, glorious day it will be! The wicked spirits that once influenced mankind and in one sense ruled this world through their wickedness will be banned from planet earth. There must be a worldwide exorcism before there can be that glorious dawning of the Millennial Kingdom.

## **7. The devil is sparking disruption within the church.**

One cartoon pictured a well-dressed man who was wearing a black suitcoat and a black hat. He was walking up the church steps to go into the building. While going into the building a pitchfork fell out of his suit jacket and this particular man had to reach down to pick it up. The cartoon then showed this peculiar man bending over and a red

scaly tail was seen hanging out behind his suit jacket. This cartoon was attempting to picture the devil coming into the church in order to cause havoc and division. Of course, we know that the devil does not look like the pictures suggest. However, the point is well made. The devil comes to church. Some of us are naïve and do not realize that Satan comes to church in order to deceive and then ultimately divide the saints. When this occurs, then the old devil will have a great victory. I believe that the devil is actually running some churches through His demonic forces! We may think that Satan only goes to the adult movie theaters or houses of prostitution. I've got news for you today. The devil comes to church and sits in the front pew!

In what ways does the devil cause division within the church?

- a. The devil brings disruption into the church by getting the church to run on demonic wisdom.

James 3:14-15

“But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish (demonic).”

The Bible is very clear and understandable. When there is jealousy and strife or division going on in the church, then you can be sure that the devil is at work among God's people. My friend, the devil is not at work in the church plumbing system or sound system. The devil is at work in the people's lives within the church. He tries and gets us to become divided and jealous among ourselves. He tries to sow division among our ranks and gets us to start fighting over petty things.

Jesus said in Mark 3:25:

“And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.”

The devil seeks to divide and disrupt the church through his demonic wisdom. There is a wisdom that is generated in the mind of people that is purely devilish in its origin and we must face up to it and identify it for what it really is. Sometimes we think that we cannot be fooled or conned by the devil. I want to say that when we think we cannot be fooled by the devil, then we will let down our guard and our mind can become an open target for demonic wisdom. When this happens, then churches can become run by demonic wisdom. Satan wants us to spread his destructive wisdom throughout the church. Through his own wisdom, Satan can gain an effective foothold in the church and begin to erode it from within. Beware of the devil's attempts to place thoughts in your mind that will cause division or strife and generate jealousy among the saints.

Satan especially likes to do this by getting us to think that we are progressing along much farther than everyone else in the church. He wants us to think that we are getting

to be the spiritual elite within the congregation and that everybody else is a step or two behind us. He wants us to think that we are the only soul winner left in the church or we are the only one left that really knows what is going on. This type of thinking or wisdom will sooner or later breed pride, confusion and jealousy within the ranks of the church. We must beware of this type of wisdom. This has sometimes been called the "Elijah syndrome." Elijah told the Lord that He was the only one left who had not bowed down and kissed the heathen idol of Baal.

1 Kings 19:10,18

"And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away."

But God told him that he was mistaken about this matter. He was not the only one left.

1 Kings 19:18

"Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him."

**b. The devil brings disruption into the church through lying.**

Dishonesty and lying are not of God. They are of the devil. Whenever you get lying going on within the church then the devil is at work (John 8:44). The Father of lies means that he was the original liar and he knows how to get people to lie within the church.

Psalm 58:3 says:

"The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies."

You do not have to teach your child how to lie! Dr. Strauss has said, "We all come into this world with a built in crime system." We have a fallen nature that was originally influenced and continues to be influenced by the devil. The devil wants us to lie within the church in some measure so that we can cause disruption within the church. This is what happened to Ananias.

Acts 5:1-3

"But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?"

Was it wrong when Ananias did not give the full price that he had received for the land? I cannot judge this man for not giving the full price for the land when the offering plate came by on Sunday morning. . He needed to make a living as well (see vs. 4). The apostles never said that they must give up everything that they owned. The sin was not that Ananias refused to give the whole amount of the land. The sin was that he lied about what he actually gave. Lying about money is one way that Satan can really bring disruption in the church. The devil likes to get into the church funds and offering plate. Shady preachers and shady ministries that lie about funds are playing in Satan's hands.

Ananias said that he gave everything when in reality he had not. He simply did not tell the truth about what he actually paid for the land. This was a bold faced lie within the church. Satan had come into church through the lying of this man. His lie was the result of Satan's working or prompting upon his heart. Listen my friend; the father of lies gets us to lie today. And when we begin to lie in church, then we have opened up a can of worms. Lying always disrupts a ministry. Truthfulness is what keeps a ministry together and functioning, as it should. When the preacher begins to lie about funds to cover up some hidden secrets or when the people begin to lie about what they are really doing and practicing within their lives, then disruption abounds within the church. God cannot bless a lying church.

### c. The devil brings disruption into the church through the worship service.

1 Corinthians 14:33 & 40 reminds us about the need for rational and orderly worship:

"For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints."

"Let all things be done decently and in order."

I was browsing in a bookstore the other day. I know that will surprise some of you since you now how much I hate books! In any event, I was looking at the theological section of books. Beside this section was a whole area where there were books on how to worship God. It was called contemporary worship. Now we must understand that when books are called contemporary worship, it always has to do with the new type of worship that has invaded the church scene within the last 20 years. It is worship that has to do with the worldly sound of distorted music within a perverted culture. It is a type of worship that breeds confusion and disorder to some degree within the time of worship. Everybody is saying that we must to break away from dead orthodoxy and get groovy in our time of worship. Listen my friend, we do not have to promote dead worship in our churches today but we need to promote orderly worship that is full of decency and order. These principles of order and decency must be applied to everything that goes on within the service from music to reading and to preaching. Dead formalism can kill a church, but so can radical or uncontrolled fanaticism.

Satan can be present in the worship of a church. When worship within the church becomes entertaining and full of confusion, then the devil has come to church. Satan tries to breed worship that is centered upon a big beat sound that is full of confusion and is nonmusical in its design and approach. He tries to create an atmosphere of entertainment that the people can clap their hands with and applaud celebrity people after they are finished doing their Hollywood type of singing. Satan wants to get worship to become man-centered instead of God-centered and he is strategically creating this within the modern churches today. This is why we have all of this applause going on today within the church and rock concerts. Worship has become centered upon man more than God. Satan tries to get a church away from a lack of order and design in their worship services. He tries to get worship on man instead of God. In other words, he tries to breed the sound of confusion and create a chaotic atmosphere of bedlam in the church service. He does this through entertaining musicians and through the so-called corporate tongue talking and praying among all the different people.

This is what was happening in the man-centered worship of the Corinthian church. Everybody was speaking out at the same time and there was the atmosphere of a baseball or football game existing in the church. God has given to us the way that we should worship. All true worship is to have order attached to it. It is not to be man-centered and full of the sounds of confusion and frenzy. This is not true worship. Satan comes to church when he gets a church to recreate the Corinthian catastrophe of the past, which is mainly confusion in sound and noise. This is why we have the great rise of the New Evangelical Charismatic services today. Only the discerning believer will be able to apply the Biblical principles of worship to these churches and discover that Satan is coming to church. We must close the door on this false revival of worship today. God gives accurate guidelines to follow for worship today.

Today man is more concerned about a feeling or experience that he can get in the worship service today instead of what he can actually give to God. This search for feeling and experience actually brings the worship down to the level of the man and what man expects to receive when going to church. Thus, the worship becomes man-centered. Christians want to attend a church where they can feel or experience their own high or fantasy of worship instead of coming to church and allowing themselves to bow down before God and give to God in their time of adoration. In a subtle way, Satan is shifting the worship of today to man. The devil does this by getting man's attention on what He wants to feel or experience in worship instead of what he can actually give to God. True worship is always man giving to God instead of man wanting to greedily get his own way.

When a man thinks that he needs a certain sound or electric atmosphere in order to worship God, then he has become a type of spiritual drug addict that is addicted to a

certain sound. This addiction occurs when he has become stuck on his need to have his pump primed in order to be able to get the same effect, feeling or experience in the time of worship. All of this is a man-centered basis for worship that is devilish in its design. Man is not to come to church and worship in order to receive what he wants. This is a selfish spirit. Man is to come to church in order to worship God by giving to God his heart and mind. Many churches today are replaced by spectators sitting in religious grandstands made out of church pews who are watching religious entertainment on a church platform. The devil comes to church and shows up in the worship service.

**d. The devil brings disruption into the church by unspiritual leaders.**

1 Timothy 3:6-7 gives the instructions for the pastors of the local assemblies: “Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”

It is very true that when unspiritual leaders and preachers get into the pulpit, they can divide a church faster than a skunk walking through the middle of the sanctuary. The word for “novice” means a newly planted person and indicates that they are recently saved or a new convert. Because of their recent conversion, the instruction is given that they should not hold office. The reason is because they must become established in truth and grow spiritually before holding office. Novice preachers usually become novelty preachers in that they try and do something that will cause disruption and division. Pride over their position leads them to engage in wrong doing or become a type of spiritual dictator over the lives of the people. It’s these types of preachers that fall into the “condemnation of the devil.” In other words, they will in one sense experience the same type of judgment that the devil experienced because of his pride. They will be cast out of their position and place of authority. Likewise, they will fall into the “reproach” and “snare” of the devil. Satan takes pleasure in trapping people in sin and allowing the world’s ridicule and reproach to come upon their lives. Satan likes nothing better than to disgrace God’s work and God’s people by trapping church leaders in sin before a watching world. One writer talks about the “sanctified obstructionist” who always wants to run everything their own way in the church. This type of person wants to have preeminence and will always cause problems.

3 John 9-10 speaks of a specific man who took on a leadership role in the church but was filled with pride and had a spirit of dominance over other people. His name was Diotrephes. “I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.”

Here was one of those bully type of people who had power within the church and wanted to have everything going his own way. The word “preeminence” has the idea of “desiring to be first.” It conveys the idea of someone who is selfish, self-centered, and self-seeking. The language suggests a self-promoting person, who served no one, but wanted everyone to serve him. This man had an exaggerated view of his own importance. Colossians 1:18 says that Christ alone deserves preeminence. John the Baptist said in John 3:30 that “He must increase, I must decrease.”

How did this church member act who was influenced by the devil? Well, for one thing, he refused to acknowledge the leadership of John (“receiveth us not”). Those who want to run the show will usually end up attacking leadership or refusing the leadership over them (Hebrews 13:7, 17). Warren Wiersbe has well said: “Whenever a church member wants position and power, he or she will usually attack the pastor either privately or openly. Usually they start a “whispering campaign” and try to undermine the pastor’s character and ministry. Like Absalom in the OT, they “hint” that the present leadership is not efficient (see 2 Sam. 15:1–6), and that they could handle things better.”

This kind of person wrecks ministries. It allows the devil to get a foothold and wedge into the church. This particular church power crazed individual was “prating against” other people. This simply means that Diotrephes told lies or brought false charges against John. It means that he was a gossiping babbler who was saying things about John and others that was not true. If church members would remember that they are to listen to no accusations against their pastor without proper witnesses present, this would help to solve the gossip problem (1 Tim. 5:19).

This man also refused to welcome other brethren into the assembly because he was afraid that the people might look up to them instead of himself. Therefore, he refused to allow any other person to receive traveling brethren or speakers into the church for fear that he might no longer be number one. If some person did invite another to the church, he would excommunicate them (“forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.”) The original language indicates that Diotrephes’ habit was to excommunicate those who resisted his authority. This man was an ecclesiastical or church dictator over the lives of the people. He was like a pope within the early days of the church.

There is within the church today the same type of leader today who acts in the same manner as Diotrephes. They want people to in one sense worship them. They want to rule over the lives of people in a dictatorial manner and tell them which way to part their hair. They want to feel that they are somehow in charge. This individual becomes a church wrecker and Satan sits back and applauds. After years of bullying people’s lives, some saints get tired of the church scene and abandon church altogether.

Sometimes church members actually rise up against a bully person like this and let him have it with both barrels. In reality, this type of person will usually get a taste of their own medicine.

**e. The devil brings disruption into the church through false teaching.**

2 Timothy 2:16-18

“But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.”

These two brethren evidently were saying that the resurrection of the believer was already past. The heresy of Philetus and Hymenaeus probably involved the idea that resurrection was a purely spiritual affair which occurred at conversion or baptism. They became mixed up with the Greek philosophy of the day, which rejected the idea of bodily resurrection. This worldly philosophy and false teaching was eating through the church like a cancer (“their word will eat as doth a canker”) and it needed to be dealt with. Error breeds more error and creates doctrinal disruption within the local assembly. Furthermore, false teaching that the saints promote always leads to division and strife. This is because some people claim to have a revelation or new truth that no other person knows about and which goes against the grain of Scripture. Beware of the new things that uproot the ancient landmarks.

2 Timothy 2:23 says:

“But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.”

You should not fight an ignorant saint entrenched in error because then you make yourself look somewhat ignorant as well! When someone claims that Jesus stood at the foot of their bed at 4:30 in the morning and spoke to them, you might as well avoid arguing with them. What they have said is so foolish and unlearned (ignorant) that it is not worth while to engage in an argument over the matter. You simply need to tell the truth to them and seek to stop their error from spreading. And Paul reminds Timothy that we can do this with a gentle spirit. We can be firm and gentle at the same time.

2 Timothy 2:24-26

“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.”

Those who are teaching error as brethren (1 Timothy 1:20) must recover themselves from the devil’s delusion and the trap that the devil has caught them in. God is willing



to grant forgiveness to the saints if they themselves are willing to respond to His inner conviction and leading upon their heart. The fact of the matter is that many individuals are so entrenched in their error that it is actually hard for them to listen to truth, which God is trying to bring to their attention. They are not willing to “acknowledge” the truth. For this simple reason the Bible says, “peradventure” or perhaps God will grant them repentance (a change of heart and mind about their error), so they can return to the truth instead of remaining in their error which they are promoting.

When a saint’s heart is hardened to truth only God can soften it through His inner conviction and create a change in their stubborn heart. However, God will not override the stubborn will of His people. That is why God may not be able to do His marvelous work of producing repentance in their heart. Sometimes the saints even choose to remain in their ignorance (1 Cor. 14:38) and do not immediately respond to the convicting hand of God and repent. God gives the conviction to produce repentance in the heart of people, but he does not override their own will and mind.

In any event, these saints needed to be rescued from the snare or trap of the devil since they had adopted this false teaching. They needed to come to their senses or become spiritually sober once again (“recover”) and abandon the false teaching. Some believers need to sober up! They need to come to their senses and start thinking in a biblically accurate way. False teaching brings many negative consequences into the church and is always the handiwork of Satan. Among these negative things is error and deception of God’s people. False teaching ensnares people in the trap of the devil, which for the believer leads them into error and deception in their own Christian life. This deception can also can lead to more ungodliness (2 Tim. 2:16) and create division within the church (vs. 23) since one party claims to know something which no other person knows about. This is why we must mark them who cause divisions (Romans 16:17). Paul warned Timothy about the false teaching that would plague the church doing the last days. He recognized the devilish or demonic influence behind all of this false teaching.

1 Timothy 4:1-2

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron.”

There is today, within these last days prior to Christ’ return, a great revival of demonic teaching. Doctrines or teachings of demons mean that the teachings being promoted are demon inspired and demon taught. People are “seduced” or deceived by these evil spirits or demons and begin to teach those things which have been impressed upon their minds by these wicked spirits. This is a frightening reality but this is what the devil is up to today. We need to get our heads out of the sand as believers and really see what is going on today. Many Christians will say “amen” to anything that a man will say

from the pulpit. They will say “amen” to any new teaching that comes down the pike. But did you ever stop to realize that you might be saying “amen” to a demonic teaching? I shutter to think about it, but it is true. We can “amen” the demons when we are ignorant of the Word of God! The greatest need in our generation today is a return to consistent, systematic and personal Bible study.

Spiritual error is seldom due to innocent mistakes. It is more often due to the conscious strategies of God’s spiritual enemies, which are demons. When you go and sit under false teaching, then you are hearing lies, which have originated from the demonic realm. This is why I am careful where I go. Paul said that we can actually listen to the teachings which originate from demons when we go to the wrong places and listen to error. Likewise, we can fellowship with demons depending upon where we go and what audience we are in (see 1 Cor. 10:20). What in the world is the devil really doing? I’ll tell you what He is doing. The devil is busy infiltrating His own doctrinal teaching among the saints today. Many saints are gullible and are actually following the teachings of demonism. When man teaches the wealth and health gospel of our day, multitudes of believers are flocking to these meetings and buying into this demonic teaching and lies. And men who claim to be inspired by God are actually inspired by demons. We have demonic revival going on today where demonic teaching is being propagated. Christians are talking about revival, but it is revival of a different kind! It is demonic revival. We have men and women teaching blatant error that is much more than ignorance on their part. Many times it is the result of demonic influence upon their mind. I listened to a man just the other day on channel eight, which is supposed to some kind of inspirational channel. He was giving a detailed account of some dream that he had. He went on and on how he witnessed submarines attacking the United States and how all of this was a prophetic forewarning of a Russian invasion and attack on the United States. This man was “speaking lies in hypocrisy” (1 Timothy 4:2). His dream may have been nothing more than a demon sent delusion. This is a frightening reality.

Satan was also corrupting the church of Thyatira with evil doctrine. These teachings were called the depths of Satan.

Revelation 2:24

“But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.”

There were those in the church of Thyatira who had separated themselves from the false doctrine and compromising practices of Jezebel and her followers, which Christ denounces as “the depths of Satan.” The term “depths” speaks about the so-called deep secret teachings of Satan. Apparently the false teaching in Thyatira involved teachings that had to do with secrecy. Those who could understand these secret

teachings were considered to be the spiritual elite. Once again we see how Satan comes into the church through wrong teaching and tries to disguise false teaching as some new and mysterious teaching that was not previously known to other believers. Believers today must develop good biblical discernment so that they might overturn false teaching that comes into the church.

1 John 4:6 says:

“We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.”

We have pamphlets that we hand out to people at our annual fair ministry with this title written on them – “The Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error.” They introduce the false religions and cults to the people. Why is this? It’s because behind the false religions and false cults there is seductive demonic teaching. The demonic spirit of error or falsehood is backing up the world of false denominationalism, religions and the cults. The great seduction of Christianity today is the result of demonic deception. This is why religious organizations do not preach the Gospel. This is why men do not preach the truth of the Word of God. This is why there is liberal teaching in the church and why people are rejecting the truth of Scripture. This is why there are so many false religions today. The demonic spirit of falsehood has been sweeping through the world. Alas, the great plague in the church today is that many are unable to discern between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. They have not been taught sound doctrine and therefore are susceptible to demonic error and messages.

## **8. The devil is suppressing our direct boldness and witnessing for Christ.**

Missionary Susie Hobert believes that one of her main responsibilities as a mother is to instill in her children a burden for their lost friends. And she has done a good job. Ten-year old Ryan was driving imaginary race cars with his friends. Several minutes later he came bounding into the house and yelled, "Mom, you've got to come quick. Isabelle wants to accept Jesus as her Savior." Skeptical of the child's sudden interest in spiritual things, Susie asked, "Ryan, I thought you were playing race cars?" "We were, Mom, but our cars wrecked. The accident was real bad so I asked Isabelle if she would go to heaven if she died. She said she didn't know. I told her how she could know and she wants to ask Jesus to become her Savior."

The mark of the early church was their bold witness for Christ. We see how the early believers were not afraid to stand up and be counted as a faithful witness for Christ.

1 Thessalonians 1:7-8 says:

“So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every

place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing.”

Acts 8:4

“Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.”

This was the Lord’s plan and purpose for the church. But Satan has effectively been silencing the church in the area of missions and personal evangelism. We are now going to investigate how Satan is trying to silence the church witness concerning Christ and salvation. The devil does not want people to be informed about their lost estate and need for salvation through Christ.

So what in the world is the devil doing today? He is trying to suppress or do away with our bold witnessing for Christ. The devil tries to put an end to the witness of the saints. He is ever working to silence the genuine Gospel message of “good news” which a lost world going to Hell needs to hear. Without the Gospel people will spend eternity in Hell. The devil knows this and this is exactly what he wants.

Romans 10:14

“How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?”

Satan wants to see people lost and doomed forever in Hell. For this reason he wages war on the Gospel message. And the only way that he can do this is to try and suppress the message of the Gospel from going forth from the lips of the saints. Why is much of the church so silent today when it comes to bold witnessing for Christ? Why is it that we are so frightened and scared to speak up for Christ? I want to tell you why we feel this way and why we fail to boldly witness for Christ. It is because of the work of the devil. We fail to realize that the devil and his workers are behind much of our blown attempts to witness for Christ. Sometimes we fail to witness because of our lack of training. But most of the time we fail to witness for Christ because we are ashamed to stand up and be counted as one of His followers. This was the case with Peter.

Luke 22:31-32 reads:

“And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.”

Here we see how Satan was working in Peter’s life in connection with his rebellion and failure to confess Christ to the people. Satan worked in Peter’s life by silencing his witness for Christ. This is why Peter denied the Lord three times when asked if he was a follower of Christ (see Luke 22:54-62). Peter had gone through a dreadful time of

fear and failure concerning his witness for Christ. And why did he end up following Christ “afar off” (vs. 54) and denying that he knew Christ? Why was Peter unwilling to stand up for Christ and be a witness for Him? It was because Satan had sifted him like wheat in the sieve. He had taken Peter and absolutely had his own devilish way with his life. And do you know what? The devil does the same thing with our own lives and we may not even realize it! We are tossed around by the devil in that he creates fear and cowardice in our hearts so that we silence our voice and witness for Christ. The old devil just wants us to blend in with the crowd and be like the rest of the world.

Luke 22:55 says:

“And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them.”

So many times we want to just sit down with the rest of the world and forget about our need to witness to a world that is going to hell. When we do this and fail to witness for Christ, we can be sure that the devil is behind all of it. The devil wants us to blend in with society instead of witnessing to a lost society. He wants us to become one of them instead of being a Christian witness. Why are we so silent about Christ and salvation? It’s because of the devil. Dear friend, we must realize what the devil is doing today. We must understand that the devil’s plan is to damn as many souls to hell as he possibly can. And the devil is going to try and silence the Gospel witness any way he can in order to achieve this goal.

We have forgotten how eternally lost people are. We have forgotten that people are going to hell everyday. We have forgotten how horrible eternal judgment will be for lost people. But the devil has not forgotten! This is why he is trying to silence our Gospel witness for Christ. Dear friend, we must stop the silence! We must stop allowing the devil to have the victory. We must not allow the devil to silence our witness for Christ. We are in a tremendous battle with satanic forces that are trying to thwart the message of the Gospel from going forth. Our calling and ministry is to share Christ with a lost and dying world, which is on the brink of hell and damnation.

Someone has remarked:

“If you wish to enrich days, plant flowers;  
If you wish to enrich years, plant trees;  
If you wish to enrich eternity, plant the Gospel in the lives of others.”

Evangelist D.L. Moody used to tell about a picture that impressed him greatly. It portrayed a woman grasping a cross with both hands as she was being rescued from a stormy sea. Mr. Moody would then go on to relate how that picture lost much of its impact for him when he saw another painting some time later. The second picture also depicted a woman being rescued from raging waters. But while clinging with one hand

to a cross, her other hand was lifting another person out of the waves to safety. That picture dramatically portrays what we should be doing since we ourselves have been rescued from the penalty of our sins. Recognizing that others around us are lost and perishing, we should not be so selfishly taken up with our own salvation that we forget about them.

Satan actually has his own evangelistic strategy in this world. The end result of his personal evangelistic strategy is to damn people in hell forever and forever. But how Satan evangelizes people to keep them from the Gospel truth is revealed in the Word of God.

There are two activities involved in Satan's evangelistic strategy:

**a. Satan's evangelistic strategy involves blinding people.**

2 Corinthians 4:3-4

"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

Satan's strategy is to blind people to the Gospel message when some faithful saint witnesses to them concerning the Gospel. Remember that deceit is trickery. And when Satan blinds a person to the truth about the Gospel they do not know it. If you knew that you were being deceived, then the deception is not genuine. The fact of the matter is that if you believe a lie, then the lie becomes the truth for you. This is what's happening in the lives of millions and millions and millions of people today in this world. They are deceived by the devil into thinking that they will go to Heaven when they die on the basis of their good merits or that they will be reincarnated into another life form. They believe the particular packaged lie that Satan has sold to them and the lie actually becomes truth to them. But how dreadfully deceptive and damnable these lies are to a lost world which will soon be cut off from this life and enter their judgment and doom in hell. What lost people need today is a spiritual eye opening. This can only come as the Gospel of Jesus Christ is presented to lost people in a clear fashion.

Jesus said in Luke 4:18-19:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

What an evangelistic challenge this is for our lives today. If we want to be like Christ, then we will have to share the liberating Gospel with people. We must preach the "acceptable year of the Lord." This means that we must share with others about the

coming of Christ into this world in order to die upon the cross and rise again. The acceptable year of the Lord has to do with His first coming, which deals with salvation and grace. The next coming of Christ to earth will deal with judgment and horror. Because Christ came and provided spiritual deliverance or salvation through His death and resurrection, people can be saved from hell and damnation today.

We cannot open the spiritually blinded eyes of lost people, but God can as we witness and tell others about Christ and what He has done for them. The Gospel is the eye opening message that the lost world needs to hear and see. But they will never see it unless we share the message with them. The Holy Spirit will use the message about the Gospel of Christ and will open the satanically blinded eyes of lost people as we faithfully witness for Christ. What an incentive this is! What a thrilling hope it is! We can preach a message of deliverance to those who are captivated by their sins and through the presentation of the Gospel message lost people can receive their sight (“to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind”). This of course is talking about spiritual sight and not physical sight. The Gospel is the powerhouse message or the dynamite that God the Holy Spirit uses to open up the blinded minds of a lost generation of people.

Romans 1:16 says:

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”

The word “power” is the Greek word “dunamis” which means the supernatural force or strength that brings a person to Christ and salvation. Thayer has remarked that this word stresses the “inherent power, power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature, or which a person or thing exerts and puts forth power. We get our English word dynamite from this word. In one sense, the Gospel is the dynamite of God! A lost world going to hell under the blindfold of Satan needs the spiritual explosion of the Gospel to take place within their hearts. This can only occur as we faithfully present the message of the Gospel to people and then allow this powerful message and the Holy Spirit to create spiritual sight in the lives of lost people. The aim of this evangelistic effort is to recover lost people from their spiritual blindness (“recovering of sight to the blind”). We want to see people everywhere repenting of their sins and turning to Christ in saving faith.

Satan has his own evangelistic effort to blind the minds of people to their need for Christ. Our evangelistic effort is to present the powerful Gospel message to them so that the blindfold of Satan will be removed and people will get saved. What a tremendous battle the believer has before them. But what a privilege it is to preach deliverance to people who are lost in their sins and going to hell. Jesus can deliver people from the judgment and bondage of their sins (“to preach deliverance to the

captives”). The only way that this can ever happen is to present the Gospel to people so that it can shine upon them (“...lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” – 2 Cor. 4:4).

“Amazing grace, how sweet the sound.  
That saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found.  
Was blind but now I see.”

**b. Satan evangelistic strategy involves stealing the Gospel from the hearts of people.**

Jesus said in Matthew 13:19:

“When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.”

The Gospel seed is sown in the hearts of people as we witness to them about Christ and salvation. The truth may be presented to them. The satanic blindfold may be taken away for a moment. But what is the strategy of Satan when this happens? He comes along and in his own devilish way steals the Gospel seed from the hearts of people. Satan, that old bird, pecks away at the seed until it is all eaten up. In time, the person who once had their heart open to their need for Christ has closed it again. Satan steals the seed of the Gospel message from the hearts of people who are beginning to see their lost estate before God and their need for Christ. He convinces them that they are not so bad after all or that they have survived this long without salvation that they can go on without His salvation. Sometimes he even convinces people that there will be a more convenient time to believe on Jesus Christ for salvation. The old bird is up to his same tricks. Beware of the seed stealer! My friend, if you see your need for Christ today, then accept Him as your Savior today before the seed is stolen away. Don't allow the devil to steal the truth that is sown in your heart.

Isaiah 55:6

“Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.”

Many times we talk about planting the seed of the Gospel, but we must also remember that Satan is trying to steal the seed away. The Gospel seed of truth can be taken away from the unbeliever so that he or she remains in blindness and on the broad road that leads to everlasting hell (Matthew 7:13-14). This is Satan's evangelistic strategy.

My friend, Hell is for real. And if you allow the Gospel seed to be stolen away from your heart, then you will go to hell someday. Jesus said that you will go to the place called hell if you do not receive His salvation and saving grace in this life.



Matthew 23:33

“Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?”

Dear friend, the point Jesus makes is this. You cannot escape the damnation of hell unless you repent of your sins and believe on Jesus Christ to be your Savior. You must turn to Christ while you are still able. Life is short. Tomorrow may never come for you. You may die today with your sins not forgiven and in a lost estate. Surely this must concern you.

Jesus said in Mark 9:43-49:

“And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life (kingdom life) maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life (kingdom life), than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.”

Jesus actually gave this passage dealing with the future judgment of unbelievers in light of the disciples need to purify their own lives. Christ’s disciples needed to judge their own lives by judging their own actions in this life. They were to be careful what their hands do and where their feet would take them. They were to be careful what their eyes looked upon so that lust would not be created in their heart and life.

“O be careful little hands what you do,  
Oh be careful little eyes what you see,  
For the Father up above is looking down in love,  
So be careful little hands what you do.”

The saved disciples would enter into eternal life in the future context of the coming kingdom. They should watch their actions in light of eternal life and the rewards and future honor connected with this life (see Mark 9:33-37). Eternal life for the believer also deals with reward and future blessing. Therefore, if we want future reward and recognition we must watch what our hands, feet and eyes do in this life. We must discipline our lives. We cannot live in defeat all of our lives or fail to serve God and live for Him victoriously.

Now, in this same context and same breath, Jesus begins to warn about the opposite side of reward, recognition and blessing throughout eternity by explaining the eternal judgment of the unsaved. He uses the same analogy of the body and relates it to the

unsaved who will suffer in their body throughout eternity. The true disciple will not experience the suffering of a body throughout eternity. But the unbeliever will experience the suffering and unending torment of a future judgment upon their body.

Jesus said in Matthew 10:28:

“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

Jesus warns the unbelieving wicked sinner, who is not a genuine disciple of Christ, about the eternal judgment and doom of hell and how it will relate to their body. There will be a conscious torment that will never end for the unsaved. Jesus Christ taught that hell was as eternal as heaven. The English word translated hell is the Greek word “Gehennah.” This word is actually a transliterated word from the Hebrew language, which was originally known as the garbage sight or dump sight of Jerusalem. It was here that the fires were continually burning since all the refuse of Jerusalem was dumped in this location. This place was a fitting illustration of the way it will be throughout eternity for the lost. They will suffer the eternal vengeance of a holy God in the eternal fires of this awful place.

You may think that God will not send you to hell. But Jesus says that you will go to hell if you don't come to him as a little child and trust in Him to save you from the place of judgment. This is the awful place of judgment for lost sinners whose sins have never been forgiven. Jesus said that this place will be so terrible that it would be better to not possess all of your body parts when entering this final abode for the lost (vs. 43, 45, 47). The reason Jesus said this is because you will have more body parts that will experience pain and suffering throughout eternity. How terrible this place must be.

There are those who are teaching today that the fire in hell is not real fire. If this were true, then why would Jesus say that it would be better to possess fewer body parts that could experience pain when going into hell? The fire of eternal hell is real. It's so real that people will feel their body burning for all eternity (43b, 44b, 45b, 46b, 48b, 49a). You may try to appease the wrath of Almighty God by saying that the fire of hell is not real fire, but that will not change your eternal suffering in this place. You will discover that your view of hell was wrong when you get there.

Jesus also taught that hell will be a place of the tormenting maggot or worm that will obviously feed upon the bodies of dying people (44a, 46a, 48a). This repeated statement from the lips of Jesus speaks about another aspect of the suffering of the unsaved. Not only will the eternal fire torture the lost, but also the worm or maggot that feasts on their body will never die (Isaiah 14:11). This obviously means that the body of lost people throughout eternity will never decompose or be devoured by the maggot that prays upon them. If the worm never dies, it means that the body of the lost throughout eternity will never die. This is what Jesus is implying by this statement. It

means that the unbeliever will be in a constant and conscious state of death, but never come to the final point of death. Your body will be in a state of ongoing dying or death throughout eternity as the fire burns you and the worm eats upon your flesh. This is why the book of Revelation calls this the “second death” (Rev. 20:14). Eternal hell is the second death in the sense that it will be a place where you will actually experience a final spiritual death or separation from God forever. In this life on earth you are separated from God in a spiritual way because your human spirit is not regenerated with God’s life. However, the second death involves a person passing through a final and eternal separation from God's presence in relationship to their spirit and body. This separation from God will result in judgment within another timeless existence.

Jesus spoke about this timeless existence of suffering and dying in Mark 9:49:  
“For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.”

Jesus once again emphasizes the point that every unbeliever who enters hell will be preserved their forever and never be annihilated. They will be salted with fire in the sense that as salt preserves food so they will be preserved throughout an eternity of fiery judgment. What a horrible fate it is for the lost person who dies with their sins upon their life and without the eternal life and salvation Jesus offers. The devil’s evangelistic strategy is to keep people from the Gospel and salvation so that they will burn in the fires of eternal hell and suffer in the unending agonies connected with hell.

Sir Francis Newport, who ridiculed Christianity, is quoted as saying, these terrifying words on his deathbed:

“Oh, that I was to lie a thousand years upon the fire that never is quenched, to purchase the favor of God, and be united to him again! But it is a fruitless wish. Millions and millions of years would bring me no nearer to the end of my torments than one poor hour. Oh, eternity! Forever and forever! Oh, the insufferable pains of hell!”

## **9. The devil is slaughtering unborn babies.**

Jean Garton tells this story about when her children were younger: "All our children were in bed; the late television news was over, and I was putting the finishing touches on a presentation I was to give to medical students the next day. As I reviewed some slides which might be used, there appeared on the screen the picture of an abortion victim, aged two and a half months gestation; her body had been dismembered by a curette, the long- handled knife used in a D&C abortion procedure.

"Suddenly I heard, rather than saw, another person near me. At the sound of a sharp intake of breath, I turned to find that my youngest son, then a sleepy, rumped three-year-old, had unexpectedly and silently entered the room. His small voice filled with

great sadness as he asked, "Who broke the baby? "How could this small, innocent child see what so many adults cannot see?"

Our society has murdered literally millions and millions of human beings in the womb of mothers. More babies have died in the wombs of their mothers than in all the history of wars combined. There is indeed a war on the womb going on today.

John 8:44

"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."

It is the business of the devil to destroy the lives of people and to kill. He was a murderer from the beginning because he inspired Cain to kill his brother Able. We can be sure that God is not behind the abortion scene. God gives life; He does not sanction the unlawful taking of life. The unchanging moral laws of God have not changed. "Thou shalt not kill" (Ex. 20:13). God actually forms the life of the child within the womb and that child is not to be murdered by wicked hands. Man is a cold-blooded murderer when he takes the life of a baby in the womb. God will be the judge of these murderers in the end. God will have the final say (Rev. 21:8).

When your sins are not forgiven by God because of your failure to place saving faith in Christ, then you will be judged for all the sins that you ever did or even thought about. Those who have murdered babies will suffer the severe judgment of God (Mark 9:42-43). God will judge abortionist doctors. They may not get their dues in this life, but their just desert is coming. By way of application to the situation at hand, Jesus would say this to the abortion doctor. It would be better for an abortion doctor to cut off one of their hands, which have performed so many abortions throughout their lifetime, then to enter hell with two hands into the fire that never shall be quenched. This is because their place of suffering in Hell will be so terrible that they will wish they had one hand less to suffer with throughout eternity.

The sacredness of human life is seen in Psalm 139:13-15:

"For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered (entwined or fenced me in – protected) me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully (to stand in awe or amazement) and wonderfully (distinctly and differently) made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance (bony skeleton frame) was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought (fabricated or knit together) in the lowest parts of the earth (the expression of the mother's womb)."

David reveals that the tiniest embryonic individuals are the subjects of God's superintending love and care. God is deeply concerned about them as persons and is

in charge of their formation within the womb. David clearly reveals that our personal identity is continuous in its existence from the moment of conception. God uses the personal pronouns “my” and “I” to prove that David was a human being while he was being formed or woven together within the womb. In fact, David was a person from the moment of conception (Psalms 51:5). In Jeremiah 1:4,5 we see how God also uses the personal pronoun “thee” (you) to refer to the unborn Jeremiah. The Bible does not make a distinction between the child after birth and the child in the womb. These humanistic madmen who try and decide when a baby becomes a baby are deluded by demons. It is actually at conception that God forms the spirit of man within him and creates human life (see Zechariah 12:1).

Man is different than the animal kingdom in that God creates man by a direct divine act. He passes down His own special life into a child at the moment of conception (see Genesis 2:7). The breath of God’s own life constitutes more than just physical life. God could have made man to exist without physical breath. Physical breath is not the main point concerning the breath of God. God breathing into man the breath of life signifies the time that He was giving man’s human spirit to him. It also specifies that mankind was receiving something of God’s own special creative life which the animals did not receive. This special feature that man would receive and represent through his God given spirit would be the image or likeness of God. Through this divinely given spirit, man would be able to resemble the image of God.

It’s interesting to note that God said animals would simply produce after their own kind (Gen. 1:24-25). However, God never said that man would produce after his kind. This statement is not seen in the creation account because God would bring His own direct touch upon every person that comes into the world, just like He did to Adam. God forms the “breath of life” or the spirit of man (Zech. 12:1) within every human being at the moment of conception. This God given spirit would be able to work and operate in connection with the soul of man so that a part of God’s special image could be recognized as being part of man’s existence and so that God’s image might be seen within the world through their lives.

The spirit of man gives babies a different existence than the animals. The spirit that God forms or creates within every human being is what makes that person distinctly human in their make up and design. Through the infusion of God’s spirit at conception, mankind is created in God’s image with a capacity to be able to know God, fellowship with God and live forever. This is why human life is sacred and cannot be discarded as that gold fish in the bowl, which just refuses to die.

Humanity bears the image of their Creator. Unlike the animal world, man was directly created by God with a human spirit that was eternal and which could reflect the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26-27). Man still reflects the image of God to some extent when he is born today (see James 3:9). He is not born without sin or with a will that will

seek after God as Adam was originally created (Romans 3:11). However, man still reflects God's image in the sense that he is to possess a ruling authority like God has. Man was given the privilege to rule over the animal kingdom because he was of a much higher and different order than the animals (Gen. 1:26,28). Mankind still possesses God's image in the sense that he has ruling authority. Then too, mankind was also created in God's likeness in the sense that he has intuitive moral responsibilities. He has a built in conscience and restraint system that still reflects God's character to some degree and which gives a man the capabilities to know about basic right and wrong (Romans 2:14-15).

Mankind today is also like God in the sense that he has special reasoning capabilities, intellect, will and emotion that reflects God's actual make up or design. The level of man's intellect far exceeds the animal kingdom. Some Zoologist expert was trying to convince the TV viewers that monkeys had a higher intelligence level than human beings or Homo Sapiens as he said. I beg to differ with the man. If a monkey is smarter than a human, then why doesn't he jump into a car and drive down the road and why doesn't he direct corporations and go to school to learn. It's because the animal kingdom is not created in the image of God. The animal kingdom does not reflect God's level of intelligence or rationale. Animals are different than humanity. A man is not an animal because he is created in the image or likeness of God. Like God, man is designed to be a highly rational, self-conscious and a self-determining creature. In addition, through man's spirit, he is also capable of obedience to moral law and is designed to have fellowship with God. Man bears God's image in that God gave man the capabilities to understand about God's being and existence (Rom. 1:19) and that he must be right before Him (Gen. 3:7-8). No animal is created with these capabilities. God directly forms the human spirit within man so that man can have the capabilities of a special communication and connection with God that the animals cannot.

Why don't monkeys go to church and sing, "Just as I am" walk down the church aisle and become saved by placing faith in Christ for salvation? Why doesn't a monkey sit down on a chair and read through the twenty third Psalm? It's because they do not have a capacity to worship God or tune their existence to God. Only man knows that God exists and that he is accountable to Him (Romans 1:19). God did not create the animal world for salvation or the capability to know God or fellowship with God. Therefore, Jesus did not have to die on the cross for your dog or cat. That's why old Phido will not be in Heaven wagging his tail and waiting to greet you when you finally arrive inside the city. It's because God did not create the animal world in His image with the capabilities to understand God and have eternal fellowship with Him. Some Christians feel that their dog will meet them in the air when Jesus returns. I have news for you dear animal lover; Jesus is only taking the saints back to Heaven when He returns. He is not taking any Saint Bernard's with Him when He returns for you and me in the rapture.

This means that animals cannot be saved or lost. We do not need to have a “bless the animal day” at church like some of these wing nut outfits do today. Animals don’t belong in church because they cannot talk to God, walk with God, worship God, communicate with God or bark to God in any way. They do not bear God’s image or likeness, which informs them about God, and what is right and wrong. God did not create animals to have any inclinations toward God. Your dog cannot go to Heaven because God did not create a dog with the need to go to Heaven. A dog is not lost or saved. Therefore, God did not create your pet poodle with a spirit that is designed to be saved and live eternally with God. The old saying about dogs is true. They just die like a dog (see Ecclesiastes 3:11; 12:7).

Jesus died on the cross for mankind because mankind is created in His image and can respond to God in faith to receive salvation and worship God. When man dies his spirit of life returns into the hands of the sovereign God who originally created that spirit to manifest His image through the man’s soul of feelings, desire and will. Man’s spirit, unlike the animals, will also live forever like God. Where the human spirit actually spends eternity is up to the individual (John 3:36).

On the other hand, we see that the spirit of the animal does not return to God because it was not created to bear God’s image. However, the spirit of life within the animal ceases to exist because the animal’s spirit was not designed to live eternally with God or have any communication with God or responsibility before God. Therefore, the dog just dies like a dog. Its life ceases to exist at the time of death. There are no dog kennels in Heaven! Only man has been given a spirit at the moment of conception that is capable of being regenerated and having a capacity for fellowship with God.

How shameful it is when man places more emphasis on the lives of animals which are not created in God’s image than he does about the slaughter of millions of babies in the mother’s wombs who are created in God’s image. It’s a sad day in America when the president can sign a law to protect spotted owls or some other kind of creature and not sign a law to protect human life within the womb. What has this world come to? May God help America! He surely will not bless America when we do such atrocities as these. The devil is having his way. He is winning the war on the womb.

We can see that man is still created within the womb of the mother to bear God’s image in a certain way. If Satan can target mankind by killing humans who bear God’s image, then he feels that a victory has been won over God. This is because destroying anyone who resembles God in any fashion is a way to dethrone God and His program to glorify Himself in this world. Nevertheless, we must understand that the child within the womb has a spirit that makes that child uniquely human (Zech. 12:1). The spirit of man, which is given to all humans, marks them out as being different than the animal kingdom. You could not go back to the monkeys even if the theory of evolution started to reverse. The spirit given to man makes a person in God’s likeness in the sense that

he reflects God's design of rational thinking and emotional capacity. He also has a moral code built into his belief system. Through the spirit formed within him, man can have contact with God and be able to worship God. It's the spirit formed within every human being that makes a man distinctly human.

I want you to understand that a child is fully human from the moment of conception or when his spirit is formed within that little cell. When the fertilized egg (zygote) is first formed, it already possesses its full complement of DNA or genetic information. That information never changes. A person's sex, blood type, hair and skin color are all determined within that first cell. From that moment of conception, you became a person. A baby at conception is a person. A baby is every bit as human as you are and I. Taking the life of these innocent children is murder. It is a travesty upon our nation and world when we destroy human lives who bear God's image. Each year there is over a million and a half abortions performed. You can be sure that doctors and mothers, who are surrendering their womb in these diabolical plots of murder, are influenced by their father who is the devil. The devil was a murderer from the beginning. Influencing people to take human life is nothing new when it comes to the devil's work.

Jeremiah 7:31

"And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart."

Although God forbade this evil atrocity (Lev. 18:21; 20:2–5; Deut. 12:31), Israelites still offered babies as sacrifices at the high places of idol worship in the valley of Hinnom which was at the South end of Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 28:3; 33:6). This place later became known as Gehennah. The people offered their babies and children to the Ammonite deity called the fire god Molech, under the delusion that this god would reward them (2 Kings 16:3; 21:6). It was said that they played the drums so loud that they would drown out the screams of mothers who would sacrifice their babies. Any person who kills babies must be deluded by the devil. Satan has always had a way of getting at babies. This is because he wants to destroy as many people as he can who have been created in the image of God. The devil wants to destroy any resemblance of God that he can in his attempt to thwart God and His likeness within this world. He wants nothing in this world that bears God's likeness. Satan's aim and over all plan is to dethrone God's likeness in this world. One way he can do this is through abortion.

Fay Clayton wrote:

"My fingers now will never stretch to touch the winning tape;  
my race was done before I learned the smallest steps to take.  
My growing height will never be recorded on the wall;



my growth was stopped when I was still unseen, and very small.  
My lips and tongue will never taste the good fruits of the earth;  
for I myself was judged to be a fruit of little worth.  
My eyes will never scan the sky for my high-flying kite;  
for when still blind, destroyed were they in the black womb of night.  
I'll never stand upon a hill, Spring's winds in my hair;  
aborted winds of thought closed in on Motherhood's despair.  
I'll never walk the shores of life or know the tides of time;  
for I was coming but unloved, and that my only crime.  
Nameless am I, a grain of sand, one of the countless dead;  
but the deed that made me ashen grey floats on seas of red."

Mankind simply rebels against God and tries to frustrate His purposes in birth when He takes unborn human lives. The devil knows this and his aim is to thwart the purposes of God upon earth, even the birth of human beings. The Bible teaches that all human life is sacred. Mankind is made in the image of God and is different than the animals. Because man bears God's image he is to be treated differently than the animal kingdom. Murdering another human being is an attack on the image of God. It is Satan's way to triumph over something that He holds precious in His sight, which is the sanctity of life that was created to glorify Himself.

Revelation 4:11

"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure (purpose or desire) they are and were created."

God created mankind for His own purpose and desire which is to ultimately glorify His name and bring praise to Himself. When Satan influences people to murder millions upon millions upon millions of babies, he is really trying to diffuse God's glory in the world as God tries to express that glory through giving life to human beings which bear His image. Abortion is an offense against the image of God and in some measure minimizes God's glory and splendor as revealed in the creation and birth of human people. Satan knows this and will try to suppress the glory of God in any way that he can in his effort to dethrone God in this world and His glory.

## **10. The devil is spawning interest in the world church.**

Most of us as men have had the experienced of washing our car and watching it glisten in the sunlight. It becomes our pride and joy as we look at this clean and sparkling car. Afterward we may go inside to eat some lunch and then come outside to run an errand in the newly washed automobile. And to our dismay, the birds have flown over top of the car and have done what only birds can do upon our newly washed red car. We could hear all the birds roosting over in the mulberry tree beside our car and only wonder how we could cut down that mulberry tree without our wife noticing it is gone! I

might title this point in my message, "The birds." I am going to speak about the birds at this point in our study. I want to say today at the very offset that the birds have come into the church! Allow Jesus to explain.

Matthew 13:31-32

"Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.

Who are the birds of the air, which are roosting in the branches of this tree? Jesus identified who the birds were in the parable of the sower (see 13:4,19). The birds represent Satan and his evangelistic attempts to steal the Gospel seed from the hearts of the lost. The "wicked one" is an oft-repeated name for the devil (Matt. 13:19; 1 John 2:13-14; 3:12; 5:18). When Jesus says that the birds or this "wicked one" is actually the devil roosting within the branches of a large tree. This brings us to the next question. What does the tree represent in this parable? It is important to correctly identify what the tree stands for that Satan is pictured as roosting in.

The flow of the parables would indicate that the tree represents the growth of what we might call "Christendom" or the unnatural growth of religion in its broad spectrum. We must remember that the "kingdom of heaven" which Jesus was speaking about was not the literal Millennial Kingdom that He had offered to the nation of Israel. Israel rejected the King. Therefore, the King changed His kingdom program and no longer offered the literal earthly rule to His national people in that day (Matt. 21:43). Jesus within these parables of Matthew 13 was talking about the kingdom in "mystery" form (see Matt. 13:11). This means that Jesus was speaking about the secret trues about the kingdom, which were unknown to the nation of Israel.

These sacred secrets had to do with the progress and expansion of the Gospel among the Gentile people which would result in the formation of the New Testament church. They had to deal with the course of events and reception of the Gospel between the rejection of Christ by Israel and His coming again in glory at the close of the tribulation period. In other words, the secret form of the kingdom dealt with the events that would transpire in the world prior to the establishment of His literal kingdom upon the earth. The Gospel as it relates to the church and tribulation period were secret aspects unknown to Israel. Therefore, they were called the mystery form of the kingdom or the way that the God of Heaven would rule His affairs on earth as it relates to the course of history between Christ's rejection by Israel and the establishment of His literal kingdom upon earth. The phrase "kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 13:11) literally reads "kingdom of heavens." It signifies heaven's sovereign rule over the affairs of this world. God is in control! It would seem that the birds or the devil are in control, but Jesus reassures us

that the heavens or God Himself is in control of the events of time as He reigns as the sovereign Lord. In His sovereignty God is in control over the birds!

In verse Matthew 13:31 Jesus spoke about the beginning of the church on the Day of Pentecost. It began as a little grain of mustard seed. Over the course of time, the church began to expand and grow numerically. However, the main problem was that the church did not continue to grow spiritually. There was the unusual, unhealthy or unnatural growth that began to take shape within the church. This unnatural spiritual growth speaks of the growth of Christendom, which possesses within its ranks both the saved and unsaved. Within the broad spectrum of the church there is the false and the true. This has always been true even in the days of the early church (see 2 Cor. 11:26 – “False brethren”). In Matthew 13:25 Jesus already had said that one of the secrets of this intervening time period between the rejection of Christ and His coming kingdom would involve the mixing of the false with the true. Unbelievers would be mixed together with believers.

As Jesus speaks about the parable of the mustard seed, he reiterates how the church itself would begin small but then expand and grow into a great ecumenical giant comprised of every false religion that would not preach the truth of the Gospel. The term “Christendom” is a fitting term to describe what Jesus is talking about in this parable. The tree that Jesus is referring to is the unnatural and unholy growth of religious ecumenicalism that lumps together the false and true within the category of the church and religiosity. This is exactly what we have today in the modern ecumenical movement. We have the bringing together of the false with the true. We have the acceptance of Roman Catholicism, which rejects the grace of God as the only way of salvation. We have the acceptance of false denomination structures, which reject salvation through the blood of Christ and do not follow the clear mandates of the Bible. Everybody wants to build bridges and form a giant structure or tree that we can all gaze upon and say, “Look what we have built.”

The ecumenical tree is nothing more than the recreation of the tower of Babel. Everybody wants to be part of this growing tree of ecumenicalism today. But they fail to see who is roosting in the ecumenical tree that promotes false denominational structures and world religions. The old bird the devil is roosting within the ecclesiastical branches of this tree today.

Matthew 13:32

“Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.”

The devil is roosting in the branches of denominational liberalism and false world religions. He is sitting in the great ecumenical monstrosity that is beginning to build the

world apostate church of the tribulation period. I must say once again that many undiscerning believers are hooked up with this growing tree and are promoting the antics and program of the birds! Religion at large has gone to the birds! Many and most churches are involving themselves in the promotion of a world ecumenical movement, which the devil is behind. Dear friend, why must we reject ecumenicalism today? I'll tell you why; it's because the devil is roosting in the branches of this movement! The ecumenical movement is full of fowls, the fowls that represent the devil. He wants true believers to mix with unbelievers so that they can promote his own evil agenda to unite the true with the false and error with truth.

Many unwise believers will say that ecumenicalism is all right because some people truly get saved. Well, the devil is saying the same thing. He does not want to see anybody saved; however, he will trade off some saved souls in order to be able to push his own agenda and damn many others in the confusion and blindness of ecumenicalism, which promotes the philosophy that everybody is okay. Many people in ecumenical rallies simply go forward not to accept Christ as their Savior, but to only confirm their own dedication to their denomination structure, even when it is rotten to the core. They go forward to rededicate themselves to the church of their choice. I want to say today that the church has gone to the birds! The church is playing into the scheme of the devil to unite the false with the true and blur the distinctions between truth and error. We are playing into the hands of the birds when we follow the cry of ecumenicalism today. We are not to build the tree, we are to ax this tree down. God is not pleased with compromise with false religions and error.

2 Corinthians 6:17

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.”

I was talking to a barber about ecumenicalism at the same time he was cutting my hair. The barber had recently been to a Promise Keeper ecumenical rally that had encompassed a wide spectrum of false denominations involving unsaved people along with other true believers. He was saying how fantastic this was to be part of this ecumenical rally and cry for religious unity. I know I should have told that barber about the birds and the tree that Jesus spoke about in this parable. I should have told him that the devil was behind this rally because he sits in the tree of ecumenicalism flopping his wings. I must confess that I did not say much about the bird to this barber who was cutting my hair. I was afraid that he might become angry with me and do more cutting than I wanted him to do! I suppose the Lord excused me this once for not speaking out, as I should. My logical reasoning was this. I did not want the devil to get the victory over my hair!

**11. The devil is seeking to keep mankind in bondage and fear.**

The devil tries to generate fear in the hearts of people concerning death. This is what the devil did to us before coming to Christ for salvation. He tries to generate within our hearts the fear of future judgment or the fear of the unknown that surrounds death.

Hebrews 2:14-15 says:

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”

Probably the chief sense in which the devil has power over death is in demanding death for the unsaved world of mankind. It was through Satan that sin first entered the world. God’s holiness decreed both the physical and spiritual death of all who sinned (Romans 3:23; 6:23). So in his role as adversary, the devil can demand that the penalty or judgment for sin must be paid. In other words, Satan can demand that a race without Christ as their personal Redeemer must suffer the consequences of their own sin. When it comes to the unsaved lost sinner, Satan demands judgment on their behalf. However, this power or authority which the devil has over the unbeliever completely changes when the sinner turns to Christ and believes that Jesus died for them and paid for their own personal judgment of sin. Now, the devil has lost the power or authority over the realm of death in that he can no longer demand judgment for sin over the believer’s life. The reason is because Jesus has already paid for that judgment. The devil also has the power or authority over death in the unbeliever’s life in the sense that he keeps the lost souls of humanity under his blindfold and deception. He also keeps them under the bondage of sin by energizing them in their evil deeds (Ephesians 2:1-2). Sin leads to death (James 1:15) and in the case of the unbeliever it leads to eternal separation from God forever (Romans 6:23). In this sense, Satan also keeps the lost or unregenerate under the realm of death. He is in absolute control of their lives and has full authority over their lives.

After speaking of the devil as possessing the power over death, the writer also speaks about the fear of death. He says that Satan had the ability to keep us in a constant fear of dying before we were saved. The devil not only had the authority to demand death by judgment, but he also kept us in the fear of that coming judgment throughout our lives. We were enslaved to his powerful ability to create fear and trembling within our heart concerning death. Since we are now redeemed from Satan’s power, we are no longer subject to such bondage or slavery and can now face death with confidence knowing that Christ has set us free from eternal judgment through His granting of eternal life. Jesus has lifted the fear! Jesus has defeated the foe! Jesus is still the answer! He always was and always will be!

Jesus came to deliver us from the fear of dying by having us place our faith in His eternal plan of salvation and redemption. Before we were saved, the devil kept us in

the constant fear of death or dying. What would happen when we die? Where would we go when we die? How terrible hell must be when we die? It was a fear of the unknown and fear of the judgment of God that haunted us throughout our unsaved life. Satan had the power to keep us in a constant fear of dying before we were saved.

I remember talking to a man while working on the roof. He was sharing with me how he would never go to the funeral home because he did not want to face what was there. This man had a great fear about death and could not face death with any certainty. Death was only a blind leap into the dark for him. Therefore, he did not want to think about it or come face to face with it in any funeral parlor. Obviously this man had been kept under the devil's fearful bondage concerning death. One of the plaguing powers, which Satan had over our lives in our unsaved state, was to keep us in fear! He wanted us to remain in this bondage of fear as it is related to death. However, when Jesus died upon the cross it gave the devil a deathblow. The word "destroy" (Hebrews 2:14) means to render powerless, idle or to go out of business. It indicates the annulment of the devil's power over those whom Christ redeems. Christ destroyed the devil or released him of his authority and power over our lives. Satan no longer has the right or authority to charge the believer for not having a sacrifice. This is because Jesus has already died for the sinner. Satan needed to first be defeated (vs.14) before the believer could be delivered (vs.15).

Verse fifteen then goes on to say that Christ has "delivered" or released the believer from the fear of dying that was generated by the devil. The death of Christ upon the cross means that Satan can no longer demand judgment for our sins. However, Christ's death also means that every believing sinner can now be released from the fear of dying, since Christ has died for them and provided them with eternal life. What a victory it was!

Today we can claim the victory over the devil that Christ has won for us by simply believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and resting in the eternal salvation of the Son of God. Faith is the victory! When we do believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, then Satan's power or authority over our own life is defeated. The devil can no longer demand spiritual judgment on the grounds that we do not have an actual Savior. We can also be delivered from the fear of death, which the devil previously kept us in bondage to while we were unsaved. The devil's defeat means the believer's victory.

When we trust in Christ to save us, we can be forever released from the fear of dying and that fear of the unknown beyond the grave which the devil kept before us in our unsaved past. What a great fear it is to not know that you have eternal life. My friend, Jesus died upon the cross in order to defeat Satan's overcoming power within your life and deliver you from the fears that haunted you before you were saved. When you disbelieve in God's plan of eternal life, then you allow the devil to place you back under the fear that he once kept you in before you were saved.

Psalm 27:1 says:

“The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?”

Are you afraid of dying? Are you unsure about what lies ahead for you? Are you disturbed about the judgment that awaits you? These are fears that the devil generates within the inner heart of people. How wonderful to realize that Jesus came to set you free from Satan’s power and fear that He has generated in your heart.

“God rest you merry gentlemen,  
Let nothing you dismay,  
Remember Christ our Savior  
Was born on Christmas Day;  
To save us all from Satan’s power  
When we were gone astray.  
O tidings of comfort and joy,  
Comfort and joy;  
O tidings of comfort and joy.”

Comfort and joy! Jesus died on the cross to deliver you from the fear of death! What a freedom it is to believe on Jesus Christ and be set free from the fear of dying, knowing that all of your sins are forgiven and that Jesus has been judged in your place and that He has paid for your eternal pardon. Glory hallelujah, Christ has set me free!

## **12. The devil is slandering the believer before God.**

I want to be very frank with you today. The devil is doing everything and anything he can to trip us up and destroy our testimony for Christ. He wants to test our faithfulness before God. I want to expose the strategy of Satan from the texts in Job 1-2. In Genesis chapter 3 Satan slandered God before man. He said to Eve that God was not so good after all. God did not give every tree for her enjoyment. God is a killjoy and does not want you to eat of this one tree for fear that you will become like Him. In Job 1-2 Satan slanders man before God. He tells God that Job is serving Him only because God has blessed his life financially and in so many other ways. Satan has always been in the slandering business. He loves to defame our name and reputation before God. Satan always has something evil to say about our lives and he is always challenging our character and reputation before God’s presence. Satan is always pointing his finger at us as he speaks to God and slanders us in the presence of the Almighty. As we will investigate in this section of the Word of God, Satan challenges God about your life and commitment to Him. The devil wants God to give him a chance to test our own love and loyalty before Him by receiving permission to bring certain evil calamities upon our lives. He wants to slander our name and reputation before God. I think that

the church today has lost sight of what the devil is really up to. I do not want to study the sufferings of Job, but Satan's involvement in these sufferings as allowed by God.

We must investigate the character of Job as we begin this section of Scripture. There is a fourfold description of the excellence of Job's character in Job 1:1. Job was said to be a "perfect" man. Of course, this does not mean that Job was without sin. The meaning of the Hebrew word suggests completeness in character. Job was sound, wholesome, full of integrity and one who was morally and ethically pure. He was a well-rounded man from the spiritual standpoint. The second description of Job says that he was "upright." This word means that he was straight from a spiritual standpoint. He was correct and right in his dealings with others and in what he said and did. He was a man full of integrity and trust. Another description given concerning Job's character is that he "feared God." Job possessed a reverent fear for God. He contemplated who God was and how great God really was. He knew that God was his mighty Creator and Sustainer in life. He knew that God was in charge of his life. Because of this he feared God in a reverential way. He showed respect and reverence for God in the way that he lived and conducted himself. The final description of Job's character describes him as a man who "eschewed evil." This word "eschewed" means to turn aside. It has the idea of departing or removing yourself from evil.

Job was certainly a man who walked with God. His character was one of excellence before God. In fact, God Himself says that there was none like him in all the earth (Job 1:8). What a statement of Divine approval Job had. The Charismatic Movement has tried to present Job as a man who was sinful and who was not right before God in order to explain why Job suffered with boils and why so many great tragedies came upon his life. In doing this they destroy Job's character and make him out to be a victim of his own doing. This is unsound and unwarranted in light of what the Bible says concerning Job. It is another futile attempt to try and support a teaching that is unscriptural. Job did not suffer with disease because he was opposed to God and had some horrible sin within his life. Just the opposite is true of this man. He was a man who lived a spiritual life before God. The scene opens with what we might call a cosmic conflict in the heavens.

Job 1:6

"Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them."

The "sons of God" in Scripture can have reference to angelic beings. This is the meaning of this description in the book of Job. Elsewhere they are described as singing at the time of creation (Job 38:7). There was a day when the angels came to present themselves before God. This obviously suggests that the angels came before God to give account of their activities and to receive new orders from God. Angels are God's messengers. However, verse six reveals that there was an intruder in their midst



on this particular occasion. It was Satan. The word Satan means adversary. The Hebrew root word actually means “opposed at law.” The picture of Satan is that he comes before the presence of God to make a judicial accusation before God. He is like a prosecuting attorney who delivers charges against God’s children in the presence of God. He slanders us within the presence of God. This is exactly why Satan was seen to be with the other angelic hosts in the book of Job.

Zechariah 3:1-2 says:

“And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?”

This was one of Zechariah’s visions. Joshua was the high priest that had returned with Zurubbabel. He represented the nation within this vision since he is seen standing before the angel of the Lord, which is a reoccurring Old Testament reference to a preincarnate appearance of Christ. But in Zechariah’s vision Satan was also seen standing within the presence of God. Why was Satan there? It’s because he is the accuser of the brethren. Satan loves to come before God and challenge God about the failures and sins of His people. Satan is like a prosecuting attorney that tries to oppose God’s people in the court of Heaven. However, we discover within this vision that the Angel of the Lord rebuked Satan and proceeded to acquit Joshua, not because Satan’s accusations were false, but because of God’s gracious love for Israel and choice of this people.

Revelation 12:9-10

“And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.”

In the middle of the seven-year tribulation period Satan will be cast out of the heavens where his work of accusing the brethren occurs. You will note that this reference represents Satan as “the accuser of the brethren” because he comes before God’s presence day and night to accuse us of our sins, our failures, our lack of service toward God and wrong type of service that we offer to God. Satan is our prosecuting attorney before God. He seeks to bring judgment against us in the courtroom of God’s Heaven. This has always been his plan and agenda. Satan wants to give us a bad wrap in God’s presence. He is out to prove to God that we are unfaithful and unworthy of the title “God’s children.” As we will see in the book of Job, Satan always accuses us of serving God out of a wrong motive or for wrong reasons. Job’s relationship with God was based deeply upon God Himself and not upon his feelings and outward

circumstances. But Satan did not believe this was true. Satan believed that Job was serving God for the wrong reasons as we will discover.

Job 1:6-7

“Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.”

Here we discover that the devil is not in hell. First Peter 5:8 declares that the “devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour.” The devil roams the world scene and not the domain of hell. His primary dwelling place is on earth. It’s upon earth where he can raise havoc with God’s people. The Bible suggests that the devil is not omnipresent like God. He cannot be everywhere at the same time. Therefore, he must roam the world and travel from one place to the other to perform his dastardly deeds.

Job 1:8

“And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?”

You will notice that it was actually God who invites Satan to consider Job! This is another detail the Charismatic Church overlooks. The scene tells us what the real cause of Job’s suffering was connected to. It was because God challenged Satan to challenge Job. God knew that Satan was there to accuse His people; therefore, God asks Satan to consider Job. God calls Job His servant because Job was faithful to God and served the Lord with his life.

Job 1:9

“Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought (without any reason of cause)?”

Satan goes to work doing what he knows best. He begins to accuse Job for serving God out of a wrong motive. He accused Job of fearing God and serving God because of the wealth, health and prosperity that God had blessed his life with. He tells God that Job was serving Him for a particular reason and the reason was because You have given him so much. In other words, Job’s motives are not right. I truly believe that Satan has been pushing this health, wealth and prosperity teaching today within the charismatic church in order to commit people to the belief that God wants them healthy, wealthy and prospering in every way. Because of this false teaching, I believe that many are serving God out of a wrong motive. They are only serving God to greedily get what they want out of life. And what happens when Satan sends a wave of persecution upon the lives of those who believe this teaching? Their faith is shown to

be shallow. They are seen to be serving God for the wrong reasons. Satan sets people up with false teaching like this in order to expose them in the end. He wants to prove to God that they are serving Him for the wrong reasons. Alas, it is true in the lives of many professing believers. Many within this category are pictured as the seed, which is sown in rocky places.

Matthew 13:20-21

“But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.”

There are those today who are serving God to get their pockets full. This is why they are so full of excitement and ecstasy when they first get started. Their relationship with God is a business adventure. This is because their connection with God is only a business connection where they are greedily trying to get what they want out of life. Satan knows enough about religious people to realize that many times people are in it for what they can get out of it. This is Satan’s accusation against Job.

Job 1:10-11

“Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.”

Satan basically charges that Job is a materialist and as long as You keep blessing his life then he will serve You. But if You hit him where it hurts, his pocketbook, then he will curse you and fade away. This is satanic skepticism at its best. Satan wants God to believe that we are serving Him for all the wrong reasons. He tells God that He has a pay-off arrangement with Job. If God blesses Job’s life with wealth and health, then Job promises to serve God. The old devil believes that all believers have “if clauses” and “contingency statements” attached to their devotion to God. And we must remember that Satan is out to prove this to be true. He wants to prove to God that we are in this business of serving the Lord with the idea or motive, “What’s in it for me.” In essence, Satan is saying to God, “Just let me send some real opposition Job’s way and He’ll look for greener grass in other places.” Dr. Barnhouse has called this the invisible war that is going on without our awareness or perception.

Satan may come to God and say that you are doing a fine job of witnessing while at work. But then he may suggest to God that you need some mockery, ridicule and persecution to prove that you will stop talking about your faith. Satan may suggest to God that you love one another in your marriage. But then He may suggest adding some heat to the marriage in order to test the marriage and see how selfish you can become. Satan may see that you are a faithful Sunday School teacher, but he tries to

get God to allow some trouble to come into your life to prove that you will give up teaching and are not really interested in the spiritual growth of the children. Satan may see that you are a faithful giver. But then he tries to get God to cause some financial squeeze to hit your life so that you demonstrate how stingy you can become in your giving. You see, the devil tries to slander you before God and get you to look bad. He is always trying to destroy your faithfulness to God and devotion to God. This is his underlying motive as he slanders you before God and tries to receive God's permission to test your life.

It's interesting to realize that Satan did recognize that God had a protective hedge about Job's life, which he could not touch. This is significant. It allows us to understand that God does protect our lives from Satan's all out attacks. God sets boundaries on what He allows Satan to do within our lives. God is always Lord of the battle and sets the boundaries of Satan. It's wonderful to contemplate today that the only access that Satan has in our lives is what God permits. We can sing these familiar words realizing that God is in control of all Satanic opposition against our lives:

“That soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,  
I will not, I will not desert to his foes.  
That soul though all hell should endeavor to shake;  
I'll never, no never, no never forsake.”

All the losses that Job faced were from natural disasters and on the natural level. However, behind these natural causes was Satan. But behind Satan was God himself. The book of Job clearly teaches that suffering falls within the sweep of God's sovereignty. Job recognizes that nothing happens without God's sanction.

My dog has a problem. His problem is that he was never taught how to walk with a leash. Therefore, when you try and take him on a walk he is always pulling on the leash. To get the dog to listen you must yank back on the leash and keep the dog from going the direction that he wants to go. In one sense, God puts a leash on Satan and only allows Satan to go where He allows him to go. This is demonstrated in the book of Job. God keeps a protective hedge about his servants that Satan cannot penetrate.

Job 3:23

“Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in?”

If Satan and his helpers could do what they absolutely wanted to do, then they would destroy every regenerate person on earth (Romans 8:36). There would be nothing but total chaos abounding on earth. But God is sovereign! He is the absolute superpower who is in control of the world events and even the very events surrounding our lives. Nothing happens to our lives without His approval. Satan is always given his limits and must work within those limits.

Job 1:12

“And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.”

The divine boundary of God's sovereignty is clearly marked out within Job's life. Satan could not harm Job's life. After Satan left God's presence we find that Satan caused Job to lose his fortune (1:14-17), his family (18-19) and his fame (1:3). Job lost everything but his faith in God. In spite of all that he lost, we discover that the wreckage of his life brought worship into his heart (1:20-22). His response to God was positive and not negative. However, Satan the slanderer was not finished accusing Job.

Job 2:1-8

“Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD. And the LORD said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause. And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life. So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.”

The cosmic scene in the heavens is once again replayed. One must wonder how many times it is replayed everyday? Satan now tries to get at Job's body. He slanders Job before God by saying that Job would curse God if God allows Job to become smitten with disease. Satan is sure that this Divine allowance will cause Job's faith to become shattered upon the rocks. Once again we see God's protective hedge about Job's life. Satan was only allowed to inflict Job with disease. God did not allow Satan to take Job's life. God is in control even when we feel things are out of control.

“God is in control,  
Though pressures burden the soul.  
His sovereign plan is a symphony,  
Which will ring for eternity.”

Satan cannot cross the line! God is in control. What Martin Luther said is true: “Even the devil is God’s devil.”

Once again we can see that Job’s reaction to all of his suffering was one of worship and not whining.

Job 2:9-10

“Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.”

Even Job’s wife was trying to get her husband to curse God. This is what the devil wanted Job to do. Obviously Job’s wife was playing into the hands of the devil. She became the mouthpiece for Satan. However, Job refused to follow his wife’s advice and did not sin by cursing God. Job realized that God was still good in spite of all the tremendous heartaches that had come his way from the permissive hand of a sovereign God.

Job 13:15

“Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him.”

The accuser of our lives does not believe that any child of God serves God out of pure motives. Therefore, Satan seeks to slander us before God’s presence in order to try and convince God that our faith in Him is only a surface faith. But Job proved to Satan that there are those people who truly do serve God out of pure motives. This incident reminds us that we must take the time to inspect our own lives. Sometimes it is good to ask ourselves why we serve God. Why do we come to church and serve God with the gifts that He has given to us? Why do we become part of a local ministry and serve God? It should be because we love God with all of our hearts more than anything else in the world.

Job’s story proves that God’s people can be pure in their motives while serving the Lord. However, at the same time it disproves the notion that we can avoid Satan’s attacks if we are strong, live a godly life and sing warfare songs. It destroys the notion that if we are skilled enough against the enemy and are trained to wage warfare that we cannot be touched. Dear friend, if God allows Satan to touch our lives, we will be touched no matter how we live or what we say and do. There was nothing Job could do about Satan’s attack. God simply allowed this satanic test to take place in order to increase Job’s faith in God. All of the victory songs and praying in the world could not stop this Satanic test from occurring. When God says yes to Satan, then you can be

sure that Satan is going to do his thing. But do not fear. God is still in control. And God will not allow Satan to go beyond the prescribed limits.

1 Corinthians 10:13 promises:

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”

The way of escape, which is always available, is God’s grace. God is present to give us strengthening grace for every trial so that we do not drown in despair and discontentment. God controls the thermostat on all satanic temptation and turmoil. God will never allow the heat to become unbearable for our lives. God knows what temperature we can take.

Job 23:10

“But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.”

We must remember that all of the satanic temptation and turmoil that God allows us to face in life is designed to increase our faith in God. It should bring us to the place where we can rest in God and know that His sovereign way is always right. It should bring us to the place where we will develop our Christian life in a greater purifying way. We can know that we will be more seasoned in our Christian life as we go through testing, since it will cause us to become stronger in our faith, patience and many other Christian virtues. If all we have in life is “sunshine faith” or a faith that blesses God when everything is going our way, then we need to increase our faith in God. Then we need to learn to go through the fire so that our faith in God can be strengthened and deepen our desire to know God better.

I think Satan wanted to impress Job with the lie that God doesn’t love him any longer because of all these things that God allowed to happen to him. Satan likes the question, “If God is love, then why does He allow so much tragedy in the world and in your life?” The devil wants you to doubt God’s love for your life when tragic things take place in your life.

Someone has said:

“Satan wants you to let life dictate what you believe about God instead of allowing what you believe about God to control your view of life.”

Dear friend, God will always love you as His child in spite of the circumstance that He allows to come into your life. In fact, God does not have to prove His love to you. Do you know why? It’s because He has already proven His love to you by sending His own son into the world to die upon the cross. There is no greater display of love than this.

Romans 5:8

“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

The old devil wants to get your attention away from the cross. The believer must learn to keep their eyes focused on the love that was displayed at Calvary. The cross stands as the ultimate display of God’s love and will refute any devilish lie that says God does not love us. Because of the cross, God does not have to continually confirm His love to us. The devil seems to whisper in our ears that God does not love us in the event of a tragedy. But God has already proven His love at Calvary.

“Though Satan should buffet,  
though trials should come,  
Let this blest assurance control,  
That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate,  
And hath shed his own blood for my soul.”

God always loves us because He sent His Son to die in our place and grant eternal life to us (Romans 8:38-39). Furthermore, in spite of what the devil tries to sell us about God’s love, we can also realize that God does continually prove His love to us even in the event of tragedy. God always loves us in that He gives strength for the surmounting trials that we face in our lives and peace for the pressures that pound away at our lives. God even gives dying grace for our time of departure. God always loves us! God loves you! God is love (1 Jon 4:8).

“Praise Him praise Him all ye little children,  
God is love, God is love.”