

Snares of Satan

A Brief Overview of Satan

God, in His infinite wisdom and understanding, made Lucifer the wisest, most beautiful, and most exalted of the created beings. Lucifer had no reason to envy the higher position of Christ; he was the highest a created being could be. God declares, "I have set thee so" (Ezekiel 28:14), demonstrating this placement was an action to stop his sin before it happened. Yet Lucifer corrupted his God-given talents. Lucifer's own motivation brought him far lower than he had been; he became Satan. In his rebellion, he desires to overthrow God's law and government. The word, Satan, means "opponent" or adversary. His primary objective is to deceive men and lead them to transgress God's law. He claims possession of the Earth and is still trying to establish his own kingdom in opposition to the Most High. His underlying motive is self-love, one of the two antagonistic motives that govern all choices. The foundation of his kingdom is "ego," the Greek first-person singular pronoun meaning "I." He is constantly seeking to draw the focus of mankind to self.

A Contrast between Motives

Let's take a moment to contrast the two paths; love and selfishness. Motivated by selfishness, Satan started a rebellion in heaven:

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; *I will be like* the most High."—Isaiah 14:12-14.

Isaiah records the motivation of Lucifer. His language speaks of lifting himself up seven times (the underlined words) until he arrived at *equality* with God. But what is the result? He is cut down to the ground and brought down to hell; and, during the 1,000 years, he isn't even able to rest in the grave as all the wicked do. When the 1,000 years are completed, he is turned to ashes.

"Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries [represents corrupt spiritual administrations] by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick [refers to the bringing of self-seeking into spiritual office]; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them

that behold thee."—Ezekiel 28:18.

This is what selfishness does for those who are motivated by it; the inevitable end is ashes and destruction. Selfishness aims for the highest place, but is laid in the dust of death (the lowest place).

Let's take a look at love now. It appears that the following section of Scripture was intentionally written to contrast the one in Isaiah:

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be *equal with God*: But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."—Philippians 2:5-8.

Here we find Christ. Before He came to earth as a baby, He had the same form as God. He was not an angel nor a man but possessed the same kind of body as God. Unlike Lucifer, equality with God for Jesus was not a sin, He was an equal of God. Yet Christ humbled Himself three times to equality with sinful man:

"For He [God the Father in verses 19-20] hath made Him [Jesus] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."—2 Corinthians 5:21.

This is already way lower than where Lucifer started, but Jesus humbled himself, became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross (a total of seven times). Jesus willingly went into the grave to save mankind. The result was that God highly exalted Jesus and gave Him a name above every name, so that at this name every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus is *Kurios*, or supreme. (*Kurios* is interchangeably used with God in Matthew 4:7). All creation will admit the supremacy of Christ; they will confess that He is God.

Satan wanted to be exalted seven times higher. He told himself that he deserved equality with God and refused to accept Christ as supreme. Christ, who was equal with God, lowered Himself seven times to the death of the cross. Self forgetful love seeks to lift up others by placing itself lower and yet it comes out supreme. Selfishness, or self love, seeks to climb higher than others and yet ends in the obscurity of nonexistence.

"How few bear in mind that the tempter was once a covering cherub, a being whom God created

for His own name's glory. Satan fell from his high position through self-exaltation; he misused the high capabilities with which God had so richly endowed [provided with a particular quality] him. He fell for the same reason that thousands are falling today, because of an ambition to be first, an unwillingness to be under restraint. The Lord would teach man the lesson that, though united in church capacity, he is not saved until the seal of God is placed upon him."—*7 Bible Commentary*, 969.

Satan's Deceptive Strategies

Satan's policy of dominating everything and everyone is deception, and he has been working for thousands of years to achieve his goals. Ellen White describes him as a "mastermind" (*1911 Great Controversy, Introduction, p. x*) and an "expert in quoting Scripture" (*1911 Great Controversy, the end of chapter 32, p. 530*), perverting its teachings to sustain his delusions. One of his most successful strategies is working upon an unconverted mind to misconstrue [incorrectly interpret] Scripture. Often, the easiest way to disprove this deceptive tactic is to go to the very verse used and determine its context. In the Garden of Eden, the serpent said, "Yea, hath God said, 'Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden'" (Genesis 3:1) This was most certainly not what God had said, but it served the purpose of drawing Eve into an argument.

"Had Eve refrained from entering into argument with the tempter, she would have been safe; but she ventured [dared to do this risky action] to parley [talk] with him and fell a victim to his wiles. It is thus that many are still overcome. They doubt and argue concerning the requirements of God; and instead of obeying the divine commands, they accept human theories, which but disguise [give a false appearance] the devices of Satan."—*Great Controversy*, 531-532.

"The great deceiver has many agents ready to present any and every kind of error to ensnare souls—heresies prepared to suit the varied tastes and capacities of those whom he would ruin. It is his plan to bring into the church insincere, unregenerate elements that will encourage doubt and unbelief, and hinder all who desire to see the work of God advance and to advance with it. Many who have no real faith in God or in His Word assent [agree, approve] to some principles of truth and pass as Christians, and thus they are enabled to introduce their errors as Scriptural doctrines."—*Great Controversy*, 520.

Our only safeguard is found in a prayerful, humble study of the Bible, with the aid of the Holy Spirit. The Word of God alone will lead the earnest Truth seeker into safe paths. Argument should not be practiced by God's people; it is dangerous ground. Truth can appear as an error when a single word is

changed; do not accept what people say at face value without first carefully searching the Scriptures.

"Satan has ability to suggest doubts and to devise [plan, invent] objections to the pointed testimony that God sends, and many think it a virtue [a particularly good quality], a mark of intelligence in them, to be unbelieving and to question and quibble [argue over minor details]. Those who desire to doubt will have plenty of room. God does not propose to remove all occasion for unbelief. He gives evidence, which must be carefully investigated with a humble mind and a teachable spirit, and all should decide from the weight of evidence."—*3 Testimonies*, 255.

Accusation

Satan is known as the "accuser of the brethren." He is continually seeking to draw the eyes of mankind from Christ to others—inspiring them with envy, evil surmising, and jealousies. Imagining faults through evil surmising is not the only satanic habit, it is also satanic to comment upon other peoples faults:

"This spirit and habit of seeing others' faults and commenting upon them is satanic in its origin, and when persons have once been overcome on this point, Satan's magnifying glasses are before their eyes, to create mountains out of molehills."—*9 Letters and Manuscripts, Letter 17 (1894), par. 4.*

The work of Satan is not only accusation but also judging others by commenting upon their faults and drawing conclusions from them.

"I saw that the very spirit of perjury [the crime of willfully lying, especially under oath], that would turn truth into falsehood, good into evil, and innocence into crime, is now active. Satan exults over the condition of God's professed people. While many are neglecting their own souls, they eagerly watch for an opportunity to criticize and condemn others. All have defects of character, and it is not hard to find something that jealousy can interpret to their injury. 'Now,' say these self-constituted judges, 'we have facts. We will fasten upon them an accusation from which they cannot clear themselves.' They wait for a fitting opportunity and then produce their bundle of gossip and bring forth their tidbits.

"In their efforts to carry a point, persons who have naturally a strong imagination are in danger of deceiving themselves and deceiving others. They gather up unguarded expressions from another, not considering that words may be uttered hastily and hence may not reflect the real sentiments of the speaker. But those unpremeditated remarks, often so trifling as to be unworthy of notice, are viewed through Satan's magnifying glass, pondered, and repeated until molehills become mountains. Separated from

God, the surmisers [those who make guesses] of evil become the sport of temptation. They scarcely know the strength of their feelings or the effect of their words. While condemning the errors of others, they indulge far greater errors themselves. Consistency is a jewel.”—5 *Testimonies*, 94-95.

There are some folk whose imagination pictures evil in every action, but these are not the only accusers. Everyone has faults of character that are being purified; instead of edifying others with encouragement, many choose to bite and devour one another. The solution to accusation is consistency and clarification. If we love our brothers, we will not be sharing their faults with others.

“An hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour: but through knowledge shall the just be delivered.”—Proverbs 11:9.

“Satan well knows that all whom he can lead to neglect prayer and the searching of the Scriptures will be overcome by his attacks. Therefore he invents every possible device to engross [capture the attention] the mind. There has ever been a class professing godliness, who, instead of following on to know the truth, make it their religion to seek some fault of character or error of faith in those with whom they do not agree. Such are Satan’s right-hand helpers. Accusers of the brethren are not few, and they are always active when God is at work and His servants are rendering Him true homage. They will put a false coloring upon the words and acts of those who love and obey the truth. They will represent the most earnest, zealous, self-denying servants of Christ as deceived or deceivers. It is their work to misrepresent the motives of every true and noble deed, to circulate insinuations, and arouse suspicion in the minds of the inexperienced. In every conceivable manner they will seek to cause that which is pure and righteous to be regarded as foul [unfair, abusive] and deceptive.”—*Great Controversy*, 519.

The solution for accusation is to give people grace and pray for them. Encourage others. Many are about to faint under the weight of their trials; they are growing in Christ just like you and I. A word of encouragement will do what censure and accusation can never do—edify.

Distraction

Distraction is a masterpiece of deception. It draws attention to something, magnifying it as if it were of the greatest importance, but it silently conceals the real important issues until it is too late. Satan is clouding the waters, hiding his work, but the prophet of the Lord declares:

“The sins of Babylon will be laid open. The fearful results of enforcing the observances of the church by civil authority, the inroads of spiritualism, the stealthy but rapid progress of the papal

power—all will be unmasked. By these solemn warnings the people will be stirred. Thousands upon thousands will listen who have never heard words like these.”—*Great Controversy*, 606.

There are some who are distracted, making it their burden to draw the attention of the church and the world to trifling subjects. They combine their message with present truth; yet they bring their distractions to the forefront as if they were the matter of most importance. I recently heard someone say that the Third Angel’s Message is *primarily* about religious liberty. The Third Angel’s Message is *primarily* about worshiping God; so you don’t partake in the sins of Babylon, irrespective of what the government says.

“Satan invents unnumbered schemes to occupy our minds, that they may not dwell upon the very work with which we ought to be best acquainted. The archdeceiver hates the great truths that bring to view an atoning sacrifice and an all-powerful mediator. He knows that with him everything depends on his diverting minds from Jesus and His truth.”—*Great Controversy*, 488.

This explains why people have great knowledge about the mistakes and failures of the members of the church, and yet they know little about the Sanctuary message. Satan aims to keep people in darkness until Christ’s mediation ends. Now is the time for earnest soul searching, fervent prayer, and deep Bible study. His strategy is only to waste our time on other matters, whatever can occupy our minds until it is too late.

These can be important temporal matters, things that seem like righteous matters that pertain to securing self-safety and self-satisfaction, but they are not self-abasement or affliction of the soul experiences. Satan manufactures battles for God’s people to fight; he is a master at drawing them into battles that they do not need to fight. The solution to distraction is to determine your priorities. Satan has determined his—to waste your time or deceive you. What are your priorities?

Complaining

Satan well knows that God has good plans for His children. He seeks to inspire mankind with base ingratitude so they will complain about the position God has placed them in. A murmuring spirit is poisonous to the soul. The Bible tells us:

“Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.”—1 Corinthians 10:10.

It is a fearful thing to murmur against God. These people do not consider that the path which they are traveling is a rugged, self-denying, self-crucifying way. Soldiers of Christ must not expect everything to move on as smoothly as though they were traveling in the broad road. There is an enemy that will resist at

every opportunity, and we cannot let him interpose
4 between us and Christ.

“I am thankful that we need not be left a prey to Satan’s power. We need not be left to be driven this way and that. We need not be blinded by the delusions of Satan, but may have our eyes anointed so that we may see things as they really are. The children of God should not permit Satan to place himself between them and their God. If you permit him to do this, he will tell you that your troubles are the most grievous, the sorest troubles that any mortal ever bore. He will place his magnifying glasses before your eyes, and present everything to you in an exaggerated form to overwhelm you with discouragement. You should have your eyes anointed with the heavenly eye-salve. You should take the Word of God as the man of your counsel, and humble your doubting soul before God, and with contrition of heart say, ‘Here I lay my burden down. I cannot bear it. It is too heavy for me. I lay it down at the feet of my compassionate Redeemer.’”—*Review and Herald, February 11 (1890), par. 2.*

The solution to complaining is to crucify self. Do you think it is evil for you to walk the path of the King of kings, to suffer for Him who suffered for you?

“If the time seems long to wait for our Deliverer to come; if, bowed by affliction and worn with toil, we feel impatient for our commission [order from God to do certain actions] to close, and to receive an honorable release from the warfare, let us remember—and let the remembrance check every murmur—that God leaves us on earth to encounter storms and conflicts, to perfect Christian character, to become better acquainted with God our Father and Christ our elder brother, and to do work for the Master in winning many souls to Christ, that with glad heart we may hear the words, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant... enter thou into the joy of thy Lord [Matthew 25:23].’”—*The Review and Herald, October 25 (1881), par. 10.*

God often brings us to the beaches of the Red Sea, the Banks of the Jordan, even to want and necessity, to see how we will react. Many of us forget who has been leading us, and we allow Satan to interpose and magnify our problems. When the way seems closed off, consider the past providence. Has God been leading you? What evidences do you have? Strengthen your faith with past experience and wait for God to work. We will be often tested and tempted, but God is purifying us in the fiery trials. All who wait in faith and patience will have a testimony to the power of God who rained bread

from heaven, parted the Red Sea, and sent one angel to slay an army. Greater is He that is with us than he that is against us.

Counterfeits

For every fruit of the Spirit, Satan has a counterfeit, an imitation to deceive people. Here are some:

Self-love: Also known as selfishness, this is the foundation upon which Satan’s entire kingdom is built. The carnal heart is naturally selfish and cannot perform a single righteous deed. Even if God told mankind that all he had to do to save himself was to obey the law, mankind would be motivated by self-preservation, a form of the exact motive that caused Satan to be forced to leave heaven. Self-justification, self-preservation, self-exaltation, and anything that has to do with self will arise because of this principle. God does not call us to do what is best for self; self must die if we will live.

“God does not give us up because of our sins. We may make mistakes and grieve His Spirit, but when we repent and come to Him with contrite [sincere regret followed by change] hearts, He will not turn us away. There are hindrances to be removed. Wrong feelings have been cherished, and there have been pride, self-sufficiency, impatience, and murmurings. All these separate us from God. Sins must be confessed; there must be a deeper work of grace in the heart. Those who feel weak and discouraged may become strong men of God and do noble work for the Master. But they must work from a high standpoint; they must be influenced by no selfish motives.”—*Counsels for the Church, 47.*

Excitement: This counterfeit to joy is often sought by pleasure lovers. Amusement is closely related to this counterfeit and is a Greek word that literally means the absence of thought. Every form of amusement is exciting; otherwise, it is merely recreation, and recreation is lawful when not carried to excess.

“Many are constantly craving excitement and diversion [straying from the original course]. They are restless and dissatisfied when not absorbed in mirth [happiness and laughter], frivolity [amusing and rather silly instead of being serious and sensible], and pleasure-seeking. These persons may make a profession of religion, but they are deceiving their own souls. They do not possess the genuine article. Their life is not hid with Christ in God. They do not find in Jesus their joy and peace.”—*Signs of the Times, June 15 (1882), par. 7.*

More Food for the Little Flock —

Snarers of Satan

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Compromise: This counterfeit of peace is when truth is sacrificed by those who will not make a bold and unyielding stand for it. If peace and unity can be achieved only by the compromise of truth, then let there be difference and even war. Peace with God is hatred for the ways of the world. Today, it is seen as a morally excellent thing to accept the sins of others and not voice a word of warning. Peace has become justifying the wicked in their actions, but this is not true peace.

“Shortly before His crucifixion Christ had bequeathed [given] to His disciples a legacy of peace. ‘Peace I leave with you,’ He said, ‘My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.’ John 14:27. This peace is not the peace that comes through conformity to the world. Christ never purchased peace by compromise with evil. The peace that Christ left His disciples is internal rather than external and was ever to remain with His witnesses through strife and contention.”—*Acts of the Apostles, 84.*

Impatience: The counterfeit of patience is why wait when you can have it now? It is no surprise that the American economy is based upon this principle. The defining characteristic of God’s people is their patience, but patience is a practice that Satan is trying to extinguish with instant gratification. Those who have real impatience are unwilling to do work for God because it requires patient toil and effort. Instead, they enjoy the current pleasures of the world.

“Some are not willing to do self-denying work. They show real impatience when urged to take some responsibility. ‘What need is there,’ say they, of an increase of knowledge and experience? This explains it all. They feel that they are ‘rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing’ [Revelation 3:17], while heaven pronounces them poor, miserable, blind, and naked. To these the True Witness says: ‘I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see’ [Revelation 3:18] Your very self-compacency shows you to be in need of everything. [Self-compacency: the feeling you have when you

are satisfied with yourself and your accomplishments] You are spiritually sick and need Jesus as your physician.”—*5 Testimonies, 265.*

Eternal life is for those who, with patient continuance in well-doing, seek it, sparing no cost. They do not account the seasonal pleasures of sin worthy to be compared with the reward that shall be to the righteous after a scant few years.

Vice and Laziness: These are the counterfeits to usefulness, or moral excellence, listed in the fruits of the Spirit as goodness. God made mankind to labor; but if we are not employed in useful work for God, we will be employed in the wicked work of Satan.

“Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness [fullness] of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before Me: therefore I took them away as I saw good.”—Ezekiel 16:49-50.

Many overlook their sins; they fail to recognize that the famous sin of sodomy was merely the fruit of their lifestyle of pride, too much food, not enough work, and showing little or no mercy. Christians are quick to condemn the abomination while, at the same time, embracing the sins that led the people of Sodom to commit them.

Envy: This is a counterfeit of humility and the root of pride. Envy will destroy others to exalt self; no methods are off limits. Envy says, “If I am not first, I will ensure there are none left to take the position.”

“The envious [covetous, jealous toward another person] man shuts his eyes to the good qualities and noble deeds of others. He is always ready to disparage [belittle or speak negatively of] and misrepresent that which is excellent. Men often confess and forsake other faults, but there is little to be hoped for from the envious man. Since to envy a person is to admit that he is a superior, pride will not permit any concession [agreement, yielding]. If an attempt be made to convince the envious person of his sin, he becomes even more bitter against the object of his passion, and too often he remains incurable.”—*Counsels for the Church, 175-176.*

“The envious man diffuses [spreads] poison wherever he goes, alienating [to cause unfriendli-

ness] friends and stirring up hatred and rebellion against God and man. He seeks to be thought best and greatest, not by putting forth heroic, self-denying efforts to reach the goal of excellence himself, but by standing where he is and diminishing [to make smaller or less] the merit [credit based on excellence of quality] due to the efforts of others.”—*Counsels for the Church*, 176.

Presumption: This is the most effective counterfeit of faith, more effective than both doubt and unbelief. Presumption claims the promises of God without meeting the conditions. The majority of Christendom is engaged in presumption to some degree.

“The sin of presumption [the act of accepting something as true without evidence] lies close beside the virtue [moral excellence guiding behavior] of perfect faith and confidence in God. Satan flattered himself that he could take advantage of the humanity of Christ to urge Him over the line of trust to presumption. Upon this point many souls are wrecked. Satan tried to deceive Christ through flattery. He admitted that Christ was right in the wilderness in His faith and confidence that God was His Father, under the most trying circumstances. He then urged Christ to give him one more proof of His entire dependence upon God, one more evidence of His faith that He was the Son of God, by casting Himself from the Temple. He told Christ that if He was indeed the Son of God He had nothing to fear; for angels were at hand to uphold Him. Satan gave evidence that he understood the Scriptures by the use he made of them.”—*1 Selected Messages*, 282.

Pride: This counterfeit of humility, pride, is able to disguise itself in the garb of humility. Pride alters its appearance to hide its identity. Additionally, it is extremely good at clothing humility in its own appearance. True humility is found in submission to ALL the commands and requirements of God. It also does not argue with, or strive against, others.

“Let the sin of pride be put away, let all superfluities [something unnecessary or not needed] of dress be overcome, and repentance toward God be exercised for the highhanded robbery toward Him which has withheld money which should flow into the treasury to sustain the work of God in its mission fields. Let the work of reformation, of true conversion, be set before, and urged upon, the people. Let our works, our deportment, correspond with the work for this time, that we may say, ‘Follow me as I follow Christ.’ Let us humble our souls before God by humiliation, fasting and prayer, repentance of sin and putting it away.”—*2 Selected Messages*, 379.

Intemperance: The counterfeit of self-control will be the destruction of many a Christian.

“Excessive indulgence in eating, drinking, sleeping, or seeing is sin. The harmonious healthy action of all the powers of body and mind results in happiness; and the more elevated and refined the powers, the more pure and unalloyed [not mixed

with anything not pure] the happiness.”—*4 Testimonies*, 417.

Many people destroy their bodies through intemperance; yet eating, drinking, and putting on apparel give them a happiness that only lasts a short time. True happiness comes from the balance that self-control gives.

Corruption

Another effort Satan makes is to corrupt the faith of God’s people. Corruption rapidly spreads; and one of his most effective corruptions arises from human speculation and assumption.

“By the cry, Liberality, men are blinded to the devices [tools for different purposes, including tricks] of their adversary, while he is all the time working steadily for the accomplishment of his object. As he succeeds in supplanting the Bible by human speculations, the law of God is set aside and the churches are under the bondage of sin while they claim to be free.”—*Great Controversy*, 522.

Satan works upon the hearts of men to make the truth of overcoming sin unpopular. He leads mankind to hate the sinner by pitying sin. He tries to muffle or eliminate the sound of rebuke and warning. Liberality lessens the exceeding sinfulness of sin, opening the gates to all manner of corruption. Men speculate and assume, arriving at conclusions, having never opened the Bible to see what God says.

“The position that it is of no consequence what men believe is one of Satan’s most successful deceptions. He knows that the truth, received in the love of it, sanctifies the soul of the receiver; therefore he is constantly seeking to substitute false theories, fables, another gospel. From the beginning the servants of God have contended against false teachers, not merely as vicious [deliberately cruel or violently aggressive] men, but as inculcators [persons who instill something by forceful or insistent repetition] of falsehoods that were fatal to the soul. Elijah, Jeremiah, and Paul firmly and fearlessly opposed those who were turning men from the Word of God. That liberality which regards a correct religious faith as unimportant found no favor with these holy defenders of the truth.”—*Great Controversy*, 520.

Following Feeling and Worldly Example

Satan seeks to convince us to govern our lives by feeling and impulse, not reason and judgment. Certainly God is not beyond speaking to us through impressions, but these are not above the clear instructions in the Bible and the writings of our prophet. The book, *Charmed by Darkness* by Roger Morneau, detailed the plan Satan used to overcome Solomon. First, he got him to trust his own wisdom; then he made him feel that it was in the best interest of Israel to make alliances, for a common purpose,

with the foreign nations. This was accomplished by marriage, and Solomon's heathen wives led him into idolatry.

“Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish [bizarre, odd, peculiar] women cause to sin.”—Nehemiah 13:26.

“The youth trust altogether too much to impulse [a sudden strong wish or need to do something, without stopping to think about the results]. They should not give themselves away too easily, nor be captivated [charmed] too readily by the winning exterior of the lover. Courtship as carried on in this age is a scheme of deception and hypocrisy, with which the enemy of souls has far more to do than the Lord. [Scheme: a clever plan, especially to do something that is bad or illegal, and shows disapproval] Good common sense is needed here if anywhere; but the fact is, it has little to do in the matter.”—*Counsels for the Church*, 117.2.

Satan works most powerfully upon the youth, to draw them into relationships that will lead to their destruction. Through infatuation, many have been led to make shipwreck of faith. We are told, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers” (2 Corinthians 6:14). The yoking is not marriage alone; it encompasses all of life's joint efforts.

“My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk [sneak] privily [secretly] for the innocent without cause: Let us swallow them up alive as the grave; and whole, as those that go down into the pit: We shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil: Cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse.”—Proverbs 1:10-14.

Do not cast your part in with the wicked, making a joint effort for any form of gain; do not combine your money with the wicked to make gain. “Where your treasure is there will your heart be also” (Luke 12:34). If Satan has a grip on your money, he has a grip on your heart. The Bible tells us:

“A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent.”—Proverbs 28:20.

The wisdom of the world says to make haste to be rich by having one purse; Crypto or the stock market are excellent examples of this. The majority of money made in these investments (especially Crypto) comes from the pockets of the poor, who also cast their pennies into the “one purse.” These are not safe places to invest money. This is exactly what it looks like to bury the talent of money in the world. To lock it up in a place where we can behold it with our eyes but not touch it with our hands, supporting not the work of God but the work of

man. Satan works upon the older people to provide for their own futures in a way that violates biblical wisdom and command. Free yourself from this sin; study to find out just what God expects of you and how you can please Him. Many of our people are guilty of robbing the poor to sustain their futures, and they do not know that the displeasure of God is upon them.

“There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”—Proverbs 16:25.

There is a class of people who follow their own ways, claiming they are on a personal journey with God while walking contrary to His will. For all their profession, these people are not on a personal journey with the God of heaven; if they were, they would obey Him.

Many Christians strongly look to the feelings in their hearts rather than consider the practical reasons for a decision they are making. But God tells us:

“Remember Lot's wife.”—Luke 17:32.

“But one of the fugitives [those running to avoid persecution or punishment from authorities] ventured to cast a look backward to the doomed city, and she became a monument of God's judgment.... While her body was upon the plain, her heart clung to Sodom, and she perished with it. She rebelled against God because His judgments involved her possessions and her children in the ruin. Although so greatly favored in being called out from the wicked city, she felt that she was severely dealt with, because the wealth that it had taken years to accumulate must be left to destruction. Instead of thankfully accepting deliverance, she presumptuously looked back to desire the life of those who had rejected the divine warning. Her sin showed her to be unworthy of life, for the preservation of which she felt so little gratitude.... There are Christians who say, ‘I do not care to be saved unless my companion and children are saved with me.’ They feel that heaven would not be heaven to them without the presence of those who are so dear. But have those who cherish this feeling a right conception of their own relation to God, in view of His great goodness and mercy toward them? Have they forgotten that they are bound by the strongest ties of love and honor and loyalty to the service of their Creator and Redeemer? The invitations of mercy are addressed to all; and because our friends reject the Saviour's pleading love, shall we also turn away? The redemption of the soul is precious. Christ has paid an infinite price for our salvation, and no one who appreciates the value of this great sacrifice or the worth of the soul will despise God's offered mercy because others choose to do so. The very fact that others are ignoring His just claims should arouse us to greater diligence, that we may honor God ourselves, and lead all whom we can influence, to accept His love.”—*Patriarchs and*

Cast Doubt on the Character of God

Doubt is one of the tools Satan uses, but many people fail to discern doubt because it is clever, indirect, and disguised in purpose. Satan's goal is to get people to doubt that God is really who He says He is. Every day there are attacks on the character of God that are done in an open, obvious way, and these by Christians. Such attacks are the most successful at hardening people who are not Christians or oppose Christianity.

Satan attacks God's faithfulness in two ways: *first*, he gets people to doubt their forgiveness, and *second*, he gets them to doubt that they can overcome their temptations. The Bible plainly declares:

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."—1 John 1:9.

"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."—1 Corinthians 10:13.

When either of these statements is heard or impressed upon your heart, know that Satan is attacking God.

Other attacks are directed toward the justice of God. The majority of Christendom believes that God burns mankind for all eternity in hell for a few years' worth of sin. Many hate and scorn God because of the clear injustice of this sentence. The wages of sin is death, not eternal torture. Another group of people teach that God requires acts of voluntary self-punishment expressing repentance, also called penance, for His justice to be satisfied; but the Bible plainly teaches that God is just when He forgives those who have confessed their sins in 1 John 1:9. God is not unrighteous to require more of mankind than He has given in the person of Jesus Christ.

God is Truth; His Word is Truth. The Bible declares that God "cannot lie" (see Titus 1:2). The words of God have creative power and are not merely descriptive like ours. It is impossible for a Being that speaks things into existence to lie. Satan attacks God by teaching that truth is not absolute; that it is relative—changeable. He seeks to make God irrelevant and even attempts to blot God from the human mind through these teachings. Even children can be led to see the foolishness in such a line of reasoning. Nevertheless, he accomplishes his purpose by sowing

seeds of doubt and raising a generation of skeptics who think God is like them. Let God be true, but every man a liar.

Discourage

Satan is always seeking to inspire God's people with discouragement. We will all have times of darkness in our lives. These times of darkness often come because we turn our eyes from the light of the knowledge of the glory of God to self.

"Do not listen to Satan's lies, but recount God's promises. Gather the roses and the lilies and the pinks. Talk of the promises of God. Talk faith. Trust in God, for He is your only hope. He is my only hope. I have tremendous battles with Satan's temptations to discouragements, but I will not yield an inch. I will not give Satan an advantage over my body or my mind."—*Daughters of God*, 146.2.

"If you look to yourself, you will see only weakness. There is no Saviour there. You will find Jesus away from yourself. You must look and live; [look] to Him who became sin for us, that we might be cleansed from sin and receive of Christ's righteousness."—*Daughters of God*, 146.

In this sinful world, bad things will happen to us; when they do, we should remember the story of Job. Look to those things that are not seen; we wrestle not against flesh and blood.

"Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."—James 5:11.

Conclusion

This is not a comprehensive list of the deceptions of Satan; he has many more in his toolbox. These are just some of the less known and commonly practiced tactics. But we are not ignorant of his devices. Buy the Truth and sell it not. Satan, in every deceitful form, will try to convince you to sell it for vanity.

For a finished work



Jonathan Taylor

Wisdom is justified of all her children. -Luke 7:35

More Food for the Little Flock —