



TEEN TREE OF LIFE

SATAN'S SUBTLE STRATEGIES

Part 4

June 28, 2020

Before you begin, ask yourself a very important question: Do you believe that Jesus Christ died on The Cross for all of your sins? If you answered yes, you will need to be sure that you are filled with The Holy Spirit. How do you do this? You name your sins to God The Father in His Son's Name. This is called Rebound. As a Christian, you must rebound any time you sin. This is taught in 1 JOH 1:9: *If we confess [name] our sins [directly to God], He [God] is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* Now, if you have never believed that Jesus Christ died on The Cross for all of your sins, all you have to do is say to yourself that you believe in Him and you are saved! The Bible verse which teaches us this is ACTS 16:31: *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved."*

This is the point in our study of Satan's Subtle Strategies which is, for most of you reading this, the most important part. That's because most of you believe in Jesus Christ as your Personal Savior. You've already said to yourself that you believe in Him and that's all you have to do to be saved. (Just like it says in **ACTS 16:31: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved."**)

But if you're reading this and you haven't personally believed in Jesus Christ, you should know this: **He who believes in the Son has eternal life... (JOH 3:36)** God requires nothing except BELIEF and in return, He gives you Eternal Life. That equates to spending eternity in Heaven, a place that's better than anything we have the ability to imagine. The apostle John wrote this about Heaven: **'He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death.' And there will be no more sadness. There will be no more crying or pain. Things are no longer the way they used to be.** (REV 21:4 New International Reader's Version) And the GREATEST thing of all about Heaven is that you will see Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ Who made it possible for you to be there!

If you don't believe, you'll remain outside of God's family and never have eternal life. You'll never have a life of meaning, purpose and destiny and you will spend eternity in the lake of fire, which originally was prepared for the devil and his angels. Imagine spending eternity in a place which Our Lord describes as **"the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels"** in **MAT 25:41**???. The truth of who

Satan is and what his plan is and what Hell is like should provide anyone with great motivation to fulfill and to live in that God's Plan.

As Christians, Satan has specific strategies against us. His goal with these strategies is to make us non-effective in serving God. As we've learned, Christian service is a result of fulfilling God's Plan. But it's not how you fulfill God's Plan. What motivates you, and your mental attitude, are the real issues. Christian service should always come out of spiritual growth. You must be motivated by the goodness produced through learning and applying Bible doctrine.

When it comes to Satan working to distract us from God, Christians are different than unbelievers because the bondage of sin has been broken by Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: **Because of what Christ Jesus has done, you are free. You are now controlled by the law of the Holy Spirit who gives you life. The law of the Spirit frees you from the law of sin that brings death. (ROM 8:2 New International Reader's Version)** But Satan's strategies against us are also similar to those of unbelievers because he is at work, in our lives, trying to lead us into believing that we are still in bondage to sin. He wants us to obey sin. In other words, he wants us to give in to the temptation to sin. But we have to ignore the temptation. Look at **ROMANS 6:11-14 The Message Bible: Could it be any clearer? Our old way of life was nailed to the cross with Christ, a decisive end to that sin-miserable life—no longer at sin's every beck and call! What we believe is this: If we get included in Christ's sin-conquering death, we also get included in his life-saving resurrection. We know that when Jesus was raised from the dead it was a signal of the end of death-as-the-end. Never again will death have the last word. When Jesus died, he took sin down with him, but alive he brings God down to us. From now on, think of it this way: Sin speaks a dead language that means nothing to you; God speaks your mother tongue, and you hang on every word. You are dead to sin and alive to God. That's what Jesus did. That means you must not give sin a vote in the way you conduct your lives. Don't give it the time of day. Don't even run little errands that are connected with that old way of life. Throw yourselves wholeheartedly and full-time—remember, you've been raised from the dead!—into God's way of doing things. Sin can't tell you how to live. After all, you're not living under that old tyranny any longer. You're living in the freedom of God**

Look again at Paul's words and remember them: **"Sin can't tell you how to live"!!!** But Satan is going to keep trying to make this happen in your life! He has three basic strategies to tempt us to sin. It's the same basic three that he uses for non-Christians. These three basic devices are found in **1 JOH 2:16**. They are: The Lust of the Flesh, The Lust of the Eyes, and The Boastful Pride of Life. Satan used these against Eve in the Garden of Eden and won and he used them to tempt Our Lord and Savior Himself in and lost.

These three basic strategies are found in **1 JOH 2:16 (New International Reader's Version): Here is what people who belong to this world do. They try to satisfy what their sinful desires want to do. They long for what their sinful eyes look at. They take pride in what they have and what they do. All of this comes from the world. None of it comes from the Father.** In this verse, the apostle John breaks down the three basic devices like this: lust of the flesh; lust of the eyes; and boastful pride or arrogance.

“Sinful desires” (or lusts of the flesh) of the flesh, refer to what the body desires. This generally means anything craved excessively or inappropriately, from food to sexual impurity. In this context, it's not about normal or necessary physical desires.

Longing for what your **“sinful eyes look at”** (or lusts of the eyes) refers not only to those things we literally see, but also those we long for in our minds or put our "mental" eyes on. This would include expensive clothes, jewelry, nice cars, magnificent homes, etc. When the apostle John writes **“They take pride in what they have and what they do”** – he's referring to having sinful desires which bring attention to yourself. This is boastful pride or arrogance and refers to the habit of bragging about yourself. It includes excessively going after honors and titles, boasting about ancestry, family connections and things like that.

Satan actually used these three basic strategies against the woman in the Garden of Eden and won. First let's look at **GEN 3:6 (New International Reader's Version): *The woman saw that the tree's fruit was good to eat and pleasing to look at. She also saw that it would make a person wise. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her. And he ate it.***

The woman had looked at that tree and found it **“pleasing to look at”**. When she chose to eat from it, she became guilty of longing for what her **“sinful eyes look at”**. This is the lust of the eyes. Satan uses this trap to try to get people to entertain fantasies in their minds. Unfortunately, those fantasies often turn into reality, like it did with the woman. She also saw that the tree **“was good to eat”**. This is the lust of the flesh or **“sinful desires”**. Satan wants us to gratify our sinful desires immediately, whatever they might be — food, sleep, sex, pleasure, possessions, etc. The woman fell for this strategy when she ate from the tree.

Now Satan had already laid the ground work for using these subtle strategies with the woman in **GEN 3:5 (New International Reader's Version): *“God knows that when you eat fruit from that tree, you will know things you have never known before. Like God, you will be able to tell the difference between good and evil.”*** So when Satan said **“you will know things you have never known before”** – he got her to focus on the fact that by eating it, she would be like God. This was Satan's sin in Eternity Past!! He used his own experience with lust on her. And she fell for it because she, too, wanted to be like God, which she thought she would be, if she ate it. And think of how proud that would make her!

Satan wants us to desire to be exalted and to develop an attitude of arrogance. Like the scripture says, he wants us to take pride in what we have and what we do! The woman had a choice to make — she could believe God's Word or Satan's word. Tragically, she chose to believe Satan, the father of lies, rather than the One who is Truth.

{to be continued}