



TEEN TREE OF LIFE SATAN'S SUBTLE STRATEGIES

Part 8

July 26, 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."*

We're getting close to the end of our study of the specific strategies Satan uses to entice us to sin. Over the last weeks, we've learned that Satan is very aware of the ways of the world. He knows just what appeals to people and he uses this knowledge to tailor temptations to our individual weaknesses. For Satan to come among God's people as a roaring lion would not have worked; but he comes to us as an angel of light with pleasant, flattering words and a smile on his face. And this makes it very difficult for believers not to be deceived. In every strategy we've looked at, we can see that Satan presses mercilessly toward his one goal, which is to lead people into destruction.

8. "The Christian life is too hard." Think about this one for a moment. Satan wants us to think that being a Christian is too much work so we'll give up and go to his side!! Have you ever felt that pull? Maybe you'd rather be going to the beach or hanging out with your friends, rather than going to study God's Word. Maybe you'd rather sleep late before getting up to go to school, so you don't take the time to praise or pray to God. Maybe you see your friends who aren't living the Christian way of life and it looks like it's easier just to let go of your relationship with God. Please don't let that happen. Remember, if you're not with God – you're with Satan!

As we've learned, as Christians, we're in the heat of battle which Paul described like this: ***Our fight is not against human beings. It is against the rulers, the authorities and the powers of this dark world. It is against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly world. (EPH 6:12 New International Reader's Version)*** And in this battle, Christians who are staying in God's Plan are Satan's targets. If you let go of God and His Plan for your

life, you let Satan win. You join his side. And worst of all, you insult God The Father, God The Son and God The Holy Spirit!

Satan's going to keep trying to get you to give up on your Christian walk. He's going to get you to the point at which you think it's too hard to stay disciplined and keep up your studies of God's Word. He's going to make you think that application of Bible doctrine is too hard to do or that it won't work when you need it. He's going to make you weary and deceive you into thinking that your devotion to God is a waste of time. The more you mature as a believer, the harder he'll try. It happened with Asaph who wrote: ***I've been stupid to play by the rules; what has it gotten me? A long run of bad luck, that's what—a slap in the face every time I walk out the door. PSA 73:13-14 (The Message Bible)*** For him, there didn't seem to be much reward for his hard work to stay in God's Plan for his life. But he persevered and so should we!

Now like Asaph, we never know if the struggles we face are a result of God's Discipline or of His Testing. So, what we have to do is keep our faith in Him strong and trust what He's doing. With Asaph it was a loss of perspective. The simple answer to staying strong against this particular Satanic strategy, is to live with eternity in view and not just your current situation. Use Asaph as an example to follow and don't be pulled off course during the hard times or even the successes in your life – keep focusing on God. When you're being tempted by Satan, remember the apostle Paul's advice: ***Think about things that are in heaven. Don't think about things that are only on earth. (COL 3:2 New International Reader's Version)*** And never forget that God is in charge and in control and that the stronger we become as Christians, the more Satan's going to try to get us from growing more and staying with God!

The writer of **HEB 12:4-11 (The Message Bible)** gives the perfect advice for those times when it seems that the Christian life is too hard: ***In this all-out match against sin, others have suffered far worse than you, to say nothing of what Jesus went through—all that bloodshed! So don't feel sorry for yourselves. Or have you forgotten how good parents treat children, and that God regards you as his children? My dear child, don't shrug off God's discipline, but don't be crushed by it either. It's the child he loves that he disciplines; the child he embraces, he also corrects. God is educating you; that's why you must never drop out. He's treating you as dear children. This trouble you're in isn't punishment; it's training, the normal experience of children. Only irresponsible parents leave children to fend for themselves. Would you prefer an irresponsible God? We respect our own parents for training and not spoiling us, so why not embrace God's training so we can truly live? While we were children, our parents did what seemed best to them. But God is doing what is best for us, training us to live God's holy best. At the time, discipline isn't much fun. It always feels like it's going against the grain. Later, of course, it pays off handsomely, for it's the well-trained who find themselves mature in their relationship with God.*** The idea in this verse is that the Christian life is not hard, because we're not alone in our struggles and we must remember to stand firm in our faith and not give in to Satan's subtle strategies.

9. "Casting doubts on the truthfulness of God's Word." Satan will also challenge you to question God's Word. He'll use philosophy; what is proclaimed as science; religious books; cults; liberalism; and the experience other people share. He may even

use your own experiences. These challenges can be direct like when Satan contradicted what God said to the woman in **GEN 3:4**: **"You surely will not die!** Or it could be more subtle questioning and statements to lead you only slightly astray. Did God create the world in six days or is that referring to a series of ages? Was Jonah really swallowed by a big fish or is that just a whale of a story? Wasn't Daniel really written in the second century B.C.? Wasn't the gospel of Matthew written based on Mark's account? None of these seem crucial in themselves because you can still be saved, even if your understanding of these issues is wrong. But each undermines the validity and therefore the authority of the Bible. And that is a slippery slope!

It's amazing how many people are willing to gamble their eternal destiny on their own supposed sources of authority. What is your basis for knowledge and truth? The Bible claims to be true and from God. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ said in **JOH 17:17**: **Use the truth to make them holy. Your word is truth.** Do you believe Him?

In **2 TIM 3:16 (New International Reader's Version)**, Paul wrote that: **God has breathed life into all Scripture. It is useful for teaching us what is true. It is useful for correcting our mistakes. It is useful for making our lives whole again. It is useful for training us to do what is right.** Do you believe Paul? Do you believe God The Holy Spirit inspired the men who wrote the Bible?

In **2 PET 1:19-21 (The Message Bible)** the apostle Peter wrote: **We couldn't be more sure of what we saw and heard—God's glory, God's voice. The prophetic Word was confirmed to us. You'll do well to keep focusing on it. It's the one light you have in a dark time as you wait for daybreak and the rising of the Morning Star in your hearts. The main thing to keep in mind here is that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of private opinion. And why? Because it's not something concocted in the human heart. Prophecy resulted when the Holy Spirit prompted men and women to speak God's Word.** AMEN!!!!

Do you know how else you can stand up to Satan's casting doubt on God's Word? Be an honest truth seeker. Challenge the competing sources of authority to stand up to the same scrutiny they are applying to the Bible. The Bible will win every time for those honestly seeking the truth!!

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