

Imagination

Steps To Understanding Satan's Wiles

John O. Reid (1930-2016)

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About thirty five years ago I attended the funeral of a man that had worked in one of the company's I used to call on. His name was Eddie, and he was a Mormon. He drank to excess, chased the women and stole petty cash from the company he worked for, but he was a likeable rogue.

I had never attended a Mormon funeral before, and I was interested to hear what the minister had to say. He said, "You know, Eddie was a good man. Do you know how I know that?" I said, "Boy I do not know how you know that." My ears perked up and I just wanted to see how he justified this likeable rogue.

He said, "Because, when God finished His creation, He said it is very good." I know that was true, but that was not correct. That was from Genesis 1:31. I knew the answer was wrong, but it took me a while to reason it out. Indeed the creation was perfect, and man was perfect at that time, and very good. But, it was shortly after that when Satan came on the scene, and performed that wicked magic that he does on the whole human race.

This is the being that God has caused, and used, to test and to try us for thousands of years. That minister just did not understand this. This afternoon, I would like us to consider this being, his hate for us, and as much as possible, what we are up against. Finally, how we are to overcome him. We do not have to be scared of him, but we certainly do have to be aware.

Ever since Satan's title was changed from "Light bringer" to "Satan", other descriptive titles were given to him. I am going to read those to you, the "Devil", the Dragon, the Evil One, the angel of the bottomless pit, the prince of this world, the prince of the power of the air, Apollyon, Abaddon, Belial, and Beelzebub.

Since that time, he has been out to destroy all that God stands for, and especially the people that will eventually have what he, and his demon cohorts, will never have—membership into the family of God. To help us to see what we face, Jesus Christ (John 8:44) calls Satan a murderer from the beginning, one that does not abide or live in truth. When he speaks a lie it reflects his own nature, because he is a liar, and the father of them.

His other titles (if you can picture any more coming on this being) are: the

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Slanderer—the accuser of the brethren, the Opposer, the Adversary, prince of the fallen angels, the Destroyer. And the synonym for Dragon (that gives me the chills) is "the sharp-seeing one"—where can he find a chink in your character?—or the "one set against all," and finally, "the worthless one".

This, brethren, is the adversary that we, and the world, face. The Apostle Paul was fully aware of this danger, and he warns us of it in Ephesians 6:10-13. In the previous verses in Ephesians 6, he talks about children obeying their parents and then down further he says, "*fathers do not provoke your children.*"

He knew that he had to give the people serious warning about overcoming their human nature and "the sharp-eyed one", therefore he concludes the first part of the warning about putting on the armor of God. He tells us to put on the truth of God, the breastplate of righteousness and the gospel of peace and of faith; wherewith we will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

We are to take on the helmet of salvation, the sword of the spirit (which is the word of God) and praying always for perseverance and for the supplication for all the saints and for the ministry. Why does he give this? That we might stand against the wiles of the devil. Let us read this:

Ephesians 6:10-13 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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. Therefore, take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day and, having done all, to stand.

Exactly what are the wiles of the devil? This is what we have to understand, if we are going to resist Satan. The word wiles means "that which is traced out with a method." It is not just a simple frontal assault. That which is well laid out in art, skill and cunning. We have to realize that Satan is truly crafty.

Strong's #3180 [methodeia] means "to work by method"—the following, or pursuing of an orderly and technical procedure in the handling of a subject. As it applies in the New Testament, connected with evil doing, "a device, an artifice, an art, an artificial method of craft and wile." In other words, cunning devices attempted to delude us and to destroy us. He, and his demons, work at it in systematic, steady fashion, never letting down of

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their own choice. They will never quit. Satan and his demons move toward us covertly, they can approach us in the dark where they cannot be readily seen.

He employs cunning, rather than power, to try and slowly slip us out of the way here. He seeks to delude and betray, rather than to destroy by force. To top it all off, he is not visible to us as a physical enemy would be. Thus, we must consider him, and his demon cohorts, as having a continual ambush for us.

Just what are we up against? Well, this is my mathematical area. No one really knows how many demons that Satan has, but we might gain a close idea by considering what it says in Daniel 7:9-10.

Daniel 7:9-10 I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days sat down, whose garment was white as snow and the hair of His head like the pure wool. His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him. Thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.

We take ten thousand times ten thousand and it comes out at roughly one hundred million or so, that stood before Him.

Revelation 12:3-4 And there appeared another wonder in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew a third part of the stars of heaven, and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

If there were one hundred million angels standing before the throne of God, and Satan pulled one third of them away, then roughly he must have about 50 million angels which are now demons. In a world with five billion, that is roughly one demon to every one hundred and fifty people. But in the church perhaps with forty thousand still trying to do their best to obey God that is about 825 per church member, man, woman and child. This is the force that is out there to try and work us over and do the best it can to destroy us. Now that we have a rough idea of the enemy that faces us, we will look at the tactics that he employs.

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Ephesians 2:1-3 And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins, wherein in times past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. Among these also we all in times past had our manner of living in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Chapter two shows the greatness of power that God has toward His people and it also shows the power and the major method that Satan uses to get to us and to affect mankind. God tell us that He has quickened us, and made us alive to live before Him, and that simply states the whole plan of God. God the Father calls us through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and we are made acceptable to the Father in spite of all of Satan's demons in power.

Prior to that time, we did not have any hope of being accepted by God, we were dead spiritually and about as carnal as Paddy's pig. Like some of our neighbors, we did not want to open our bibles for fear that perhaps we would find something in there that God wanted us to do, and we did not want to do it. That is exactly how we were. As it says in Ephesians, we walked and lived according to the way of the world, to the way we were raised, in whatever area of the country with its prejudices, fears, superstitions, and its angers. What is being stressed here is that all of mankind is then living in sin.

How was this accomplished? How did Satan cover all of this and manage to get it done? This was accomplished because he is the prince of the power of air. The word prince, or Satan in this case, means "one in first authority". I do not think we realize that he really is in charge of the world that we live in.

John 14:30 Hereafter I will not talk much with you, for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me.

Jesus Christ fully acknowledged Satan as the ruler of this world. We have to resist this world. The commentators have sort of a cute application here. Because he is referred to as the prince of the power of the air, they assume that his dominion is in the air and that he, and his demons, are restricted to just the airspace or atmosphere.

They think his control is of the air, storms, rain and things like this. Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong understood completely that the air was how Satan broadcasts to mankind.

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Because of his exposure to radio and television, he understood the concept that thoughts can be transmitted through the airwaves. He understood how Satan affected mankind. Satan simply broadcasts his thoughts and images into our mind. Many times we do not take Satan seriously enough.

I Peter 5:8-10 Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil walketh about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren who are in the world. But after ye have suffered a while, may the God of all grace, who hath called us into His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you.

God will put you through the trial and the testing, and in the end He will bring you through it and complete you. But if we neglect what we should be doing, by staying close to God, we become weak and allow "the sharp-eyed one" to influence our thoughts and attitudes. This makes us more vulnerable in God's church to be picked off as a straggler, as we have seen happen to so many. The warning is that we are to be on guard, and to watch in the sense that we should be circumspect as one who is in danger. Not that we have to run around looking over our shoulder all of the time, but religiously speaking, we have to be on guard to Satan's schemes at all times.

It is something like walking through a minefield, in a sense; you have to be careful where to put your feet. In this case, where you put your mind and your thoughts. We see in Matthew 4:1-10 where Jesus is tempted by Satan. This is a very simple question, but I think we all have to understand the answer. Why did Satan tempt Jesus? The simple answer is, to separate Him from His Father. Why does Satan tempt us?

For the same reason, to separate us from the Father. Now we tend to think that Jesus was being tempted for a short time by Satan, but in Luke's account we see that He was tempted for a full forty days. That pressure on Him was steady and consistent. We tend to think that He just had three temptations, but He was tempted over and over again in different orders. Each one of the temptations was repeated over and over trying to break Him.

Matthew 4:1-5 Then was Jesus led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He afterward hungered. And when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." But He answered and said, "It is written: Man shall not live by bread alone, but by

every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Now Jesus Christ was no doubt very hungry, and thus the first area was in sustaining His life, coupled with a possible pride in His ability as the Son of God. Because Satan said "**IF**" you be the Son of God, the first part of the temptation was to have Him prove that He was God's Son. In telling Him to command the stones to be bread, Satan was tempting Him to break His fast by subtly saying, "if indeed you really have the power, prove it to me."

This was the thought that Satan was putting in His mind, the subversion that he was putting in there. Prove it and satisfy your hunger—an image of gratifying His hunger and taking the pressure of fasting away was presented to Jesus, along with a chance to display His power as the Son of God. Jesus comes back with this response, "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word of God."

In Matthew 4:6-7, Satan tempts Jesus to prove who He is by casting Himself off the pinnacle of the temple. Satan's purpose was to take Christ's life if possible. Again, Satan presents the image or thought to Jesus that could cause Him to want to react in the way that shows Satan that He was truly the Son of God. Satan now quotes scripture incorrectly.

Matthew 4:5-7 Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, and set Him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto Him, "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down. For it is written: "He shall give His angels charge concerning thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone."

The correct translation would be "For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you and keep you in all your ways,'" **not** Satan's ways. Satan here is subtly trying to get Jesus to put His Father to the test, again tempting God. Jesus is so wise and so secure, and so close to His Father, He does not fall for it. Again, Jesus understands that to obey Satan, in any manner, is to cease to obey His Father. Thus, He answers, "You shall not tempt the Lord your God."

Then in verses 8 and 10 Satan offers the *pièce de résistance*. Satan now plants the ultimate image in His mind. Rather than suffering, and having to wait all those years, **you can have it all right now**. See all those people down there that you can help—see the changes that you could make—you could bring peace, harmony, and bring suffering to

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an end. All you have to do is just worship me. If you will do that, it can all be yours right now. Jesus again responds from God's word. He said, "You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve" and Jesus commanded Satan to leave.

Jesus understands something about Satan that we all need to realize, and that is, that Satan is a liar, and the father of lies. Not that Jesus would ever worship Satan, but even here He knew that as a liar he could change his mind the moment that Jesus worshipped him. You cannot trust Satan no matter how glorious he makes things look. Satan never plays fair.

Now, brethren, we have to understand that no matter what image or thoughts Satan offers us, no matter how good it looks, no matter what pleasure it holds for us, it is always a lie in the long run, and it is always wrong for us. No matter how good it appears, no matter how enticing the thought, pain, suffering and disaster lurk beneath it. We are going to see a specific example of this where the reality finally hit.

Luke 22:1-6 Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover. And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill Him, for they feared the people. Then entered Satan into Judas, surnamed Iscariot, being one of the twelve. And he went his way and communed with the chief priests and captains how he might betray Him unto them. And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money. And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray Him unto them in the absence of the multitude.

Now Judas carried the bag and he was assigned the job of paying the expenses of the group. Maybe they did not appreciate that and considered him an accountant in charge of the church's money. He evidently had a weakness in the area of money. He saw it going out, and coming in, but he was not getting any of it. I do not know what his thoughts were. Judas evidently knew that they wanted Jesus greatly, but they feared what the people would do, so they wanted to arrest Him secretly and have a private trial.

Satan found fertile ground in Judas. He presented the thoughts of wealth, ease, power perhaps, and even the possibility of getting even from perceived slights. Thus, urged by these thoughts, Judas communed with the High Priest in the temple and delivered Jesus for thirty pieces of silver and they were glad. Now, I assume this was big money to Judas. In Matthew 27 here comes the reality—it looked good, it sounded good...

Matthew 27:1-7 When the morning had come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put Him to death. And when they

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had bound Him, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate, the governor. Then Judas, who had betrayed Him, when he saw that He was condemned, repented and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood." And they said, "What is that to us? See thou to that!" And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood." And they took counsel and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.

As with obeying Satan and his way in anything, the day comes, brethren, when reality hits. At last, Satan having got what he wanted, pulls away the image of power, wealth and of getting even, and the true picture of what Judas had done presents itself. Judas is in deep anguish and he is torn to pieces inside. How could I have done this, how could I have brought the Lord God to these people to be slaughtered?

The chief priests could not have cared less about Christ's innocence or Judas' guilt. Judas throws the money down stating that he had shed innocent blood, and then, in grief and anger at his stupidity, hangs himself. It is the same with us, brethren, we can give in to Satan in this way or in this world. We can smoke, drink excessively, sleep around, cheat, steal, hold anger, break laws, etcetera. But the day comes, when reality has to hit.

When it presents itself, the penalties come. God, through His great mercy, extends His mercy to us upon repentance. But, that does not mean that the penalty will not be there. How many young ladies have become pregnant and repented, and said, "I wish I had not done that," but still they have the baby to raise?

How many young men have got a woman pregnant? How many have ended up with a sexual disease? But it is too late at that time, God may forgive you, but the penalty is still there. Satan presented a wonderful experience, but when reality came it was not so wonderful. We will see in the book of Acts how Satan puts forth his mind into others (puts ideas into them).

Acts 4:32-37 And the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and of one soul; neither said any one of them that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and

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great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked, for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold and laid them down at the apostles' feet. And distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. And Joses, who was surnamed by the apostles Barnabas (which is, being interpreted, "the Son of Consolation"), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

I do not know if you are aware of this, but this is where the communists used to point out that this is the spirit of Communism. Just the opposite is proven true. The people owned their own possessions. Many had traveled a long way to keep the Spring festivals in Jerusalem. Three thousand had been converted and baptized in one day and they wanted to learn more about the new way.

Those extra days, extra shelter, extra food had to be provided for the three thousand members of God's church. This emergency and love for one another caused each to treat the things that he possessed as if they were common property. No-one selfishly insisted that it was his individually, and yet until it was actually handed over it belonged to the individual.

Acts 5:1-11 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 of it and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, "Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the price of the land? While it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." And Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and gave up the ghost. And great fear came on all those who heard these things. And the young men arose and wrapped him up, and carried him out and buried him. And it was about the space of three hours later when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. And Peter said unto her, "Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much?" And she said, "Yea, for so much." Then Peter said unto her, "How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of those who have buried thy husband are at the door and shall carry thee out." Then she fell down straightway at his feet and yielded up the ghost. And the young men came in and found her dead and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband. And great fear came upon all the

church and upon as many as heard these things.

These two fell to Satan's approach. The simple approach for Ananias and Sapphira would have been to say, "I have property and I am going to keep back thirty percent of it for personal things that I have to buy. The rest is coming to you." Had they done that, their names would not be written in this book—if they had been upfront about it.

But instead Satan presented the image to their mind that they should just appear to give all, that they might seem wholehearted in giving what they owed as everybody else did. Satan, perhaps, put the thought in their minds that everybody would look down on them if they kept back any money. By just simply not telling anybody they could give the money, and keep the money they wanted, and appear to look good to all the brethren, and thus they tempted God by lying.

Just as Achan, back in Joshua 7, by stealing the Babylonish garment, the two hundred shekels of silver and the big wedge of gold brought sin into the camp of Israel, so the lives of Ananias and Sapphira brought sin and lawbreaking into the church. At the last minute, the reality of following Satan's thoughts, as opposed to God's thoughts and God's way of living and instruction, came to mind, and the realization of what they had done had struck them and they dropped dead.

One last example of Satan's attack here (because Satan's attacks can even come from close friends in very subtle ways) we read in Matthew when Jesus was getting ready to be sacrificed.

Matthew 16:21 From that time forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples 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 happen 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."

Here we see Satan subtly working through a friend, who has Christ's seemingly best interest at heart. He was doing his best to talk Jesus out of fulfilling His role as Savior. Even though he knew what was written in Isaiah 53, that this was what the Messiah was going to do.

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We have further examples of Satan causing David to number Israel, resulting in seventy thousand deaths. We see the glee with which Satan attacked Job. We have to understand, that we as God's people today, are going to be tempted and attacked. He is trying to shake us from our faith.

I John 2:15-16 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father, but is of the world.

Of course, who rules the world? Satan! You have all seen the Enron disaster, the stock market crooks that have stolen money, some of them very foolishly thinking they would never get caught. These are all inspired by greed and by the way of Satan.

I John 2:17 And the world passeth away and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

The world is moved by Satan and this is the arena that you and I must fight our fight in and win. Jesus tells us here if we love the world, with Satan's imaginations or arguments motivating it, that we do not love the Father. It is just that black and white. We have to understand that the world does things Satan's way.

Let us look at a couple of small examples here. As you know, we are to exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees. Right after Jesus says this, He raises the bar, or the standard, from "you shall not kill" to "you shall not be angry":

Matthew 5:21 "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old, 'Thou shalt not kill,' and 'Whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment.' But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca,' shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, 'Thou fool,' shall be in danger of hell fire. Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way. First be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

This is what God wants from us. We see from this, that God wants us to work to mend

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relationships, and have harmony, peace and love in the church. But the visual industry, television, computers and movies (some of the most wonderful instructional tools that have ever been invented) do not begin to portray those filled with anger working to solve their problems. Entertainment of that sort would not pay the bills.

They present stories of continued anger and hatred and the solution to that hatred and anger is to kill one or the other. Over and over again. How is this reflected in the society we live in? I do not know if you are aware of it, but Los Angeles is the murder capital of the world. We have over one hundred thousand gang members and all of them operate by hate and by getting even. I forget how many shots have been fired by snipers at policemen; I think it is about thirty sniper attempts at policemen. Satan, who is a tool of God, hates all people, but mostly God's people.

He is continually sending his thoughts of rebellion and hatred, not only to individuals, but also to nations, and to other people that come against God's people. They, as well, receive thoughts of injustice being done, both real or imagined, and because of this, even their children are growing up picturing themselves as human bombs.

I remember a while back I saw kindergarten pictures from a Palestinian school. In our schools, when little children draw pictures, they draw the cow, the flowers, and the sun up in the sky. Out of about twenty kindergarten students in the Palestinian school, three children drew cows, sunshine and birds, and the rest drew pictures of little stick people with bombs tied around their waists.

This is what Satan has done to that part of the world. The militant members of Islam, under Satan's sway, have images thrust upon them by Satan and his demons for bringing the entire world under their religion and destroying any who will not come under that way of living. How can this attitude be reflected in the church?

We can justify holding our anger against others by subconsciously justifying, and saying, 'that is the way it is done in the world.' Satan sets these images continually before us, and many more, because of what we allow to come into our homes in television, movies or magazines.

Matthew 5:27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.' But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

Boy, does this world want us to look on members of the opposite sex in that way. The

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standard has been set, that we might be pure in our relationships with those around us of the opposite sex, both men and women.

Again, Satan continually tempts us with the imaginations and images of sexual improprieties in magazines, books, televisions and movies. Every home, every library, every motel and computer, has unbelievable garbage available to them.

Satan has not missed the bet in fashion either. Fashions fluctuate, but designers always focus on sex appeal, and in this age we see short skirts, bare midriffs, low cut blouses and extremely skimpy bathing suits.

We can tend to think that it is just the women that follow the styles of the fashion world but that is not always true. I remember having a couple (that does not attend with the Church of the Great God), where the wife was telling her husband "Why do you make me wear these short skirts? I feel embarrassed because when I climb into my car the men in church look at me in the wrong way". Men can be attracted by this world's styles, just as women can, and they desire to show off in the wrong way the woman that they are dating or their wife.

I Peter 3:1-5 Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any obey not the Word, they also may be won without the Word by the conduct of their wives while they behold your chaste manner of living coupled with fear. When adorning yourselves, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing gold, or of putting on apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price. For in this manner in olden times the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands,

The initial intent of the verses is to show that a wife called, while married to an unconverted man, might be instrumental in his calling by her chaste conduct, by the right changes that have been made in her life, by which she now believes. Her conduct is pure, and she truly fears God, not wanting to do anything that would bring shame on Him.

In verse 3, Peter discussed the adorning with a thought. That it is not in the heart of the woman to want to be caught up in the styles of the current fashions, but in no way infers that dressing attractively is wrong. You are representing God by the way you dress. Peter goes on to set up a principle, he says "Let it (the dress, the ornaments, the style)

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not be the principle thing. Rather, let your beauty be reflected by what you are inside, coupled with modest, attractive dress." In other words, it is not the apparel one should notice, but the beautiful spirit that is hidden in the woman that is faithful to God. That is what we should have, and that is what we should want.

This, in the sight of God, is of great value. Satan sets forth different standards. For God's people, this is the standard the wives should want, and what the husbands should want for their wives. Also, what the young men should want for the women they date and it is what the women themselves should want.

It may seem like a small thing, but, amidst all these things in the world, the bottom line is, that God's standards should be our standards in all that we do.

Proverbs 31:30 Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman who feareth the LORD, she shall be praised!

What a wonderful, wonderful thing that is.

We fly Alaska Airlines quite often, and one of the ladies out there has become our friend, and she has two beautiful daughters. These daughters dress modestly and they will not participate in the things that the other girls at school do. She commented to us, that at first, the boys said, "I am not going to date you, if you will not do what I want to do."

But, these girls stood by their standards (I think they are Catholic) and the boys find them very attractive by the qualities and the character that they possess. They know that if they date these girls, that they had better be on their best behavior. The girls will not give in to the peer group of this world.

Why is it that we are so susceptible to Satan's influence, especially as the end of the age comes?

I Timothy 4:1 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,

In other words, there will be spirits out there, attitudes and doctrines that are different.

How does this occur?

Ephesians 2:2 wherein in times past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.

All around us these things are taking place. Satan is working in the world to cause final mass disobedience to God's way of life, thus presenting to us an environment to resist and that is against us every day. How many of us have said that we feel so small compared with the world? We all meet in small groups, in two's and three's and twenties, and yet we stand against the entire world.

As we all have walked that way at one time, we can find ourselves falling back into that lifestyle prior to being called. For some, they have their escapes in the form of smoking, drinking, narcotics, wrong sex, not controlling money and having a great desire for money and the wrong pleasures. Others have poor training habits from youth; by their way of thinking, it reflects itself on the struggles they go through today.

Satan works to tell us that we are tired of the fight and he offers us rest from overcoming with the thought that "The Lord delays His coming." He works to influence and move us ever so slowly back toward the way we used to think and act. You see, Satan fully realizes his time is short. Brethren, he is desperately working throughout the entire world to cause massive disobedience to God's way of life, and I do not know if he has been cast down at this point. He reads the handwriting on the wall, and he will try, with all he can, to take us out of this way that we have been called to. I think we really have to realize that.

In spite of all of Satan's might, we do have the assurance that we will not fail in this calling that we have been given.

Philippians 1:6 being confident of this very thing, that He who hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the Day of Jesus Christ.

We read this and we just take it for granted. But the term "being confident," is very strong language, and it means that Paul was fully convinced, and had no doubt in this matter. Paul is stating here, that we had better understand, that the work that was begun in us, was begun deliberately by God the Father Himself. You can take a look at that in John 1:12-13 and John 6:44.

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John 1:12-13 But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

John 6:44 No man can come to Me unless the Father who hath sent Me draw him; and I will raise him up at the Last Day.

We were not called by men; we did not just come along. God looked down at us, at our mistakes and all of the foolishness we had, and said, "*I am going to call them and bring them into the Kingdom as members of my family.*"

The phrase "will perform it" in Philippians 1:6 means that God will carry it forward right through to the end. The phrase appears nowhere else in the Bible, and it means that God would carry it through to completion, and not leave our calling unfinished. He will do this until the day that Jesus Christ comes, in power and splendor.

Barnes' Notes had a comment:

We may remark on this verse that Paul believed in the perseverance of the saints, it would be impossible to express a stronger conviction of the truth of that doctrine than that he has done here. Language could not be clearer, and nothing could be more unequivocal, than the declaration of his opinion, that where God has begun a good work in the soul it will not finally be lost.

Of course, we do have the option of ignoring God, and going the wrong way. We have that assurance that God, not men, started this work in us. We can be confident that if we co-operate with God in this calling, that we will be made complete members in the God family in the future. Now, even with this promise, we cannot sit back. We have a part in all of this and we must put effort into it. We must resist Satan's imaginations, half truths and deliberate lies.

James 4:1-10 From whence come wars and fightings among you? Do they not come even from your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not; ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain. Ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that friendship with the world is enmity with God?

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Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. Do ye think that the Scripture saith in vain, "The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy"? But He giveth more grace; therefore He saith, "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye doubleminded. Be afflicted and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up.

One way we can tell that Satan is working with us, or against us, is in our attitude. When our attitude turns sour, from correction or circumstances we find ourselves in, we can be pretty sure that Satan is working to gain a foothold to catch us off guard.

I can remember the early corrections I received in the church. I hate to say it, but my first response was defense, and then justification, and then a really bad attitude. It took me about a week or so to get my mind back in order, and apologize to God, and then I realized I could have done things differently and it was my fault.

In a sermon given some years ago, a minister who is no longer with us reminded his audience that if anyone saw himself as a victim, you can be pretty sure that Satan was involved. We have the example of Cain. Abel's sacrifice was accepted and Cain's was not.

Satan got into him with a bad attitude and Cain killed his brother. He said, "I am not my brother's keeper." How about Korah? He thought Moses had too much power and wanted to share power with him. He said, "We all should have power." He, and several hundred of his family, got in a bad attitude and God buried them.

James 4:5 Do ye think that the Scripture saith in vain, "The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy"?

James alludes to the principle that the spirit in man that dwells in us is a spirit that is attuned to Satan and makes his job of influencing us easier. It lusts to envy, to greed, to spite, to resentment, to desire and jealousy. We are all affected by this human nature that we possess. Envy is a difficult thing. Proverbs 14:30 says, "envy is rottenness to the bones." Proverbs 27:4 says, "who is able to stand before envy?"

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Envy, or jealousy, is a condition that every one of us from time to time must deal with. I remember way back, when somebody was ordained in front of me. Back in those days they did not ask you if you wanted to be ordained. You sat in the audience and, all of a sudden, they said, "we are going to have an ordination." Everybody wondered and I said, "Oh, I am going to be a deacon." They called up somebody else, and my face turned red, and I went home and got on my knees and I repented. I had a really bad attitude over that—this was jealousy. It was stupid of me. That was how I handled it at that time.

James 4:6 But He giveth more grace; therefore He saith, "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."

Here, we begin to get the attitude that we are to have. God will not deal with, or teach those, that have a stuck up and proud mind. The subject is still envy, wars and fighting for our way. All those involved in the wrong things in this world will not humble themselves before God. But there is a group that will humble themselves before God, and that is God's people. God has extended unmerited pardon to this group.

As He states, He resists the proud, but gives love to the humble. Thus, brethren, the first step in resisting Satan's influence is to humble ourselves. We must, with conscious and definite forethought, submit to God and yield to what He shows us is good for us in whatever situation we are in. It is a two-fold attack. We obey God, and we resist Satan. Satan's influence becomes less and less, as we draw close to God.

James 4:7-8 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye doubleminded.

The principle here, brethren, is if we want help from God, we have to draw close to Him. Simple principle. We cannot have one foot in the world, and one foot with God. We have to totally want to be with God. We must come to Him with a strong desire to clean ourselves from any iniquity. Not only that, but we must desire to really change our heart. We must be aware that our heart is deceitful (Jeremiah 17:9) and indeed is capable of being double-minded. We have to be on our toes and fight against it.

James 4:9 Be afflicted and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.

I think we sometimes read over these words, and do not stop to consider them. The word "afflicted" here, means to endure hardship. We are really to consider what we have done, or how lax we have become, and feel true distress over it. Though we may not be laughing over our flaws, what James is after here is that we must truly be serious about coming before God and indeed be in heaviness regarding our falling short. It is not something light, it is something very serious.

James 4:10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up.

We are to truly humble ourselves before God with fasting and true repentance. We must stop and consider that though we may have injured somebody else, the true sin that we have committed is against God. Psalm 51 "Against you, and you only, have I sinned." God's laws had been broken. This is what God wants us to understand. After we have done this, and we are again right with God, He will exalt us and lift us up from our discouraged condition.

Thus the first step to thwarting Satan's imaginations and lies, is to truly draw close to God with the various tools we have been given to use.

Second step, is to truly know, and understand, what God's word says. God wants more from us than just learning. We will get to that in a second.

II Timothy 2:15 be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Is this just for the ministry? No, it is for us as well. "Rightly dividing the word of truth."

II Timothy 2:16 But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness.

Do not wander off the course. Paul is saying to Timothy, give diligence, or make an effort, to discharge the office that is given to you. We have to do the same with our calling. We are to make sincere effort to take full advantage of the calling that God has given us. The world does not have this. The phrase "rightly dividing the word of truth" is found only here in the Bible and means "to cut straight and divide correctly"—to really understand God's word.

As it applies to each of us, it means not just to study diligently, which is certainly what we have to do, but we have to be diligent in how we use God's word and how we apply it in all aspects of our lives. It is really important as the ministry does not always know what to do in your particular circumstance. You study and you go forward. The meaning here, is that we are to learn to walk in the new way correctly, and then there is the sense that the ploughman ploughs a straight furrow.

This verse is implying that Timothy should do this, so the brethren in the church can follow, that they might be on good ground. It applies to us. To the best of our abilities, we are to work to keep our path as straight as possible. As it pertains to Satan, simply put, it means the more of God's knowledge we put in our mind and use, the more difficult it is for Satan to gain a foothold with us.

Brethren, we know in Hebrews 5:12-14; 6:1 we are told to go past the basics, to perfection in the knowledge and application of God's word. This is what God wants from us. What good are we to God if we cannot apply His words?

In Matthew 13 Jesus had just given the parables of the sower and the seed, wheat and the tares and the parable pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

Matthew 13:51-52 Jesus said unto them, "Have ye understood all these things?" They said unto Him, "Yea, Lord." Then said He unto them, "Therefore every scribe who is instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."

What does this mean? In other words, the person that has learned God's way (either from his early learning or his recent learning), that will be his treasury, and he will bring that information forward and apply it to the various situations he comes to. We should not just acquire truth, but we should be able to bring it forth at the right moment and use it continually.

Now comes the third thing—a proper mind-set.

II Corinthians 10:1 Now I, Paul, myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—I, who in your presence am lowly among you, but being absent am bold toward you—I beseech you that when I am present I need not be bold with that confidence with which I have in mind to be bold

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against some, who think of us as though we walked according to the flesh.

These scriptures are set on the foundation that there were some who were jealous of Paul. They had evidently commented that he was nothing, and by saying Paul was nothing, they alluded that his message was nothing.

II Corinthians 10:3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh.

Paul was saying that we do not war after the flesh, even though we are a human body. Because we are flesh, we are very conscious of our failings and our weaknesses. In spite of our weaknesses, we do not war as do those of the world, and he is coming to that. Our warfare is against sin, and we have to understand that it is sin and evil we are fighting against. The goals we strive for are different than those of the people in the world. Our fight is against wrong desires, and all of the influences and schemes that Satan and his demons throw at us, as well as our human nature.

II Corinthians 10:4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God for the pulling down of strongholds,

Paul is saying our warfare is not fleshly. We know we cannot depend on wealth, beauty, strength, handsomeness, or physical power, but God's weapons are mighty through His power in us. That is why His weapons work. The weapons that we use, the world cannot comprehend, because they seem simple and stupid to them. Those weapons are God's truth and His righteousness. It is as simple as that. This is what the armor of God is all about.

It is because of God's Spirit in us that this way of living is valuable to us. Without God's Spirit this way does not mean a thing to the people of the world. It is by this way, with His help, that we pull down the strong-holds or the fortifications that have been built up in our life over all these years. It is by this way, with His help, by sticking to the truth and righteousness, that we defeat Satan and his demons.

The ways of this world, and our sins repeated over and over, have indeed set a pattern of behavior that Satan wants to play on.

Galatians 5:17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against

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the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

So we have a tough time. That tough time is what God wants. He wants us to learn to build up calluses and strength in resisting Satan. But you see this is the fight that God has called us to. I hope we understand this. Our fight is to defeat Satan, as Jesus Christ did. The fight he had was much tougher than we will ever have. We are to develop the wonderful character of God.

II 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,

Our job then, is to cast down wrong imaginations, or false arguments, that work to trick us into a different way of life. We have to be really careful, as it says in I Peter. Anything that exalts itself above God's teaching or way of living must be brought into captivity to the truth. Every word, thought, or action, must be brought into the obedience of Christ. And to do this, we have to have a certain attitude that goes along with that.

Matthew 11:12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

What Jesus is saying here, is that from the day that John began to preach, there was a great rush or a crowd crushing to hear John. This crowd was so excited at what they heard, and what was offered to them, it was as if they would take the Kingdom by force. There was an attitude there that was good. It gives a picture of those, being given an opportunity to obtain the Kingdom of Heaven, beating down anything that stood in the way of it being obtained. This is the attitude that we must have. Our calling is serious business. We must honestly want what God offers us at all cost.

II Corinthians 10:6 and being in readiness to avenge all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

As this might be applied to us, we have to have a readiness of mind not to cozy up to what Satan offers, but to take revenge on all disobedience that we find in ourselves. It is an ongoing search, and reaction and process until our obedience is correct and fulfilled

before God.

Brethren, though Satan numerically outnumbers us there is no way he can defeat us if we truly follow God's instructions for overcoming.

I Peter 5:10 But after ye have suffered a while, may the God of all grace, who hath called us into His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you.

Now, brethren, our Father and our elder brother Jesus Christ, know the difficult job we have of overcoming our human nature and Satan's vicious schemes. Yet, they know that the result of this struggle will be to our benefit and we will have taken a stand against evil, against Satan, standing for God and His way of life. Thus, perfecting our nature in the process. God wants us to know that He is fully aware of the difficulties that all of us go through and He understands it as a loving Father.

I do not know whether you have ever thought of this, but it just occurred to me what it will be like when Satan is cut off from all of his broadcasts. I used to drive to Las Vegas every so often and I would stop at Calico ghost town on the way back—three miles off the highway. I would sit up on a rock high above the desert floor and it was so still.

I could not help but wonder what will it be like when Satan is cut off and he no longer broadcasts—it will be wonderful. God understands that that time is off in the future and He wants us to understand that He is completely with us in all we do and in the struggles that we go through.

Psalms 34:15-22 The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry. The face of the LORD is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as are of a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivereth him out of them all. He keepeth all his bones; not one of them is broken. Evil shall slay the wicked, and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate. The LORD redeemeth the soul of His servants, and none of them that trust in Him shall be desolate.

Watch, and be careful of Satan, and fight the good fight.