

**THE SPIRITUAL MIND AND THE WILES OF THE DEVIL - Biblical Lessons for Victory Over Darkness - Part four - Sunday, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024 - Sanctuary Class**  
**Pastor Don Horban, Cedarview Community Church, Newmarket**

Christians face **two problems** when they encounter the schemes of the Devil. First, there is the problem of **human weakness**. Then, there is the problem of **human ignorance**. Of these two, the **second** is the greater problem. I'll tell you why. God, in His mercy and grace, has made ample provision for the problem of human weakness. The One who dwells in each believer to strengthen, help, and uplift is greater than the one who is in the world (**1 John 4:4**).

But while there is gracious provision for **weakness**, we alone can solve the problem of our own **ignorance**. Whatever else the Holy Spirit will do for us in His mercy, He will never **learn**, or **study** for us. True, the Holy Spirit will bring back to our remembrance the things we have learned. He will regurgitate truth we have digested. But there is nothing He can do for those who willfully remain in ignorance.

We've studied five schemes of the Devil. Today we will examine two more:

6) **SCHEME NUMBER SIX - The Devil works to lead us into SITUATIONS of temptation long before prompting us to commit ACTS of sin.**

The Devil rarely strikes from a distance. He emphasizes the innocence of situations that only hold the **potential** for future sin. He wants to link my life up with occasions where the force of temptation will be at its greatest.

For example, a married man **can** have a beautiful friendship with woman other than his wife. Technically, he **can** have a close friendship with another woman without being **unfaithful** to his marriage vows. He can spend much time alone with another woman while remaining true to his spouse. But the Christian man with wisdom knows he is far more **likely** to be unfaithful to his wife with this kind of relationship with another woman than without it.

**REMEDIES AGAINST THIS SCHEME:**

a) ***The Scriptures clearly teach not only the avoidance of sin, but the avoidance of occasions for sin***

**Jude 23** - **"....save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh."** These strange words from Jude carry their meaning from an Old Testament picture relating to the requirements for sanitation when dealing with diseased persons or corpses. Not only must the body not be touched, but even the clothing, possessions and houses must be avoided. Jude says when it comes to keeping a safe distance from sin and compromise, too far is much better than too close.

This same thought is picked up in **Proverbs 4:14-15** - **"Do not enter the path of the wicked and do not walk in the way of the evil. [15] Avoid it; do not go on it; turn away from it and pass on."** It's the **path** of the wicked that must be avoided, not just the actual **destination**. The clear idea is one avoids the results of sin best by avoiding the path that leads **into** it.

b) ***Remember, God will not long provide deliverance from sin for those who do not care to separate themselves from occasions of sin.***

Samson would be an excellent example of this truth. He toyed with temptation repeatedly before he discovered the Spirit of the Lord had departed from him. Past blessing and anointing doesn't provide automatic protection from future sin and failure.

Paul offers more counsel on this same thought - **1 Corinthians 10:12-14** - **"Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. [13] No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to**

endure it.[14] Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.”

Deliverance comes for those who seek **escape**, not for those who toy with careless **compromise**. Help is for those who flee. The final exhortation regarding idolatry re-emphasizes the point that corruption takes place **first** in the heart and affections. **Then** it get fleshed out in the actions.

c) ***Recall to your mind the examples in the Scriptures of those who demonstrated this avoidance of the appearance of evil.***

i) Joseph - **Genesis 39:5-15** - Especially **verse 10** - “And as she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie beside her or to be with her.”

ii) David - **Psalms 26:2-5** - “Prove me, O Lord, and try me; test my heart and my mind. [3] For your steadfast love is before my eyes, and I walk in your faithfulness. [4] I do not sit with men of falsehood, nor do I consort with hypocrites. [5] I hate the assembly of evildoers, and I will not sit with the wicked.” Deliverance comes to those who plan to avoid the first approaches of evil.

7) **SCHEME NUMBER SEVEN - The Devil weakens our resolve toward purity by pointing out the apparent joy and prosperity of the wicked around us**

By his own admission, David was almost brought to spiritual ruin over this very issue: **Psalms 73:2-5, 13-14** - “But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled, my steps had nearly slipped. [3] For I was envious of the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. [4] For they have no pangs until death; their bodies are fat and sleek. [5] They are not in trouble as others are; they are not stricken like the rest of mankind....13-14....All in vain have I kept my heart clean and washed my hands in innocence. [14] For all the day long I have been stricken and rebuked every morning.”

**REMEDIES AGAINST THIS SCHEME:**

a) ***Always remember how dangerous and deceptive it is to measure God's heart toward a person solely by the pleasantness of outward circumstances. See Jeremiah 44:15-18 - “Then all the men who knew that their wives had made offerings to other gods, and all the women who stood by, a great assembly, all the people who lived in Pathros in the land of Egypt, answered Jeremiah: [16] "As for the word that you have spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not listen to you. [17] But we will do everything that we have vowed, make offerings to the queen of heaven and pour out drink offerings to her, as we did, both we and our fathers, our kings and our officials, in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. For then we had plenty of food, and prospered, and saw no disaster. [18] But since we left off making offerings to the queen of heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, we have lacked everything and have been consumed by the sword and by famine."***

b) ***Always hold before your mind the final audit we all face with our Creator and Judge. See Psalms 73:17-20 - “....until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I discerned their end. [18] Truly you set them in slippery places; you make them fall to ruin. [19] How they are destroyed in a moment, swept away utterly by terrors! [20] Like a dream when one awakes, O Lord, when you rouse yourself, you despise them as phantoms."***