

Satan's Secret Strategy

Genesis 3:1-7

In the garden Adam and Eve had everything to meet their needs and make them happy. However, their character would only be revealed when tempted to disobey God and forget all his goodness and love.

This story is from the ancient past, but it is as up to date as tomorrow's newspaper. The scene has changed, but the methods have not. This passage reveals four things we should know about Satan's secret strategy. First...

He tries to get us to doubt God's provisions - 3:1-2

The serpent tries to lead *the woman*, later called Eve, into sin. Though not identified here, the tempter is obviously *that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan* (Rev. 20:2). The Bible does not tell us when Satan fell, but it was after the sixth day, because everything God created was good and happened before Genesis 3. God's making Adam and Eve in His own image may have been a blow to Satan's pride, which led to his rebellion and fall.

In Isaiah 14:12-14, Satan is called "Lucifer" (KJV), which means *morning star* (NIV). Satan is used as an example of what happened to the king of Babylon in his pride, splendor, and fall. This use in the Bible is called a double entendre which is a subtle literary device that uses one statement to convey two very different meanings. The passage clearly goes beyond the Babylonian king and refers to Satan when it says *you have fallen from heaven* (14:12) and reveals what reason for Satan's fall in Isaiah 14:14?

The serpent was *more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made* (Gen. 3:1). *Crafty* means "clever and deceptive." This temptation happened before the curse, before the serpent crawls on his belly. There was nothing about the serpent to alarm Eve. When Satan comes to you and me, he does not come as an ugly, scary creature from which we flee. How does 2 Corinthians 11:14 tell us Satan comes to us?

The tempter does not whisper, "I am here to tempt you and ruin your life." No, he would like to discuss the Bible. He asks Eve, "*Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"* (Gen. 3:1). Notice that Satan tries to focus Eve's attention on the one tree, out of thousands that were in the garden, of which she could not eat. Satan wants to get Eve thinking negatively about God. He wants to focus her attention on that one thing God has prohibited and cause her to forget all His blessings and provisions.

The truth is God did NOT say, "*You must not eat from any tree in the garden.*" What does God say in Genesis 2:16?

The only exception is *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (2:17)*. The Devil wants Eve to believe God is holding out on her. He does the same to you and me. He wants us to think God is keeping us from some pleasure or enjoyment. The Devil wants us to think that God doesn't want us to get drunk, do drugs, or have sex outside marriage to keep us from having fun. However, every command in the Bible is given because God loves us and wants to protect us from the consequences of sin (see Psalm 84:11).

Satan tries to get us to **doubt God's provisions** by convincing us God is holding out on us, and then...

He tries to get us to deny God's punishment - 3:3-4

Eve tells Satan that God said, "*You must not eat fruit from the tree... and you must not touch it, or you will die.*" Satan responds, "*You will not surely die*" (3:3-4). In other words, "Eve, surely you don't believe that. God's just trying to scare you."

The new age movement repackages this old lie by teaching reincarnation, which says you just keep coming back until you get it right. How you come back is determined by your "karma," which is the totality of your actions. If your karma is bad, you might come back as a maggot, but if it is good, you might come back a millionaire. It is just Satan's old lie, "*You will not surely die.*" But what does God say in Hebrews 9:27?

Every command in the Bible is God's law, and law without penalty is only a suggestion. The Bible is not filled with God's suggestions; it is His holy Law. We don't have "Ten Suggestions"; we have Ten Commandments.

Some think God is too good to punish sin, but the truth is God is too good not to punish sin. What would you think of a judge who continually let criminals go unpunished? You would say that is a bad judge. A good judge punishes evil, and God is a good Judge.

Not only does Satan try to get us to **doubt God's provisions** and **deny God's punishment**, but also...

He tries to get us to distort God's purpose - 3:5

Finally, the Devil says to Eve, "*For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened...*" (Gen. 3:5). The Devil convinces Eve that obeying God's Word is preventing her from reaching her full potential. In essence he is saying, "Eve, you are blind; you need to see the light of liberation." The purpose of God's Word is not to keep us in darkness; it is just the opposite, as declared in what way in Psalm 119:105?

The Devil says to young people, "I know God says don't do it before you get married, but you need to experience the joy of sex." The media usually pictures virgins as dumb, moral dinosaurs. However, what is the one word that sums up everything God was looking for in the woman He chose to bring His Son into the world? It is "VIRGIN." Above all else, this made Mary God's woman, and God expects no less from His men.

The Devil tells Eve, "*...you will be like God, knowing good and evil*" (Gen. 3:5b). But that's a lie. The more you sin, the less you are able to distinguish between good and evil. What does Romans 1:26a declare God does to people who habitually suppress His truth *by their wickedness*?

God is serious about what He says about sin and His judgment of it. To deny God's Word is to attack God's character. When the Devil tells Eve that if she will eat the forbidden fruit she will *be like God*, he is saying, "God lied to you to keep you from fulfilling your potential." When we believe God is holding out on us, the work of the tempter is complete.

When the Devil succeeds in causing us to **doubt God's provisions, deny God's punishment, and distort God's purpose**, he will complete his strategy as...

He tries to get us to disobey God's precepts - 3:6-7

When we doubt God's Word, our senses come alive to what is evil. What was once out-of-bounds, we want more than anything on earth, even if it is something that can destroy us. Therefore, we read, *When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it* (3:6).

The strategy of temptation used by Satan in the Garden of Eden establishes a pattern that is so effective it has never changed. First John 2:16 sums up *everything in the world* that can tempt us, and these have not changed from the time of the Garden of Eden. All temptation falls into three basic categories. To understand them better, fill out the chart below:

Categories of All Temptations

1 John 2:16

*the cravings of sinful man
(appetites)*

*the lust of his eyes (visual
attraction)*

*the boasting of what he has
and does (pride)*

Genesis 3:6

*...the fruit of the tree was good
for*

It was... pleasing to the

*...the fruit of the tree was...
desirable for gaining*

**Temptation of Jesus
Matthew 4:1-11**

...tell these stones to become

*The devil... showed him all the
of the world.*

*If you are the Son of God,
yourself*

There are no new sins, for all temptations today fall into one of these categories. That's why God's Word makes what declaration in 1 Corinthians 10:13a?

You say, "Eating a piece of fruit, is that what caused the human race to fall?" No, it wasn't a piece of fruit; it was disobedience to God's Word and letting God's character become suspect. When Adam and Eve ate the fruit, it only revealed what was already in their hearts.

If Satan had come to Eve that morning and said, "I'm going to plant some thoughts in your mind that will destroy you," she would have fled. When Satan comes to us, he always deceives us into thinking he wants to bring us pleasure, popularity, freedom, and fulfillment. This is how we are sucked in. Satan cannot lead us into sin until he first attacks and destroys our confidence in God's Holy Word. That is why Jesus rejected each one of Satan's temptations by quoting the Bible, including what fundamental truth for resisting temptation found in Matthew 4:4?

The serpent told Adam and Eve their eyes would be opened and they would be like God. However, that was all propaganda, for when they ate the forbidden fruit *then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked (3:7a)*. Instead of becoming like God they lost their innocence, and their naked bodies made them feel ashamed. Therefore, *they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves (3:7b)*.

Satan's secret strategy is to get us to **doubt God's provisions, deny God's punishment, distort God's purpose, and disobey God's precepts**. What has been Satan's strategy in your experience?