

## The Devices of Satan

*“Lest Satan should take advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices,”* 2 Cor. 2:11.

The preceding scripture belongs to a context in which the writer (the apostle Paul) was instructing the saints at Corinth concerning their duty to *“forgive and comfort”* (v. 7) a formerly withdrawn from brother, who had made the necessary correction. The brother alluded to was doubtlessly the one mentioned in I Cor. 5:1 who had been caught up in *“sexual immorality,”* that of having *“his father’s wife,”* or being involved in an incestuous union. Formerly the brethren at Corinth had been *“puffed up”* and had not *“mourned”* about the situation, I Cor. 5:2. But Paul stressed that when they *“gathered together”* they were to *“deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus,”* I Cor. 5:5. Indeed, disciplinary action had to be taken lest *“the whole lump”* be leavened by the destructive nature of this sin, I Cor 5:6. Later in the same chapter he exhorted saying, *“I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person,”* I Cor. 5:11. In the time between the writing of the first and second epistles to the church at Corinth, the withdrawn from brother evidently repented, and now in the second letter Paul stated that *“this punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man”* 2 Cor. 2:6 — *“sufficient”* in that the brother repented of his evil conduct. So now, *“the shoe was on the other foot,”* that is, his fellow members of the church were *“to forgive and comfort him”* lest he be *“swallowed up with too much sorrow,”* 2 Cor. 2:8. Moreover, they were to *“reaffirm”* their love to him lest Satan *“should take advantage of”* them, v. 11, for, as Paul said, *“we are not ignorant of his devices.”*

*“Devices,”* as used in this text, is the plural form of the Greek *Noema*, which “denotes thought, that which is thought out; hence, a purpose, device,” **Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words**, by W.E. Vine. Indeed, Satan is our *“adversary,”* I Peter 5:8, and he seeks to *“take advantage of us,”* though *“his devices,”* his *“wiles,”* Eph. 6:11, or his countless well-planned, devious schemes. Elsewhere (2 Cor. 4:4) Paul described Satan as *“the god of this age”* who has *“blinded”* those *“who do not believe, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.”* He is the enemy of God; he is the enemy of God’s people; yea, he is the enemy of every person who aspires to serve God. He tempted the first couple in the garden, Gen. 3:1-6; He even tempted Jesus Christ, Matt. 4:1-11, and you can be certain that he will tempt you and me! Jesus told Simon Peter that *“Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat,”* Luke 22:31. To be on the safe side, it behooves you and me to insert our own name in the place of *“Simon,”* for indeed he has *“desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat!”* And to accomplish his Satanic ambitions he utilizes countless *“devices,”* and he works through innumerable people. In the remainder of this article we shall note some of the many *“devices,”* schemes, or avenues through which Satan works.

### Satan Works:

**1. Through False Teachers.** Writing to Christians, Peter said: *“But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed,”* 2 Peter 2:1-2. While addressing the elders of the church at Ephesus, the

apostle Paul warned, saying, “*from yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves,*” Acts 20:30. Countless examples could be cited of false teachers rising up among the Lord’s people and drawing away disciples. It is a sobering fact, but nonetheless a **fact** that many “*false apostles, deceitful workers,*” who transform “*themselves into the apostles of Christ,*” 2 Cor. 11:13, have repeatedly reared their ugly heads among the Lord’s people, have wrought havoc, created division, which on numerous occasions resulted in almost complete apostasy. Knowing that “*many false prophets have gone out into the world,*” we simply **must** “*test the spirits whether they are of God,*” I John 4:1. All Christians should follow the example of the Bereans who “*received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so,*” Acts 17:11. When it comes to distinguishing truth from error we cannot be too careful! It **does** make a difference what one believes!

In the preceding paragraph we primarily referred to teachers of religion. However, there exists many teachers **of irreligion**. For example, there was Charles Darwin who advanced the idea of organic evolution, affirming that all life started with a single cell (which spontaneously created itself from nothing!), and evolved upward to man. Of course, other changes had to occur before anything so complex as a cell could be formed. Atoms had to combine to form molecules, and molecules had to combine to form a cell, and that cell (once it generated itself into existence!) still had no blood, no nerves, no sex, no head, and no brain! It was said of Darwin that “he made hell a laughingstock and heaven a dream,” but millions have embraced this unscientific, unproven (and impossible to prove) theory,

And in addition to teachers of irreligion, there are countless **teachers of immorality**. A case in point is that of the late Hugh Hefner. Hefner brazenly said “If Jesus Christ were on earth today, and had to choose between being on the staff of Playboy Magazine or being on the staff of one of the joy-killing, pleasure-denying churches, he would, of course, immediately join us. Such blasphemy is hard to fathom! Then there is Joseph Fletcher of “Situation Ethics” infamy; He said “it is sometimes right to do wrong,” and that “Reliance upon law is essentially a neurotic maneuver.” In other words, if one believes a person has to rely on the law of God, he has mental problems!

**2. Through our Families!** Jesus said “*a man’s enemies will be those of his own household,*” and that “*He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me,*” Matt. 10:36-37. Yes, properly formed and functioning, there is something precious about that word “family,” especially when the background marriage is in keeping with God’s law, and when the family members act in keeping with His law. But tragically, upon obedience to the gospel, many people have been alienated from their own families. Think of the multitudes who have learned the truth, but did not obey it because of the opposition of a family member — a parent, a child, a husband, a wife, etc. Yes, Satan is willing to use family members to dissuade people from becoming Christians!

**3. Through our Friends.** Multitudes have learned (the hard way!) that “*evil company corrupts good habits,*” I Cor. 15:33. Think of the young people in particular who have been lured into sinful behavior because they didn’t want to be called “chicken,” or because they were told “come on, everybody else is doing it,” or “just one drink (or one joint) won’t hurt you,” etc., etc. This is one reason why one should be exceedingly careful about the character of the people with whom he (or she) regularly associate. This is why parents should be concerned about the friends formed by their children!

**4. Through our Jobs.** Yes, there is dignity in work. Even before the fall, “*God took the man and put him in the garden to tend and keep it,*” Gen. 2:15. And after the fall, God spoke to

Adam, saying, “*in the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground...*,” Gen. 3:19. The apostle Paul said “*If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat,*” 2 Thess. 3:10. Elsewhere we read that “*if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever,*” 2 Thess. 3:10. Laziness is the very antithesis of Christianity. However, a faithful Christian should use caution regarding the job he seeks. Will it render him unable to worship God with regularity? What about the nature of the work itself. Does it involve one having to bid “*godspeed*” to conduct which God condemns? Does it involve doing what God forbids? Many such questions could appropriately be asked.

**Conclusion:** Yes, Satan has many “*devices.*” He has you (and me) in his crosshairs. We must continually be on guard lest we spend eternity with the devil and his angels! (BW)

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