

## The Devices of Satan

*“Lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices,”* 2 Cor. 2:11. *“Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil,”* Eph. 6:11.

In these two verses the apostle Paul referred to the “*devices*” of Satan and “*the wiles of the devil.*” “*Devices*” is translated from *noema* (Greek) and “denotes thought, that which is thought out; hence, a purpose, device” **Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words,** by Vine). A.T. Robertson, in **Word Pictures** in the New Testament, defined “*devices*” as a well thought out plan, one that is “especially for evil plans and purposes.” “*Wiles*” (Eph. 6:11) is translated from *methodia* (Greek) and it denotes “cunning arts, deceit, craft, trickery” (Thayer). In the marginal reference in the NKJV, the word “*schemings*” is used in the place of “*wiles.*” Both words “*devices*” and “*wiles*” are used in the plural, inferring that the “*devices*” and “*wiles*” of the devil are many and varied.

You will please note that these verses which refer to the “*devices*” and the “*wiles*” of the devil appear in separate New Testament epistles which were written by the apostle Paul to the “*saints*” at Corinth and Ephesus, respectively. In other words, the inspired apostle Paul was warned God’s people in this the gospel age to be on guard against the “*devices*” and “*wiles*” of the devil.” It is evident that Satan is a schemer, a plotter, one who works behind the scenes in order to ensnare the children of God, to take them captive, and influence them to serve him instead of God!

Clearly, Satan is our “*adversary,*” one who “*walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour,*” I Pet. 5:8. We must therefore “*resist him steadfastly in the faith,*” I Peter. 5:9, but to successfully “*resist*” Satan we need to know something about his “*devices,*” his “*wiles,*” or clever ploys to lead us astray. With this in mind, we shall now consider some of the ways in which Satan seeks to ensnare us.

### Satan Works on Us:

**1. Through False teachers!** Please note 2 Peter 2:1-2: “*but there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will 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.*”

Because of the prevalence of “*false teachers,*” the apostle John exhorted, saying, “*beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world,*” I John 4:1. The existence of false teachers make it all the more important for every Christian to follow the example of the Bereans who “*received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily in order to find out whether these things were so,*” Acts 17:11. Don’t accept what any preacher says just because of who is saying it; “*test the spirits,*” I John 4:1; “*Test all things; hold fast that which is good,*” I Thess. 5:21!

**2. Through our families!** Family is so important! One is blessed indeed to have a good wife, or a good husband, a good mom or dad, obedient, responsible, God-fearing children, etc. “*An excellent wife is the crown of her husband....,*” Prov. 12:4. “*Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward,*” Psalm 127:3. However, notwithstanding the blessings one experiences when he /or she is a part of good family, it must be remembered that

**God** comes first! Jesus worded it this way: *“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. 10:37. On countless occasions those who professed to be Christians have compromised the truth because love for family trumped love for God. How many parents have believed and taught the truth regarding marriage, divorce, and remarriage until a son or a daughter became involved in an unscriptural marriage? And then they “changed their views,” or else ceased to take a stand for the truth. How many have learned the truth on what it takes to become a Christian, but refused to obey because of opposition from family members, or because mom and dad believed differently. Satan has always led people astray through the influence of family members; you can be sure he is still using this means.

**3, Through our Friends.** Friends are so important! He who is without friends is poor indeed! However, in the spiritual realm friends can be enemies in disguise! The apostle Paul warned the saints at Corinth, saying, *“Do not be deceived; Evil company corrupts good habits,”* I Cor. 15:33. Satan is glad to work on us through our friends — “friends” who might urge the young person to do something stupid, or else be called “chicken.” “Friends,” who, with regards to some sinful activity, might say, “come on, everybody else is doing it.” “Friends” who say “just one drink won’t hurt you; or “smoke this joint and get an instant “high,” or “friends,” who insist on your accompanying them to some den of iniquity, saying, “live a little,” or “it’s time you had a good time,” etc. Satan is very skilled in being able to tempt God’s people to do wrong through the influence of “friends.”

**4. Through our jobs.** God intended for able-bodied people to work! Even before sin entered the world, God *“took the man and put him in the garden to tend and keep it,”* Gen. 2:15. After the first couple ate the forbidden fruit, God said to Adam, *“In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, and to dust you shall return,”* Gen. 3:19. Writing to the saints at Thessalonica, the apostle Paul said, *“If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat,”* 2 Thess. 3:10. Elsewhere this same apostle said 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.”* Laziness is a sin! However, it is possible for one to have a “job,” that puts him in the position of bidding “god speed” to evil conduct, or which puts him continually in evil company. If one has a job that renders him continually unable to worship God on the Lord’s day, he should look for employment elsewhere! Often times “on the job” good people are continually forced to hear filthy language, or is tempted to laugh at immoral jokes, etc. Satan knows how to work on us through our jobs, and the “friends” we have on the job. Of course, true Christians are aware that they must *“shine as lights in the world,”* Phil. 2:15, and that light shines in darkness. Countless people of corrupt minds and vile speech have been influenced to clean up their speech and their conduct because of being privileged to work alongside a child of God who was determined to be both *“the salt of the earth,”* and *“the light of the world,”* Matt. 5:13-14. However, let us not forget that Satan is a master at tempting people to do wrong because of things which take place in their regular place of employment.

**5. Through the weakness of the flesh.** Jesus said to Peter, James, and John *“the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak,”* Matt. 26:41. He said that to three of His chosen disciples; if that was true of them, it is also true of us! Life in the flesh is a battlefield; it involves hard conflicts with foes, both within and without. There are three avenues of temptation — *“the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,”* I John 2:15. That being the case, we must continually *“resist the devil”* James 4:7, always having on *“the whole armor of God”* so that we *“may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil,”* Eph. 6:11.

Indeed, *“the wiles of the devil”* are many and varied,. His *“devices”* are multitudinous,

deceptive, devious, and often very effective in leading people into sin. Properly understood, faithful Christians are in a warfare against Satan!

### **But How Do We Win The Battle Against Satan**

**1. By obtaining a working knowledge of the Bible.** Please note Psalm 119:11 wherein David praised God, saying, “*Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against you.*” Jesus was “*in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin,*” Heb. 4:15. But when tempted by the devil, each time Jesus quoted scripture, saying, “*it is written,*” Matt. 4:4,7,10. The greater our knowledge is of the word of God, the easier it is to “*resist the devil.*”

**2. By putting on “the whole armor of God,”** Eph. 6:11. Please read Eph. 6:12-18, thereby informing yourself of each item of God’s “armor” in which we are to be clothed. By obeying these verses we can successfully “*resist the devil.*”

**3. Resistance!** As Christians we must “keep on keeping on!” This side of the grave, we must never let our guard down. Satan, “*the tempter,*” Matt. 4:3, “*the prince of this world,*” John 12:31, “*the father*” of lies, John 8:44, is “*cunning,*” Gen. 3:1, so we must be on the alert, always mindful of his “*devices,*” and seeking diligently to “*resist him steadfast in the faith,*” I Pet. 5:9.

**Conclusion:** Notwithstanding the cunning and the skill of Satan and the multitude of his “*devices*” and “*wiles,*” with the Lord’s help we can successfully resist him. With this in mind, please note James 4:7,8: “*Therefore submit to God, Resist the devil and he will flee from you,. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you...*” Christians are on the winning team, but to win they must fight “*the good fight,*” finish “*the race,*” and keep “*the faith,*” 2 Tim. 4:7.

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—Bobby Witherington