

Satan's Strategies And Our Responses

The Creator God has a plan for each human being and Christians are called by Him to learn and live His way of life so He can give us the gift of eternal life, [**Romans 6:23**].

However, there is a powerful spirit being who wants us to fail in this calling. His name is Satan, which is a Hebrew word meaning adversary, one who opposes, is hostile or contrary to us, one who fights us.

Satan hates us because he knows that humans have been chosen to inherit the earth, which he at this time rules over, [**1 John 5:19**].

Satan wants to destroy us completely, but God protects us and places various restrictions on Satan, [**Job 1:6-12**].

The Creator God does allow Satan to try to deceive us, [**Revelation 12:9**] to test us and cause adversities for us, as he did Job, and try to cause us to fall away.

These adversities and tests can help us, that is why God allows them, but we do need to remain aware that Satan is our evil adversary.

We also need to know Satan's strategies that he uses to weaken our resistance of his deceptions.

Ephesians 6:10-16 [NIV] *“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled round your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.”*

Satan is our enemy and he has devious, deceptive schemes or plans that he hopes will lead to our destruction.

Ezekiel 28:12 [NIV] *“Son of man, take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre and say to him: ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: “You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.”’”*

The context shows that the “king of Tyre” must be an angelic being who is identified as Satan, [**Revelation 12:9**].

Few people today remotely realise how great is the power, now turned to cunning deception, is possessed by Satan.

2 Corinthians 11:14-15 [NIV] *“And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.”*

Satan deceives the whole world by pretending to be the “light of the world,” [**John 8:12; John 9:5**] and he has his own servants who masquerade to be righteous servants, ministers of God.

As we look at today's world, we can see how successful Satan has been in his deception.

The vast majority of people on the earth do **not** believe in the Creator God and Christianity. Many “Christians” do **not** live the way that God commands in His Word, the Christian Bible, but have allowed pagan practices introduced by Satan to creep into their worship and way of life.

Satan does **not** have to spend much time and effort on such “Christians” so his major effort is against all who are true Christians, who base their worship and lives on what is taught directly in the Christian Bible without human traditions that are influenced by Satan.

2 Corinthians 2:11 [NIV] *“in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.”*

We also should **not** be ignorant of Satan’s schemes.

The Christian Bible gives us many clues as to how Satan devises strategies to destroy us.

Let us now discuss four of them and how we can respond to thwart Satan’s efforts and to continue to be part of the Creator God’s plan for all humanity.

1 Satan tries to choke us with the pleasures of this world.

Luke 4:5-7 [NIV] *“The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, ‘I will give you all their authority and splendour, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will all be yours.’”*

Satan tested Jesus Christ, offering to give Him the authority and the glory of the world.

2 Corinthians 4:4 [NIV] *“The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”*

Paul called Satan as the “god of this age,” and Jesus Christ did **not** tell Satan that the world was not his to give.

Satan is in charge of the world and he can distribute the power and wealth of this world as he wishes, as far as the Creator God allows.

Matthew 13:22 [NIV] *“The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful.”*

The seed is the message about the Kingdom of God, [verse 19] and the deceitfulness of riches can choke the Word of God.

If our attention is diverted by deceptive riches and temporary concerns, the lack of the study of God’s Word, the Christian Bible, will no longer bear spiritual fruit in our lives.

The Holy Spirit will no longer live within us and that intimate relationship needed to produce spiritual fruit will no longer exist, [Galatians 5:22-25].

We don’t necessarily have to be wealthy to be deceived by riches.

For example, if you think that more income will solve your marriage problems, you are deceived.

If you think that keeping a job is more important than being honest to customers and yourself, you are deceived.

This world’s glitter can be very attractive to us and to our children, but we need to see beyond this attraction.

Hebrews 11:24-26 [NIV] *“By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. He chose to be ill-treated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.”*

When Moses was young, he had the treasures of Egypt, but they were only temporary pleasures, [Exodus 2:1-10].

By faith in the future Moses chose to suffer affliction with the people of God.

1 John 2:15-17 [NIV] *“Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world, the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does, comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives for ever.”*

It is when people are prospering that they are usually tempted to love the world and focus on material pleasures rather than a future yet unseen Kingdom of God, that is the created family of God, that the Gospel Message speaks of.

How can we battle against this satanic strategy?

God gives us the protection we need.

Just as Jesus Christ did, we counter Satan’s temptations with principles found in the Word of God, the Christian Bible, [Matthew 4:3-11].

The Word of God is the active part of the spiritual armour that God offers to every Christian, [Ephesians 6:17].

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 [NIV] *“Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.’ Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.”*

This is simple, yet difficult perhaps to enact. We come out of the world in spirit and mind and be different, **not** participate in things that are ungodly.

Philippians 4:11-13 [NIV] *“I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.”*

Personal contentment in whatever circumstances we find ourselves helps us to avoid the pressure this society puts on us because we are different.

John 17:14-18 [NIV] *“I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.”*

Jesus has sent us into this society to witness to it, [Matthew 28:18-20]. But **not** participate in its customs.

Satan’s first strategy is to ensnare us in this world, our response is to come out of the world.

2 Satan tries to monopolise our time.

Our time is our life.

If Satan can dictate how we use our time, he in effect rules our lives.

The way we use our time reflects where our hearts and minds are.

If our time is used up in the cares of this world and the pursuit of money, Satan has us in his grip.

Satan knows that if we don't ask, we won't receive the good things that God wants to give us, [**Luke 11:11-13; Luke 11:3**], both physical and spiritual.

Satan knows that if we don't repent, we will **not** be forgiven of our sins, [**1 John 1:8-10**].

Satan knows that if we don't draw close to God we will fall away from God and come within the grip of Satan, [**James 4:7-10**] who is a roaring lion seeking to devour us, [**1 Peter 5:6-9**].

Satan's purpose can be achieved even if our time is consumed in good pursuits.

If we spend all our time in "church work" and neglect our family responsibilities, we are allowing our priorities to be misled.

If we spend all our time on our job of work we will be neglecting some weighty matters of the study and obedience to God's Word, the Christian Bible.

Even if we spend all our time in study and prayer and never put God's love in us into action we are **not** balanced.

John 7:37-39 [NIV] *"On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, 'If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.' By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified."*

The Holy Spirit which is the source of God's love in us [**Galatians 5:22-23**] **cannot** be stagnant, it must flow through us in acts of love for other human beings, which will take time.

If we are too busy with family or other activities in our lives that we don't study God's Word, the Christian Bible, and pray to our Creator God, we are missing out our opportunity to mature spiritually in our lives.

These are subtle traps that Satan can use against us.

If a person is unbalanced by doing something, even something good, they are neglecting an important part of spiritual foundation and spiritual maturing.

If this continues for long, the foundation will crumble, the person will fall into Satan's trap and any good works they may do will be of **no** value in the end assessment by the Creator God.

The things that are really important in our lives are: our calling by the Creator God, our training and discipline to attain spiritual maturity, our personal relationship with our Creator God and our relationships with our physical and spiritual families.

What we need is balance in our various responsibilities.

A major key to this balance is to simplify our lives.

When we have less activities in our life to weigh in the balance, it is easier to see which ones are most important.

When we have less clutter we have more clarity in our thoughts.

Satan tries to monopolise our lives, our time, to distract us from maintaining the balance.

We counter Satan's influence in our lives by simplifying our lives so we can focus on what is important.

3 Satan tempts us to resent authority.

Isaiah 14:12-14 [NIV] *“How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’”*

Satan despises authority, he wanted to be equal with the Creator God rather than under God's authority.

Satan wanted independence.

So Satan, knowing the end result, tries to encourage this attitude in us, especially in democratic societies.

Satan tries to discredit our human leaders.

If we resent authority, we need to take a close look at how we use the authority we do have or how we would use the authority we might be given in the future, [**Revelation 5:9-10**], as priests and sub-kings under Jesus Christ, King of kings, [**Revelation 19:16**].

Do we show respect to civil rulers?

Do we submit to civil laws with humility?

Or has Satan caused us to resent such human authority?

How do we combat Satan's negative attitude towards authority?

Luke 22:24-26 [NIV] *“Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. Jesus said to them, ‘The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves.’”*

By learning from Jesus Christ the right way to use authority, all in authority must use it to serve those under them in authority.

We must rule **not** for selfish benefits, but for the benefit of others.

As we learn this right way, we will become less critical of those who have authority over us.

We will realise that happiness comes from giving.

Acts 20:33-35 [NIV] *“I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing. You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. In everything*

I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

Paul illustrated this right way to use his authority in the way he lived.

1 Peter 2:9 [NIV] *"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."*

Christians are already a royal priesthood, that is, kings and priests in training.

Ezekiel 44:23-24 [NIV] *"They are to teach my people the difference between the holy and the common and show them how to distinguish between the unclean and the clean. 'In any dispute, the priests are to serve as judges and decide it according to my ordinances. They are to keep my laws and my decrees for all my appointed feasts, and they are to keep my Sabbaths holy.'"*

One duty of a priest or king is to teach.

Malachi 2:7 [NIV] *"For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, and from his mouth men should seek instruction, because he is the messenger of the LORD Almighty."*

For this reason we should grow in grace and knowledge of God's Word to be able to teach others, [**Hebrews 5:12-14**].

1 Peter 3:15-16 [NIV] *"But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander."*

To be able to do this now is to help us prepare for our future job, [**Colossians 4:5-6**].

We need to ask how are we doing now in our own little kingdoms?

Can we discern right values from wrong and give others sound, Godly, wise advice, based on our clear understanding of God's Word, the Christian Bible?

Are our thoughts and opinions being brought into captivity to obedience towards Jesus Christ's will?

2 Corinthians 10:5-6 [NIV] *"We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete."*

This is what we must be doing every day and in every situation, use God's Word, which expresses His will, as the **only** standard we judge all things by.

Satan encourages us to reject authority, especially the authority of God's Word, the Christian Bible.

As we learn to be under the authority of God's Word, we are learning to be teachers of God's way of life.

4 Satan attacks the family.

The family is the smallest unit of social organisation, and should be the smallest unit of God's authoritative government.

As Satan tries to weaken God's authority over humanity, he also tries to weaken our families.

Mark 3:24-25 [NIV] *“If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.”*

Satan tries to divide a family by breaking down God’s rules that bind together and strengthen the family unit.

Proverbs 6:16-19 [NIV] *“There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers.”*

God hates those who sow discord among brethren.

How does Satan sow discord?

Through deceit, slander, accusation, jealousy, resentment, anger and bitterness, these are Satan’s weapons.

Society has many forces within it that pull families apart.

Parents work away from home and everybody has different activities to go to. There are tensions between the sexes and between parents and children, mainly fostered and encouraged by the media.

Ephesians 2:2 [NIV] *“in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.”*

“Ruler of the kingdom of the air” can take on new meaning in these days of TV and the Internet!

There are divorces and single-parent families, pre-marital sex and public acceptance of it all.

The solution is obvious, but it takes a lot of courage and effort to swim against the current social trends.

Revelation 19:7-8 [NIV] *“Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.”*

God uses the marriage relationship as a type of relationship between Jesus Christ and the Christian Church.

Marriages can be happy, they can reflect the genuine love that exists between Jesus Christ and the Christian Church.

Children can be a blessing.

The Creator God has given humanity in His Word, the Christian Bible, guidelines for all human relationships.

All who put the Creator God’s ways of life into practice will find that they really do work.

Psalms 127:1-3 [Amplified Bible] *“Except the Lord builds the house [family] they [the parents] labour in vain to build it, except the Lord keeps the city [society] the watchmen wakes in vain [Psalms 121:1-8]. It is in vain for you to rise up early, to take rest late, [work long hours] to eat the bread of [anxious] toil, for He [the Creator God] gives blessings to His beloved in sleep. Lo, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward.”*

To help our family relationships we must **not** be absorbed by the world.

We must simplify our lives and reduce commitments outside our family except what we can do as a family unit.

We need to learn to rule and teach God's way of life together.

These will strengthen our family ties and help us to draw closer to one another.

We then can become allies of one another in our spiritual battles.

Ecclesiastes 4:12 [NIV] *“Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”*

As we bind ourselves together as a family unit, Satan will find that we are tougher targets.

1 Timothy 5:8 [NIV] *“If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”*

This provision is both physical and spiritual.

Family responsibilities are a part of God's way of life, and are essentially the best way for all to grow spiritually.

Psalms 133:1 [Amplified Bible] *“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.”*

Let us strengthen our defences against Satan's strategies to destroy us by helping one another.

We have a tireless adversary in Satan, but we also have a tireless and more powerful Heavenly Father, Saviour and Holy Spirit, [**1 John 4:4**] who will give us all the support we need to have victory over our adversary Satan.