

"Satan's Schemes"

Did you know someone is planning a way to steal your soul? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Yes the devil exists, and he wants your soul. Stay tuned.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. The SEARCH program began 38 years ago in September 1980! Mack Lyon began this television ministry on one station in Ada, Oklahoma. He first wanted to reach the entire state of Oklahoma with a Bible-based program filled with love and Scripture. He wasn't trying to sell anything or make outlandish promises. He wanted to preach the pure gospel with love. Little did he know of the plans that God had for this ministry. Today we reach every corner of the country and into more than two dozen countries across the globe by television and radio and to the whole world by the internet. Our goal today is still to preach the pure gospel with love. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

From the beginning, Satan intended to steal every person's heart from God. He seduced Eve to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; he was out to win her heart from God. Satan used Eve's disobedience to influence Adam to sin. Satan lied about God and told her "you surely will not die." Then he gave her the impression that God had cheated her. "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3 and verse 5).

Because Adam and Eve fell for the devil's schemes, physical and spiritual death entered into the world. The devil uses many schemes to move our hearts away from God. God and His Son Jesus today. 1 Peter 5 and verse 8 says, "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." We must know Satan's schemes, because falling for them will cost our souls.

Now we offer this study free on Satan's schemes. And if you'd like a printed copy or a CD of our study and you live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website at www.searchtv.org.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from 2 Corinthians 2 verses 9 to 11, and then we'll explore Satan's schemes.

Our reading today comes from 2 Corinthians 2 verses 9 to 11. There was a person at Corinth who had sinned against God but repented and the people forgave him. And so Paul is saying that he is willing to forgive as well.

For to this end also I wrote, so that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things. But one whom you forgive anything, I forgive also; for indeed what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, I did it for your sakes in the presence of Christ, so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.

Let us pray. Father we're grateful for You love. We're thankful Father for the this day we're thankful Father for the blessing of life. And Father help us to be strong against the schemes of the devil that we may love You and serve You always. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.

The schemes of the devil that he dreams up can cost us our souls and can lead us astray. And so we must never take them for granted. The devil is a schemer and he seeks to separate you from God. Make no mistake! How does the devil trick us? Well, first, Satan uses lies and half-truths from

the voices that are surrounding us. Oh the Lord Jesus said in John 8:44, that "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies." The best way to distinguish the truth from error is to study Scripture. We should continually remind ourselves of God's truth. Your best defense against Satan's schemes is to know God's Holy Word.

Second, the devil uses other people. The problem of peer pressure is nothing new. Some think if everyone is doing it, it must be okay; others see family or friends do it and believe it must be all right. People, however, are not the standard of right and wrong; God is. People may have no problem with what God calls sin, but God does! God will not overlook what He calls sin. And unless the blood of Jesus cleanses you from sin, you must bear the penalty of it!

The law of Moses said in Deuteronomy 13 verses 6 to 8, "If your brother, your mother's son, or your son or daughter, or the wife you cherish, or your friend who is as your own soul, (they) entice you secretly, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods' (whom neither you nor your fathers have known, of the gods of the peoples who are around you, near you or far from you, from one end of the earth to the other end), you shall not yield to him or listen to him." Now while we love people, we must love God even more. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 10:37, 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."

The children of Israel began to grow close to the pagans, and their idols when they intermarried with them, and slowly this began to adopt, they began to adopt their ways. You remember Solomon, when Solomon first became king, he walked in the ways of his father David and was faithful to God, but Solomon married many foreign women from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the people of Israel, "You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods." Well, Solomon clung to these wives in love (1 Kings 11:2). His many wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the Lord his God. Solomon did evil in God's eyes and he opened the door for Judah to turn the hearts, their hearts from God. When you compromise and leave the Lord, you encourage others to do the same. The apostle Paul warned the church at Corinth in 1 Corinthians 15:33, "Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals."

Third, the devil is a tempter. He uses selfishness to steal our hearts from God. He wants to drive a wedge between our desires and the God who made us. 1 John 2:15 to 17 reminds us, "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever."

Satan wants people to be jealous, to feel cheated, to be discontent, or to covet what others have. The devil wants us to despise other people's success and to rejoice at their failures. The devil frustrates good works and shames those who don't follow along with his vices. Jeremiah 17 and verse 9 says, that "The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?" The Lord Jesus understood us and said in Mark 7:2 to 22, "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness." People with evil hearts do evil things.

Again 1 John 2:15 to 17 says, "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever." People learn to love sin when it brings them pleasure, but they don't realize how sin can ruin their lives and cost their souls. Jeremy Taylor many years ago said this about sin, "First it startles him, then it becomes pleasing, then easy, then delightful, then frequent, then habitual, then confirmed. Then the man is impenitent, then obstinate, and then he is condemned."

One must never tolerate or condone evil. When people tolerate evil, it's not long before they accept it and practice it. You can't walk through the mud and not get muddy. As time passes, people celebrate their evil as if it were good. And in the end, they pass laws supporting their evil and then persecuting those who refuse to practice their evil. David Lipscomb said, "The devil only wants to get the wedge of a little allowed sin in your heart, and you will soon be all his own. Never play with fire—never trifle with little sins."

Fourth, the devil loves to tell people that they can't change. The devil hates it when people repent of their sins. The devil even tries to paint repentance as a punishment, when in reality it's a process of healing. Evil people hate the light and they mock those who leave evil lives to live righteously. They don't like being reminded that their immoral lifestyle is wrong. Peter wrote in 1 Peter 4:4 to 5, "In all this, they are surprised that you (that is when you are converted) do not run with them into the same excesses of dissipation, (that is moral looseness) and they malign you (they slander you); but they will give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead."

People can change! They can turn their lives around, and I have seen them do it! You can choose what is right and forsake what is evil. You don't have to stay enslaved to sin. Paul spoke of the Corinthians who changed their lives. 1 Corinthians 6 verses 9 to 11 says, "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. (And then he says) Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God." God can wash you and make you holy, and declare you innocent in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Sin enslaves, but the Lord Jesus promised in John 8:36, "So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed." Paul said in Galatians 5:13, "For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another." Christians can be free to do what is right and what shows love instead of acting in selfishness. God's ways bless everyone. When we follow Jesus, we enjoy the fruit of righteousness. Galatians 5:22 to 23 says, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." My friend, that is real freedom! It's freedom to bless. There's no law against righteousness, no law against love, joy, or peace. No one can blame you for being patient, kind, or good, faithful, or gentle, or self-controlled. God's way is a blessing to everybody!

Fifth, Satan loves to accuse the people of God. Satan likes to turn things upside down and make evil into good and good into evil. Revelation 12 and verse 10 says, "Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren (that is Satan) has been thrown down, he

who accuses them before our God day and night.” In ancient times, the accusers said Christians were cannibals, because they ate Lord’s Supper remembering the body and blood of Jesus Christ. The accusers said Christians were incestuous, because a Christian brother would marry a Christian sister even though they weren’t kin in the flesh but only in Christ Jesus. The accusers said that Christians were atheists, because they didn’t believe in the Roman or the Greek gods, but they did believe in the God of the Bible who created them. Accusations filled with lies and half-truths led men to become prejudiced against the people of God.

Today Satan still makes accusations against the people of God. If they have the least weakness, Satan labels them as hypocrites. Now a hypocrite is someone who pretends to be what he does not intend to be. Now there are hypocrites indeed in the world, but struggling with sin and hating one’s sins doesn’t mean one is a hypocrite; it means he’s human. All Christians struggle with sin and strive daily to fight it. They are not pretenders. Faithful Christians confess their sins and ask God to forgive them; a hypocrite just keeps on pretending that he never sinned. Oh, the difference is clear.

Today Satan’s people accuse Christians of being mean-spirited and narrow minded. Satan loves to slander and mock God’s people. The Lord Jesus said in John 3:19 to 20, “This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.”

Satan wants to justify and glorify sin and error. And when God calls something sinful and God’s people acknowledge what God says, Satan and his crowd become mean and accuse God’s people of being unloving. I tell you it’s loving to teach people about God’s moral laws, because God’s morals are kind and protect. It’s cruel to lie to people about God’s morals and then encourage people to practice sinful things. When God’s people teach that we must obey God and not go beyond the teaching, Satan and his crowd accuse God’s people and slander them.

God said in Isaiah 5 and verse 20, “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!” Don’t be fooled by Satan’s schemes, lies, and false accusations. Satan is the earliest source of fake news, and he’s never stopped trying to blind us to God’s truth! When you ignore or refuse to believe God’s truth, you fall for the devil’s schemes. The devil is not your friend and never has been. He will use you and lead you astray. Oh, come to the Lord, and find the love and freedom in Christ! Let’s pray together. Oh, Father help us to love You, to refuse to sin, to hold fast to Your teaching. And may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen.

What can you do to fight the devil? Well, first, fill your heart with the word of God so that you’ll know the truth and be able to spot the errors of Satan. God doesn’t want His children to be “tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, (or) by craftiness in deceitful schemes” (Ephesians 4:14). Rather he wants us to know the truth!

Second, we must stand strong and resist the devil. James 4 verses 7 and 8 says, “Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.” God gives us the armor that we need to fight the devil. Ephesians 6:10 and 11 says, “Finally, be strong (or be strengthened) in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.” Truth, the gospel message, faith, hope, salvation, the word of God, and prayer make up our armor. And when we have God’s armor and Christ’s strength, we can defeat the devil to the salvation of our souls.

Third, remain alert. The devil attacks when we are vulnerable. 1 Peter 5:8 says, "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." Keep resisting the devil!

If you wish to have the Lord in your life to strengthen you and to win this struggle, then become a Christian! Put your faith in Christ and His teaching. Turn from the sins that wage war against your soul and take up your cross to follow Christ. Confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, just as Acts 2:38 teaches. Why not start your Christian life today!

Well, we hope that today's study about Satan's schemes has been helpful to you. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy or a CD of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now you can download these lessons or a newsletter online at our website: www.searchtv.org. There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches in your area. You can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry." We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, we're not here to get your money. We're here to help you get to heaven.

Please get involved with a church of Christ. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. Well, as always we say to you we're gonna be back next week. We hope you'll tell a friend about this program. And keep searching God's word with us keep studying with us. Let people know about the program. And as always we say to you God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.