

How the devil wins a Christian

The first thing we need to learn about the devil is that he is not trying to win the non-Christians because they are already his by default. This means that the devils number one priority is to find ways to win those who call themselves Christians. Notice what John says in,

1 John 5:19 We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies *under the sway of the wicked one.* ²⁰ And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. ²¹ Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

First of all we notice that the devil domain is the earth, Paul calls him the prince of this world in Eph. 2:2 and we all know the devil is very sneaky and can appear to be good on the outside but he is wicked through and through. But God has given us power to anticipate and recognize the devil and his sneaky ways through his Word. God has given us everything we need to know on how to resist the devil but we must be on constant watch. If we fail to arm ourselves with the word of God and prayer we will find ourselves slowly drifting toward the devil's side and he knows this and he uses this. You see the devil loves it when we become lazy in our Christianity because we become ripe for the picking.

The devil also loves it when Christians think they have reached perfection and no longer have room to grow because as soon as they have that attitude they will soon belong to the devil. The devil also loves it when people take scripture out of context to fool people into thinking that there is now way they can every be lost. For instance someone might quote,

1 John 5:18 We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him.

When people take verses like these out of context and without considering what the rest of the Bible says they can give a person a false idea that they could never be touched by devil or every sin again once they become a Christian but we know that this is not the case when we examine the whole council of God because we see and over and over again where the writers warn the Christians to watch out for the devil and temptation least they fall. Even in this same book John makes it very clear that the Christian can and does sin.

1 John 1:10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

So in John contradicting himself. Absolutely not! What John is saying in 5:18 is that those who are born of God are no longer going to live a life of sin because when we gave our selves over to God we became servants of righteousness instead of servants of sin. Even within verse 18 we see implied that a person must do something to keep themselves from sinning because notice it says those who are born of keep themselves. Now when a Christian is keeping themselves pure by obeying the word of God the devil certainly cannot touch the Christian.

However we need to recognize the fact the devil can and does win Christians to his side from time to time. We read of several Christians that were affected by his influence in the first century. For instance he stole:

- Ananias & Sapphira because of their lies and greed Acts 5
- Simon who wanted turn the power of the HS into a financial gain Acts 8
- Hymenaeus and Alexander denied the faith suffering shipwreck 1 Timothy 1:20
- Demas went back to his worldly ways 2 Tim 4:10
- Church leaders like Diotrefes and other unnamed elders were won by the Devil 3 Jn. 1:9, Acts 20

We would be very arrogant to say that it could not happen to us. Now I will say that here at our congregation that we have an eldership that grounded in the truth and overall we have fairly strong congregation and if the devil tried to attack us as group he would most likely fail. But need to understand that the devil doesn't work this way instead he waits and he watches and picks people off one by one. Notice how Peter describes the devil.

1 Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

Just like lion who watches a group of animals it looks for the most vulnerable one which is usually weaker or its not staying close with the group the devil looks for the Christian whose faith is becoming weak and who is not being actively involved in God's kingdom. So it is up to you to test yourself daily to see if you are drifting from God. We need to keep in mind that if we allow ourselves to be won by the devil he will also use you to win other to his side.

Keeping this in mind let us now look at some specific ways the devil wins a Christian.

1. Sometimes the devil is effective by using distractions.

Paul's tells us in 2. Cor. 2:11 the devil has devices that uses against us. We need to keep in mind that the devil has been around along time and he has the advantage of know just what make a human tick and knows the best way to distract a person from their goal. You see the devil loves it when Christians get to many things going on in their life and they get to busy to spend any time with God. Think about your own lives and the amount of time you spend running from one place to other or how much time you spend watching TV or doing work around the house and compare that time to how much time you spend with God by either praying or studying his word or by being a doer of his word? If were to make a pie chart and compare how you use your time how big would the pie be that is spent on God?

How many times do we allow distractions to keep up from attending worship service and Bible class? When we allow the things of this world to distract from serving God on daily basis the Devil is getting closer and closer to wining you over to his side.

As Christians we need to remember that we signed up to be soldiers of Christ and we are told by our commander.

Matthew 6:33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Are you being a good soldier of Christ? Are you priorities straight? Are you seeking God's kingdom and righteousness first or are you distracted by worldly things?

Now I want to look at another verse that is usually used to comfort a Christian

1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it..

Paul teaches us a couple of things here. First of all the devil is limited on how he can influence us. He can only do so through worldly ways. He cannot influence us in some miraculous way or in some way that will violate our free will. Second we learn that God will not allow a Christian to be tempted beyond what they are capable of handling and God will always provide a way of escape for the Christians. But on the same hand the devil will also provide a way for corruption. For instance when Jonah of the OT tried to run from God there just happened to be a boat available for him to sail away. When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden the devil provided them with an excuse. When the Christian today doesn't want to assemble with the saints, give to the Lord, or fulfill their Christian duties the devil will make a way available for you to avoid these things and he certainly will provide you with the excuse you need to justify the sins you get involved in because he wants to feel good about rebelling against God.

If you don't want to be won by the devil then we must learn not to allow him to distract us from our goal of reaching heaven. Notice what,

Hebrews 12:1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

So to keep the devil at bay we must learn to stay focused on Jesus and seeking his kingdom first in our life.

Another way the devil wins the Christian is through Boredom

One thing that is important for us to learn about life is that we cannot maintain the same excitement level everyday because life many times is mundane & ordinary. This is why we look forward to vacations, entertaining events or hobbies we may have because we want to do something a little different. Many times people can understand this concept when it comes to everyday life but they don't learn to apply it to their Christianity. Some who become Christians will be on fire for the Lord and they will get busy every day working for him but then one day they wake up and that fire is not as hot as it used to be and they began to lose their passion and just as quickly as their flame began their flame goes completely out and they stop serving God altogether and that is the kind of Christian that the devil wants because he knows that Christians that think that they can only serve God while they are on some kind of spiritual high will soon burn out and be his.

So as Christians we must learn that there will be ups and downs in our Christianity just like there is ups and downs in regular lives. But we must never give up on Christianity during low times. You see it is ok to let your flame get a little low sometimes just don't let it go out. We must learn what works for us and motivates to stir the fire now and again to keep it burning strong. You know God does expect us to go 90 mph in service to him day in day out he just wants us to go at a steady pace and to take time now and again to refuel ourselves. Jesus understood this,

Mark 6: 31 And He said to them, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat. 32 So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves.

While it good for to work hard for the Lord everyone needs to rest from their labors or they will burn out and the devil will win your soul. Now when I talk about resting from your labors I am not suggesting in anyway that you take a break from worshipping God or doing that which is right because notice what Paul says,

Galatians 6: 9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

2 Thessalonians 3:13 But *as for you*, brethren, do not grow weary *in* doing good.

So even if we are in the middle of recharging ourselves and someone needs a helping hand we cannot say I'm sorry I cant help your right now because I am on vacation from the Lord. We can learn what taking a break is about by looking at what Jesus did when he took his breaks from his labors.

Mark 6:45 Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while He sent the multitude away. 46 And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray.

You see Jesus spent some alone time speaking to father. He took some time for himself yet he did not take break from God and neither should we. So if you get to the point in your Christian life where you feel bored with God's word or doing good works or attending the church services let it be a warning sign to you that you are well on your way to being won by the devil.

Another way the devil wins Christians is through other Christians.

I don't think many of us really think that we are that big of an influence on those around but think most of us would be really surprised at how many people look at and follow our example. In fact I have heard many Christians who makes excuses for the faithfulness to the Lord based other Christians. For example when someone sees a older Christian who they consider to be very close to God not attending all the Bible classes or worships services then they will fill like justify themselves in not making it to all the services that are offered by the church.

This how many Christians fall away from the church completely. They will but a lot of faith and trust in other Christians and when they see them doing things they should not be doing or when the fall away then that influence that Christian to fall away as well. You see the devil just loves it when Christians base there faithfulness on another Christian because he know that no matter how faithful a person is they can and the sin against God and when they do they become a power tool for the devil as their behavior will most likely win him so more souls. A great example of what I am talking about can be found in,

Galatians 2:11 Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; 12 for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who

were of the circumcision. ¹³ And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.

Now think about this a min. Here we have a man who hand selected by Jesus to be one his ambassadors and he was the first apostle to make that great confession that Jesus was the Christ. As we see Peter was a powerful influence on those around him but in this instance he was being for the devil. He knew that God no longer wanted there to be a division between the Jew and the Gentile yet Peter had a weak moment and sinned by action and Paul called him on it because not only was he wrapped in his sin he was influencing Barnabas and other Jews around to engage into the same sin.

Again this show just how powerful you can be as a bad example and why the devil loves using you in this situation to win other Christians to his side. This is why I believe it very important that watch how live our lives and the example that we are making. We need to ask ourselves on a daily basis, What kind of example am I being today? Am I working for the devil or against him? But not only should we strive to be a good examples we need to teach other Christians and remind them that people fail from time to time so don't base your faithfulness to Lord based on the action of others. No instead base your faithfulness after the example of Jesus because only he was able to be the perfect example because he never failed to do what was right, He never sinned. The devil has won far to many Christians to his side because they made another Christian their example instead of allowing Jesus to be their example.

Another way the devil wins Christians is through discouragement

There are many discouragements we will face in the life and the devil loves every single one of them because he knows 50/50 chance of winning through discouragement because you either grow stronger from the pitfalls this life has to offer or you will grow weaker.

If your having problems in your marriage the devil will use the to win you.

If you are a single parent and you struggle with getting your kids ready for church by yourself and everything else that goes a long with this situation you can get to so discouraged that you find it easy just to stay home and do nothing. Well again this is what the devil is hoping he want you to give up so that he can start winning you to his side.

The same thing is true when it comes to illness the devil is hoping that you will get so discouraged about your medical condition that you give up on God.

Sometimes Christians think that Elders don't have problems with discouragement but they do. You see when they see a congregation that doesn't seem to care what is going on or when they see several Christians fall away and no matter what they say or do seems to change their mind, these kind of things can discourage and elder and again the devil loves it when this happens.

When preachers don't feel like their work or there message is reaching people they become discouraged. When Christians don't show up for Bible classes the bible class get discouraged and so you see discouragement becomes a great tool for the devil. Jesus offered the following advice on how defeat discouragement.

Luke 18:1 Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart,

So if we see that we are becoming discouraged follow the advice and pray always to the Lord. Now we have looked at several ways that the devil wins Christian to his side. Now there are

many more ways that could be named but was important for us to realize is that he wants us fail. If we want to keep the devil at bay we must continually resist him and he will flee because when be Christians we were given power of the devil the Jesus Christ but if we allow him into our lives he will come running to reap as much havoc as he can.

The devil is crafty and he knows how to turn the truth into a lie, how trap people, and he can transform himself into appearing to be an angle of light. Must take him the devil and way seriously or he just win our souls. I want to close this lesson this morning with word of Paul which gives great advice on how to keep the devil at bay.

Ephesians 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶ above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; ¹⁸ praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints