

People today say they “hate evil,” but in truth they do not; secretly they love their selfish pleasures and the world’s ways. They say they “love God,” but they do not; secretly they’re suspicious of God and inclined to enjoy the devil’s ways.

THE DEVIL’S STRATEGY—The devil’s goal was simple: cause man to give away to him the authority which man had. How would Adam give his authority away to the devil? There was only one way: to take himself out from under submission to God. This submission was symbolized by the one restriction God had given to Adam: he was not to eat from one particular tree (and be content with enjoying the remaining millions of trees!). It was a place Adam could not go, a point where he had to acknowledge that while he had authority, it was not the *final* authority—God had the final authority. But if he would submit himself on this one point to God’s authority, God would delegate to him authority over all the rest. This God-given authority is what the devil coveted—the right to rule over all the earth.

This was not an easy goal for the devil. It was hard to find an area where Adam could be tempted. Think about what the devil was up against. Adam had but one restriction to live under, and it was an easy one. He was not hungry. He was not in a narrow place; instead there was blessed abundance and variety. He had plenty of space to explore. He had no wants; he was perfectly fulfilled. He had no fear concerning the future; and he had no sin nature. On this point we cannot identify with Adam. We have a sin nature—a nature that just wants to cross God in order to be independent. We’re filled with selfishness.

Simply stated, this was the devil’s dilemma: *How do you get a man who has **everything** to give it up in exchange for **nothing**!!* The devil’s strategy was to go after Eve, and to be able through her to get to Adam. This is a common tactic of his. When there are godly parents, his approach is to attack the children, and through them attempt to bring down the parents. When there’s one godly spouse, his approach is to attack the ungodly spouse, and through that one to bring down the other. But how

did the devil manage to get to Eve who was as blessed with abundant life as Adam was?

HE LIES—The devil has nothing to offer, so he has to convince man that what he does have to offer is *something*, when it’s actually *nothing*. The devil approaches each one of us just as he did Eve, using doubt and dissatisfaction. He creates doubt that God is telling the truth, and dissatisfaction with what God has provided for you.

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was most probably not uniquely special in any way. It was just one of many trees, but one that was marked off by God as a restriction. If the devil was to get Eve to eat of the tree, he could not tell the truth. There’s no truth in him—“He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it” (*John 8:44*). The devil is not only a liar, but a “deceiver.” Most people lie at certain times to protect themselves. They tell a “little lie” to avoid embarrassment or inconvenience. The devil never lies for this purpose. When he lies to you, it’s always so that he might destroy you. His intent is malicious without exception. Deception is precisely this: lying with the intent to destroy.

A fisherman uses little live minnows as bait on a hook at the end of a leader line. With thousands of minnows in the water, how does he get the big fish to go after his one little minnow? It’s simple: when the big fish comes around, the other minnows swim away. His little minnow tries to swim away, too, but it can swim only until it reaches the end of the leader line.

It looks like he is being nice, going to a lot of trouble to give the big fish a free meal. In fact, he does everything he can to get a healthy, attractive, tasty minnow as close to the big fish as possible. But his purpose is not for the well-being of the big fish; the real purpose is hidden—a clever deception. As soon as the fish bites the hook, the fisherman’s whole attitude changes. With every fiber of his being, his entire focus is to get that fish into the boat—and later to eat it for dinner!

The key in deception is that it looks good on the surface, but the reality is very different. This whole world’s system is controlled by the devil, and because it is, he makes it totally destructive to our eternal souls. The devil’s deception is twofold: (1) make the lie look as attractive as possible, and (2) use the lie for the sole purpose of destruction. The devil set out to steal man’s God-given authority over the earth by deception.

HE OFFERS “LIFE”—What did the devil offer Eve that she didn’t already have? There was nothing new to offer her, so he offered her “life.” Real “life” is what people seek today: fulfillment, satisfaction, completeness, self-actualization, recognition, achievement. But this is what Eve already had in her abundant life with God!

But the “life” the devil offers *does not* exist. This can be seen on television, which offers a fantasy that does not exist in reality—there’s sin without consequences, destruction without pain, and compromise without guilt. The producers don’t care if it’s a deception; it’s okay in the name of harmless “entertainment.” But it isn’t harmless! It causes us to think that the world actually works that way! People begin to internalize the “reality” seen on TV; they allow it to overwhelm their conscience and any righteous teaching they have had regarding right and wrong.

This whole world’s system is basically a lie. The devil is using every part of it to destroy life with God. It seems attractive and fulfilling to get “life” as the world portrays it, to fill what the world says is a “need.” But the “need” does not really exist; and even if it did, what the world offers could not fill it anyway! The fisherman’s concern is not really for the fish, but to destroy the fish. The “life” the world offers is a deception designed to destroy the abundant life with God of true believers on this earth. How does the devil offer “life”?

FOCUS ON THE WORLD—The devil points to the world around you, rather than to God. He says “life” is in experiencing the world. Understand this: God gave us all things richly to enjoy (*1 Tim 6:17*). There is nothing wrong by definition in enjoying the world. If there were, all Christians would have to become monks like those

whose solution in the Middle Ages was to live in caves to be totally separated from the world. They attempted not being *of* the world by not being *in* the world. Even this extreme outward self-denial can lead to self-righteousness, where a person pridefully considers himself more spiritual than others. Rather, enjoying things in the world becomes a problem only when we attempt to find “life” in them!

The life that God gives is not in avoiding the world; it’s in *knowing God*—“This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (*John 17:3*). His purpose is not to restrict us, but to give us abundant life in Christ, so that we’ll have a heart that loves him and desires to serve him.

The devil brings confusion in a subtle way by turning us *away* from God and *to* the world to try to find “life.” It can even include the wonderful love relationships in our homes. The devil tries to get loving parents to find “life” in their children, or wives to find it in their husbands—to get the family to meet the need for “life.” If you do this, you’re playing right into the devil’s schemes. Life is in knowing God; then you can truly enjoy the loving relationships which he alone can give.

ALWAYS “LATER”—The devil’s offer of “life” is always later. It always requires just one more step. A man purchased a new camera and quickly began to enjoy taking photos as a hobby. He would take a good picture, and then see someone else’s better picture, and ask, “How did you do that?” The answer was always, “You need to have one of these.” There was always something more to buy. At first it was a filter, and then a longer lens, and then a “fill” flash, and then a tripod. The man finally asked, “When does it stop?” The answer was, “It never stops!” This same scenario is even *more true* in the area of computers!

This is just the way the devil works. First he says, “You need this relationship in order to be happy.” So you get into that relationship and he says, “Now you need the relationship and this car.” And then it’s the relationship, the car, and this nice house with a garage for the car, and then a swimming pool, a hot tub, and on, and on, and on. It’s always *the next thing!*

John D. Rockefeller was one of the richest men in the world. On his deathbed he was asked, "How much money is enough?" He said, "**Just one dollar more.**" It's tragic: "The eyes of man are *never* satisfied" (*Prov 27:20*). If you get on the devil's treadmill in this world, you'll discover that "life" is *always later*. The reason is simple: he doesn't have it to give to you now—or ever—because it does not exist! The point of satisfaction with a fulfilled life never comes. It doesn't matter how much money you have, how famous you are, or what you've accomplished. The only thing the devil has to keep you on his fishing line is to tell you there's *more later*, just a step away, and then you'll get there. But there's always another step! The world is the devil's treadmill. This causes you to lose your "today." Most people are living for some kind of "*next event*" to make them happy.

In contrast to this, our God is a "*present tense*" God; life in him is fellowship with him *now*. He says, "Come *now*...though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow" (*Isaiah 1:18*). True Christians have life right now; they're "satisfied" in their inmost being. They have plans and hopes and dreams, but they're not obsessed with them. You can recognize when you've allowed anything to obsess you: when something doesn't happen as you had hoped, you become upset.

You can know God himself right now. It's not that you can know him someday, or somewhere else, or when you know more of the Bible. His purpose is that you know him right now, find forgiveness now, and have fellowship with him now. And if you *do* know him, his purpose is that you commune with him now, not sometime later, but all throughout the day, seeing him work all around you in the people and circumstances of life. It doesn't matter where you are in knowledge or location. If you lay hold of this truth, one of the great things that will happen to you is this: you will experience God *right now*. Your life will become a present tense life. You will be living in the "now," not regretting the past or looking down the road to something in the future. You will have a complete satisfaction in your heart—right now. □



"Him that cometh to me
I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37)

Cast yourself at once, in the simplest faith, upon the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. All of your preparation for eternity is entirely out of yourself, and in the Lord Jesus. Washed in his blood, and clothed upon with his righteousness, you may appear before God divinely, fully, freely, and forever accepted. The salvation of the chief of sinners is all prepared, finished, and complete in Christ (*Eph 1:6; Col 2:10*).

Again, I repeat, your eye of faith must be directed entirely out of and from yourself to Jesus. Beware of looking for any preparation to meet God in yourself. It's all in Christ. God does not accept you on the ground of a broken heart, or a clean heart, or a praying heart, or a believing heart. He accepts you wholly and entirely on the ground of the perfect atonement of his blessed Son. Cast yourself, in childlike faith, upon that atonement—"Christ dying for the ungodly" (*Rom 5:6*)—and you are saved!

Justification is a poor, law-condemned, self-condemned, self-destroyed sinner, wrapping himself by faith in the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is "unto all, and upon all them that believe" (*Rom 3:22*). He, then, is justified, and prepared to die and meet God, and he only, who casts from him the garment of his own righteousness, and runs into this blessed "City of Refuge"—the Lord Jesus—and hides himself there from the "avenger of blood" (*Josh 20*), exclaiming, in the language of triumphant faith: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (*Rom 8:1*).

Look to Jesus, then, for a contrite heart; look to Jesus for a clean heart; look to Jesus for a believing heart; look to Jesus for a loving heart; and Jesus will give you all.

One faith's touch of Christ, and one divine touch from Christ, will save the vilest sinner. Oh, the dimmest, most distant glance of faith, turning its languid eye upon Christ, will heal and save the soul.

God is prepared to accept you in his blessed Son, and for his sake he will cast all your sins behind his back, and take you to glory when you die. Never has the Lord Jesus rejected a poor sinner who came to him empty and with "nothing to pay" (*Luke 7:42*). God will glorify his free grace in your salvation, and will therefore save you—**just as you are**, "without money and without price" (*Isaiah 55:1*). Paul immediately responded to the anxious jailor who asked what he must do to be saved: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (*Acts 16:31*).

No matter what you have been, or what you are, plunge into "the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness" (*Zech 13:1*), and you shall be clean, "washed whiter than snow" (*Psalms 51:7*). "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow" (*Isaiah 1:18*). Heed no suggestion of Satan, or of unbelief. Cast yourself at the feet of Jesus, and if you perish, perish there! Oh no! perish you never will, for he promised, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (*John 6:37*). And his blessed invitation is, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (*Matt 11:28*). Let your reply be, "Lord, I come! I entwine my feeble, trembling arms of faith around thy cross, thy death, thyself, and if I die, I will die, cleaving, clinging, looking unto thee!"

So act and believe, and you need not fear to die. Looking the Saviour in the face, you can look death in the face, exclaiming with good ol' Simeon, "Lord, now let me depart in peace: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation" (*Luke 2:29*). My prayer is that you and I, through rich, free, and sovereign grace, will meet in heaven, and unite together in exclaiming—"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain!" (*Rev 5:12*). □

*Just as I am without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bidst me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!*

*Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind—
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need in thee to find—
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!*



"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10)

A mere pawn in the devil's hand—is it possible? Could that be you? just another fool duped by the master deceiver himself? This tract is designed to cause you to think. Satan was a successful schemer in the Garden of Eden; and he operates today just like he did then. Here's what he's up to:

TO STEAL—to steal from man the authority that God had given him. The devil cannot stand to be under authority. He wants to be in control. He saw Adam in control of that beautiful paradise world, and he wanted it for himself.

TO KILL—to kill the man himself. The devil is a murderer; he cannot give life, so he seeks to take it. He sought to kill man by getting him to violate God's will, resulting in actual spiritual death.

TO DESTROY—to destroy the fellowship that man had with God, and even the glory of God in man—the potential to be God-like in our character, not in omnipotence but in holiness and love. The devil's aim is to warp the character of man, so that it's devil-like in impurity and selfishness.

When the devil tempts you with sin, it's for the purpose of your destruction. He's capable of nothing but destruction. He may have been the highest created being at one time; but he rebelled against God, and has been set on exalting himself above God ever since by any means (*Isaiah 14:12-15*). Contrast this with what Jesus told us about himself. He came to give us abundant life. Adam, in fact, enjoyed this abundant life of fellowship with God. Jesus came that we might also have this same life.