

FAITH'S ENEMIES

We have already looked at faith's friends and companions. Now we examine the enemies and roadblocks on our journey of faith. Satan comes to steal, kill and destroy our faith in God and does so through various deceptive means.

1. **Unforgiveness** - Mark 11:22-26 This famous faith challenge of Jesus ends with a warning about unforgiveness. We must not hold anything against anyone but must remain clean in our relationships. God tells us that 'faith works through love' - Galatians 5:6. Forgiveness is one topic we will devote a whole message to in another section.
2. **Ignorance** - Romans 10:17 If we do not receive the Word of God, we will be ignorant. This refers mainly to God's written Word, but God also uses prophetic words not only to remind us of things but also to encourage us. Young Timothy needed this - 1 Timothy 1:18
3. **Unbelief** - This is a mother of all sins. Adam and Eve did not believe God in the garden of Eden but fell for the serpent's deception with these words: 'Did God really say?' Unbelief keeps us from entering into God's best and even miracles. An unbelieving heart is an evil heart. - Hebrews 3:12-19, Numbers 13:31-33, James 1:6-7, Matthew 13:58, Mark 6:5-6. Jesus rebukes unbelief - Mark 16:14
4. **Doubt** - Matthew 14:31 Unbelief is an absence of faith. Doubt speaks of a diminished faith. In that verse, the word doubt in Greek is *distazo*: '**to waver in opinion**'. However, in Matthew 21:21, the word doubt in Greek is *diakrino*: 'to withdraw from, to discriminate, hesitate, hence to doubt, judge, stagger or waver'. The same word is used in Romans 14:23. Doubt is to hesitate, re-examine or question what has already been proven. It is wavering after faith has already come, like what happened to Peter on the water - Matthew 14:27-31. Doubt can be costly. Abraham and Sarah doubted God's promise and had Ishmael, instead of waiting for God's chosen son Isaac. The conflict in the Middle East today between Jews and Arabs has its source in their doubt of God.
5. **Disobedience** - Hebrews 4:6. Adam and Eve lost paradise to this and Israel missed the promised land due to disobedience.
6. **Impatience / Laziness** - Hebrews 6:11-12 Esau lost his birthright because of impatience over hunger. How many times do we miss God's best because of passivity, apathy or laziness.
7. **Stop confession** - Hebrews 10:23 We must not deny Jesus or His words.
8. **Fear** - Hebrews 10:35-39 When storms come, we want to take down our sail and leave the situation. Fear paralyzes us, effects our morale, confuses our thinking and over excites our emotions etc. - 2 Timothy 1:7, Numbers 14:9. It is sad to see some Christians afraid of certain gifts and manifestations of the Holy Spirit due to excesses, misuses or even their own bad theology.
9. **Dead works** - Hebrews 6:1 The soil of our heart must be cleared of rocks, weeds, sin, self-rights in order for faith to be planted and grow.
10. **Seeking Man's Praise** - John 12:42-43; 5:44 Religious traditions can keep one from receiving persons, beliefs or practices from God that threaten their position, power or prosperity
11. **Rejection of Authority** - Numbers 12:1-2,15; Miriam stops progress
12. **Idle Speech** - Numbers 14:1-4,28,36-37 God is listening. Speak faith!
13. **Discouragement / Past Hurts** - Exodus 6:6-9, Hebrews 3:13, John 17:13
14. **Bad Conscience** - 1 Timothy 1:19, Those like Daniel were bold because they had a clean conscience.

15. **Unthankfulness, lack of praise** - Romans 1:21 One of the first steps away from God is ingratitude. God abhors grumbling and complaining - Numbers 14:27. John Hyde was a missionary to Pakistan who became known as 'Praying Hyde'. He also began to believe God for a soul a day to come to Christ and eventually for four souls a day. Whenever he did not see four converted a day, he found the reason was usually a lack of praise in his life.
16. **Pride** - James 4:6 God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. 'God opposes = 'God sets himself in battle array' -Wuest Greek translation. Humility opens the door for the grace of God to be poured out.
17. **Worries of life, deception of riches, materialism** - Mark 4:15-19 Such things are distractions from faith and prevent one from being rooted in God. When people are consumed with acquiring, maintaining, fixing and adoring things, they forget God - Deuteronomy 8:10-14. God desires us to take time off each week to remember his goodness - Deuteronomy 5:13-15
18. **Humanism/ worldly wisdom** - 1 Corinthians 1:26-29

'See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of the world rather than on Christ. - Colossians 2:8 NIV

In western culture today, false beliefs like evolution plus gender and sexual confusion have been promoted. Man has been exalted over God.
19. **Occult / Metaphysics** - Dark spiritual forces can exhibit the supernatural, but they do not operate by faith in God but in their own laws and formulas. We must not seek to manipulate God or others in order to get what we desire.
20. **Feelings /Flesh** - We are to be led of the Spirit and not by our feelings or by the flesh. - Romans 8:14. God has given us five senses to enjoy and live in this physical world, but to live in God's kingdom we must use our spiritual senses. Those who live by feelings are like Thomas who only lived by his physical eyes. - John 20:24-29. The things of God must be discerned by the Holy Spirit and not by our five senses. - John 3:8. We are not to judge people after the flesh - 2 Corinthians 5:16-17. While Jesus walked the earth, the disciples saw him only in the physical realm. We are now to know Him beyond that, for we see Jesus as He is now in His resurrected glory in heaven, who has authority over all. God is not against feelings, but our faith is based on facts given to us in the Bible. Feelings are not reliable to lead our lives.
21. **Presumption** This is '**the arrogant act of overstepping boundaries, taking liberties with God's will or acting without divine authority.**' - AI definition

Presumption is a subtle enemy. This is what Satan sought to use against Jesus from the pinnacle of the temple - Matthew 4:5-11. Jesus could instantly become the primary religious leader in Israel. Satan offered Jesus a shortcut to success through the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. In the broadest sense, those temptations involved political power (mountain), religious power (temple) and economic power (bread). Satan wanted Jesus to act upon a devil-quoted scripture without first hearing from God. Jesus avoided the sin of presumption and did not succumb to instant glory. He only wanted to please the heavenly Father by following their pre-ordained of Jesus

going to the cross before He would later take the throne. Suffering comes before glory. - Titus 1:2, 1 Peter 1:20

God told Israel to go into the promised land, but in his time. Some went too late - Numbers 14:41-45. It was the right thing, but the wrong time. The presumptuous act independently from God. Pride and presumption go together. The Hebrew word for presumption is *zadon* ie. arrogance, pride, insolence. The word used in Numbers 14:44 means: to swell, be elated or lifted up. See also Deuteronomy 18:20,22; 2 Peter 2:10. During many times in history, people have claimed to know precisely when Jesus is coming back to earth. We should pray as David did: **'Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins'. - Psalm 19:13 NKJV**

'Presumption is a sin that particularly tempts bold, courageous men of faith who are eager to accomplish something for God.' - Dr. Charles Farah Jr.

God tells us **'to flee youthful lusts'**. - 2 Timothy 2:22. George Verwer, the founder of the mission group Operation Mobilization, said that we have a limited view regarding 'youthful lusts'. It can mean more than sexual appetites. It can simply be doing work for God based more on youthful energy and zeal than by God's Spirit. We can be busy for God but barren and unfruitful. God does not want us to work 'for Him' but 'with Him'. **'We are God's fellow workers' - 1 Corinthians 3:9**

Examples of Presumption

- Presuming everybody that prays the sinners prayer is 'saved', only God knows the heart
- The diabetic who stops taking medicine before their healing is confirmed
- Israel entered a battle without God's command - Numbers 14:44
- Foolish prophets who follow their own spirit and have seen nothing - Ezekiel 13:3
- Prophets who presume to speak in God's name without God's command - Deuteronomy 18:20

Faith teacher Kenneth E. Hagin told of a few Bible School students who gave away their cars after they heard a visiting teacher say he had done so and received back a nicer car. All of those students were seen the rest of year without cars. They had presumed that if they copied the teacher, they would also receive a better car. One should not copy another person's faith example if they do not hear from God themselves. A personal relationship with God is important as we follow his leading and put our trust in Him.

Thank for joining us on this faith study. May you grow stronger in **The Faith**, in your **Life of Faith** and in **Faithfulness**. As you practice walking by faith, know that faith pleases God as we trust Him, much like a small child trusts their earthly father. We serve a good Father - James 1:17.

May you have an **unfeigned faith** like Timothy. - 2 Timothy 1:5

Unfeigned = sincere, genuine, unalloyed, unhyprocritical, heartfelt, without guile

That is the kind of faith God wants for you and me!

John Beckerink

jesusreigns.net