

Captivated

To be captivated means to be held fast under the spell of beauty, charm, or some other source of fascination. Sounds pleasant enough, even romantic or exciting. But there's a danger, especially if that power to enchant is held by an unhealthy idea/activity or someone unscrupulous. Satan is the uncontested champion in the art of captivation, a skill he has perfected over the millennia. That *father of lies* (John 8:44), who often *masquerades as an angel of light* (2 Cor. 11:14), tempts us with things that appear charming, beautiful, and intriguing – things that may or may not be evil in themselves, but which he knows can hook us and draw us in. Then we're not just captivated; we are caught, held captive, enslaved.

Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey – whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.
(Romans 6:12-13, 16-18)

Although Christians belong to and serve Jesus, that doesn't mean we are immune to temptation. If Satan can't entice us over to his side, he will attempt to make us ineffective for God by damaging our integrity, distracting our attention, and dividing our loyalty.

Is there something that has so captivated you that it has compromised your work and witness for God? Is the pursuit of wealth or fame your consuming passion, for example? Has a celebrity or a love interest become an idol in your life? Has a dedication to fitness or love of sport become an obsession? Is your addiction to social media monopolizing your time and attention? Does food and/or drink hold too high a place in your affection? Is your devotion to your job, your hobby, or even your family out of proportion to your love for God?

Whatever consumes a disproportional amount of your time, energy, and imagination is your god, and you are enslaved to that idol. Identify it. Confess it. Ask God, by the Holy Spirit's power, to set you free from its rule. Refuse to be mastered by anything other than God Himself (1 Corinthians 6:12), who is our rightful king. True freedom lies in being captivated by Christ alone. *Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."* (John 8:31-32)

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