

5. Know Your Enemy's Strategy!

Our enemies are intelligent, and coordinated in their attacks. This is why the **Apostle Paul** warns us to ...

Ephesians 6:11

**Put on the full armor of God,
so that you will be able to stand firm
against the schemes of the devil.**

Though we will cover the 'armor of God' in a later lesson, what does Paul's use of this term tell us about how he views the Christian Life?

What do you learn about the 'devil' in this verse? _____

If you are able to discover your enemy's *strategy*, you may then gain an advantage over him. During *World War II*, the Allies were able to break the secret codes of the Axis powers: the *Enigma* in Europe and the *Naval Code* in the Pacific, which helped them achieve victory. **Fortunately**, we have discovered *satan's strategy*, which is outlined by the **Apostle John** below.

1 John 2:16

**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.**

Complete the following: The 'boastful pride of life' is the lust of the ...

How do the 'lusts' mentioned here relate to the 'World'?

How does satan use these 'lusts' and the 'World' to get us to sin?

Satan was probably one of the first creatures created by **God**, even before the World came into being. He may have been there when **Adam** was animated from the ground and knows the inclinations of this new creature.

Ephesians 6:11 (Observations)

Underline what we are to put on.

Circle what we must be able to do.

Underline what we must stand against.

The word translated 'schemes' is the Greek word '*methodeia*'. I don't even have to ask which English word was derived from it. The devil has a *method* or a *strategy* that he has used successfully to *enslave* people to sin, even from the very first in *Eden*. He is so confident in its *effectiveness* that he continues to use it to this day, even on you and me!

In this Lesson, we will examine his *Modus Operandi* ... his MO, which has worked so well through the ages.

We will observe how he used it against the first Adam so successfully, and against the second Adam (*Jesus*) so miserably. And in the process, **we will be able to see how he is using it against us!**

1 John 2:16 (Observations)

Circle the two things that lust.

Underline the third element that is '*in the world.*'

Circle *Whom* they are '*not from.*'

Circle what they *are* from.

The word translated '*lust*' is not inherently an evil word. **Jesus** used it when He said to His disciples "*I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer;*" (*Luke 22:15*). But it is primarily used to describe the *passionate desires* that emanate from the **Sinful Nature** in our **Flesh** ... the *longing* for what we *see*, for what we *feel*, for what is *pleasurable* and even for what gratifies our **pride** and **ego**.

Satan knows that if he can discover what our *prime 'lusts'* are, he has found a *weakness* in our '*armor*' that can be exploited for our destruction. **That is his strategy which he has used to destroy countless people from the beginning.**

Scripture includes many instances of *satan's* quest to tempt *Mankind* to join his *rebellion* against *God*. We will examine two from which to learn *how he operates* and *how we can thwart his scheme*.

Genesis 3:1-6

- 1 **Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made.
And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?'"**
- 2 **The woman said to the serpent,
"From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat;**
- 3 **but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'"**
- 4 **The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die!**
- 5 **"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."**
- 6 **When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.**

What is the intention of the serpent's question in verse 1? _____

How well did the woman know God's instruction? _____

What is the purpose of the serpent's statement in verse 4? _____

Which 'lust' did the serpent target in verse 5? _____

How did satan use the three 'lusts' in the temptation (verse 6)? _____

Why did her husband eat the fruit? _____

Genesis 3:1-6 (Observations)

v1

Underline how the serpent is described.

Underline what the serpent said.

v2

Circle from where the woman said they may eat.

v3

Underline where the forbidden fruit tree was located.

Circle each prohibition God put on that tree.

Underline the *result* of violating the prohibition.

v4

Underline the serpent's reply.

v5

Circle whom the serpent accuses.

Circle the *two* things the serpent says will happen.

Underline how she would be like God.

v6

Circle what the woman saw.

Circle what the fruit was to her eyes.

Circle what she believed the fruit would do.

Underline what she did.

Circle to whom she also gave the fruit.

Circle where her husband was.

Circle what he did.

This passage reveals the very first application of *satan's* *tried and true strategy* to tempt Mankind to *rebel* against God. And *it* has never been changed! Why? ***Because it works!***

Even as you read the serpent's words, you can detect a *slippery*ness to them as they emerge through a *derisive* smile. The woman and her husband seem almost *naive* in their innocence, allowing the serpent's words to *mold* their *thoughts*. That was her *first* mistake. ***You never allow other people's thoughts to enter unchallenged into your mind!*** You *capture* them 'to the ***obedience*** of Christ' (2 Corinthians 10:5).

But as described, *satan* is *craftier* than any of us. He discerns the desires of our ***flesh, eyes*** and ***egos***. Satan exploited her desire for ***food***, for ***novelty*** and for ***wisdom***, leading to her *fall*. She was *deceived*. But what was her husband's *excuse*? Simply that he had come to so *idolize* his wife that he could not live without her! ***And men are like that to this day!***

Satan Tempts Jesus

Matthew 4:2-10; Luke 4:13

- 2 *And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry.*
- 3 *And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."*
- 4 *But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'"*
- 5 *Then the devil took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, 'He shall command His children concerning you'; and 'on their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'"*
- 7 *Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"*
- 8 *Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me."*
- 10 *Then Jesus said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.'"*
- 13 *When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time.*

What seemed to contribute to Jesus' vulnerability? _____

How do the temptations exploit the lust of the flesh, eyes and ego? _____

How does Jesus resist each temptation of satan? _____

What is ominous about verse 13? _____

Matthew 4:2-10; Luke 4:13

(Observations)

v2

Underline how long Jesus fasted.

Circle what Jesus became.

v3

Circle who came to Jesus.

Circle what Jesus is conditionally called.

Underline the test to prove Himself.

v4

Circle Jesus' initial statement.

Circle what 'man' shall not live on alone.

Underline what he should live on.

v5

Circle where the devil takes Jesus.

Underline where he made Him stand.

v6

Circle what Jesus is conditionally called, again.

Underline what Jesus is asked to do.

Observe satan's quote (Psalm 91:11-12)

v7

Circle how Jesus begins His response.

Underline what you should not do.

v8

Circle where the devil takes Jesus.

Underline what he shows Jesus.

v9

Circle what the devil will give Jesus.

Circle what he requires Jesus to do.

v10

Circle Jesus' rebuke.

Underline what is 'written'.

v13

Circle until when did satan leave Jesus.

How to Resist the Tempter

After tempting mankind successfully for millennia, the *irresistible force* of **satan** ran into the *immovable object* of **Jesus**. And this when Jesus was at His *weakest*, having fasted for 40 days and nights!

Just as with the temptation of *Adam* and *Eve*, *satan* uses his tried and true strategy of attacking the weakest point, which for Jesus was *physical hunger*. The weathered stones looked just like freshly baked loaves of bread, but Jesus said, *'It is written...'*, and *resisted!*

How do you resist satan's attack? With the spiritual sword of God's Word! *Satan's deception* must be met with **God's Truth!** The temptation of the *bread* exploited the **lust of the flesh**. The temptation of the *Temple* exploited the **lust of the ego**. And the temptation of the *kingdoms* exploited the **lust of the eyes**. But be sure of this, **satan will always return at 'an opportune time'!**

Don't Give Satan an 'Inch'!

Like a predator, the devil is always looking for an '**opportune time**' to pounce. And it doesn't have to be a major issue either. He will use even a minor disagreement and build it into a mountain. All he needs is '**an opportunity**' and he's got us if we're not prepared. The **Apostle Paul** cautions us in the area of **anger** in the passage below, which is especially applicable to people in relationships.

Ephesians 4:26-27

26 Be angry, and yet do not sin;

do not let the sun go down on your anger,

27 and do not give the devil an opportunity.

How can you be angry and yet not sin? _____

Why does the Apostle Paul warn us not to stay angry for long?

How does the devil take an opportunity in our anger? _____

***“Keep watching and praying
that you may not enter into temptation;
the spirit is willing,
but the flesh is weak.”***

Matthew 26:41

Satan will take every opportunity to enslave us in sin. The word '**opportunity**' in Ephesians 4:27 comes from the Greek word '**topos**' from where we get '**topography**'. It describes a small area that is part of a larger whole. Satan knows that if he can take hold of just a **small** part of us, he will eventually conquer the **whole of us!**

Ephesians 4:26-27 (Observations)
v26

Circle what we should not do in anger.

Underline what should not happen.

v27

Circle what we should not give the devil.

Did you know anger by itself is not necessarily sinful? Even **Jesus** got angry! But **He got angry at the right things and for the right reasons**. When we do get angry, we must ask ourselves, '**Is it for our own benefit or for God's?**'

But the Apostle Paul does warn us not to **stay angry** for too long. Why? Because it will eventually create **bitterness** and **evil intentions**, and may even emerge in acts of **destruction**, usually for the sake of our **egos**. The same can be said of other emotional states as well, such as Fear, Anxiety, Jealousy, etc. They can all become a **portal** through which **satan** can enter and **take hold** of our lives!

We should not stay angry because it gives the devil an **opportunity** to get his foot in the door of our lives and gain a **presence** in our **minds** and **hearts**. Eventually, he will own us as he **incites** our **thoughts** until we are **consumed** with **hate**.

It is best to confess any lingering anger and bitterness to God **quickly** and take away **any opportunity** for **satan!**

Application

Review this Lesson and Answer the Following:

1. Describe satan's Strategy and How We Can Resist It:

2. What Specific Things Will You Do to Apply What you Have Learned?
