

Lesson Three

Beware the wiles of the devil

Text: Ephesians 6:11

Introduction: We must not be ignorant of Satan's methods.

Satan catches with bait (2 Corinthians 11:3)

Illustration: Setting a trap

The enemy uses different methods to entrap the Christian.

1. He comes from within the Church. The Fifth Column – the enemy acting within. This method is effective in preventing the Church being built up through the ministry of the body of Christ.
2. He comes as a roaring lion in order to produce fear. Fear will make the Christian weak and unable to stand against the devil.
3. He comes as a friend in order to produce pride. Leadership pride will stop the ministry of the Holy Spirit through the body of Christ.
4. He will give praise and recognition so that buildings and religion will be more important than the gospel.

Introduction: Satan uses bait to trap people.

1 Corinthians 11:3 'But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.'

The word '**beguile**' means '**to catch with bait**'.

Eve was beguiled by the clever words of the devil. She was deceived by the words 'you shall be like God'.

The bait Satan used was the 'exaltation of self'. He still does this through the influence of friends, close personal relationships or through false teaching.

- Friendship with people who lead us away from Christ.
- Relationships that prevent us from living fully for Christ.
- Teachers who lead people away from the truth of the scriptures into error.

We are most gullible when we are young, full of energy, and inexperienced.

Satan seeks to lead young people away from Christ through the attractions and excitement of the world. We must be able to stand against it.

Satan's methods.

Illustration: Setting a trap

1. No sense of danger (Ignorance)
2. Trap well hidden (Camouflage)
3. Draw victim (Enticement)

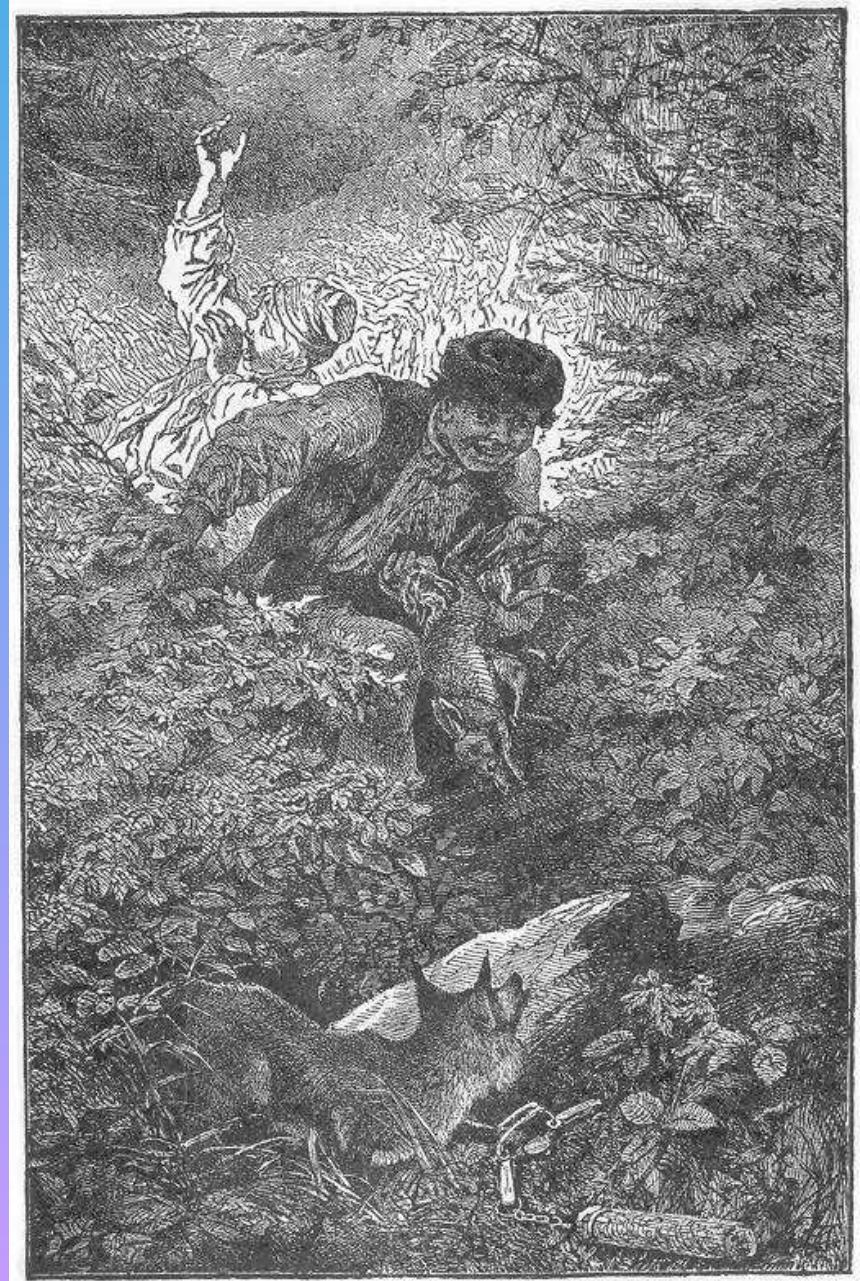


Illustration by W. HAMILTON GIBSON
From the book: Camp Life in the Woods
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Entrapment

Example – Encouragement - Enticed

(1) Example. Become familiar with deeds of those who have lower standards.

Hollywood promotes lower standards as normal.

(2) Encouragement. Closer friendship with these people

Friendships encouraging us to lower our standard

(3) Enticed. Led into doing the same things.

Drawn into the net – gratifying desire (desire for pleasure, the desire for possession to have something that is not rightfully ours, or the desire for recognition)

The Christian will be defeated when he or she is trapped by one of these:

- Lust of the flesh – Gratification of sinful desires including immorality.
- Lust of the eyes – Motivated and led by covetousness
- Pride of Life – Controlled by selfish ambition (1 John 2:16)

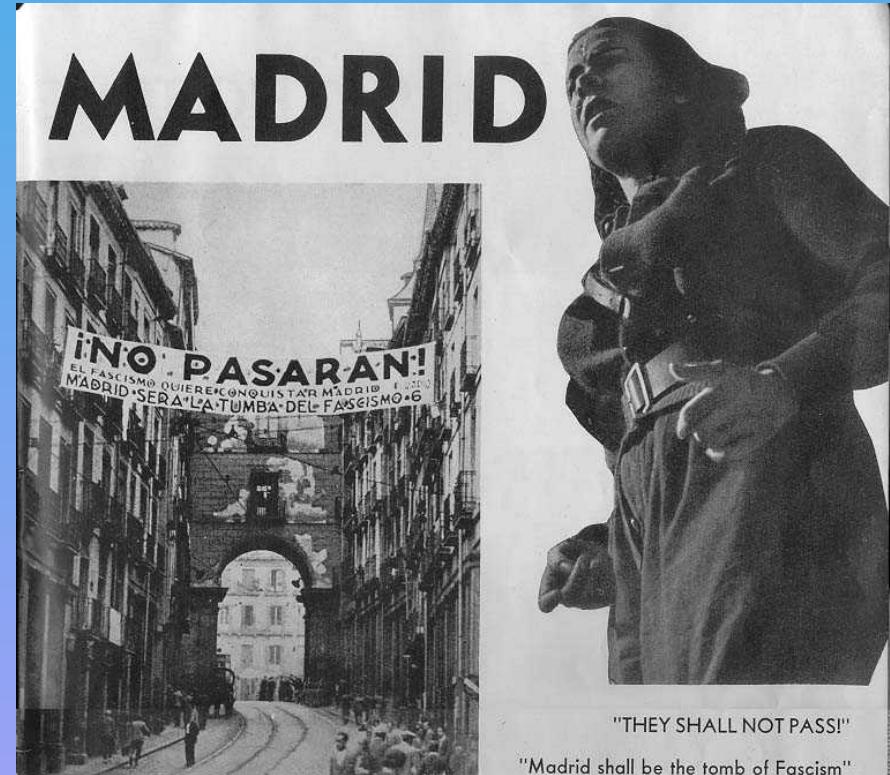
1. He seeks to entrap by deception. Fifth Columnists – the enemy within.

1936-39 Spanish Civil War

In 1936 Emilio Mola (1887 – 1937) made a radio address in which he undermined the Republican government by referring to a fifth column.

Four columns were making their way into Madrid and the nationalist supporters within the city were called the fifth column.

The term now refers to those who aid the enemy by undermining the authority of the people of whom they are a part.



"THEY SHALL NOT PASS!"

"Madrid shall be the tomb of Fascism"

buildings in ruins, Madrid stood firm. History calls this heroic stand the Miracle of Madrid. But the fact is that a People's Army—no longer an untrained mob but an efficient fighting machine—faced General Franco for the first time. His attack bogged down and finally stalled when confronted by a real army. The Civil War entered upon a new phase. A war of attrition fought from trenches replaced the swift movements of the first period.



Fifth Columnists are most effective for the enemy when they hold key positions or when they are able to influence those who are in key positions.

The devil masquerades as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14) to lead people into error and to remove the influence of those who will oppose him.

- 1) His ministers also transform themselves as ministers of righteousness (2 Corinthians 11:14). In order to hold key positions in the church
- 2) The devil is strengthened when key positions in the church are held by those who are driven by the 'pride of life' rather than the 'love of God'.
- 3) Those who hold key positions in the Church can stop anointed ministries from building up the body of Christ.

Answer: Put on Christ at all times and pray at all times – obey the leading of the Holy Spirit at all times.

Be bold but gentle – be willing to preach anywhere: Wesley preached on his father's tombstone at Epsworth.

2. The devil acts as a roaring lion to produce fear.

He produces fear to stop a person serving Christ

Fear always has MIGHT

- Fear can come over what might happen**

Danger of leaving the comfort zone

Financial insecurity

Sickness and disease

What MIGHT happen

Persecution and trials

Failing to achieve our goals

- Fear about what people say**

Neglecting his family

What people MIGHT say

Unsuccessful in life

Not willing to do a proper job...

Personal testimony:

Philippines 'One day conference'

The night before we were holding a One Day Conference in the Philippines, I was not able to sleep till after 3 am.

Concerns kept going over in my mind. I was very aware that these thoughts were an attack from the enemy. In addition a mosquito kept biting me.

We had a busy day ahead and the conference began about 8.30am.



The presence of the Lord was with us. I felt no tiredness all day, and there was a great anointing. The joy on people's faces was wonderful to see.

Overcoming fear – Hudson Taylor on Brighton Beach

On June 25, 1865 as he walked on Brighton Beach, Hudson Taylor gave himself to God to begin a new mission society for China.

Missionaries could face extreme hardship and death but he made the decision to do God's will.



Within one year of his Brighton Beach experience 24 missionaries went with Hudson Taylor to China.

In his lifetime, 800 missionaries went to China with the China Inland Mission and 50,000 Chinese converts were baptised.

3. Devil flatters to make us proud. When a Christian becomes concerned over his or her reputation the devil can stop the Church evangelising.

(Luke 6:26) ‘Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.’

Pride can destroy the Church even in places where persecution could not.

There is a danger in using the gifts of the Spirit to elevate the leadership.

Prophesying over the leaders.

Pride can come in.

Leaders then try to control the Church

Church splits. Meeting destroyed.

How do we stand against this?

Put on humility and love.

Do not allow bitterness or selfish ambitions to control our actions.

Overcoming pride. George Verwer motivating the church for world missions

Example: I saw George Verwer when he was celebrating his 61st birthday.

He wore a tee-shirt and an old jacket with a map of the world (in the picture he has a newer one)

He held a Beach Ball of the world showing the need for world missions.

He then put on some funny glasses with a light on top that he said were given to him for his birthday so he could read in the dark.

He was very happy to be photographed.



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George Verwer has been greatly used of God. His one aim has always been to motivate the body of Christ in evangelism.

4. Devil flatters to make us ineffective. The devil comes as a friend to make us ashamed to preach the gospel.

Romans 1:16 ‘For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.’

When the devil cannot stop the church by persecution he will seek to stop her by flattery.

When a movement seeks to be accepted in the community it will lose the power of God.

This is why God always needs to raise up something new.

(1 Corinthians 1:21-29)

- Foolishness of the Method - preaching
- Foolishness of the Message - preaching of the cross
- Foolishness of the Messenger – the person God sends.

Church history

The greatest enemy of the Church has not been persecution.

Tertullian said 'The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church'

Persecution made the church stronger.

In the Acts of the Apostles the leaders were persecuted.

They had no big buildings to impress the community.

They had no means of large incomes –Priscilla and Aquila and Paul were tentmakers.

There was no distinction between clergy and laity.

They did not make big appeals to feed their own ministries.

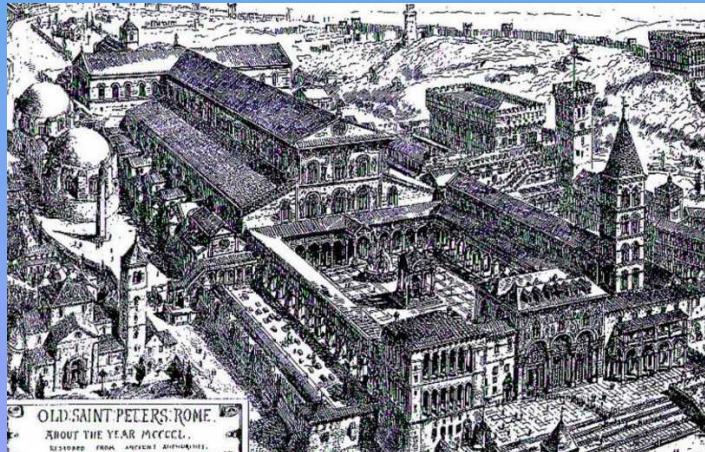
The message of the gospel was more important than building local churches.

The trap of 'praise and recognition' will move the church away from Christ to follow religion by building big churches, and having big ministries etc..

The craving for worldly prestige and the desire to build big.

Development Of Church Basilicas in church history

The Old St. Peter's Basilica in Rome (c.1450)



Begun during the reign of Constantine about 320 AD.

Supposedly built over the tomb of the Apostle Peter.

Drawing by H.W.Brewer (1891)

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The new St. Peter's Basilica was consecrated in 1626.

Painting by Giovanni Paolo Pannini (1691-1765)

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The appearance of big churches and big ministries can look very impressive but the motive that brought them into existence can often be the desire for worldly recognition.

We need to put on the whole armour of God (Ephesians 6:10-18).

Put on truth

Put on righteousness

Take up faith

Take up salvation

Take up the word of the Spirit

Praying always.

But first of all put on love (Colossians 3:14)

Love is the distinguishing mark of the genuine believer. (John 13:35)

Summary

The devil seeks to bring the believer into a trap

1. He will appear as an angel of light to make believers ineffective and unable to move against him.
2. The devil seeks to make believers afraid. We must overcome fear through faith in the promises of God
3. The devil seeks to make believers proud so that they become ineffective and a means of stopping others. We must overcome pride through humility and love.
4. The devil seeks to flatter believers by making them feel important members of the community. We overcome by identifying ourselves at all times with the foolishness of the gospel.