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## Why Such Lack and Evil?

*The fact that "devils" are predominantly comic figures in the modern imagination will help you. If any faint suspicion of your existence begins to arise in his mind, suggest to him a picture of something in red tights, and persuade him that since he cannot believe in that (it is an old textbook method of confusing them) he therefore cannot believe in you. - **Uncle Screwtape's Advice to Wormwood, C. S. Lewis' The Screwtape Letters***

For most of us, the thought of a life without lack is unimaginable because we live in a world so obviously full of lack—lack of kindness, fairness, and compassion, all of which are more precious because they seem so rare. So much is going wrong all around us: injustice, oppression, natural disasters, broken relationships, perversity, selfishness, pride, and apathy, so much pain that it seems we would need to block it all out and pretend that all is well to have any hope for a semblance of safety and sufficiency. Yet it is not pretense we need, but understanding.

We live in a world under the care of a wholly good God with unlimited power, who lacks nothing and intends only good for his creation. Why, then, is there so much lack and evil? What has gone wrong? Many people believe that the source of these problems rests with humanity alone, but we must acknowledge the activity of Satan here. His presence in the world accounts for the seemingly unlimited extent of human wrongdoing that goes far beyond what humanity (made in the image of God) would generate on its own. He has humanity in his grasp through the ideas, beliefs, and bastions of wickedness he has developed throughout history, and he intends to keep them there. He works in the realm of the heart and ideas, in their individual as well as social forms, to control the major structures and processes of human life upon the earth.

As we will see in future devotionals, the secret to a life without lack is faith in God and in God's full capacity and willingness to meet all our needs—and more. But what is faith? It is simply an understanding of how things are, wedded to a commitment to live one's life in light of that understanding.

Part of the problem with our faith today is that we do not truly believe in the reality of the spiritual, either the good side or the evil side. In our world people maintain their sense of respectability by rejecting everything except what they can see in the natural world. To accept that there is more than that threatens their self-identity as proper, intelligent citizens of the modern world. But the perspective of the modern world is not the perspective of the Bible, and it is from the biblical perspective that we need to consider the primary source of lack and evil in the world today.

**Reflect:** *Our understanding of how things are must include belief in the devil and knowledge of his character and intentions. If you know enough about him and understand him, you will find that you can have faith in him too. We don't need to worship Satan to have faith that he will do exactly what he is intent on doing. You'd better be ready for it. (Q) Do you know where the devil is right now? Can you describe the type of work he's engaged in at this very moment? (Stay tuned, the following devotionals will seek to provide answers for these questions.)*