



June 7, 2021

Satan's Three Weapons of Temptation

*And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. - **Ephesians. 2:1-3***

In his letter to the believers in Ephesus, Paul describes the general condition of their lives prior to placing their faith in Christ. We must take what Paul says here very seriously, for he is revealing the answer to our questions concerning why there is such lack and evil in the world, and why human beings are caught up in it. Here are the essential points we must grasp:

- Satan is a spiritual being who is the primary ruler in the domain called the "air."
- The "air" is not far off, but all around us.
- Satan, then, is immediately present in this world as its "prince" and chief influencer.
- Prior to placing their faith in Christ and being given new life in him, people are "dead in trespasses and sins" and are, whether they know it or not, under the influence of Satan.
- This is what the phrase "sons of disobedience," means; like father, like son (or daughter).

If we are to know the abundant provision of God's unlimited resources, we must also understand how Satan works to rob us of that experience. He does so by deceit. You may have heard the saying that the way to know if certain people are lying is if their lips are moving. This is absolutely true of Satan. Jesus referred to him as "a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44 NRSV). Indeed, his whole kingdom is based on lies; he works by deceiving. Why? Because he does not have direct power over our will. Therefore, if he is to get us to do his bidding, he has to fool us. He cannot make us do anything we do not want to do. If it is true that a person can be the devil's puppet, the strings are Satan's lies.

Satan uses three primary weapons to oppose God and derail our experience of God's sufficiency, all of which are forms of temptation. In the first of the apostle John's short letters, he urges us not to love "the world" (1 John 2:15). John is not referring to the created world of nature, with all its magnificence and beauty, nor even to the many good things that make up the world of human culture. He is referring specifically to those aspects of our world, especially our cultural and social practices, that are under the control of Satan and, thus, opposed to God. This "world" is marked by three spiritual dynamics that John identifies as "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 2:16).

Reflect: *In your life, how does Satan use deception to tempt you through these three forms mentioned by the apostle John: the desires of the flesh - obsessive natural desires, the desires of the eyes - looking good, and the pride of life - dominion over others. Consider the story of Adam and Eve in the garden and see this ploy in action (Genesis 3:6).*