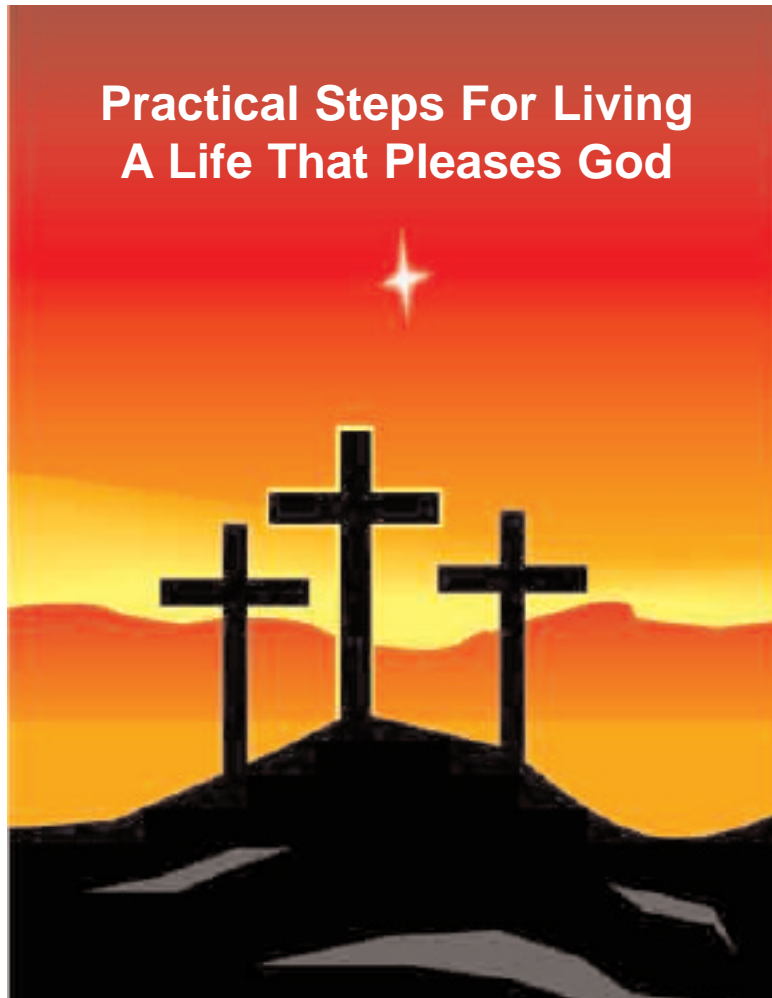


Lifebytes

16. Freedom In Jesus Video Series (Part 1) Certain Of What We Do Not See

Satan's Strategies (Part 2)



[For the video or audio of this series, go to our website **for free download**]



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Satan's Strategies (Part 2)

Deception: *Unforgiveness*

You don't get very far into the Newer Testament before you find Jesus sharing an all-important point:

If YOU forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive YOU. But if you do NOT forgive men their sins, your Father will NOT forgive YOUR sins (Matthew 6:14,15).

Satan's most powerful strategy is to entice people to hold unforgiveness toward another human being, a person who's made in the image of God and FOR whom Jesus died.

Unforgiveness is epidemic among those who call themselves "Christian." The Apostle Paul warned the Corinthian believers about the demonic scheme of unforgiveness.

If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And what I have forgiven — if there was anything to forgive — I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that **SATAN MIGHT NOT OUTWIT US**. For we are not unaware of **his schemes** (2 Corinthians 2:10,11).

Sadly, we've met far too many Christians who are trapped in Satan's scheme of unforgiveness. Why is unforgiveness such a critical strategy in the devil's arsenal? Because the person who refuses to forgive remains unforgiven by our Father.

And not only are they not forgiven, but Jesus explains in the parable of the unforgiving servant what our Father does to those who refuse to forgive.

Satan's most powerful strategy is to entice people to hold unforgiveness toward another human being, a person who's made in the image of God and FOR whom Jesus died.

In anger his master turned him over to the jailers **TO BE TORTURED**, until he should pay back all he owed. This is how **MY HEAVENLY FATHER** will treat **EACH OF YOU** unless you forgive your brother from your heart (Matthew 18:34,35).

And who's the torturer to whom our Father turns over an unforgiving person? Satan. Why? For the destruction of their sin nature so that they might return to fellowship with God.

This is the pattern for God's faith communities when they encounter unrepentance in their midst. This is why Paul commanded the Corinthian believers,

Hand this man over **TO SATAN**, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord (1 Corinthians 5:5).

If you want to keep clear of Satan's scheme to torture you, remember Jesus' words: ***"If you don't forgive, My Father won't forgive you."***

Satan would like nothing more than for you live as an unforgiven "Christian", because then he can torture you. As we've shared in our Hebraic Article and video segments, ***The Gospel of the Covenant is the Pilgrimage to Salvation***, our Father won't even ENTER into a Covenant with an unforgiving person because the shed blood of Jesus is too precious to Him.

The price Jesus paid to secure your

Our Father won't even enter into a Covenant with an unforgiving person because the shed blood of Jesus is too precious to Him.

The price Jesus paid to secure your forgiveness is too high for you to believe you can refuse to forgive anyone else.

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We have two questions for you:

- Are YOU being emotionally tortured at this time?
- Is there anyone you haven't forgiven? REALLY forgiven?

(See: Newsletters 2000-03, 2000-04 "Forgiving Others", Parts 1 and 2)

Let's recap this one more time:

Followers of Jesus are NEVER permitted to hold onto ill feelings against any person for whom Jesus died. And that covers all of humanity!

That's why Paul focuses on the REAL enemy in our spiritual battle in a verse that's worth repeating:

For our struggle is NOT against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 6:12).

The Greek word for struggle here means "wrestling". More specifically, it refers to hand-to-hand combat. *Wrestling* in our spiritual battle has strong implications for followers of Jesus.

It's one thing to recognize the schemes of the enemy. But it's quite

another to know HOW TO WRESTLE with demonic foes.

Never lose sight of God's Word. Our struggle is NEVER against another human being. If you're pitting yourself against another person, repent of that! Ask for the mind of Christ from the Holy Spirit so you can love as our Lord Jesus loves — even those who have hurt you.

Other people CAN be used by Satan as instruments of pain or distress in your life. But, our Lord never allows you to fight against them or to hold unforgiveness toward them in your heart.

Paul warns that hurtful demonic darts will indeed be flung our way. But he also directs us how to overcome Satan's ploys:

In addition to all this, take up the SHIELD OF FAITH, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one (Ephesians 6:16).

We have two more questions:

- What is the nature of the flaming arrows the evil one frequently hurls your way?

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- Is it slander, being misunderstood, imposed upon, anything else???

Do you think Satan may use PEOPLE to fire these arrows at you?

You can bet on it!

Deception: False Teachers

The writers of the Newer Testament warn us about the kind of people Satan

will use to deceive and distract God's people. Paul certainly has no doubts about the reality of what he calls "*deceiving spirits and demons*":

*The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will **ABANDON THE FAITH** and **FOLLOW** *deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron* (1 Timothy 4:1,2).*

How can you recognize a hypocritical liar who's been misled by demons, and whose conscience is so seared that no truth can get through to him?

First, as the Bereans did in Acts 17:11: Test everything against the Word of God. As Jesus proclaimed from the Hebrew Scriptures, "*Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God*" (Matthew 4:4, quoting Deuteronomy 8:3).

(See: Newsletter 2001-11 "Followers of Jesus Are People of the Word")

Every true teaching that represents our Lord must be able to stand in light of Scriptural examination. Paul set the standard of **BIBLICAL BOUNDARIES** in regard to everything he taught. He also expected that anyone else who represented God's truth would do the same:

Now, brothers, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, 'Do not go beyond what is written.' Then you will not take pride in one man over against another (1 Corinthians 4:6).

You can safeguard yourself by being a

Every true teaching that represents our Lord must be able to stand in light of Scriptural examination.

person whose faith practices are anchored on the Word of God. We urge you, if you want to avoid being deceived, make sure your way of life is founded on the Bible.

Deception: Conflicts & Arguments

Interpersonal conflicts and arguments are another of Satan's means of creating **strife** and **unforgiveness** among Christians. If you want to be fruitful in serving the interests of Jesus, you need to avoid Satan's scheme of interpersonal tension:

*And the Lord's servant **MUST NOT QUARREL**; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must **GENTLY INSTRUCT**, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will* (2 Timothy 2:24-26).

Paul clearly understood the devilish scheme of verbal discord. He pointedly warned his two proteges, Timothy and Titus, against entertaining argumentative controversy:

*As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These **PROMOTE CONTROVERSIES** rather than God's work—which is by faith* (1 Timothy 1:3,4);

AVOID foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are **UNPROFITABLE AND USELESS** (Titus 3:9).

Let's review a few principles for your own spiritual walk:

- Be a student of the Word of God who APPLIES that Word in obedient trust, both in your own life and in your family.

Learn to discern what's being taught to you through the help of the Holy Spirit within you. Remember, He's the *Spirit of truth*. Avoid any Christian teaching situations in which you aren't given the time or opportunity to be noble as the Bereans were to search the Scripture FOR YOURSELF to discern its truth.

- Avoid arguing with other people. Quarrels and controversies divide relationships and don't reflect Jesus. Remember Paul's words,

*All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too **GOD WILL MAKE CLEAR** to you* (Philippians 3:15).

Quarrels and controversies do nothing but estrange you from others, and often leave you with unresolved bitter-

ness. And, you only make Satan all the happier.

Remember, you alone are responsible to God for yourself. You aren't going to be able to give Him excuses why you gave in to Satan's schemes. Our Lord never accepts the excuse, "The devil made me do it."

We urge you, if you want to avoid being deceived, make sure your way of life is founded on the Bible.

That's why it's crucial that you use the Bible to scrutinize your own faith practices

- for any false teachings you've embraced.
- for any person against whom you hold unforgiveness.
- for, any relationships you destroyed through conflicts and arguments.

You need to take these actions so you can avoid Satan's strategies and schemes. No one else can do this for you!