

CHAPTER FIVE

THE DEVICES OF SATAN

When Jesus died on the cross and then rose again, He conquered Satan and his demonic hosts, taking away all their power, “having disarmed the powers and authorities He made a show of them openly.” (Colossians 2: 15). They now wage war through lies, deceit and fear, working in all areas of our lives; our attitudes, emotions and thoughts and even, the physical. However, they only have power in these areas *as we give it to them!* The apostle Paul declared that *we are not ignorant of his devices,*¹ but, sadly, that is just not true for the majority of believers today!

The devil's opportunity

Have you ever been angry? Of course you have, just like me. Jesus was angry when He saw the money changers in the temple. I'm sure He was angry when He saw the multitudes in deep poverty and with much sickness. His heart was grieved when He saw the results of the disobedience of Adam falling on all mankind. The feeling of anger is not sin. Feelings are not moral or immoral - they are amoral. What we do with our feelings, however, does matter, greatly. Paul exhorts us that when we are angry we must not sin. Then he adds “...and do not let the sun go down on your anger.” (Ephesians 4: 26). We must deal with the situation straight away. If we allow the anger within to fester, it will produce a bitterness that will rob us of God's best. As long as we are in this world, people will do us wrong and offences will

¹ 2 Corinthians 2:11

come. Jesus warned us of that.² There may well be much cause of anger within us but He has given us His Holy Spirit to enable us to know grace at such times.

Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many are defiled. (Hebrews 12: 15).

If we do not deal with the anger in the appropriate way (which we will discuss later), we are playing right into the hands of the enemy! Paul continues by saying “and do not give the devil an opportunity.” Later, in the same portion of Scripture dealing with our conversations with one another, he warns us that we may be *grieving the Holy Spirit*.

When we bear anger, or other wrong attitudes, the enemy has access to our thoughts, spreading his lies and deceit to drive a wedge further in. Soon it appears that reconciliation is impossible and he has won that battle.

Jesus warned us to be *on our guard*³ and Paul charged us to be sure that *no advantage be taken of us by Satan*⁴. Both are in the context of forgiveness to those whom we perceive as having wronged us. An attitude of unforgiveness, like anger, gives the enemy an advantage, an opportunity, a foothold in our life. The opposite attitudes of forgiveness and peace defeat him.

The roaring lion

Have you ever seen a lion stalking its prey? I haven't, but I assume it is much like my cat stalking the birds or mice in our garden. He crouches very low and moves very slowly so as not to warn his intended prey of his intentions. He certainly doesn't let them know he is coming by making a loud miaow! What,

² Luke 17:1

³ Luke 17:3

⁴ 2 Corinthians 2:11

then does the apostle Peter mean when he tells us to be *alert for your enemy, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour.*" (1 Peter 5: 8)?

In *Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan, we read that Pilgrim was approaching the Palace Beautiful, built for the relief and security of believers. He now understood why Timorous and Mistrust, others seeking the Celestial City, had fled past him in great fear, for the entrance way was guarded by two lions. Immediately, Pilgrim's heart sank and he also became afraid. If a lion came bounding into your room and roared at you, I imagine you would react like them - full of fear! I would! Roaring lions have that effect on us - they are very frightening. Soon, Pilgrim noticed that both lions were chained and that, so long as he walked a narrow path between them, neither could reach him to cause him harm. We need to understand that the lion, Satan, has had his teeth pulled and is chained. He cannot harm the people of God so long as we keep to the narrow way. Even when we step off the narrow way, the Father's love reaches out to bring us back before the enemy can destroy us. However, he will roar - and many are defeated by their emotions reacting to the roar.

His roar is often that of the accuser, bringing condemnation.

It was the first time Mary had sung the solo parts in the youth choir. It went well except for that high note in the chorus where she was a little weak and wobbly. It was only a quiet voice whispering in her ear that told her, "*you made a fool of yourself*" but it was the roar of the lion. She vowed never to sing in public again.

Pastor John had such high hopes when he began ministry at St. Peter's church. Now, just two years later he was leaving. The youth group had not grown in numbers as the senior pastor had expected so John was *invited* to leave. The lion roared, "*you'll never be successful as a pastor. You're a failure!*" A

week later, he reapplied for the secular job he had left when he first believed that God had called him into the pastorate.

Alec had slipped again. He so longed to be free from this filthy habit of smoking, but it was too tempting when he'd been offered this cigarette. Now he was feeling guilty and the lion roared, "*God cannot use you. You're always letting Him down!*"

Not only does the lion roar at every slip or failure, but he knows which of our emotions are the most likely to be effected by the roar. For some it is the emotion of guilt, for others, it is fear. Many react to his roar in the emotions of low self esteem, lacking confidence. Where do you react?

How sad when the roar of the lion comes through the thoughtless comment of another believer! How important it is in the Body of Christ to affirm one another to counteract the lies, the roar of the devil!

The archer

When one is about to wage a battle, it is good to occupy the high ground. This forces the enemy to fight uphill and enables you to see his moves so that you can take the appropriate steps to counteract him. We need to understand as believers, the tremendous privilege we have of being "in Christ". Paul declares that God has *exalted Jesus, far above every rule and authority and power and dominion. (Ephesians 1: 21)*. To the Jews, these are the names of the ranks of the demonic army of Satan, but all of them are far beneath His feet. He has crushed the head of their master and has all authority over them. He wills us to exercise that authority so that we may learn to be overcomers. Those that would reign with Him must be worthy to wear a crown and crowns are only to be given to the overcomers.

"And you alsohave been raised up with Him, and seated with Him in heavenly places."

(Ephesians 2: 6).

We must live on that higher ground where the only way Satan can reach us is by firing his fiery arrows. We have also been provided with a sure defence against those flaming missiles. *“Take the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all of them.” (Ephesians 6: 16)*

As the enemy would throw his lies and accusations against us, we hold up our shield of faith, remembering that *“faith comes by hearing ... the Word of God.” (Romans 10:17).*

We need to know WHO WE ARE and the privileges of being “IN CHRIST”.

Who I am

I am a child of God	John 1:12
I am a friend of Jesus	John 15:15
I am a joint-heir with Christ	Rom 8:17
I am God’s dwelling place	1 Cor 3:16
I am joined to the Lord	1 Cor 6:17
I am a member of His Body	Eph 5:30
I am reconciled to God	2 Cor 5:18
I am God’s workmanship	Eph 2:10
I am a citizen of Heaven	Phil 3:20
I am a new creation	2 Cor 5:17
I am clothed in righteousness	Eph 4:24
I am chosen of God	Col 3:12
I am a saint	Eph 1:1
I am a stranger to this world	1 Pet 2:11
I am what I am	1 Cor 15:10
I am an enemy of the devil	1 Pet 5:8

I am a member of a chosen race,
a royal priesthood,
a holy nation,
a people for God's own possession 1 Pet 2:9,10

In Christ...

I am completely forgiven	Rom 5:1
I am free from condemnation	Rom 8:1
I am greatly blessed	Eph 1:3
I am chosen to be holy	Eph 1:4
I am predestined to be His child	Eph 1:5
I am bought back from Satan	Eph 1:7
I am sealed by His Spirit	Eph 1:13
I am seated in heavenly places	Eph 2:6
I have direct access to God	Eph 2:18
I may come to God confidently	Eph 3:12
I have Christ within me	Col 1:27
I am made complete	Col 2:10

(For a more complete list, read your Bible!)

It used to be that there was a simple remedy for most minor ailments; “Just take two aspirins and go to bed!” I have a simple remedy for most of the minor attacks of the enemy.

Take **two of the above Scriptures** each day and meditate on them. Your faith will soon grow strong and the fiery arrows will be less effective against you.