

WISDOM TO WALK IN THE WAY

By the Late Rev. E. E. Shelhamer

"Lest Satan should get an advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices." II Cor. 2:11.

Here we are warned not to let Satan slip up on us like a snarling dog. Though he is next to God Almighty in wisdom and power, yet through Christ we can conquer. Here are some of his tactics:

1. He tries to get us to do things in a hurry. A hurry spirit is generally from beneath. For instance: answering an unkind letter in a hurry; going into business with the wrong partner in a hurry; quitting one church and joining another in a hurry, especially when agitated; falling in love and marrying in a hurry. Oh, the wreckage all along the shores of time because of haste. It might be well to hang up a motto in every room reading thus: "He that believeth shall not make haste." Isa. 28:16. He who can hold steady and fully believe, will seldom if ever get out of Divine order.

2. Another trick of Satan is to torment a conscientious soul over a mistake. If you have missed a golden opportunity, Satan will pounce down upon you and make you feel you have ruined things and the last chance is gone. Not so, for a loving heavenly Father can rule and overrule and give you another chance, provided you are absolutely sincere. If you will humble yourself and fully believe, you can profit by every mistake.

3. A third trick is to get you to stumble over others. Some of the best saints have serious faults. But remember, we do not stumble backwards; we stumble over objects in front of us. So, if you stumble over others, this is an acknowledgment that in some respects they are ahead of you. Do not pull off in spirit and talk about them. If possible have a gentle chat with the one concerned and while doing so, confess your own faults, which may be more serious than his.

4. Another trick of the old "accuser" is to depress and falsely condemn. Upon awakening in the morning, you may feel cast down and shut off from God with no apparent reason. You may search your heart and wonder what you have done, or left undone. On such occasions, do not "cast away your confidence," but calmly hold your ground and if your loving God does not show you where you are responsible, then conclude that this gloom is from Satan. He works in the dark and if he cannot get you to sin while awake, he will play upon your nerves and subjective mind while asleep. Fearful dreams and evil forebodings may harass you. But no marvel! Even the great Apostle Paul said, that on one occasion while in Asia, he was "pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that he despaired even of his life." Doubtless Satan tried to choke Paul to death.

5. Another sly trick is to get one to make a rash vow. In your zeal you may vow not to eat, or sleep till a loved one is saved, or healed. Listen! God is not a hard master. You need not do as the heathen, "Bind yourself with an oath." You need not pledge to do this or that. You need not consecrate to go here or there, but rather consecrate simply to obey God moment by moment. When the proper time comes God will gently open or close doors according to his will and your ability. "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God."

6. Another impulsive trick is to get one to look back with remorse. The suggestion comes, "You are now defeated; you are not a success and never will be; why not end it all!" This suicide demon is kept busy flitting here and there, but especially around high precipices. Satan tried to get Jesus to cast himself down from the pinnacle, but was outwitted. Friend, if you are given to fits of discouragement, keep away from high places and railroad bridges. Do not brood over failures! What? Can we not trust God? Yes, but not Satan. Many never planned self destruction, but in a fit of despair, did the rash thing. At such times it is well to plead the merits of Christ, saying, "Lord Jesus, cover me with the blood, I hide in the Rock of Ages!"

7. And still another trick is to get one to lose self-control. Satan fans into a flame uncontrollable desires, such as desire for food, tobacco, drink, or sex. If Satan can catch you off your guard, then like David you become blind to future joys or, like Esau, you sell out for a moment's gratification and later, seek with tears to regain your loss. Desire may become so overwhelming as to lead to murder in order to cover it up. Oh, that young men could read the life of Joseph frequently, beginning with Genesis 39th Chapter. His ability to resist temptation and his magnanimity in letting God vindicate him, placed him next to Jesus as an example. "Go thou and do likewise."

8. Another big trick is to cause you to feel that you are all important to the success of the work. You must keep your hand upon it. Your prayers, your wisdom, your management are necessary and you are really indispensable. Say, did you ever stop to think, that if should you die, or backslide, God could easily raise up another just as efficient, or perhaps more so? So, don't get important.

9. And still another successful trick is, to get you to give less than your full share; or to withhold part of your tithe, thinking that your children will give it after you are gone. What a big lie! They will never do it, for they have inherited your dishonest disposition. As a rule, the more you give them the deeper they will be damned in hell. Why not give freely now and thus have the joy of "lending to the Lord." He will "repay again." "The liberal soul shall be made fat and he that watereth, shall be watered also himself." Prov. 11:25. Now dear reader, capitalize all these tricks and thus help others by your conflicts with Satan. In the end you may rejoice that God permitted Satan to develop and make a strong character out of you.

WE HAVE PUT NOTHING INTO IT

"He continued in prayer to God." "And as He prayed His sweat was as it were great drops of blood." Has our season of prayer any resemblance to these? Does it suggest energy and sacrifice, even to the point of blood? Are our intercessions weighted with purpose, and have we the demeanor of an armed man cleaving his way to some shining palace of gold? How much do we put into it? Many of us have scarcely begun to pray at all. We have only played at praying. It has not been a mighty business; it has only been a harmless convention. We have put nothing into it, and therefore we have taken nothing out. We have "prayed amiss."

—J. H. JOWETT.

A CHURCH ON FIRE

Some years ago, a church in England began to experience a mighty work of God. Ministers of other denominations were stirred by this work, and upon inquiry as to how it started were told the following story:

"Ours was a church that did not have a summer slump, for ours was a year-round slump. How we worked for that church! But despite all our efforts the services continued to dwindle and lost ground Sabbath after Sabbath until it seemed we would have to close.

"We blamed the minister. He was a godly man and would have given his life for the gospel. We blamed the young people. Some almost blamed God Himself.

"About this time a quiet, middle-aged woman moved into the town. Her faith was boundless. She knew the Bible from cover to cover. Her quiet but trusting manner in quoting God's promises put us to shame. The sight of our unfilled pews, our almost empty Sabbath school, left her undismayed. 'God wants His house filled,' she said. 'He wants the young people saved and the older ones reclaimed. He wants men and women delivered from Satan's power. We must make ourselves to pray for them.'

"Encouraged by her insistent, unfaltering faith, we set ourselves to praying. We began, a little band of eight earnest souls. Every day at eleven and again at four we gave ourselves to prayer for the minister, for the ingathering of souls in the community, for our loved ones, for those in authority in our nation, for all saints, for all men, and for the mission fields. As God laid it on our hearts, so we prayed.

"Every evening for one hour before services we prayed, unitedly, earnestly. All talking was forbidden. We tiptoed to our place of prayer and stayed there as long as our hearts were burdened. Prayer became our business. We gave ourselves to it and all that was in us. We did not proclaim what we were doing abroad, but others, attracted by our earnestness, began to join in prayer.

"Soon the attendance in church and Sabbath school began to increase. By God's help, we built an altar of prayer in our church, and built all other things around it. We held with an iron grasp the hours we had pledged to prayer. The leadership of the Holy Spirit was acknowledged. Human leadership and self-assertion were not encouraged in our midst. All self was humbled. Our spirits were contrite and broken under the burden of prayer for lost souls.

"Our minister caught the fire. Our church became holy ground. Before the town realized it, the church services were crowded. The picture houses and dance halls were almost deserted, and the spirit of a heaven-sent revival pervaded the whole town and countryside."—Selected.

NEGLECTED OPPORTUNITIES

The specter that I am most afraid of at the last is the specter of lost opportunities. The keenest regrets that I feel today are born of neglected duties—of neglect to do all that I might have done for the sick, the sad, the suffering and the sinning; above all, for the immortal souls that are now beyond my reach.

—T. L. CUYLER.