

The Hindering Strategy
of Satan

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

Since his unsuccessful rebellion against God (Isaiah 14:12-15), Satan has continually sought to inhibit God's plan. In the Garden of Eden, the serpent beguiled Adam and Eve to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which ended the dispensation of innocence. Genesis 6:2 refers to "sons of God," or angelic beings, taking human wives in a strategy to nullify the purity of the human seed. It was an attack designed to prevent Jesus from being born a man to die for all men. Thus, His sacrifice would have been an unacceptable sin-offering.

In Numbers 14:6-10, the nation of Israel was successfully hindered by fear and did not proceed to the Promised Land. In Matthew 2, Herod had all children under the age of two killed, in his plan to do away with Jesus. And when Jesus was in the wilderness, Satan tempted Him in an attempt to get Him to operate outside of the will of the Father.

Today, Satan similarly tries to hinder Christians from progressing in God's plan for their lives. This booklet is written to help Christians understand the hindering process of Satan's intricate battle plan against God and His people.

Chapter One

DEVICES AND WILES

“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered” (1 Peter 3:7).

“Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?” (Galatians 5:7).

Satan has specific strategies designed to hinder Christians from doing God’s work. These hindering spirits attempt to keep the believer from praying and from studying the Word. The devil despises the premise of Christ and the effect it has in a person’s life. He will stop at nothing to interfere with the ministry of the Church.

An examination of two Greek words provides a picture of Satan’s purpose in hindering the children of God. *Anakoptois* is translated “hinder” in Galatians 5:7. Here, the prefix *ana*, which signifies repetition, is combined with

kopto—to cut; to impede. Incorporating the literal Greek meaning, Galatians 5:7 could be read this way: “Who has been breaking up the road you were traveling so well and who has stopped you from advancing?” The devil likes to stop the Christian in his tracks, creating an attitude of uncertainty about the path in which God is leading. Thus, Satan’s intent is clear; not only does he seek to stop the progress of believers, but he also aims to impede their relationship and fellowship with God.

Strains and Pressures

Mental strain is one device that Satan often uses to accomplish his purposes. Through demonic atmospheric projections and pressures, the devil induces believers to toil in their thoughts. Those who permit this kind of attack to affect them are characterized by unexplained tiredness and a lack of emotional control. Details cause tension. This person often complains about being overworked. Satan’s attack has him paralyzed, and he cannot move ahead in God’s plan for his life.

In the midst of a busy schedule, a believer may receive projections of weariness. This is not to say that Christians never need rest. However,

there are times when Satan will arrange details and deterrents in order to drain a person's energy. If he is not aware of the continual atmospheric warfare between the forces of heaven and hell, the believer under this type of attack grows dull and lethargic. He is not sharp and may even feel too drained to pray or to study.

Another demonic technique is designed to form an attitude of frivolity and carelessness. A believer affected by this type of attack generally displays contempt for discipline and leadership. This may be reflected in poor work habits or in a failure to meet financial obligations. Wrong decisions on his part have permitted hindering spirits to influence him into a lackadaisical disposition.

Other satanic tactics are aimed at hindering believers through anxiety, nervousness, and materialism. As varied and different as they may appear, Satan's "wiles" or *methodeia* (carefully planned attacks) in Ephesians 6:11 basically are rooted in his principle purpose to distract Christians from concentration upon God and upon His Word.

Chapter Two

ACKNOWLEDGE THE LORD

“In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

“Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil” (Proverbs 3:6-7).

What will remedy and remove satanic hindrances? Only a re-focus of the attention upon Christ can bring release to the Christian caught in any device Satan has put before him. Hebrews 12:2a explains that Christ alone should be the focus of the believer’s attention: “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.”

The word that must be understood in Proverbs 3 is the word “depart.” It is translated from the Hebrew *cuwr*, which literally is defined as “to turn off.” Herein lies the key to battling satanic hindrances. The believer who will consistently acknowledge the Lord and allow Him to order his steps renders evil powerless against His spiritual capacity. This believer may experi-

ence afflictions as Job did. And though there will be persecution (John 15:20), he will remain peaceful.

“The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way” (Psalm 37:23).

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee” (Isaiah 26:3).

The problem for some believers is that they simply do not acknowledge God. The Lord will not violate a person’s free volition. *Yada* is the Hebrew word for “acknowledge.” In the context of Proverbs 3:6-7, *yada* refers to someone who chooses to recognize and follow the omniscient wisdom of God above his own limited knowledge. Christians who do not do this become frustrated by their incapacity to apply the Word of God in their lives.

Martha had this problem in Luke 10:40. Her intentions were good, but she did not acknowledge the Lord at that moment. Hence, she grew irritated and reacted by complaining to Jesus. But Mary remained calm, as her attention was on the Master.

“And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard his word.

“But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone, bid her therefore that she help me” (Luke 10:39-40).

The believer who exercises his mind in the Word of God gradually acquires a divine, eternal perspective on life. The temporal details are not a source of worry for him as he puts on the mind of Christ in every situation (1 Corinthians 2:16).

About God’s Business

It must be understood that there is a great difference between being busy for God and being about the Father’s business (Luke 2:49). Mary was about God’s business. Meanwhile, Martha was “cumbered about” or fenced in by her emotions. She allowed seemingly important duties to weigh heavily on her mind, and thus, she was hindered from receiving the Word of God. Romans 8:8 explains, “They that are in the flesh cannot please God.” Many people do good things in the name of Christ, but they are hindered in the process of maturity and fruitfulness because they have not recognized Him as the author and finisher of their faith.

“Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts” (Zechariah 4:6).

Demonic spirits continually try to disturb the Christian’s occupation with the Lord. Jesus was not exempt from these types of projections. During his forty-day fast described in Matthew 4:1-11, Jesus was approached by the devil. Three times, it is recorded that Satan tempted Jesus to do something outside of the Father’s plan. What was the Lord’s response? He counterattacked with the Word of God.

Jesus would not receive the temptations, saying, “Get thee hence, Satan” (Matthew 4:11). His heart was fixed upon doing the Father’s will. Many hindrances can be overcome by simply standing fast in the faith according to 1 Corinthians 16:13. This faith, of course, must be founded upon the Word. Like Christ, believers do not have to receive demonic interruptions. When a wearying mood or tired spirit tries to hinder prayer or study, the answer is concentration on Bible doctrine. This counteraction produces energy and life.

“This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy

word hath quickened me” (Psalm 119:50).

“It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (John 6:63).

Chapter Three

THE POWER OF TRUTH

“For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little” (Isaiah 28:10).

The above verse instructs Christians to hear and study the Word in this way: “Line upon line, line upon line; precept upon precept; here a little, and there a little.” In doing this, the believer stores God’s thoughts in his memory center so that they can be recalled in times of need by the Holy Spirit. What a provision this is for the child of God! Even the most difficult situation cannot hinder the Christian whose mind is stayed upon Christ. This type of believer is relaxed and at rest under pressure. Beyond that, he always seems refreshed and full of energy.

Why?

He appropriates the mind of Christ (Colossians 3:16). This believer’s thoughts are “line upon line” and “here a little, there a little.” He

reflects upon the myriad of God's promises. Continually, he asks himself this question: "What am I occupied with at this moment? Christ or my circumstances?"

Overactivity of the mind exhausts and frustrates a person's capacity to proceed in his walk with God. The best thing a Christian can do in the midst of details and pressures is "wait upon the Lord" (Isaiah 40:31).

Qavah is the Hebrew word for "wait" in Isaiah 40. Qavah does not speak of a passive submission to circumstances. Instead, it refers to "patient expectancy." Christians who experience the truth of this verse place confidence in the promise of His return and ultimate victory (1 Thessalonians 5:2-3). These believers are secure in their union with Christ. "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ" (1 Corinthians 6:15).

Full Joy

"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (John 15:11).

There are Christians who accept it as normal when they are crushed spiritually by situations and details. Their joy is not full because they

have not esteemed God's precepts.

The church at Corinth was among the most gifted of the New Testament churches, but divisions, immorality, and confusion over key doctrines such as the resurrection prevented it from effectively revealing the life of Christ (see 1 Corinthians 15). The Corinthians were far from experiencing the joy the Lord had intended for them. Paul exposed the root of their troubles in 1 Corinthians 2:5, explaining "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

Believers must be mindful of the provision they have of being in Christ. His victory is theirs as well. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." Satan hinders Christians in an attempt to keep them from manifesting the fruit of the Spirit, for this expression spoils the devil's strategies.

Some Christians become trapped in a progression of trying to "die to themselves." In other words, they desire to die to their selfish desires and natural preferences, but they go about it in the wrong way. They struggle with emotions and weaknesses in an attempt to produce godliness.

But this is something that cannot be produced by men. Colossians 3:3 states that the believer is “dead and his life is hid with Christ in God.” He does not need to be concerned with how to die to self; rather, he needs only to recognize the fact that he is already dead and that he now has Christ’s life.

The death of the old sin nature is a positional reality because of Christ’s accomplishment on Calvary. It becomes a part of a believer’s daily experience as he abides in Christ and makes continual positive decisions to receive the Word of God. Paul dealt with this in his letter to the Galatian church. “Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” (Galatians 3:3). In John 15:4, Christ’s command was simply this: “Abide in me.” Our part is to rest in Christ and allow the plan of God to make our positional crucifixion experiential.

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

CONCLUSION

“Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily” (Colossians 1:29).

“For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day” (2 Corinthians 4:16).

The Christian who focuses on Christ will not be hindered. As he considers the power of the Lord at work in his soul, he begins to labor and move forward in the plan of God. Daily, the refreshment of the Word energizes him for service.

He is not relying on his limited resources, but casts all of his cares upon the Lord (1 Peter 5:7). Thus, he experiences victory and peace as he operates in the domain of Satan, who is the “prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2), and “the god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4).

The believer must rejoice in his redemption and recognize that Christ’s power protects him from the attacks of the enemy. Thus, his life ma-

tures into a confident, productive expression of God's grace.