



Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices

Satan's Devices to Draw the Soul to Sin, Pt. 3

Introduction

When I was in college, the Paleo Diet was launched. I became very serious about it. There have been other times when I was regimented about an eating plan, a workout plan, a Bible-reading plan, or a host of other things. This time of year is an appropriate time to mention those things, because statistically, if you made a New Years Resolution, you will have stopped it or broken it three days ago (*Jan. 19th*).

It's not only true for me, but I've learned it's true for other people, too – I didn't stop being serious about the Paleo Diet because I dropped it all in one day. Rather, I stopped because of little changes here and there. A little desert. A single roll. A day missed on the plan. These small changes and compromises eventually shaped my entire viewpoint, and they eroded my dedication to the plan. Likewise, in this way, Satan will draw our souls to sin.

The Device: “By the Extenuating and Lessening of Sin”¹

Definition: “Ah! says Satan, it is but a little pride, a little worldliness, a little uncleanness, a little drunkenness, etc. As Lot said of Zoar, “It is but a little one, and my soul shall live” (Gen. 19:20). Alas! says Satan, it is but a very little sin that you stick to. You may commit it without danger to your soul. It is but a little one; you may commit it, and yet your soul shall live.”

***In what ways have you experienced this?**

Matt. 5:17-20: Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Therefore, anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the Kingdom of heaven.

***How does Satan, by this device, undermine and oppose Jesus's command regarding the law and righteousness?**

¹ Definition of “Extenuating” – (Adj.) serving to lessen the seriousness of an offense.

The Remedies

1. **Solemnly consider that those sins which we are apt to account small, have brought upon men the greatest wrath of God – the eating of an apple, gathering a few sticks on the Sabbath, and touching the ark.**

“Oh! the dreadful wrath that these sins brought down upon the heads and hearts of men. The least sin is contrary to the law of God, the nature of God, the being of God, and the glory of God; and therefore, it is often punished severely by God.”

“Therefore, when Satan says it is but a little one – you must say, “Oh! But those sins which you call little are such as will cause God to rain hell out of heaven upon sinners as he did upon the Sodomites!”

1 Chron. 13:9-10: Uzzah reached his hand to steady the ark, because the oxen stumbled. The Lord’s anger burned against Uzzah, and he struck him down because he put his hand on the ark. So, he died there before the LORD.²

**How can we take sin this seriously without falling into a Pharisaic “holier than thou” complex?*

2. **Seriously consider that giving in to a lesser sin makes way for committing a greater sin.**

“He who, to avoid a greater sin, will yield to a lesser, ten thousand to one, God will in justice leave that soul to fall into a greater.”

“We, by yielding to the lesser, do tempt the tempter to tempt us to the greater. Sin is of an encroaching nature; it creeps on the soul by degrees, step by step, until it has the soul to the very height of sin.”

*Ps. 1:1: Blessed is the one who does not **walk** in step with the wicked, or **stand** in the way that sinners take, or **sit** in the company of mockers (scoffers/scorners).*

**How is the blessedness described by Psalm 1 related to this Remedy?*

“Satan will first draw you to sit with the drunkard, and then to sip with the drunkard, and then at last to be the drunkard. He will first draw you to be unclean in your thoughts, and then to unclean in your looks, and then to be unclean in your words, and at last to unclean in your practices... Here they go on from sin to sin, until they come to the top of sin, that is, to sit in the seat of scorners.”

3. **Solemnly realize that it is sad to sin against God for a trifle.**

1 Sam. 14:29: Jonathan said, “I tasted but a little honey, and I must die.”

“It is the greatest folly in the world – to adventure the going to hell for a small matter... It is a most unkind and unfaithful thing to break with God, for a little.”

² Cf. **Num. 4:15**: “After Aaron and his sons have finished covering the holy furnishings and all the holy articles, and when the camp is ready to move, only then are the Kohathites to come and do the carrying. But they must not touch the holy things, or they will die.”

“Little sins carry with them but little temptations to sin, and then a man shows that he is most vicious and unkind when he sins on a little temptation. It is devilish to sin without temptation... The less temptation it is to sin, the greater is that sin.”

“When Satan says it is but a little one, you must answer: often, there is the greatest unkindness showed to God’s glorious majesty, in the acting of the least folly, and therefore you will not displease your best and greatest friend – by yielding to his greatest enemy.”

4. Seriously consider that there is great danger – yes, the most danger – in the smallest sins.

“Greater sins startle the soul and awaken it to repentance sooner than lesser sins do. Little sins often slide into the soul, and breed, and work secretly and indiscernibly in the soul, until they come to be so strong, as to trample upon the soul, and to cut the throat of the soul.”

“There is oftentimes the greatest danger to our bodies in the least diseases that hang upon us, because we are apt to make light of them, and to neglect the timely use of means for removing them, until they grow so strong that they prove mortal for us. So, there is most danger often in the smallest sins.”

***What are some examples of these “small but deadly” sins?**

5. Solemnly consider that other saints have chosen to suffer the worst of torments rather than commit the least sin, that is, such as the world accounts little sins.

“You may see in Daniel and his companions, that would rather choose to burn and be cast to lions than they would bow to the idol which Nebuchadnezzar set up. When this ‘slight offense’ – in the world’s account – and a hot fiery furnace stood in competition, that they must either fall into sin or be cast into the furnace, such was their tenderness of the honor and glory of God, and their hatred and indignation against sin, that they would rather burn than sin!”

“I have read of that noble servant of God, Marcus Arethusius, minister of a church in the time of Constantine, who had been the cause of overthrowing an idol’s temple. Afterwards, Julian came to be emperor, and he would force the people of that place to build it again. They were ready to do it – but Marcus refused. Whereupon, those who were his own people, to whom he preached, took him, and stripped him of all his clothes, and abused his naked body, and gave it up to the children, to lance it with their pen-knives, and then caused him to be put in a basket, and drenched his naked body with honey, and set him in the sun to be stung with wasps. And all this cruelty they showed, because he would not do anything toward the building up of this idol temple! No, they came to this, that if he would do but the least towards it, if he would give but a half-penny to it, they would save him. But he refused all, though the giving of a half-penny might have saved his life. And in doing this, he lived up to the principle that most Christians talk of, and all profess – but few come up to – that we must choose rather to suffer the worst of torments that men and devils can invent and inflict, than to commit the least sin whereby God should be dishonored, our consciences wounded, our religion reproached, and our own souls endangered.”

***As you read these two accounts, what strikes you about their faithful obedience? What are some examples of “little sins in the world’s eyes” that we compromise or resist?**

6. Seriously consider that there is more evil in the least sin than in the greatest affliction.

“This appears as clear as the sun, by the severe dealing of God the Father with his beloved Son, who let all the vials of his fiercest wrath upon him, and that for the least sin as well as the greatest.”

Rom. 6:23: *The wages of sin is death.*

[the wages] “of ALL sin... whether great or small, Oh! How this should make us tremble – as much at the least spark of lust as at hell itself; considering that God the Father would not spare his eternally begotten Son, no, not for the least sin – but would make him drink the dregs of his wrath!”

***In what ways do Remedies 3-6 expose our (your) low view of sin? How can we let them grow us?**

Conclusion

Let us have eyes to see the vileness of sin, even little sins – to see the danger in the least. Let us live for God’s glory and grow in our desire for holiness and live with thankfulness for Christ, who died for our sins – the great and little. ***Prayer Requests for the Device and Remedies.**