



Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices

Satan's Devices to Draw the Soul to Sin, Pt. 6

Introduction

***Imagine, for a moment, what the blessed life looks like. What do you see?**

When I was in high school and college, I worked for a man named Eric Richardson. He owned Richardson Construction, which was the most successful construction company in the area where I grew up. Eric had everything, and his life seemed so charmed. “That’s the blessed life,” I told myself – and I wanted it.

Yet, I didn’t know all the trials, hardships, and issues going on beneath the surface – anxiety, addiction, crumbling family life, pursuit of success for his father’s approval, etc. For many of us, we can get caught up by pursuing *the blessed life*. We see what others have, so we pursue them, thinking that will bring us blessing. It’s not merely financial/material. We look at outward relationships, bodies, experiences, etc. Media and social media make this all the worse. Beware, however, because Satan will attempt to use these people, who have what you want, to draw your soul to sin.

The Device: “By representing the *outward mercies* that vain men enjoy and the *outward miseries* they are freed from, while they have walked in sin.”

Definition: Says Satan, “Do you see, O Soul, the many blessings that such and such enjoy, who walk in those very ways that your soul is startled to think of, and the many crosses that they are delivered from, even such as makes other men – who say they dare not walk in such ways! – to spend their days sighing, weeping, groaning, and mourning? And therefore,” says Satan, “if ever you would be freed from the dark night of adversity and enjoy the sunshine of prosperity, you must walk in their ways.”

***What are some ways you’re tempted to pursue the lifestyle of non-believers for the sake of prosperity and/or comfort?**

Jer. 44:16-18: “As for the word that you have spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not listen to you. But we will do everything that we have vowed, make offerings to the queen of heaven and pour out drink offerings to her,¹ as we did, both we and our fathers, our kings and our officials, in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. For then we had **plenty** of food, and **prospered**, and saw **no disaster**. But since we left off making offerings to the queen of heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, we have **lacked** everything and have been **consumed** by the sword and by famine.”

***How was this device of Satan being used to draw the people of Judah to sin?**

¹ The queen of heaven was likely an ancient fertility goddess of Ancient Assyria/Babylon/Egypt. The Judeans had likely worshipped this idol during the long, peaceful, and prosperous reign of Manasseh (one of the evillest kings in the Old Testament). The reference to “since then” was likely a reference to Josiah’s destruction of idol worship after he took over following Manasseh.

The Remedies

1. Solemnly consider that no man knows how the heart of God stands towards a person by his outward blessings given to that person.

**Why do you think we equate blessings from God with outward mercies?*

“His hand of mercy may be towards a man, when his heart may be against that man, as you may see in Saul and others; and the hand of God may be set against a man, when the heart of God is dearly set upon a man, as you may see in Job and Ephraim.”

“No man knows either the love or hatred of God by his outward mercy or misery; for all things come alike to all, to the righteous and the unrighteous, to the good and to the bad, to the clean and to the unclean. The sun of prosperity shines on the bushes of the wilderness as much as on the fruit-trees of the orchard; the snow and hail of adversity comes upon the best garden, as well as upon the stinking ash-heap and wild waste.”

2 Cor. 1:3-5: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.

**How can 2 Cor. 1:3-5 help you disarm and resist this device of Satan?*

“Cicero judged the Jews' religion to be nothing, because they were so often overcome, impoverished, and afflicted; and the religion of Rome, he considered to be right, because the Romans prospered and became rulers of the world; and yet, though the Romans had God's hand, the Jews had his heart, for they were dearly loved, though severely afflicted.”

**In what ways could you say the same for Jesus?*

2. Seriously consider that there is nothing in the world that so provokes God to be angry and full of wrath as men's taking encouragement from His goodness and mercy to do wickedly.

“To argue from God's mercy to sinful liberty is the devil's logic! Such logicians walk upon a mine of gunpowder ready to be blown up, for no soul of this kind can avert or avoid the wrath of God. This is wickedness at the height – for a man to be very bad, because God is very good. There is not a worse spirit than this in hell.”

What do you think he means by **sinful liberty?*

**How can honor Christian Liberty (freedom) without becoming Legalistic or Antinomian?²*

WCF, 20.2: God alone is Lord of the conscience, and has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men that are contrary to His Word in anything; or beside it, if matters of faith or worship. So that, to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commands, out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience.

² *Legalism* focuses on obedience to laws or moral codes based on the (misguided) assumption that such obedience is a means of gaining divine favor. *Antinomianism* denies the binding nature of any supposedly absolute or external laws on individual behavior.

WCF, 20.3: They who, upon pretense of Christian liberty, do practice any sin, or cherish any lust, do thereby destroy the end of Christian liberty, which is, that being delivered out of the hands of our enemies (*sin, Satan, the world*), we might serve the Lord with fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

***How does Westminster's explanation of Christian Liberty help answer that question?**

“To render good for evil is divine; to render good for good is human; to render evil for evil is brutish; but to render evil for good is devilish; and from this evil deliver my soul, O God.”

3. Seriously consider that the lack of wicked men is far greater than all their outward enjoyments.

“They have many mercies, yet they lack more than they enjoy. The mercies which they enjoy are nothing to the mercies they lack.”

***What do you think he means by “mercies” and things “they lack”?**

“It's true they have honors and riches, pleasures and friends, and are mighty in power; their family is established, and their offspring are before their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them. They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They take the timbrel and harp, and they rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in wealth, their eyes stand out with fatness, they have more than their heart can wish; their strength is firm, they are not in trouble as other men.”

***When you're around people who have more than you, what do you normally think about them?**

“Yet all this is nothing to what they lack. They lack a saving interest in God, Christ, the Spirit, the promises, the covenant of grace, and everlasting glory. They lack acceptance and reconciliation with God; they lack righteousness, justification, sanctification, adoption, and redemption. They lack the pardon of sin, and power against sin, and freedom from the dominion of sin. They lack that favor with God, which is better than life, and that joy which is unspeakable and full of glory, and that peace which passes understanding, and that grace, the least spark of which is more worth than heaven and earth. They lack a house that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. They lack those riches that do not perish, the glory that does not fade, and that kingdom that is not shaken.”

“Wicked men are the most needy men in the world, yes, they lack those two things that should render their mercies sweet, that is, (1) the blessing of God, and (2) contentment with their condition. Without these things, their heaven is but hell on this side of hell.”

“If only the eyes of wicked men were opened to see their spiritual needs under their temporal abundance, they would cry out and say, as Absalom did, “What are all these to me so long as I cannot see the King's face?” (2 Sam. 14:23, 32). What is honor, and riches, and the favor of creatures – so long as I lack the favor of God, the pardon of my sins, a saving interest in Christ, and the hope of glory! O Lord, give me these, or I die! Give me these, or else I shall eternally die!”

***Based on his statements, what does it look like to be truly blessed? What keeps you from believing it?**

“A crown of gold cannot cure the headache; a velvet slipper cannot ease the gout; honor or riches cannot quiet and still the conscience. The heart of man is a three-sided triangle, which the whole round circle of the world cannot fill – but all the corners will complain of emptiness, and hunger for something else.”

***I hunger for respect, connection, and a good time. What do you hunger for, and how are you seeking satisfaction in the world? How does Jesus satisfy those things?**

Conclusion

May we remember that God’s heart does not always match his hand, it is very evil to pursue wickedness on account of God’s goodness, and that the most “blessed” sinner lacks the most necessary things for communion with God, godliness, peace, and eternal life.

***Prayer Requests for the Deceased and Remedies in your lives, as well as in those you know & love.**