



Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices

Satan's Devices to keep Saints from holy duties, Pt. 4

Introduction

One of my favorite animated movies is 'Up'. This movie is about a man who marries the love of his life, and once she dies, he is lost. He meets a boy who wants to perform some service for him so he can get another badge for his boy-scout club. Through a series of events, the man lifts his house with balloons because he doesn't want to sell the home, and he flies it to Paradise Falls. While there, they meet a dog who can talk, named Doug.

Doug is very distracted. His unfocused mind is always being distracted, and he yells, "Squirrel!" He can be thrown off course by the most insignificant distractions – even when the stakes are high and he needs to come through for the sake of his owners. In a similar way, we are very distractable. Satan weaponizes this against us to keep us from holy duties. Even, and especially, when we're engaged in these duties (prayer, worship, reading, meditating, fellowship, service, etc.), our minds fly away like Doug, "Squirrel!". We must be watchful against this device of Satan, for by it, he keeps many saints from engaging in their holy duties.

Device: "By casting in vain thoughts while the soul seeks, or waits on, God."

Definition: By this device, Satan has cooled some men's spirits in heavenly services, and taken off, at least for a time, many precious souls from religious performances. When prompted with an opportunity to engage in a religious service, Satan casts in vain thoughts, such as, "I have no heart to hear, or no heart to pray, or no delight in reading or being in the society of the saints." Satan does so dog and follow my soul, and casts in such a multitude of vain thoughts concerning God, the world, and my soul, that I even tremble to think of waiting upon God in any religious service. Oh! The vain thoughts that Satan casts in do so distaste my soul, and so grieve, vex, perplex, and distract my soul, that they even make me weary of holy duties, yes, of my very life. Oh! I cannot be so raised and ravished, so heated and melted, so quickened and enlarged, so comforted and refreshed – as I should be – because of the varied array of vain thoughts that Satan interjects or casts into my soul. Lord, now how gladly I would serve you, and vain thoughts will not allow me!

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

2 Corinthians 10:3-5: *For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

***How does Paul's description of the Christian life equip us against this device of Satan?**

Remedies

1. **You must have your hearts strongly affected with the greatness, holiness, majesty, and glory of that God before whom you stand, and with whom your souls converse in religious services.**

“A man would be afraid of playing with a feather when he is speaking to the king.”

“When people have poor, low, light, or slight thoughts of God as they draw near to God, they tempt Satan to stir himself and cast in a multitude of vain thoughts to disturb and distract the soul as it waits on God.”

“There is nothing that will contribute so much to the keeping out of vain thoughts as to look upon God as an omniscient God, an omnipresent God, an omnipotent God, a God full of all glorious perfections, a God whose majesty, purity, and glory will not allow him to behold the least iniquity. The reason why blessed saints and glorious angels in heaven have not so much as one vain thought is because they are greatly affected with the greatness, holiness, majesty, purity, and glory of God.”

***How would beholding God’s holiness help you keep out vain thoughts?**

“When Pompey could not keep his soldiers in the camp by persuasion he cast himself down along in the narrow passage which led out of it, and bade them go if they would – but they must first trample upon their general. And the thought of this overcame them. You are wise, and know how to apply it to the point at hand.”

2. **Be faithful in religious services despite those wandering thoughts the soul is troubled with.**

“For the soul to be resolute in waiting on God, whether it be troubled with vain thoughts; to say, ‘Well, I will pray still, and hear still, and meditate still, and keep fellowship with the saints still,’ will be a sweet help against these vain thoughts.”

“Many precious souls can say from experience that when their souls have been steadfast in their waiting on God, that Satan has left them, and has not been so busy in vexing their souls with vain thoughts. When Satan perceives that all those vain thoughts that he casts do but prompt the soul to greater diligence, carefulness, watchfulness, and steadfastness in holy and heavenly services, and that the soul loses nothing of his zeal, piety, and devotion – but doubles his care, diligence, and earnestness – he often ceases to interpose those afflictions and vain thoughts, as he ceased to tempt Christ when Christ was steadfast in resisting his temptations.”

“It is a rule in the civil law that nothing seems to be done if there remains anything to be done. If you finally say, ‘It is enough’, you are undone.”

James 4:7-10: Submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and He will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts you double-minded. Grieve, mourn, and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

***According to James, what’s at stake if we allow vain thoughts to keep us from holy duties?**

3. Consider that watching against sinful thoughts – and resisting and lamenting over them – carries with it the sweetest and strongest evidence of the truth and power of grace (and of the sincerity of your hearts), which is the surest way to be rid of them.

Ps. 139:23-24: Search me, O God, and know my heart. Test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting.

“Many low and carnal considerations may cause men to watch their words, their lives, their actions; as hope of gain, or to please friends, or to get a name in the world, and many other such like considerations. Oh! But to watch our thoughts, to weep and lament over them – The only way to do that is through some noble, spiritual and internal principle, such reasons as love for God, a holy fear of God, a holy care and delight to please the Lord.”

“Thoughts are the first-born, the blossoms of the soul, the beginning of our strength – whether for good or evil; and they are the greatest for or against a man that can be found... There is nothing that so shows a person to be thoroughly shaped by grace as having his thoughts to be ‘brought into obedience’ as the Apostle speaks in 1 Cor. 10:4-5. Grace is grown up to a very great height in that soul where it prevails to the subduing of those vain thoughts that walk up and down in the soul.”

“Internal bleeding kills many people; so will sinful thoughts, if not repented of.”

4. Avoid the varied array of worldly business.

“Oh, let not the world take up your hearts and thoughts. Souls which are torn in pieces with the cares of the world will always be vexed and tormented with vain thoughts in all of business. The stars which have least circuit are nearest the pole; and the men that are least perplexed with business are commonly nearest to God.”

2 Tim. 2:4: No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs – he wants to please his commanding officer.

Everyone always complains about being too busy. Thomas Brooks (and scripture) warn against the danger of distractions from worldly affairs.

***Why do we resist getting rid of these worldly affairs when we can even acknowledge their detriment?**

***What tends to occupy your mind the most? In other words, what are your sources of anxiety?**

***What aspects of your life (in those regards) could be solved if you gave something up?**

Conclusion

May we be mindful of God’s holiness, faithful in holy duties, proactive in our thoughts, and cautious about worldly affairs that distract us.

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