



Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices

Satan's Devices to keep Saints from holy duties, Pt. 5

Introduction

When Marigold was first born, we lived in a little house in Oviedo, FL (*a NE suburb of Orlando*). We didn't want our family to come right away, because we wanted to establish the rhythms on our own before the reinforcements arrived. We feared that their initial help would set us up for failure and shock, since we were living 30 hours away from the nearest family member. That meant I was doing everything for the first 2-3 weeks as Katy recovered and enjoyed Marigold. My parents arrived around that 3 week mark, and my dad made a comment to me about how I was doing too much.

Rather than correcting him and explaining the situation/reality, I took the bait. The seed of bitterness was sown, and I began to think, "You're right; I am doing a whole lot. I've done enough." The moment that mindset shifted, I started doing less and less – the first phase was that I stopped doing those things with joy. When my classes began, it was easy for me to justify my lack of intentional involvement and support: "I put in my time; now it's your time," I told myself. In other words, I began resting in my performances, particularly, my past performances. I convinced myself that I had done enough, and in doing this, it ended up creating great tension in my marriage. The reinforcements of family came over the next month or so, and when they left, Katy and I struggled because I wasn't as present as she needed. By the end of the semester, she was depressed and we almost dropped out of seminary. Thus, Satan tempts us to rest in our performances to keep us from the holy duties Christ calls us to.

Device: "By tempting them to rest in their performances, such as prayer, hearing, reading, righteous deeds, and the communion of saints."

Definition: And when Satan has drawn the soul to rest upon the service(s) done, getting them to think they've done enough. He tells us, 'These performances were done well, so you have no need to continue on. God is well-pleased with you.' After he convinces you of this, he then shifts his tone, and he will get the soul to begin reasoning in the following way: 'Why, it would be better for you to never pray than to pray and rest in that prayer; you had better never hear, read, or be in the communion of saints than to rest in those duties.' He takes us from one degree of neglect to another. And by this device, he stops many souls in their heavenly race, and he takes off poor souls from those services that should be their joy and crown.

***In what ways have you experienced this in your own life?**

Prov. 3:5-8: *Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil. It will bring healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones.*

***How does the wisdom of Proverbs 3 expose the sinful logic in this device of Satan?**

Remedies

1. You must dwell on the imperfections and weaknesses that attend your best services.

“Oh the spots, the blots, the blemishes that are to be seen on the face of our best duties! When you have done all that you can, you will still need to say, ‘Enter not into judgement with your servant, O Lord!’ (Ps. 134:2), for the weaknesses that cleave to my best services.”

Isaiah 64:6: All our righteous deeds are like filthy rags (lit. translation: ‘clothes of menstruation’).

***In what ways are your best services attended with imperfections and weaknesses?**

“If God is strict to mark what is done improperly in our best actions, we are undone! Oh the water that is mingled with our wine; the dross that cleaves to our gold! Pride and high confidence are most apt to creep in upon *duties well done*.”

2. To consider the lack of power and ability that any of your best services have to provide you with divine comfort when God shall say to you, ‘Go and cry to the gods you have chosen; let them save you in the time of your tribulation.’

***When you’re full of guilt and shame, what are you usually tempted to run to as a refuge for comfort?**

“If, on that day, God withholds the influence of his grace, your former services will be poor comforts to you. And then you will have to cry out, ‘none but Christ, none but Christ, none but Christ!’ Oh, my prayers are not Christ, my hearing is not Christ, my fasting is not Christ!”

“One smile of Christ, one glimpse of Christ, one good word from Christ, one nod of love from Christ in the day of trouble and darkness – will revive and refresh the soul more than all your former services in which your soul rested, as if they were the bosom of Christ, which should be the only center of our souls.”

“Christ is the crown of crowns, the glory of glories, and the heaven of heavens.”

3. Solemnly consider that good things rested on will as certainly undo us – and everlastingly destroy us – as the foulest enormities which can be committed by us.

“Those souls that after they have done all, do not look up so high as Christ – and rest, and center alone in Christ, laying down their services at the footstool of Christ – must lie down in sorrow; their bread is prepared for them in hell.

***Two of the primary reasons we don’t live centered on Christ are: Pretending and Performing. How do these two things get you to rest on your own services and not on Christ?**

Isaiah 50:11: But watch out, you who live in your own light and warm yourselves by your own fires. This is the record you will receive from me: You will soon lie down in great torment.

“Is it good to dwell with everlasting burnings, with a devouring fire? Why do you, then, rest in your duties still? See that you center only in the bosom of Christ.”

***In what ways do you struggle with pretending and performing?**

***What would it look like to ‘center in the bosom of Christ’?**

4. You must dwell on the necessity and excellency of that resting-place which God has provided for you.

“Above all other resting-places – he himself is your resting place; his free mercy and love is your resting-place; the pure, glorious, matchless, and spotless righteousness of Christ is your resting-place; Ah! it is sad to think that most people have forgotten their resting-place, as the Lord complains: ‘My people have been lost sheep, their shepherds have caused them to go astray, and have turned away to the mountains: they go from mountain to hill, and they forget their resting-place (Jer. 50:6).’”

“So poor souls who do not see the excellency of that resting place that God has appointed for their souls to lie down in – they will wander from mountain to hill, from one duty to another, and here they will rest and there they will rest. But those who see the excellency of that resting-place that God has provided for them, they will say, ‘Farewell prayer, farewell hearing, farewell fasting. I will rest no more in you – but now I will rest only in the bosom of Christ, the love of Christ, the righteousness of Christ!’”

***How does resting in Christ actually promote the performance of holy duties? (*Which is contrary to this device of Satan*)**

Conclusion

In order to rest in Christ and live in obedience to him, may we be dwell on the imperfections of our best actions, consider the inability of our actions to comfort us in judgement, and remember the only true and sustaining resting-place for our souls.

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