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Resisting Satan's Devices



Spiritual Warfare - Steve Gregg

In "Resisting Satan's Devices," Steve Gregg discusses the principle methods Satan uses to attack and deceive Christians. He advises Christians to resist these devices by using the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, as well as prayer and fasting. Gregg emphasizes the importance of staying holy and avoiding sinful behavior, regardless of societal norms. He also warns against adding to or subtracting from the Word of God, as this can lead to confusion and deception.

Transcript

In our last session, I introduced the topic of some of the devil's principled devices and methods. Paul said that we are not ignorant of his devices in 2 Corinthians 2.11, though as I mentioned, I think sometimes Christians may be more ignorant than Paul thought of the devices of the devil, and if we are ignorant, we are more prone to be deceived and more prone to succumb to the problems that the devil wishes to bring upon us, many of which, all of which probably, are related to deception. Deception may be used of the devil to persuade us to sin.

It may be used by the devil to persuade us to feel condemned. It may be used by the devil to dampen our zeal for evangelism or to bring fear into our lives. Whatever effect the devil hopes to bring about in our lives to ruin us spiritually or neutralize us in terms of effectiveness in the spiritual warfare, whatever the effect may be, the method is deception.

And I'd like to acquaint you with some of the ways that we respond to these devices as the Bible gives us instruction. I was reading this morning, and I'll make a... I'll make reference later more specifically to the subject of demon possession, not in this session but in our next. But I was reading this morning a story, I'd read it before years ago and I was reading it again, a true story, of a Lutheran pastor in Germany in the mid-1800s who encountered a singular case of demon possession which was very striking.

And there's many things I'd like to say about that case, but the one thing that was very clear is that prior to encountering this in his parish, he had no awareness of the reality of

demon possession. Like most or like many Christians, he was aware that the Bible described demon possession, but he had never experienced or encountered any notable cases of it, and he was very unprepared for it. He didn't know what to do.

As it turned out, after 18 months of dealing with a very tragically possessed lady, he managed to see her through to full deliverance from, as it turned out, thousands of demons. And by the way, it is biblical that some people may have thousands of demons. There was a man, Jesus, encountered who lived in the tombs who had thousands of demons.

This woman apparently had thousands of demons, but as I was reading the account, the pastor basically just kind of had a wake-up call, a rude awakening at that, when he discovered a case of really spectacular demon possession in his parish. And he realized that he had never been trained for this. He was unfamiliar with this.

He was just groping for how to deal with it. And because he was faithful and because he was a man of prayer and a man of the Word of God and a good pastor, he managed to see this woman through to full deliverance after a protracted period of time and a great number of efforts. And he did right things, but he did them sort of in an experimental way, not knowing for sure if these were the right things.

And I think that we can be more prepared than that. And I think that not only in encountering demon-possessed people, but in encountering the devil's own ploys against us to get us to sin or to get us to fear or to get us to just be lethargic or apathetic, whatever the devil may be seeking to do against us. If we are aware of his devices and aware of what the Bible says we are to do about them, we will be several steps ahead of where this man found himself in this particular case I was referring to.

And so, some years ago, I don't know, I think I mentioned in our first session, the first time I encountered a demon-possessed person was probably, I suppose I was probably 18 years old, in Southern California back around 1971 or 72, I suppose. And it really made it clear to me that I needed to find out what the Bible said about spiritual warfare, about what Christians are supposed to specifically do when encountering the devil. And as it turns out, I have not encountered demon possession all that often.

I have encountered it on several occasions, but it seems to me that knowing what to do is going to have more frequent application to day-by-day encounters with the devil's temptations and deceptions in our lives. That's going to be more frequent, more common than when we encounter a demon-possessed person and have to do something unusual like cast out demons. I say unusual, for some people this is more unusual than others.

I think that all Christians must be prepared to deal with that kind of situation when it arises, but I don't think it arises all the time, every day, for every Christian. But

temptations and the specific deceptions of the devil do occur just about every day in the lives of most Christians. And so I want at this point, before talking about the special cases of demon possession, I want to talk about the warfare for your own soul, the Christians' responses to the devil's devices, how we resist those devices of the enemy.

And I just want to give you scriptures that speak directly to the subject as much as possible in our warfare. Now, when Paul told us what the armor of God is, in Ephesians chapter 6, he listed five pieces that he referred to as the armor of God, and we've talked about these. There was the breastplate of righteousness, the belt of truth, the shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace.

There's the shield of faith and the helmet of salvation. These all have in common the fact that they are armor, and as such, they are defensive in nature. God has given us armor to deflect, as Paul said, the flaming arrows of the wicked one.

But in addition to armor, Paul lists, although not as many pieces, he does list equipment that Christians have for offensive warfare, and these are the word of God and prayer, principally. And he says, take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. This is in Ephesians 6, 17.

And then in verse 18, he says, praying with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and persevering and watching thereunto with all supplication and prayer for the saints, for all saints. Now, Paul indicates that taking the word of God as a sword and prayer are two of the things that Christians have as an advantage in fighting off the enemy. Now, the word of God and prayer can service defensively and offensively.

When he speaks of the word of God as a sword, he is speaking of an instrument by which the enemy can be harmed. Swords may be used in an actual case of hand-to-hand combat, where two swordsmen are fighting each other. Obviously, a sword can be used to block the thrust of another person's sword.

But the real value of a sword is not in blocking another sword, but is in slicing at your enemy and doing physical harm to him. A sword is a weapon, more than a piece of armor, really. And so Paul, when he begins to talk of the word of God and then prayer, he is switched from the idea of wearing armor for self-protection to equipment that is given to us for doing damage to the enemy.

And so I believe that the word of God and prayer are weapons. They are perhaps what Paul principally has in mind when he says in 2 Corinthians 10, 4 and 5, the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but are mighty through God. The word of God and prayer, I believe, are the principal weapons of which we read in Scripture and certainly in Paul's passage on the subject in Ephesians 6. But in addition to being useful for weaponry, they are useful for protection as well.

And I believe that the Bible teaches that prayer is a principal means of overcoming the devil's devices. And since the devil seeks to deceive us and since detection of the devil's devices is an important part, our early warning that we are in fact engaging the devil is very important. It's important that we pray that we would not be deceived and that we pray that our eyes would be open to those attacks.

I believe that Christians always ought to pray as Jesus did, or as Jesus taught us to pray, I should say, in Matthew chapter 6. In what we usually call the Lord's Prayer, in Matthew 6, verse 13, part of our prayer that the Lord instructed us to pray is, Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. The first part of this, do not lead us into temptation, is a very difficult statement to interpret.

On the one hand, temptation cannot be avoided. And that is made clear. In fact, temptation plays a role in our testing, in our development of our spiritual lives and so forth.

To encounter temptation is not entirely a negative thing. If it were entirely negative, God would probably not allow it to happen. But the Bible says all things work together for good.

To those who love God and who are called according to His purpose, in Romans 8, 28. So, even temptation is therefore our good. But we are told to pray, lead us not into temptation.

Now, does this mean that temptation is to be avoided at all costs? That temptation is uniformly bad for us to experience? That we should pray, and if we did pray in faith, we could avoid all temptation altogether? That we could pray that God would not lead us into temptation? And if we pray in faith and the prayer is answered, then we would experience no temptation? Well, that is one of the problems associated with understanding the meaning of this. It almost sounds like if we pray this, we are asking that we might never be tempted. And we are, of course, not ever expected to pray things that are not the will of God, or that we could never expect God to answer.

We are, in fact, to pray things that we expect God to answer. The very fact that God tells us to pray for a thing means that it is His will for us to experience it and to receive it. And therefore, if we were to understand this petition to mean, may I never be tempted, then we would have to assume that God's will is that I would never be tempted.

But that can hardly be the case. We read specifically of the Spirit of God leading Jesus, in Luke chapter 4, into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. Furthermore, the Bible suggests that our temptation, our experience of temptation, is something that God not only allows, but it seems to be part of our training.

In fact, it is something that is measured out, specifically in the right quantities by God's own sovereignty. So that we read in 1 Corinthians 10.13 that there is no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man. And God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond that which you are able to endure, but will with the temptation also provide a way of escape.

Interesting, God will provide with the temptation a way of escape from temptation. He will not permit you to be tempted more than you are able to endure. It sounds like God is the one making the decision as to how and when and to what degree you will be tempted.

He at least is placing the limitations upon it. Now that doesn't mean that God is the tempter. James tells us, let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God.

God is not the one tempting. But certainly if we are tempted, it is God who is permitting it to be so. It is the devil who is called the tempter in Scripture.

But we know from the book of Job, that the devil could not bring any test or temptation on Job unless God permitted it. And when God permitted it, in Job chapters 1 and 2, God permitted it with reservation and with restriction. In the first case, God told Satan, you can take Job's property, but you can't touch his person.

And then in the next chapter we read, God said, now you can touch his person, but you have to spare his life, you can't kill him. So that we find the devil is the active tempter, but God is the one who decides what the devil may be permitted to do or not. So we can have confidence when Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10.13, that God will not allow you to be tempted beyond which you are able to endure, and will always provide a way of escape, that no temptation comes by accident, no temptation comes randomly, no temptation comes into your life without God not only being aware of it, but first approving it and delimiting it.

God is the one who limits the degree of intensity, the degree, the period of time that a temptation will last. God is the one who for our good and for his glory, allows the devil to tempt us in measure, and God determines what that measure will be. Now that being so, and seeing that God himself through the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil, and Jesus is our example, who is tempted in all points as we are, and we experience the same, we cannot conclude that God never wants us to experience temptation.

If he never wanted us to experience it, we would not. And even Jesus experienced temptation. But temptation is not sin, and therefore temptation in itself is not something that is offensive to God, or which can never or should never occur in the life of a believer.

Sin should never occur in the life of a believer, because God is offended by sin. But temptation is not the same thing as sin. Temptation is a testing.

Now, when we read, do not lead us into temptation, therefore I've always had problems believing, and I do not believe, that we are to pray that we would never experience temptation. And yet it sounds like that, do not lead us into temptation, sounds like I'm praying, do not ever let me experience temptation. But it cannot mean that.

Biblically there is too much against that. And therefore I myself have come to the conclusion that that first clause is to be interpreted in light of the second clause, but deliver us from the evil one. And I think that that means, do not lead us into temptation without delivering us out of it also.

That is to say, God might be, if we did not pray otherwise, He might lead us into a temptation and not deliver us out of it. Just lead us in, and there we are, stuck with it. What we're praying is that He'll lead us safely through it.

Not into it, but through it. Don't just lead me into a temptation and leave me hanging there, but deliver me out of it as well. So that I would understand the first clause as what I've referred to in previous lectures and other subjects as what we call a limited negative.

It's apparently a Hebraic expression. We find it used in Scripture in undeniable places where it must necessarily be so that it is a limited negative. Where not this, but that, really means not only this, but also that.

I think I've given you examples of this phenomenon before. When Jesus said, do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth. I didn't come to bring peace, I came to bring a sword.

Well, did not Jesus come to bring peace? Of course He came to bring peace. To His disciples, He said, I give you my peace. Jesus is the Prince of Peace.

The fruit of the Spirit is peace, and love, and joy, and other things like that. Jesus, of course He came to bring peace. But when He said, I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.

This is a case of the Hebrew limited negative, which means not only peace, but also sword. When He says, I didn't come to bring peace, He means I didn't only come to bring peace, but also a sword. The only and also are implied in the statement.

And there are a number of cases in Scripture where this is so. Jesus used the expression that way, and so did others in Scripture. I am of the impression that we have a limited negative here, where He says, do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

I believe it is a limited negative. It should be understood. Do not only lead us into temptation, but also deliver us out of it.

Don't just lead us into temptation, and then leave us there, but lead us into temptation according to your will, and then out of it. And deliver us out of it. Deliver us from the wicked one.

And so the prayer, as I said, cannot be a prayer that we will never be tempted, but it is a prayer that we will not be tempted beyond what we are able to endure, but God will always provide the way of escape. The deliverance from it. The deliverance from the evil one.

Remember, Jesus said in His prayer for His disciples, in John chapter 17 and verse 15, He said, Father, I do not pray that you would take them out of the world, but that you would keep them from the wicked one. Well, the world is the sphere of temptation. The world is the sphere of the devil's activity.

But Jesus didn't pray that we would be taken out of the world to be removed from all temptation. There must be some need for us to be here. But He did pray that though we must be in the world, that we would be delivered from the power of the wicked one.

This is what we must pray for ourselves also, that God would not only lead us into temptation, but also out of it. His leading, if we were to never be led into a place of temptation, we would never be led into battle. You could never do any harm to the enemy, if you were never confronted with the enemy.

It's not our desire that we never be confronted with battle, because if you are never confronted with battle, you can never win a battle. And you can never do any harm to the enemy. But it is our desire that when we are led into temptation, when we are confronted with the enemy, that we be delivered from it.

And that's what we are to pray constantly. And that's part of the model prayer that Jesus told His disciples to pray. Later on, there was a specific instance in Matthew 26, when Jesus and three of His disciples were praying, or He went for that purpose to the Garden of Gethsemane, and He asked them to pray with Him.

And specifically, He asked them to pray this. In Matthew 26, verse 41, He said, Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. Now, it's interesting, because Jesus was about to be captured.

He didn't say, Pray for me not to be captured. He didn't say, Would you join me in prayer that I will escape the cross? Would you join me in prayer that I will pass the test, or that I will escape this conflict? He said, Pray that you will escape unsullied by temptation. Pray that you won't fall into this temptation.

At times of temptation, you may do one of two things, stand or fall. Paul said that you should take the armor of God, so that you can withstand in the evil day, and having done all to be left standing. But Jesus said, You better pray that you don't fall into temptation.

Fall into the behavior that the devil would tempt you to do. And we know the disciples did not pray. At least, they didn't pray for an hour, as He later scolded them for not being able to do.

And did they fall into temptation? They certainly did. Peter, later that night, denied Jesus three times. All of them fled and forsook Him.

They did not pray, and therefore they were unprepared. And they fell into temptation. You know, there are Christians I know, I have certainly been in this state at times in my past too, and this is one reason I know that there are Christians like this, and I also know others, who have besetting patterns in their life of sin, which they hate, of which they repent whenever it occurs, and on those occasions they make strong resolves that this will not happen again, and they are determined, but when they are tempted again, they fall again.

And they repent again, and they make resolution again, and determination again that this will not happen again, and then it does happen again, and again, and again, and again. This gets very depressing. This gets very discouraging.

And I've known people who've had this problem in many areas, whether it's fits of temper, whether it is something like smoking, or drinking, or whether it's something like masturbation, or pornography, or gambling, or some other thing, that seems to really grab the life of a believer in some cases. And he hates it, and he swears off it, he determines to never do it again, but he falls again. One of the first things I must ask a person when they tell me that they are struggling with something like this, and I've had many occasions to be told such by people who are seeking counsel, is that the best thing I know to do is to pray, first of all.

Jesus said, Watch and pray that you do not fall into temptation. Now, you will experience temptation, but you are to pray that though you be led into temptation, you will nonetheless be delivered out of it safely, delivered from the wicked one. And so many times, not always, but many times, the persons who are so afflicted and so in bondage to some sinful pattern, well, I have to confess that prayer has not been faithfully conducted against it.

And if you happen to be a person who is struggling with some kind of a sin, and you don't understand why, you just can't get over it, I guess the first question is to ask, Are you praying? Are you praying hard? Are you praying regularly? Are you praying faithfully? Are you laying hold on God? Are you maybe even fasting along with prayer to determine that you will not let go of God unless He bless you? Prayer is not just a little

cute and polite religious exercise. Prayer is wrestling. Like Jacob wrestled with God all night long.

There's a line in one of Keith Green's songs where he says, and I can't quote it precisely, but it's very close to this, what was it? One something night of anguished prayer, I triumphed over sin. Do you remember that song? That line? One sleepless night of anguished prayer, or something like that, I triumphed over sin. One battle in the holy war God's promised me to win.

You know, you can tell from hearing that line, though you don't know what he was going through, you're hearing some very profound, sacred autobiography in that line. You know, you know that there was a particular night that he lost sleep all night because of a sin that he was wrestling with, and he beat it. And when I meet Christians who have not beat something that's overcoming in their lives, I wonder, have you spent any sleepless nights of anguished prayer? Now, I realize that's not a quotation from Scripture, but from Keith Green, but his experience, his experience is not unique.

There are others who've known it. In fact, the Apostle Paul and Jesus himself said, can you not watch with me? Watch and pray. Do you know what the word watch means? Watch means to stay awake.

I mean, that's the literal meaning of this word, to stay awake. Just as fasting is abstinence from food, watching is abstinence from sleep, so that we sometimes read of watchings and fastings. Fasting and watching in prayer.

In fact, you would probably be interested if you did a study on this to see how frequently watching is associated with prayer. Jesus said, watch and pray. Stay awake and pray.

It was nighttime. Couldn't you watch with me an hour? You fell asleep? Paul says in that passage on the spiritual armor in Ephesians 6, in verse 18, where he says, praying with all prayer and supplication, he says, and watching thereunto, or watching for this purpose. That means staying awake for this purpose.

When's the last time you lost sleep because you prayed all night? When's the last time you missed three meals because you fasted for a day? Now, I'm not saying some of you don't do those things regularly. Some of you might. But I dare say some don't.

And some of the ones who don't are the ones who are not triumphing over sin. And I'm not saying that triumph over sin can't sometimes come easier than that. It may.

There are some sins that I got over overnight. When I got baptized in the Spirit, there were sins of my personality that I don't think I ever committed again afterwards. It's an amazing thing, just like deliverance from them.

But not everything. I had sins otherwise that I wrestled with for decades. And as far as I

can tell, I don't want to boast because if anyone thinks he stands, the Bible says, let him take heed lest he fall.

But as near as I can tell, I beat the ones that were the most frustrating for the most years. And some of them I beat through continuous prayer. Some of them I beat in other means.

And some I've just been delivered from. I can't claim that I spent a night in prayer about it. God just graciously liberated me.

There's no predicting how much effort will be required to overcome a particular sin. But one thing is certain. A Christian must be determined to exert whatever effort is necessary because to have sin in the life is unglorifying to God.

It's destructive to you and it gives the devil advantage. It is simply not okay. It is simply not negotiable.

The Christian cannot allow sin to continue in life and give up the struggle while it is still there. And there are times when praying all night long, maybe praying several nights a week or something, is what it's going to take. And I'm not saying that Christians must do this all the time.

I don't know how many nights Keith Green has spent like this. He only speaks about one in that psalm. But there may have been others.

I know of other Christian biographies of people who've lost sleep all night. I've prayed all night on some occasions. Not very often.

Haven't had to that often. But I guess what I'm saying is if you can get full deliverance with less praying than that, fine. But if deliverance has not fully come and you haven't devoted yourself to that kind of prayer, then maybe take a clue from Jesus.

He said to the disciples, stay awake and pray so that you don't fall into temptation. That is instruction. That is warfare instruction.

That is a battle plan. He's talking about temptation. He's talking about being delivered from the evil one.

And Christians sometimes are, they'd rather give in to the evil one than miss a night's sleep or miss a day's meals or whatever in order to devote themselves to prayer for holiness and for victory over sin in their lives. And some people may not even get it that easy. There may be more to be done.

But I would say, along with John Bunyan, the author of Pilgrim's Progress, he's often quoted as having said, you can do more after you've prayed, but you can't do more before you've prayed. You can do more than pray, that is. You can do more than pray

after you've prayed, but you can't do more than pray before you've prayed.

Which is to say that prayer is the first recourse. To go to God and to beg God and say, God, I'm serious about this. I read something interesting from this German pastor on the subject of fasting and prayer.

And I liked it because it resembled very much some of my own thoughts on the subject that I don't remember anyone ever having, I don't remember having heard them say. This was the pastor in Germany in the mid-1800s. It was 1842, I think.

Became a very famous man, although he was not a proud man. He was a very humble man. But he became famous because of this notable case of driving these thousands of demons out of this girl whose condition became legendary.

I mean, for 18 months he wrestled with it. The whole town watched sometimes while this was going on. It's an incredible story.

And I'm going to tell you something about it when we talk about demon possession in our classes. But in the course of it, this man was just kind of groping around for information from God and from the Word of God on how to deal with this case. And he said, A faithful friend in neighboring state to whom in that time I had opportunity and courage to tell of my difficult position finally pointed out to me the word, This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

Matthew 17, 21. And when I thought more upon this, I came to the point of giving more importance to fasting than one usually does. Fasting is an actual proof before God that the matter of prayer is a true and urgent one to the believer.

It reinforces the intention and strength of prayer to a high degree. It even represents a continual prayer without words. Because of this, I could believe that it would have effect, especially since in the case in which I stood, I had special word from the Lord.

I tried fasting without telling anyone about it. I must confess that the following battles were made extraordinarily easier because of it. I especially gained from the fact that I could talk much more quietly, firmly, and determinedly and did not have to spend as much time as before.

He was talking about addressing the demons when he was commanding the demons to come out. I felt that I could, without being present, have strong effect upon the case. When I came, I realized great results in a few moments.

That was especially the case after the attack in August, etc., etc. I read that this morning and thought, yeah, that states it very much how I had thought it. I don't know that you could prove from Scripture just what he said.

The Bible doesn't really say what effect fasting has on prayer. It makes it clear that prayer and fasting go together well. And some matters of great urgency require prayer and fasting, including a special case that Jesus referred to where a demon-possessed person could not find deliverance through the efforts of the disciples without prayer and fasting.

And, you know, I think anyone who reads the Bible knows that fasting is relevant to prayer in some sense, and it is not infrequently mentioned in connection with prayer against the powers of darkness. But the Bible nowhere says why it is that fasting helps or what it is that fasting does. It certainly isn't the case that you're going on a hunger strike and saying, God, I'm twisting your arm here.

I'm going to starve to death if you don't answer my prayer. But it may in some respects, in principle, be not dissimilar to that in that you are demonstrating to God that this is a matter of urgency. As Pastor Blumhart said in the passage I read, that it is a demonstration that the matter of prayer is a matter of great urgency and determination to the believer.

You know, we can so easily and lightly toss up prayers. We're so Protestant, you know. We're so liberated from religiosity and ritual and things like that that we realize that I can pray while I'm driving down the street.

I can just toss up prayers any time during the day with very little thought. And by the way, that is true. We find Nehemiah spontaneously praying while he's building a wall just shooting up one-sentence prayers at times when he has a concern on his heart.

You can do that. But at the same time, there are matters of great urgency which we may take only too lightly if we just say, okay, I prayed about that. That means I spent 30 seconds asking God to take care of this problem.

But then we forget about it. It's not really that urgent. When we say, okay, I'm going to fast about this.

This is important to me. I'm going to keep my mind on it and my hunger is going to remind me of it day in and day out. In fact, my absence from meals is going to be as it were a continuous prayer even when my words are not coming out and even when I'm not specifically and mentally praying for it.

Blumhart said, and you can't prove this from Scripture, but I don't believe he's wrong. He said that fast, in a sense, is sort of a continuous prayer even without words. And it shows that it is a matter of true urgency and seriousness to the person praying.

I believe that, you know, Jesus definitely taught that prayer sometimes is like a woman begging a judge to do the right thing. A judge who is not quick to respond. Or like a man banging at the door of his neighbor's house.

The man who's already gone to bed, but the man wants him to get up and give him some bread for a guest who's come. The man's not eager to get up and help and he's slow to do so, but because the banging continues, he gets up. What Jesus teaches in parables like this is that sometimes prayer must be persistent.

And if persistent, we don't know why. I mean, God could answer the prayer instantly, but in the case of Daniel, Daniel fasted and prayed for three weeks. The prayer, God was not reluctant to answer the prayer.

In fact, the angel was sent the day Daniel began to pray, but it took three weeks to overcome the spiritual resistance in the heavenlies. And I have reason to believe from Daniel chapter 10 that Daniel's praying and fasting and his persistence in this is what got the breakthrough so that his prayer finally, the answer that God had sent three weeks earlier, finally got to him. And so for whatever reasons or however it may be, the Bible does teach that in warfare against the devil, prayer is a mighty weapon and it has accompaniments in the form of watching, which means losing sleep over it, and fasting, which means missing meals for it.

Now, losing sleep doesn't mean that you lose sleep because you're worried and your nerves are a wreck and you lose sleep because you're an insomniac. It means that you sacrifice sleep, just like you would sacrifice meals when you're fasting. You lay aside deliberately sleep in order to devote yourself to prayer.

Now, I hope that all of you have had some experience with this kind of prayer. I don't know that any of us have enough of it. I have a feeling we would see revival if more of us were determined that we would not sleep or eat until we had some assurance that God was sending revival.

But I guess we're just not that concerned. We've got it reasonably comfortably here. Who needs revival, right? I mean, we're doing okay.

But we're not doing okay. And that's the thing. The devil keeps us living at a low level of spiritual satisfaction, a low level of spiritual success, a low level of holiness, a low level of evangelistic success, and this is the devil winning.

And yet one of the greatest weapons we have is the weapon of prayer. And if we would use it with more determination, with more of the biblical accompaniments to it, like fasting and watching, we might be surprised at how things would turn around in our own spiritual lives and in our own spiritual effectiveness. Well, we need to be made aware of this.

Jesus taught that prayer is certainly a part of resisting the enemy, and that resistance of the enemy is not only the resistance of his attacks upon our own conscience and our own heart and our own holiness, but his attacks that try to prevent us from doing good for

anyone else. Now, additional to prayer, we have the Word of God. Now, remember, Jesus said in John 17, 17, as he prayed for his disciples, he said to his Father, Sanctify them by thy truth.

Thy word is truth. Sanctify means make them holy. Make them holy people.

And do it through your truth. And your word is truth. One of the things the devil wants most is to defile you, to interfere with the holiness of your life and your testimony.

It hurts your conscience, it hurts your testimony, and it hurts God's glory. And therefore, to be holy is one of the things that the devil attacks us the most about, to avoid, to keep us from being holy. And therefore, what I mean is he tries to get us to sin.

Now, Jesus prayed that we would be holy, that we would be sanctified, and he prayed that his Father would sanctify us, he said, by the truth. Sanctify them by your truth, Jesus said to the Father. And then he said, Your word is truth.

We've said earlier that the battle is over truth. It is the truth that makes free. It is deception that the devil depends 100% upon.

100%. If he wants you to sin, he must use deception. If he wants you to be afraid, he must use deception.

If he wants you to be depressed, he must use deception. He must conceal from you the things about which you ought to be rejoicing. If he wants you to feel condemned, he must use deception, because there is no condemnation of those who are in Christ.

The devil depends entirely on deception. If he wants people to remain unsaved, he must use deception. He must prevent them from knowing the truth that Jesus is the King.

And everything the devil does is through deception. And the best cure, and the only cure I know for deception, is truth. And the Word of God is truth.

Now, some people, when they read of the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, they think that this means that the Word of God is some kind of a magical, maybe like a lightsaber, an actual scary-looking weapon that just the sight of it, or just the sound of it, scares the devil. I mean, just the quotation of Scripture, oh, that terrifies the devil because of some mystical, magical power or something that the Bible has. Well, I will not deny that the Bible may have unusual power of a spiritual sort.

But I suspect that the devil's... the damage that the Word of God does to the devil is not because of some mystical power that inheres in the Scriptures, but because of the truth that is revealed in the Scriptures. The devil's whole regime rests upon the strength of deception, and nothing does more harm to the kingdom of deception than truth. All that a person deceived needs to know is the truth.

Now, I will admit, there needs to be more than just a mental presentation of the truth. You can tell the truth to somebody who's in error, and they can remain in error. The truth has to come with power.

The truth has to come with anointing. The truth has to come with conviction and the Holy Spirit. And this, we must pray, will occur because the Scriptures have that power too.

But it is the truthfulness of the Scriptures that makes them such a threat to the power of Satan. If you are meditating day and night on Scripture, if you are studying the Scripture, if you are mindful of the Scripture and believing the Scripture and mixing it with faith, there's very little deception that you could possibly fall into. You have too much truth, too much light to stumble around in the darkness.

Therefore, the use of Scripture is our principle, besides prayer, is the principal equipment we have to resist the devil's devices. Where the devil hopes to gain advantage by deceiving us, we gain the advantage back by the Scripture. When Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, in Matthew chapter 4 and in Luke chapter 4, the devil came to him and tried to get him to do things which rested upon his hopes that he might deceive Jesus into doing the wrong thing.

But Jesus was undeceived. Why? Well, in Matthew chapter 4 and verse 10, Jesus said to him, Away with you, Satan, for it is written, You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only you shall serve. Actually, all three of the temptations were met with this statement, It is written, in the quotation of some Scripture.

But in particular, Jesus rebuked Satan through Scripture. He said, Away with you, Satan. Be gone, Satan.

Why? Because it is written. And the citation of Scripture was that which required that Satan's deception come to an end and cease in that situation. In the parallel to that, in Luke 4, verses 12 and 13, it tells of another of the temptations.

It says in there, Satan was quoting Scripture to Jesus, but he quotes it incorrectly. He actually omits an important part of Scripture. And Jesus answered and said to him, It has been said, or it is written, You shall not tempt the Lord your God.

And the devil ended, when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time. Jesus, we find in the temptation narratives, did, even though Jesus was superior to Satan in rank and in power, very clearly so, he did not depend on that, but he depended on Scripture to overcome the deceptions and the temptations that the devil was bringing to him. And if Jesus depended heavily on Scripture, I don't see how we could do better than that when we are tempted.

Now, principally, I want to talk to you about the lies of Satan that he uses to try to get you to sin. I said yesterday in our class about the devil's devices, that the devil cannot

get anyone to sin unless they are deceived. And I believe there are a number of ways in which he seeks to deceive.

There are certain lies that the devil always uses. I'd like to acquaint you with them so that when he speaks them in your ear, you'll recognize them, you'll be acquainted with them, you'll know where that's coming from, and you'll know what to do about them, what to say to them. I believe that when the devil lies to you, there is scriptural precedent for you to speak back to him and say, Be gone, Satan, because it is written, and to tell him what the Scripture says on it.

Now, again, it's not so much that there's magic in the words of Scripture. It's simply this, that by quoting Scripture, you know that you are quoting what's true. If the devil said, you know, you have to sin, and you just said, Be gone, Satan, I don't have to sin, you might wonder, why don't I have to sin? Maybe I do have to sin.

How can I be sure I don't have to sin? How do I know I'm telling the truth? They say, Be gone, it is written. Sin shall not have dominion over you. Then, suddenly, you know you're telling the truth.

So, that you have the truth, and there's no way the devil can counter the truth, because he has nothing but lies. Well, there are several kinds of lies. I've actually listed probably a dozen different lies of the devil.

I've collected these over the years from my own experience. Things the devil has told me. Sometimes it took a while for me to realize it was him talking.

But, I've noted them. I'd like to pass them by you, and see whether any of them have come your way. Some of the lies the devil tells, initially, are about identifying sin in the first place.

Whether a certain thing is sin or not. I mean, one thing the devil will do is to deny that certain things are sin. It's not really wrong to do, to tell a little white lie.

Many people think that. But, where do they get it? Is it in the Bible? Does the Bible say it's not wrong to tell a little white lie? Or does the Bible say, put away all lying. And do not lie one to another.

And, I mean, to deny that a certain thing is a sin is what the devil will often do. Now, there are many people, Christians, who, I think I mentioned this before, who have divorced their spouses, or had affairs with other people, or cheated their employers, or lied to their children or to other people about certain things. A very common one is the question of whether there's a Santa Claus or not, for example.

Is that a true statement or a lie when you tell your children there's a Santa Claus? Is it a white lie, a black lie, a gray lie, or do these colors apply to lies? Most, these are things

Christians have done. Christians have lied. Christians have cheated.

Christians have divorced without any biblical grounds. Christians have actually taken up mental and even physical adulterous affairs. And in doing so, in many cases, it is clear from talking to them that they believe they were justified.

They believe they did not sin. Some of these things you can't imagine how they could conceivably have justified it, but they've allowed themselves to be deceived. The devil has convinced them that what they did isn't wrong.

Now, you might say to them, but aren't these things generally wrong things to do? In some cases, they might say yes, generally, but there are extenuating circumstances here. I mean, God couldn't expect me to do the thing that He generally expects people to do in such a case as this. And the devil will try to convince you that the thing is not wrong.

But if the Bible says it's wrong, that's where you have to counter. It is written, you shall not do this thing. One of the hardest things for young people, single people, males especially, is to contend with the practice of masturbation.

I understand that some women have problems with this too, but it seems statistically that men struggle with it at a higher degree or in larger numbers than women do. It would appear that even among Christians this is not very uncommon. I say it appears that way because I've talked to a great number and many Christians are concerned about it in their own lives.

And one of the things that makes it very hard to know what to say about it is because there is not a scripture somewhere that says thou shalt not masturbate. That's the problem. People come to me and say, does the Bible forbid this? And it's hard to answer with a direct scripture, thou shalt not masturbate.

And as long as a Christian cannot find some scripture, some truth to quote back to the devil, it's hard to resist that temptation. When the temptation is strong, if you don't have a sword there, if you don't have a scripture there, if you don't know the truth because the scripture you think is silent on the subject or the devil convinces you that the scripture is silent on the subject, there is very little to support you in your resistance. And I know many young men, Christian young men, who struggle in that particular area for the very simple reasons they don't know for sure whether it's wrong.

They might know it's wrong in their conscience, but they don't know it's wrong at the moment of temptation. Somehow the suggestion is made and they are convinced that this is not wrong behavior. Now, I'm going to have to agree that we don't have a direct scripture speaking about that act.

And frankly, I'm very surprised that we don't because I'm sure that that particular

practice didn't originate in the 20th century. I'm sure that it's been a problem for all human history, including biblical times. I'm surprised that it's not so named, although it is possible that that practice is named under some other name.

There are many times the Bible lists sins, most of which are of a sexual nature. I mean, it lists fornication, immorality, adultery, and in the list you'll find along with it something called uncleanness. What is uncleanness? Does that refer to having dirt on your body? You haven't bathed recently? Haven't used shampoo for months or whatever? Is that what uncleanness is? No, that's not what uncleanness is.

Cleanliness is not next to godliness in that particular sense. But what is uncleanness? I don't know what Paul means by uncleanness. It may be very generic or it might refer to something specific.

What's interesting is how often uncleanness is mentioned in Scripture in association with other sins that are of a sexual nature. And I don't know if there's a specific sin or if it's just general moral uncleanness. But one thing is interesting that in the Old Testament a number of things were ceremonially unclean.

Not necessarily morally so, but ceremonially so. And they would make a man unclean until nightfall or until maybe a week later in some cases. But one of the things that made a person unclean, a male, was if he had a wet dream.

As you know, if you've recently read through the Pentateuch, a man would be unclean for, I believe, I don't remember if it was a day or a week in such a case, but if he had an emission during the night. Now, I don't believe that having such an emission during the night is something to which God places some moral guilt upon since most men don't have full control over what happens to them when they're asleep. But the fact is, that may in itself, I believe all those uncleanness laws have some typological value.

I believe that they are a type of something else. And it is possible that when Paul lists uncleanness among sexual sins without specifying what he means, he may be being very generic or he may be referring simply to such emissions which under the law would even be ceremonially unclean. But when done deliberately, it becomes a moral issue of uncleanness.

I'm only guessing. It is, I would have to say, an educated guess, but it's not certain whether Paul would be referring to the practice of masturbation when he talks about uncleanness. Like I said, I've always found it surprising that that is not a sin that is mentioned specifically in the list of sexual sins unless it's there under another name, which it may be.

I will say this, that even if there is no specific reference to that particular act, yet in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, verses 3-5, 1 Thessalonians 4, 3-5, Paul says, For this is the will

of God, your sanctification, that is that you be holy. Then he spells that out, that you should abstain from sexual immorality. Okay, well, sexual immorality is kind of vague.

That could include fornication, homosexuality, bestiality, adultery, a lot of things. Sexual immorality is just sexual misbehavior and there's a lot of different categories for that. But what does he have in mind specifically? Well, verse 4, That each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God.

Now, it's interesting that rather than listing all the things that are sexually immoral, that is, instead of listing all the things thou shalt not do, Paul lists the things you shall do with reference to sexual behavior. It's not so much that you shall not do the following and make a long list of every conceivable sexual kinky thing, whether it's sadomasochism or child molesting. You could make a very, very long list.

Paul doesn't list all the things that are sexually immoral. He lists the ideal, what we are supposed to do with our sexuality, that you are to contain yourself in sanctification, that is in holiness, and in honor, not in sexual passion. Now, what that does is set a general standard of holiness in the area of sexual behavior, that you are to maintain a control over your sexual passion, which control is to result in a behavior that could be described as holiness and honorable.

Now, some may dispute whether certain practices are consistent with holiness and honorable, but I would just say this. Even without mentioning, say, masturbation as a particular practice, I don't know anybody who in good conscience could say that masturbation strikes them or their conscience as a holy and honorable practice. I don't know of anyone who feels very honorable about masturbation.

Most people are fairly ashamed of it. It's not something that people are proud of. And that's interesting, too, because among heathens, sometimes men love to talk about their sexual exploits and how many women they've had and so forth, but it's very rare to find even a heathen who wants to talk about how many times he's masturbated.

It's a rather shameful thing. It's interesting. I don't think anyone that I've ever heard of would describe masturbation as an honorable practice, something that makes them feel particularly honorable and proud of themselves.

It seems like it's singularly dishonorable, shameful, humiliating experience for those who do it. And that in itself suggests that that practice falls short of the ideal that God has set for us in our sexual behavior, that we should contain ourselves in holiness and in honor, our vessels, which is our bodies. Now, I didn't mean to go on a tangent about masturbation, but so little is said about it, generally speaking, in the church, either because it seems shameful to speak of it.

That's too bad. Paul spoke about all kinds of things that are truly shameful. Homosexuality and other things.

Things that are even shameful among the heathen, he said. Like a man having his father's wife. These are very shameful things.

It's a shame we have to talk about them. We wouldn't if they didn't exist among us. But the reason I center on that particular one is because there we have a very good example of what almost all would agree is a sin, but we don't have a specific scripture that names it undeniably and says, thou shalt not do that particular thing.

There's a case where the devil can really get an advantage by saying, well, this isn't a sin. There's nothing in the Bible against it. And there's other practices too, but that is a notable one, especially problematic among young single males, frequently.

So the devil will lie to you about whether or not a thing is sinful in some cases. Now, there's some things he can't fool you about. He can't convince you that murder is okay, or probably he won't convince you that adultery or bank robbery is okay, but there are things not quite so stark, not so grievous as those which are nonetheless forbidden in scripture, but people feel justified in them.

The devil says, go ahead and get mad. Or, you know, envy and anger and wrath and jealousy and anxiety, depression, you know, the devil will sometimes allow people to indulge and justify themselves in indulging in anxiety or depression or anger on the basis that nowadays this is considered to be a syndrome. This is nowadays considered to be a pathology.

These days, we call that mental illness, as if it was something, a sickness that comes on people and they have no control over whatsoever. When in fact, the Bible speaks about all these things as sins that are to be avoided and to be resisted. We simply live in a time where the biblical world view about sin is not in vogue.

It's not even in vogue among Christians. So, if a person indulges in depression or allows anxiety to spiritually cripple them, that person is usually given a medication for that or counsel of a psychological sort or something. All kinds of therapies.

Therapy is a medical word. Therapies are used as if they are sick. Now, by maybe some extension or extrapolation of the word, we might use the word sickness if we are understanding that we're not talking about the same category as biological sickness.

If we say that somebody has a sick mind, we're using the word sick in a metaphorical sense. We're not really saying that they have a germ that makes them think in their depraved ways. Tragically, though, more and more people are using the word sick of the mind in just that way, that they are saying that this person's thought patterns are such because of a chemical imbalance or because of a genetic factor.

In other words, they are handicapped somehow, just like a person who is born blind or a person who gets polio or diabetes is handicapped. And sometimes, if you question whether it's appropriate to use the drugs that they use on a child who is diagnosed as having ADD or a drug on somebody that's diagnosed as schizophrenic or bipolar affective disorder, which we usually call manic-depressive, or some of these names that have taken on a therapeutic air, as if this is sickness. If you question the use of drugs on these things, people will say, well, you wouldn't deny insulin to a diabetic, would you? And that's not even relevant to the subject.

A diabetic has a deficiency in insulin in his body. Normal bodies need insulin. And when the gland that produces insulin is not working, the body will die unless insulin is supplied.

It is an actual substance the body needs. But the drugs that are given to people with alleged mental problems are not substances the body needs. I know a Christian friend whose wife is on lithium because of manic behaviors and so forth.

This Christian, a strong Christian man generally speaking, he has been convinced by the medical profession that his wife had a lithium deficiency. And that's why she behaved this way. And when they gave her the right dosage of lithium, she behaved better.

I can't deny the results. If lithium made her feel better and made her act better, I won't deny that the behavior has improved. But I will ask, how is it that a person can have, or be said to have, a lithium deficiency when lithium has no known use in the human body? Lithium is a toxic metallic salt in the same category as lead.

We have lead in our bodies and we have lithium in our bodies and they do affect us but not generally positively. Our bodies don't generate or digest or have use for lead. As a matter of fact, the less lead you have in your body, the better off you are.

Lithium is similar. It's largely toxic. It happens to have an effect when you have a certain amount of it in your body.

It disables certain brain functions. If this disabling of certain brain functions makes people not have manic episodes, we call that a cure for something. But it doesn't mean that what they lacked in the beginning was enough lithium.

Lithium just is a toxic chemical that has an effect that affects brain behavior. And if it affects it in a way that we find desirable, we'll call it a cure for something. You might as well say that because a person goes out and gets drunk and it relieves him of his depression momentarily.

That he was suffering from an alcohol deficiency before that. It's nonsense! Biblically speaking and scientifically speaking and yet Christians have bought right into it. It's the devil's lie because what that does is he says it's not a sin.

Your behavior is not a sin. It's a sickness. And we need to make sure that we are alert to these kinds of lies because they're all around us.

They're in the church. They come over the radio on Christian broadcasts. From Christian psychologists and so forth.

And so the devil, one of his lies is to deny that something that the Bible says is sin. To actually deny that it's sin. And to give it some other name.

Just say, well it's not sin in this case or, no this is wrong to think of this as sin. This is actually a sickness or this is a genetic problem or whatever. By the way, if you've heard that schizophrenia or ADD or any of these conditions are genetic and by the way, you will hear that from certain literature.

I would just say those studies that have purported to result in that diagnosis are questionable at best, deceptive at worse and there is actually no proof that there is any genetic factor for ADD. Although I've heard many people say, well it's genetic, you know. Fathers and sons have it sometimes.

It's been proven it's genetic. No, it has not been proven. They say it, no matter how many times they say it, it doesn't make it the case.

They have not proven such a thing. They have not proven that schizophrenia is genetic. Now, brain chemistry, that's another story.

Sure, there are imbalances of chemicals in the brain. And these are caused by a lot of different things including hormones and cycles of life and things ingested and things like that. And even indulgence in certain emotions can cause adrenaline imbalance and things like that.

I will not deny that with certain emotional states there are chemical correspondence in the brain. The question is what came first, the chicken or the egg? Did a person get depressed because of a problem in the chemistry of his brain or did the chemistry change because of his depression? Did a person's chemistry of his brain change because he got angry? Or did he get angry because the chemistry was imbalanced? That has never been demonstrated. But to suggest that the spiritual state has some effect on the physical state would be quite consistent with scripture.

John said to his friend Gaius in 3 John, I wish above all things that you would prosper and be in health even as your soul prospers. That you would be in physical health even as your soul is in health. If your soul is right, it can have effects on your body.

Jesus found a man who was paralyzed and before he healed him of his paralysis he healed him of his problems of sin. He said, Son, your sins are forgiven. And then he said, Now, take up your bed and walk.

There may be, in fact, cases where a physical condition is aggravated or even caused entirely by sin or by emotional or other behavioral factors. But to turn around and say, Oh, this person is doing this because of a chemical imbalance is to put the cart before the horse and to mix effects with causes and so forth. It is the standard thing even among Christians to say, Oh, don't call that sin.

Then you're picking on the afflicted. Well, I won't deny that these people may be afflicted, but by what? They may be afflicted by their own deception, their own falling for the devil's lies. They might even be afflicted by demons.

Some of them. In fact, I have no doubt of it. Some mental cases that we would call them are actually demon possessed.

There can be no doubt about that because we read in the Scripture many cases of demon possession which would be diagnosed as mental cases today if they happened to be around. These people that Jesus cast demons out of in Scripture, if they were walking the streets today, they'd be put on some kind of psychiatric medications or put in an institution, in a straitjacket. They'd figure, well, there's another sicky.

Yeah, but he's not sick. He's possessed. It's a spiritual problem.

Anyway, I've gotten on another tangent. I've got a lot of tangents. I can get up on tangent on almost anything if I want to.

Anyway, one of the great lies of the devil through one means or another is to try to convince you that a particular behavior, which the Bible describes as sin, is not sin. One of the best ways to do that is to keep you ignorant of what the Bible says in the first place. If the devil can keep you from reading the Bible, he's gained great advantage.

And you're not likely to know very well what the Bible says if you don't read it and meditate on it. But then if you do read it and meditate on it, he might try to misinterpret it for you or do what he can to cause you not to believe it. Whatever he can do to make you think that whatever it is you're doing wrong isn't really wrong.

That's the first line of attack. Another way that he lies about what sin is is by adding to the Word of God and making you feel guilty about things that aren't even sin. But he gets the same benefit out of it because you think it is.

Eve, you recall, said that God had commended her and Adam not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, nor to even touch it. Well, of course that's not true. God didn't tell them not to touch it.

She added to the Word of God. Now, is that a good or a bad thing to do? Well, the Bible says in Proverbs 3 and verse 6, I mean Proverbs 30 and verse 6, add thou not unto his words lest he reprove thee and thou be found a liar. If you add to the Word of God, you

may end up being found to be a liar.

If you just quote the Word of God, you'll never be found to be a liar because it's true. But your additions may not be true. Now, why would anyone add to the Word? Well, one reason people would add to the Word is out of a good motive.

Probably Eve added to the Word for a good motive. She probably didn't want to fall into sin and she knew that eating the tree, eating the fruit of that tree was not right. Therefore, it would be wise not to touch it at all.

In fact, we're not sure. She wasn't even there when God gave the command to Adam. She hadn't been created yet.

Maybe Adam's the one who miscommunicated to her. Maybe she was the victim of a legalistic religious scheme that she'd been taught. But the idea is if God says don't eat it, that's not the same thing as don't touch it.

Now, anyone knows that if it's forbidden to eat it, it's probably a very good idea not to touch it either. Just stay out of there. Stay as far from it as you can.

But there's a difference between good advice and the commands of God. The difference is not, of course, that good advice is good and the commands of God are bad advice, but rather that good advice is human, merely. Human wisdom.

The commands of God are God's wisdom. If God says don't eat a thing, it may be excellent advice to not touch it either, but don't confuse good advice with the Word of God. It's not on the same level.

When the Bible says do not be drunk with wine, that is a command of God. When a church says don't ever drink alcohol under any circumstances, that is not the Word of God. It might be a great idea.

I mean, I've read many books and pamphlets by Christians about why it's wrong to drink any alcohol. And many reasons are given. All of them human reasoning.

But none of them are scriptural. The Bible does not forbid the drinking of alcohol, but it does forbid drunkenness. But is it not wise? If you know that it's a sin to get drunk, would it not be wise not to even take the first drink? I mean, after all, every drunkard had a first drink.

If he never had a first drink, he'd never be a drunkard. True, true. All true.

All human reasoning. And perhaps good advice. I would certainly suggest to you that it's good advice for you to never drink alcohol.

I can't think of any good reason to drink alcohol. I'm not a drinker myself. I don't believe

that drinking alcohol has very many good reasons behind it.

Although there might be some. Paul said to Timothy, take a little wine. Not only water, but take a little wine for your stomach's sake.

There might be some medicinal uses. I'm not saying that a person could or should never drink it. I'm just saying it's a good idea not to, generally speaking.

It's a good idea, but I'm not going to say it's the word of God, because the word of God doesn't say that. When you put a hedge around the law, when God says don't do this, and you add to it, don't do this, and don't do this other thing either, because that gets too close to doing the forbidden thing. Don't touch it either, because once you touch it, you may be more tempted than before to eat it, and you're not supposed to eat it, so you shouldn't touch it.

Don't take a first glass of wine, because you might end up taking ten. Well, what happens is people begin to think that they can help God out here. God didn't really say it as clearly as He should have.

He wasn't strict enough here. This comes out in issues of modesty sometimes. The Bible specifically says women should dress modestly, but there are churches and groups that have decided to tell us what modesty is.

And depending on their own opinion and culture, you know, modesty requires in the eyes of some that women never show their wrists or their ankles. Others feel the wrists and the ankles are okay, but the knees, that's getting too far. Others draw the line somewhere else.

Most of them would say that what they're describing are standards of modesty, but the Bible doesn't specify what modesty is, but human opinions get in there to try to help make it clear. I think when the Word of God is added to, we get into trouble. And the reason for it is this, when God gives a command, you can count on it.

His command comes with the power to obey, if you believe it. If you mix it with faith, you can keep it. God never gives a command that you cannot keep, or which He does not intend to give you the grace to keep.

God is not unreasonable to command you to do things and then leave you without the power to do it. If He commands it, it can be done. However, if you command it, or some man commands it, it may be that you can't do it.

If you stick with what the Word of God says and don't add to it, you will always have God as your assistant to keep it. But if you get all mixed up as to what's the Word of God and what's not, if you go to a church that says you can't touch any alcohol and it's a sin, which is a human teaching, not a biblical teaching, and then you later find out that the

cough syrup you took was 50 proof alcohol or something like that, suddenly your conscience says, oh no, I've sinned, I've drunk alcohol. I mean, this is an extreme situation, but the Bible doesn't guarantee you any assistance in keeping the rules that man makes up.

And if you break a rule that man made up, because God doesn't help you to avoid it, because He doesn't care about it, it's not His rule. But you don't know the difference between a rule man made and a rule God made, then you have the same condemnation in your conscience as if you'd broken a law of God. You don't know the difference.

That's where the Pharisees were. They didn't know the difference between the traditions of man and the Word of God. They thought the disciples had sinned when they didn't wash their hands properly before they ate.

And Jesus said, you're teaching for doctrines, the traditions of men. That's the devil's activity, get you to add to the Word of God, then suddenly you lose all, where's the boundary between what God says and what man says? And what did God really expect from me and intend to help me to do? And what am I going to be on my own doing? And if I fall in an area that I think to be a command of God but isn't, I'll feel just as guilty before God, just as alienated, I'll be just as condemned as if it was a command of God. That's why Paul said that there are some Christians who think that they should keep a day special, this is Romans 14, and some Christians think they should abstain from certain foods.

Others don't hold those convictions. Paul sided with those who don't hold those convictions. He said that you can eat whatever you want, no problem.

But if you think it's a sin, don't eat it. Why? Because you will condemn your conscience. And if you lead somebody else who thinks it's a sin, even though it isn't, if you lead them into behavior that they think is sin, they'll condemn their conscience.

Condemnation of your heart can happen whether you sin or whether you just think you did. And therefore, if the devil can add to the Word of God, and that has certainly been what he's done in the Church from the beginning. We start with the pure teaching of Christ and the Apostles.

Then the next generation we have the teaching of the Church Fathers, and then later Fathers, then later Fathers, and more traditions come in, and more traditions. Eventually you've got this whole sacerdotal organization, this institution where you've got to say 40 Hail Marys and don't eat meat on Friday, and a whole bunch of other things, and no one knows the difference between what God said and man said. So it's a situation just set up to keep people in condemnation.

Now you might say, ah, but we're not Catholics, so we're not in that problem. But every

Protestant church I've ever been in has its own set of traditions, maybe not as elaborate as those of the Catholics, or as ritualistic, but they're definitely a problem. So adding to the Word of God is another way that Satan helps us to lose sight of what sin is.

Sometimes he makes us think some things aren't sin when they really are. Other times he makes us think things are sin when they aren't, because he's added the Word of God. Another thing is causing us to confuse temptation with sin.

I mentioned this yesterday, so I won't go on about it today, but the devil can make you feel every bit as condemned if he can make you feel that you've sinned when in fact you've only been tempted. We often can't tell the difference. Temptation feels like sin to a great degree.

If very wicked thoughts come to your mind, are you not likely to accuse yourself of having very bad thoughts? And yet if you don't love those thoughts, if you hate those thoughts, if you're denying and refusing those thoughts, but they're still persistent, they're not your thoughts. Those are temptations. Jesus was tempted like we are, but he didn't sin.

To be tempted is not to sin. Yet if the devil can convince you that because you've been tempted you have therefore sinned, then he can get the same mileage out of a temptation as he would have gotten out of you succumbing to a temptation, even if you've successfully resisted it. So these are some of the ways the devil tries to confuse us about the identification of sin.

There's other things he says. For example, and I made this point in a previous lecture, the devil will try to deceive you when he's trying to persuade you of sin. He'll try to persuade you that the consequences of sin, of a negative sort, will be much less than the pleasures of sin if you indulge.

He does this either by suggesting to you that you'll get away with it and you won't suffer any consequences, or he may diminish to your mind the kinds of consequences you may face. I knew a woman who had some affairs, she was a married woman, she had some affairs with a few different guys, and she was not at that point fully backslidden, she backslid later, but she was still trying to profess to be a Christian, and I think trying to convince herself she was a Christian at that time, but I wondered how it was that she justified these affairs. But I think she must have somehow felt that she would get away with it, obviously, because she did not intend to destroy her marriage at that point, she wanted to keep it a secret.

She obviously felt like it would remain a secret. The fact that I'm telling you about it right now proves it didn't remain a secret. It became well known.

Jesus said, what is done in secret will be shattered from the rooftops, but the devil will

get people to sin by convincing them that it'll remain a secret. They won't suffer for it, or if anyone finds out it won't be many, there won't be too much embarrassment, there won't be too much to regret, there won't be too many consequences, but there were many consequences. And there always are, more than the devil advertises, because he doesn't advertise the negatives about sin, he only advertises the pleasures.

And the Bible is truthful about this. There are pleasures in sin for a season, it says in Hebrews chapter 11. But that season is a short one compared to the length of time the consequences and regrets must be endured.

The devil lies about that. Galatians 6, verses 7 and 8 says, do not be deceived. God is not mocked.

For whatsoever man sows, he will also reap. If he sows to the flesh, he will reap of the flesh corruption. If the devil tells you otherwise, you are in the process of being deceived.

Don't be deceived, Paul says. God is not mocked. You sow to the flesh, you will reap to the flesh.

Another one is that the devil will sometimes give you the impression that yielding is the only option. I'm sure that many of you, if you have fallen into sin, have done so because although you wished to resist, and you wished to retain your holiness, yet you became convinced that there's no way out. That this temptation is just going to keep bombarding you again and again continuously.

There's just no way out. The only way out is to go ahead and yield and then repent. The devil loves to tell you that because of course that brings an end to the fight right away.

He's going to have to expend a lot of energy trying to get you to sin unless he can convince you that it's hopeless. If he gets you to be convinced that the only way that this conflict is going to come to an end is by you surrendering and that you simply cannot win no matter how long you struggle, you might as well just give up now, then if you get convinced of that, then you'll give up and he'll win. But the Bible states the opposite.

It says resist the devil and he will flee from you, not you will flee from him. It will not be he that wins, it will be you that win, in James 4.7. We also mentioned earlier, 1 Corinthians 10.13, that God will not permit you to be tempted more than you're able to endure. So if the devil tries to make you feel that this temptation is so strong at the moment, is something that is going to remain and increase until you give in, and that's the only way this will be resolved, then he's lying to you.

You know, I really think that only the devil knows, and maybe he doesn't even know, but God knows exactly at what point God's going to take him by the nap of the neck and pull him off your back. The Bible says that Jesus was tempted for 40 days in the wilderness,

but then the devil had to leave him for a season. Every time you're tempted, it's for a season.

There are seasons of temptation and then there are seasons where the devil must leave you alone for a while. God is the one who determines the length of these seasons. But only God knows their length, or maybe the devil does.

Maybe he gets a sense of it. The Bible says in Revelation that he knows when his time is short. And I'll tell you, my impression is that although we don't have a clue whether the temptation we're being bombarded by for the last 48 hours, whether that thing's going to end in two seconds or in another 48 hours.

We don't know how long it's going to go. The devil may have some inkling, and I suspect that he intensifies the temptation when he realizes that he's losing time, that it's only a little while he's going to have to back off altogether. And so he gives all of his artillery.

I'm deducing this in principle from what it says in Revelation. It says, Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because the devil has come down to you having great wrath, because he knows his time is short. He knows that if his time is short, he's got to work harder.

And if your temptation gets stronger, it may signal to your mistaken mind that this means that this is just going to get stronger and stronger, and I'm just going to have to give in. There's no way out of this. But if you were to know the facts, it may well be that it's getting so much stronger because the devil knows that he's going to have to stop altogether in about 30 seconds.

If you don't give in at this point, he gives it all that he's got. But if you resist now, he may have nothing else to give. He may have to be pulled off for a while.

And only God knows. We do not, but what a tragedy it is. I think, and I don't know of specific cases because only God knows these things, but I'm sure there are many cases where Christians gave into temptation at the very moment that unbeknownst to them, if they had resisted a few moments longer, the temptation would have been gone entirely.

But it just got so strong that they became convinced that there's no way out of this. It's going to overpower me. I can't take it anymore.

There's no option but to yield. Another thing the devil uses to try to persuade us to sin, and another lie, is that if you're trying to uphold a standard that's high of holiness, the devil will point out to you how many Christians, even Christians respected, maybe even people in ministry, do not maintain as high a standard as that which you're aiming at. The devil will speak through other people and say, listen, nobody's perfect.

Don't be so hard on yourself. I've heard these things many times. And that's the devil

trying to say, listen, you're holding yourself to an unrealistically high standard.

You can't be perfect anyway. Why bother trying? Even people who are in ministry, even people who are good Christians don't attempt what you're attempting. Being perfectly holy is impossible, so why bother trying? And yet, the Bible says, in Philippians chapter 3, Paul says, it's true.

I'm not yet perfect. But this one thing I do, forgetting the things that are behind and looking to the things that are before, I press on toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. He admits it.

I'm not perfect. Nobody's perfect. But that doesn't mean I can't try.

The devil wants you to be persuaded that because nobody's perfect, and that is a true statement about human beings, no one is perfect. But he wants you to think that because no one's perfect, you might as well not even try. Paul says, no, the opposite is true.

Because I'm not perfect, I keep pressing on toward the mark. I'm not perfect, but I forget the past, and I look forward, and I press on toward that mark. The fact that no one is perfect is not an argument against trying to be perfect.

Again, the devil is trying to get you to measure by a false standard, the standard of what everybody else does. Boy, that's a scary thing. I believe a lot of Christians who would otherwise be very convicted when they read what Jesus says about money and about rich men not making it to heaven and things like that, a lot of Christians in America who are very rich, I think they'd be far more convicted, if not for the fact that they're measuring by the standard of other people in their church who are richer than they are, or just as rich.

Jesus said it's hard for rich men to get to the kingdom of heaven, even harder than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, but it can't really be that hard, because look at all these godly people who are rich and opulent and living in luxury and so forth. Certainly, nobody's perfect, nobody follows these directions. It can't really be expected that I do so.

That hindered me a long time in the church I was raised in, not on the matter of money, but on other matters. I'd read the cost of discipleship, I'd look at the people in the church who were better than me and older than me and knew more than I did. I'd think, well, that must not mean what it looks like it means, because they'd know it if it did, and they're not living that way.

Why should I set a standard for myself higher than others? Well, because you have to set the standard for yourself that God sets. If others fall short of it, you don't have to go to hell with them. Nobody's perfect, no, but if you don't try to be, you won't be one of God's

people.

Being perfect is what God calls you to pursue, and that no one's perfect is not an argument for throwing in the towel. Another thing the devil would like to do is persuade you that your temptation is unique. That is to say that you should succumb and should give in because no one else, no one could be expected to endure this strength of temptation.

Yeah, most people maybe don't fall into sin like this, but they're not tempted like you are. Your situation is special. You are in extenuating circumstances, and yet Paul said in 1 Corinthians 10, 13, no temptation has taken you but such as is common to man.

You're not unique. The devil doesn't have endless numbers of temptations. He's a limited creature, and what he uses on you, he uses on everybody, but if he can make you think you're the only one, then he can make you feel alone in the battle.

He can also make you feel that you would have more excuse than others to succumb, because after all, your temptation is unlike any others have had, and yet Jesus was tempted in all points like we are, and really, all the temptations you experience are common to man in general. In 1 Corinthians 10, 13, Paul said. Another thing the devil will say, he'll give you the impression that this is your last chance to really enjoy this particular sin.

I've noticed this when I'm fasting. Not that eating in itself is sin, but when you're supposed to be fasting, eating is wrong. And I remember on many occasions when I've chosen to fast, that I found out only after I've already begun to fast that that night, something is being served for dinner that is something that isn't served very often, but it's something I particularly like.

I think, well, this probably isn't a very good opportunity to fast. And really, the fact of the matter is, the impression comes to my mind that I may never get another chance to eat this particular stuff. This is a very bad day for fasting, because if I don't eat it tonight, I may never see it again.

It may never be presented to me again. Well, that's true. I might die today, but that's irrelevant.

The fact of the matter is, if I do break my fast, I will regret it. The devil gives the impression that if you don't sin, you'll regret it. You won't have another chance to get this pleasure.

I'll tell you, sometimes that's the thought that comes to a man's mind when he sees out of the corner of his eye what looks like, if he would look directly at it, it might be a beautiful woman. And he's thinking, I'm not going to look. I'm not going to look.

I'm not supposed to look at that kind of thing. And the devil says, better look quick. She's about to go into that door over there, and you won't have a chance to see her again.

But don't miss this opportunity. But the lie of the devil is that if you miss that opportunity, you'll have something to regret for it. I have never yet regretted resisting temptation.

The opportunity to sin will present itself as many times as you like it to and more. It's not as if you have a unique opportunity to sin on this occasion, and if you don't do it now, you're going to be sorry about it. The fact of the matter is, you will be sorry if you do give in.

It's not a great opportunity that's presented. But the devil makes it seem, and he twists things in such a way, in some cases, that if you do not give in to this temptation on this occasion, you're going to miss out on something, and you'll never have an occasion again that you could ever enjoy this particular pleasure. First of all, it's a lie.

There are other occasions to enjoy sinful pleasure if you want to enjoy them. But secondly, sinful pleasure is not something that we would enjoy anyway. It's not an opportunity to be seized upon.

It is a loss to be avoided. Well, these are just some of the ways that the devil tries to misconstrue reality to get us to sin. We don't have time to go into more detail on them.

The clock is a tyrant, and we're out of time right now, so I have to quit. But perhaps this will give you some idea of some of the things. I haven't given you all the ones on my list, but the devil certainly has a wide variety of lies that he tells, but everything he says has this in common.

It's a deception. And he wants to gain advantage through deception, but the truth makes you free.