

## Chapter 4 – The Enemy’s Snares

The apostle Paul referred to the devil as wily or scheming (Eph. 6:11). NASB NIV (Schemes) KJV NKJV (Wiles) “Wiles are devious or cunning strategies employed in manipulating or persuading someone to do what one wants.” (Internet definition)

Much of the time the devil ensnares us one small lie at a time. John 8:44 tells us – *“You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”*

The devil sets these schemes or snares against us (All start with D):

- Debate
- Division
- Doubt
- Deception

### A. THE SNARE OF DEBATE

Debate shows up when we are sharing the Gospel or even discussing the Gospel with a nonbeliever.

Charles Stanley says “If you find that you are in a conversation in which a person continually interjects “but” and “what if” and “but what about,” recognize that the devil is using that person—not for an honest discussion aimed at getting to the truth of an issue, but a debate solely for the pleasure of disagreement.”

The Devil is the master of debate, you can’t win a debate with the devil. It is best to walk away. Say to the person who attempts to debate with you, “Maybe we can discuss this some other time.”

### B. THE SNARE OF DIVISION

The devil wants to divide people. Look at the United States today. The US has become ineffective because of the division. As a Church we too can become ineffective at reaching people for Christ if we are at odds with each other. Often because we disagree on a few minor details in theology we can’t get together at all.

The devil seeks to cause division in any ministry outreach. One organization that is gaining ground in Ohio is Revive Ohio. It hasn’t come to Licking County but in 2019 it started in Knox County. Reaching people starts with the basic foundation of Christianity, a prayer.

“It is critically important in defeating the devil that we continually seek to unite with and remain united with believers who truly are seeking to follow and serve Christ Jesus. We must become yoked with those who are joined to Christ.” (Charles Stanley)

Bible Study Fellowship has been successful at breaking down the barriers of religion. Men and women of all denominations get together and study the Word of God.

Remember brothers and sisters in Christ are not our enemies. Many of us may even work with Methodists or Catholics.

The real enemy is the devil and his forces, at work behind the scenes in every case of spiritual assault.

One of the things that divides us are accusations. Accusations are a key tool of Satan. The Bible refers to Satan as “the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night” (Rev. 12:10). Consider how you feel when someone has falsely or even rightly accused you of something. You feel backed into a corner, ready to fight back. Relationships can be destroyed over accusations. That is division.

WHAT UNITES US? If accusation divides us, what unites us? The love of God. Read Romans 8:35–39. Paul tells us that even though there are many things that divide us, we cannot be separated from the love of God. God loves everyone and we are to love each other. The love of God is the one place where believers can have common ground.

What do these Scriptures as about showing love?

- a. Matthew 22:37-39 – Love God and love others
- b. Proverbs 25:21-22 – Take care of your enemy
- c. 1 Corinthians 13:2b – Without love we are nothing

Words of love and acceptance in Christ Jesus produce the exact opposite of accusations.

### C. THE SNARE OF DOUBT

I have heard someone that attended this church say, “The Bible is just an old book that is not applicable today.” That is Satan speaking. If Satan can get us to doubt or not accept certain scriptures, then he is winning.

What do these verses say about the Word of God?

- a. Hebrews 4:12 – It is sharper than a two-edged sword, able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
- b. Psalm 119:9-11 - A young person can stay pure by obeying your word. (NLT)
- c. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 - All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; (ESV – God breathed)

“The truth is, the Bible does relate to us today. All of the authors wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He doesn’t make mistakes, and He is always timely and eternal.” (Charles Stanley)

There’s ultimately only one “different opinion,” and that’s the devil’s opinion.

Even in the Garden, Satan caused doubt in what God said. He asked Eve, “*Indeed, has God said, “You shall not eat from any tree of the garden”?* (Genesis 3) Satan made Eve doubt what God had said and we are still paying for it.

Satan’s favorite use of doubt is making us question our salvation. He puts a thought in our minds, “Are you really saved?, Really?”

A key message of the New Testament is “Christ is in me, and I am in Christ.” The devil will do his utmost to test that central truth of your relationship with Christ Jesus.

When Jesus was baptized, He experienced a strong affirmation from heaven. See Luke 3:21–22. Immediately after this, Jesus went into the wilderness. The first seven words out of Satan’s mouth? “If You are the Son of God.” Satan attacks us the same way. He tries to get us to doubt our relationship with God. To do this he tells 3 main lies.

### **Lie #1: Saved people don’t sin.**

They still are human and live in fleshly bodies with natural desires. If this is true then there are no saved people.

### **Lie #2: Some sins are beyond forgiveness—**

1 John 1:9 tell us that if we confess them, then they are forgiven.

God’s mercy and patience with us are beyond measure.

### **Lie #3: God gets weary of people who sin and repent repeatedly, and He eventually stops forgiving their sins.**

Unlike humans, God’s love is perfect. He may be disappointed at our sin but He will never give up on us. This is what grace is:

God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense. As the hymn says, “Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe.” Even though we are weak, we have to remember what 2 Corinthians 12:9 tells us “*And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.*”

We can never be perfect, God knows that we will fail and He will be there for us. John 8:36 tells us the way to be free from our sin. “*So if the Son makes you free, you will be free*

*indeed.*” There is only one way to get rid of our sin and that is to give it God. 1 John 1:9 says, *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

We aren’t freed to sin again but we are made right with God. We are freed to do our best NOT to sin. If we do sin, we are to confess it to the Lord and ask forgiveness. It wouldn’t hurt to ask Him to strengthen you to not give in to that temptation in the future. As it says in the Lord’s prayer, *“and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”*

Charles Stanley says “Salvation isn’t based upon a feeling, and it isn’t assured on the basis of a feeling. Salvation is based upon an act of your will in receiving what God has graciously offered to you! Salvation is the work of the Holy Spirit—forgiving you, cleansing you, and sealing you in Christ Jesus forever. Emotions come and go. They rise and fall. Salvation isn’t rooted in emotion. Finally you didn’t save yourself, and you can’t unsave yourself. “

If you continually question your salvation or don’t believe you are genuinely saved, you can always go to the Lord today or pray talk to Pastor Brian and make a recommitment of your faith in Jesus.

Doubting your salvation prevents you from being all you can be for Christ. It makes you question everything in your life. Will God really take away MY sin? How can I talk to others about Christ, I’m not that strong of a Christian?

Satan often focuses on baptism. He will say “Look at the number of ways that other churches baptize.” We baptize by immersion because that was most likely how Jesus was baptized but John 3:5 says “Jesus answered, *“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”* Jesus put no specifications on the baptism, it says baptized of water and the spirit, no other specifications.

Satan will try to get you to doubt the importance of going to church. He will make you think:

“If I miss today, it is just one week.”

“Sunday is the only day that I get to sleep in.”

...

Hebrews 10:25 says that we should NOT forsake getting together. That means we should do our best to get together every week to encourage and be encourage as we worship. Everyone is being attacked by Satan.

“Satan ultimately will try to get you to doubt any and every aspect of the Christian life so that you will devalue, dismiss, or diminish the importance of the most basic Christian disciplines: offering thanksgiving, praise, and prayer; reading and studying the Bible;

attending church; giving tithes and offerings; witnessing about Christ Jesus; and using your spiritual gifts to bless others.” (Stanley)

If we let Satan get a foothold in our lives, he will weaken our walk with Jesus/God. I find that if I miss my morning Bible Study, I don't feel as close to God. God doesn't go anywhere, it is Satan getting that foothold.

#### D. THE SNARE OF DECEPTION

Charles Stanley says “Deception is a lie about the true reality of something. Deception occurs when we believe things are good, but they aren't; when we believe things look hopeless, but they aren't; when we think something is true, but it isn't; when something looks too good to be true and turns out not to be good at all.”

Deception is probably Satan's most used snare. Revelation 12:9 tells us that Satan “deceives the whole world”. Satan not only uses the most obvious lie, he uses the “little” lie. The one that is just one degree from the truth.

Here are two prominent lies of the devil:

1. “You don't have time for that.”
2. “Don't think about tomorrow.”

“Sin leads to death, destruction, and a diminishing of every good thing. It destroys relationships, reputations, and the opportunity to reap great blessings. It hinders growth and keeps us from fulfilling our God-given destiny. It destroys inner peace, joy, and feelings of deep satisfaction. It diminishes self-worth and dashes hopes, dreams, and goals. Sin shackles and limits us in ways that cause us to retreat into ourselves and to hide from the world.” (Stanley)

To deceive us, Satan may say, “This might happen to some people, but it won't happen to you.”

Genesis 3:4 says, “The serpent said to the woman, “You surely will not die!” The devil told Eve that “Surely you won't die.” The death was not immediate. It was the beginning of death in the world. At that point her body started down the road to death. As an older man, I realize what this truly means. At some point in your life you realize that yesterday your body was better than it is today and tomorrow it will be worse. The best physical day that you have is today. Sounds morbid. But that is what the warning from God to Adam and Eve was. Death entered the world and eventually we will all pass through death's portal barring the Rapture.

Romans 6:23 tells us that “The wages of sin is death” We all will die because sin entered into the world and we all sin. There is a sin debt that is owed and death is the price.

Satan will also tell you lies about Jesus. What lies about salvation God or Jesus have you heard?

- a. "Jesus isn't the only way to God."
- b. "All religions are the same—they all lead to God."
- c. "Jesus was just a good man who died a martyr's death."
- d. "All religions have the same god."

2 Corinthians 4:3-4 tells us that the devil seeks to keep unbelievers in their condition by blinding their minds to the truth. It says *"3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."*

Satan hates the Word of God, hates the name of Jesus and especially hates those who believe in Jesus and know the Word!

John 8:31-32 tells us how to be free. Jesus sets us free. These verses say, *"31 So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."*