



Nuggets From **STANDING STRONG THROUGH THE STORM**

Nugget #2: **SATAN'S TACTICS OF DECEIT**

*Submit yourselves, then, to God.
Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*
James 4:7

An anonymous writer, who perhaps was inspired by C. S. Lewis's *The Screwtape Letters*, visualized the following scenario:

Satan called a worldwide convention. In his opening address to his evil angels, he said, "We can't keep them from reading their Bibles and knowing the truth. We can't even keep them from family values. But we can do something else. We can keep them from forming an intimate, abiding experience in Christ.

"If they gain that connection with Jesus, our power over them is broken. So let them go to church, let them have their conservative lifestyles, but steal their time so they can't gain that experience in Jesus Christ.

"This is what I want you to do, angels. Distract them from gaining hold of their Savior and maintaining that vital connection throughout their day."

"How shall we do this?" shouted the evil angels.

"Keep them busy in the non-essentials of life and invent unnumbered schemes to occupy their minds," he answered.

"Tempt them to spend, spend, spend, then borrow, borrow, borrow. Persuade the wives to go to work and the husbands to work 6 or 7 days a week, 10-12 hours a day, so they can afford their lifestyles. Keep them from spending time with their children. As their family fragments, soon their homes will offer no escape from the pressures of work.

"Over stimulate their minds so that they cannot hear that still, small voice. Entice them to play the radio or cassette whenever they drive, to keep the TV, the VCR, and their CDs going constantly in their homes. Tempt them to spend more time on their computers, especially watching Internet pornography. And see to it that every store and restaurant in the world plays music constantly. This will jam their minds and break that union with Christ. Fill their coffee tables with magazines and newspapers. Pound their minds with the news 24 hours a day. Invade their driving moments with billboards. Flood their mailboxes with junk mail, sweepstakes, mail order catalogues, and every kind of newsletter and promotional offering, free products, services and false hopes.

"Even in their recreation, let them be excessive. Have them return from their recreation exhausted, disquieted and unprepared for the coming week. Don't let them go out in nature. Send them to amusement



parks, sporting events, concerts and movies instead. And when they meet for spiritual fellowship, involve them in gossip and small talk so that they leave with troubled consciences and unsettled emotions.

“Let them be involved in soul-winning. But crowd their lives with so many good causes they have no time to seek power from Christ. Soon they will be working in their own strength, sacrificing their health and family unity for the good of the cause.”

It was quite a convention in the end. And the evil angels went eagerly to their assignments causing Christians everywhere to get busy, busy, busy and rush here and there and spend, spend, spend!

Satan’s tactics against the Christian can be categorized by deceit and *intimidation*. A modern artist has pictured Satan as in this graphic with a bow ready to fire his arrows or “fiery darts” at us. His tactics against us are both internal and external but the internal tactics are the most subtle.

Internally he tries to deceive us (remember he is the father of all lies, John 8:44) by lying about the truth of the Word of God, and about other believers. He is also our accuser before God. His internal tactics begin with the deadliest—pride. Ever since the Garden of Eden, Satan has promulgated **The Great Lie**: “*You will be like God*” (Genesis 3:5b). We all must learn to overcome pride, which was Satan’s own initial sin and which is his pervasive and repetitive tactic against us.

Satan continually accuses us in our own hearts and heaps feelings of *guilt* and failure on us. True guilt is that which comes from disobeying God. On the other hand, *false guilt* or legalism comes from disobeying the rules of man. One reason that guilt is so effective in crushing the witness of a saint is because it is partially true. We all have failed the Lord. None of us has triumphed in power over every circumstance as we could and should have done. So when Satan accuses us, we know in our hearts that there is much truth in his accusations.

But God has provided us with a way to cleanse ourselves of any sin and the guilt that accompanies that sin. When we realize we have failed the Lord, we confess the specific sin and He forgives and cleanses us (1 John 1:9). Once we have confessed our sin it is gone, and our feelings of guilt are also relieved.

Another outgrowth of the postmodern era in which we live is that even some Christians no longer believe in absolute truth. A natural extension of this lack of absolutes is the widely held world-view that there is good in every religion and all roads lead to heaven. Individuals can then pick and choose the elements they wish from whatever faith and mix them all together. This is Satan’s tactic of *syncretism*. Chuck Colson refers to its impact on our faith as “salad-bar Christianity!”

While God created all things and is the source of all we have, He does not condone our allowing things and money to usurp His first place in our lives. The prosperity that He so freely gives us, and wants us to have, is indeed a blessing until it takes the place of God. *Materialism* is thus the attitude that says money, property, possessions, physical comforts, as well as worldly fame and honor, are the most important things in life. Not to say, “There is no God,” but to say, “I don’t have any need for God!”

For Christians, materialism is much like the frog in a pan of water that is slowly being heated. He boils to death because he does not realize the danger quickly enough to jump out of the pot before it is too late.

A church leader from the country of Romania, which was once a communist-dominated land and is now free, commented, “In my experience, 95% of the believers who faced the test of external persecution passed it, while 95% of those who faced the test of prosperity failed it!”

Satan is a defeated enemy but he will not give up trying to destroy God’s kingdom. We must be determined to not give Satan any opportunity (Ephesians 4:27). We must arm ourselves against him (Ephesians 6:10-18), and then resist him with our God-given strength (James 4:7). We can call upon our Lord to rebuke him (Jude 9) and have the confidence that by the shed blood of Christ, victory can be ours (Revelation 12:10-11).

