

## **The Wiles of the Enemy and How to Overcome Them**

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**John 10:10:** NKJV: The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

**Ephesians 6:11:** NKJV Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

1. The devil exaggerates the pleasures of sin while minimizing the true nature and outcome of sin. **Hebrews 11:24,25 NKJV:** By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin.

Observe the phrase "enjoy the passing pleasures of sin." The devil approaches us with exaggerated emphasis on the pleasure we can enjoy if we will sin. He is asking us to invest in something with promise of immediate return - but without telling us about the risk, the outcome, the ugly side! The devil is counting on the fact we will see the fun, the pleasure - the joy of satisfied appetite - and jump at that, acting impulsively. If you stop and think; if you inquire if you look deeply and consider consequences - you frustrate the wiles of the devil. The devil wants us to act on the immediate pleasure of the tempted behavior.

Therefore Satan is annoyed when we stop to think; when we inquire about some tempted behavior; when we think in terms of long-term consequences-- when we study and pray and consider if something is right or not! Satan exaggerates the immediate gratification, while minimizing the true nature of the sin. The bait looks good, but when you take that bite you have taken in the ugly poison of sin.

2. The devil sees an opening into our lives through emotions or mood (**Ephesians 4:26, 27 NKJV:** Be angry and do not sin, do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil.

People have said to me; I knew I shouldn't be drinking, but I was depressed. I know I'm married, but this other woman made me feel so good. Sure it's wrong to lie, but I was under such pressure! It was a sin to treat my brother the way I did, but I was so mad!

What's happening? The devil is watching. When we fall into certain moods or we are overcome by various kinds of emotions, the enemy steps in to defeat us; to lead us into sin. The wiles of the devil include this cunning ability to find openings through our moods and emotions. Paul said, "Be angry and do not sin:' do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil

**(Eph 4:26).**" When I'm angry and I take that anger with me into the next day, and carry it along with me for weeks and months and years... I might as well wear a bull's eye target. The devil will find me and seek an entrance into my heart for his evil purpose and to my downfall. Use the word of God and prayer-- to take a careful inventory of your moods; your emotions; the grudges you carry. Expel the hurt feelings you can't seem to turn loose of; the habitual, destructive

thoughts you entertain. The devil can use those thoughts to slowly erode your character; to lead you into sin to gradually turn you away from God.

3. The devil will use people to lead us astray. **Matthew 7:15:** NKJV "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves."

**Matthew 10:17:** NKJV Beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues.

Through words of invitation into sin;, through false teaching, or through subtle influence he can defeat us. One of the wiles of the devil is to use people to corrupt us.

4. The devil is the master marketing agent; he packages sin in neat, attractive bundles. **Hebrews 3:12,13:** NKJV: Beware brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today", lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

The lust of the eyes

A look at Christianity today reveals a world of faults. We could go through that list, but we only need to see how man relates with man, and we will see that there is a root problem.

We tend to think that as adults, we have outgrown our childhood problems, leaving them behind. But we have merely developed an act to hide the truth of how we feel about ourselves inside.

These roots are very powerful, and unbeknownst to us, rule us in life from within. We all learned early to make our decisions on our emotional feelings, rather than wisdom.

We think that was just "kid stuff", but they were the roots that set our life direction. None of us was exempt from traumatic times in our childhood when we didn't get our own way and believed it was because we were not loved. And after our tantrum was over and we were alone with our thoughts, we were open to the still small voices of the enemy. When we heard them, we thought they were our own thoughts, since we had no wisdom yet to consider otherwise.

The enemy has unique specialties and he works to put evil traits in each of us in childhood. Some of those traits are: deceit, envy, strife, scorn, panic, impulsiveness, greed, pride, control, anger, hate, self-pity, bitterness, vengeance, fear, covetousness, theft, manipulation, obsession, depression, suicide, argumentativeness, murder, defiance, lust, laziness, gluttony, oppression, filth, addictiveness, infirmity, negativity, darkness, and etc. We each get several of these traits, and we only learn to hide them as best we can. But the traits remain in us even after we think we have done away with them. They wait for opportune times to rise up again.

Self-discipline is ruling over yourself, and in a sense, this is what we learn to do by our act. But when we become born again, we only polish our act all the more, again by self-discipline. Though our sermons tell us we are now free from the Law, just think this through. For when we use self-discipline, we are putting the Law on ourselves. Right? So God must have known of another solution to this problem that is so contradictory. We are shown this way when Jesus came of age at the Temple, and he went off to gain wisdom and stature.

It helps if we see that wisdom and love are two words for the same things. Jesus became love, and no longer needed to obey the commandments, for love fulfills the law without having to obey it. But if we remain captive to our inner traits, our love cannot be pure enough to fulfill the law.

**Ephesians 6:11:** AMP: Put on the whole armor of God, (for His precepts are like the splendid armor of a heavily-armed soldier), so that you may be able to (successfully) stand up against all the schemes AND the strategies AND the deceits of the devil.