

War Zone

Part 3 – The Devil’s Tactics (Part 2)

ILLUS – It’s the American Civil War, a soldier from Ohio is shot in the arm. His captain sees he is wounded and barks, “Gimme your gun, private, and get to the rear!” The private hands over his rifle and runs north, seeking safety. But after two or three hundred yards comes upon another skirmish. He runs east and finds himself in another part of the battle. So he runs west but finds fighting there too. Finally, he runs back to the front lines shouting, “Gimme back my rifle, Captain. There ain’t no rear to this battle nowhere!”¹

“There ain’t no rear to this battle.”

When you got up this morning, the devil was already on the job.

You’ve already been tempted; Satan never lets up.

So here’s a recap of what we saw in our last message from Gen 3:1-6:

- 1. Temptation is crafty, subtle, sneaky.**
- 2. The serpent spoke to the woman who had second-hand knowledge of God’s Word.**
- 3. The tactic the enemy used – he questioned God’s Word.**

So let’s continue to look at this passage in Gen 3:1-6 and see what else it has to teach us.

Important Truths

4. Eve added to God’s Word

She should have quit while she was ahead and kept quiet.

Don’t break the silence unless you can improve on it. Noel Gibson

Let’s read what she said again.

Gen 3:2-3 And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden [TRUE]; (3) but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it [TRUE], nor shall you touch it [NOT TRUE], lest you die.’”

She was adding to God’s Word.

No Christian gets into trouble by acting on God’s Word – it’s when they start adding their own interpretations and reasoning that problems arise.

ILLUS – A number of years ago, a man came to see me. He’d been pastor of a church and run off with someone’s wife. Eventually, he had convinced himself that he could prove what he was doing was Biblical. It was sad to see this man adding his own interpretations to God’s Word. He’d been deceived by the deceiver. (From Hosea – but you never use an unclear passage of Scripture to interpret a clear passage.)

ILLUS – John Sandford, talking to a homosexual quoted Lev 20:13 “If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them.” Response: “John, that’s talking about promiscuity. I don’t lie with any man, only my lover.”

Does it say that? No – he added his own thoughts.

ILLUS – Another time, John Sandford was told by a lesbian pastor that the reason God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah was that they failed to practise hospitality.

¹ 1001 Humorous Illustrations For Public Speaking p364

Does the Word say that? No – she added her own thoughts – in fact the people of Sodom allowed Lot and his family to live there with them – wasn't that hospitable?

Eve was guilty of the same thing as the lesbian pastor – she added her own interpretation.

5. Eve changed God's Word

Gen 3:2-3 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden [TRUE]; (3) but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it [TRUE], nor shall you touch it [NOT TRUE], lest you die [ALSO NOT TRUE].'"

God didn't say that either.

ILLUS – If I say to my children, "Don't play on the road lest you get run over," that doesn't mean they **will** get run over. It means they might. It may never happen.

So did God say they might die, if they ate the forbidden fruit?

Gen 2:17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you **shall surely** die.

No possibilities, no maybes – it was a dead cert. You eat, you die, no question about it.

Eve didn't seem to worry about that – she watered down God's Word – like a lot of people do today.

ILLUS – Do you know why you water down medicine for children? To make it easier to swallow.

That's why you've got so-called gay churches.

That's why so many people disobey God and think they can get away with it.

If a person says God told them something and it contradicts the written Word of God guess which one's right.

I don't know how many times over the years people have quoted Scripture to me, and I've said, "No, it doesn't actually say that, it says this."

2 Tim 2:15 Be diligent [speed yourself², make an effort] to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing [to cut straight³; to handle correctly, skilfully⁴] the word of truth.

6. Satan saw his opportunity

And he moved in for the kill.

As soon as the serpent heard what Eve said, his little ears pricked up (yeah, yeah, I know, snakes don't have ears), and he said to himself, "This woman doesn't really know what God said. She's just guessing."

And he recognised that this was the opportunity he was waiting for – it was safe to move in for the kill.

So, no more beating around the bush – he makes a direct attack on the truth of the Word of God.

Gen 3:4-5 Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. (5) For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

This is the first lie in Scripture – if Eve had stuck to God's Word, Satan would never have been so bold as to contradict what God had said.

This is the strategy of the enemy: he sounds out the extent of our knowledge, how firm our grasp is on the truth.

And he attacks in our area of weakness.

What the serpent said here gives us an important insight into his modus operandi.

Gen 3:5 For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.

² Brown, Colin (Ed.) *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* P 1168

³ Fee, Gordon D. *NIBC: 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus* p 255

⁴ Zodhiates, Spiros, *Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* p 1057

First, the promise of something better than she already has – “your eyes will be opened”.

What is the appeal of drugs, adultery, stealing? The promise of something better than you already have.

ILLUS – Take George, for example. He’s been married for a few years. The excitement has worn off. And his wife is ... well, she’s just so familiar. Then one day, he’s at work, having a cup of coffee and chatting in the canteen with a work colleague, an attractive young lady. And her hand brushes against his, and she smiles, and it’s exciting. One thing leads to another, and before you know it, they’re sleeping together. He leaves his wife and marries her. And it’s great ... for a while. A few years down the track and she’s ... just so familiar. Then one day, he’s at work, having a cup of coffee and chatting in the canteen with another work colleague, an attractive young lady. And her hand brushes against his ... well, you know the story.

What happened here?

The promise of something better; but it wasn’t really better, Satan just presented it that way.

Second, Satan appeals to Eve’s ego: “You will be like God.”

But his promise to be like God was worthless – Adam and Eve were already in the image of God – but it *sounded* good.

There’s nothing wrong with wanting to be like God, but we’re not talking about character here – we’re talking about power.

When we looked at the passage in Ezekiel, I mentioned there was a parallel passage in Isaiah.

Listen to this, this is Lucifer speaking.

Isaiah 14:14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.

Sound familiar? “I will be like the Most High. ... you will be like God.”

Satan wanted to be a god in his own right, and he was tempting Eve to reach for the same.

Pride, the mother of all sin.

Third, listen to what he actually promised her and see if you can spot the trick.

“You will be like God, knowing good and evil,” says the serpent.

God’s not the only one who makes promises; Satan does too.

If you steal, I will make you rich; if you lie, people will admire you; if you indulge in violence, people will fear and respect you.

Every temptation comes with an implied promise; that’s what makes it tempting.

And he was promising Eve that she would know good and evil, but the trick was, he wasn’t really promising her anything.

Think about this:

Gen 1:10 – God created the heavens and the earth and saw that it was good.

Gen 1:12 – God created the plant life and saw that it was good.

Gen 1:18 – God created the sun, moon and stars and saw that they were good.

Gen 1:21 – God created the sea creatures and saw that they were good.

Gen 1:25 – God created the land animals and saw that they were good.

Gen 1:31 – God looked at everything He made and saw that it was **very good**.

And of course, God Himself is good.

Everything she already had was good, so all Satan was actually offering her was the chance to know evil.

Beware of the offers of the enemy; they may seem very attractive, but they’re not really worth a thing.

ILLUS – As a teenager I was searching for something to fill the void in my life. Drugs looked interesting – I tried a couple of different things. Then a “friend” gave me LSD. He said, “Only take ¼.” I did. A few

minutes later, nothing had happened. I took another ¼. Nothing happened again. So I took the rest. Then bang! I tripped out for 12 hours – psychedelic walls, psychedelic everything.

Now don't you young guys even think, "Cool!"

Shortly after this, I gave my life to Christ, but I struggled with the desire to take it again for six months.

Don't let anyone ever tell you that only once won't hurt.

It'll put a hook into you that's very hard to get back out.

I look around at the number of people that took up drugs as a lifestyle and most are still paying the price.

Hepatitis C, ill-health, mental illness, suicide.

I'm so glad God intervened and I never continued down that road.

Let me tell you how this works; the fun part is just the bait.

ILLUS – Temptation: I once saw a documentary on one of the deserts in Africa and it featured a particular snake. The snake would bury itself in the sand with just the tip of its tail showing. Amazingly, that bit of tail looked a lot like a blade of grass, and grass in the desert is always interesting to someone. Along comes an ant and grabs what she thinks is grass and tries with all her might to drag it off. Of course, she's got no chance of moving that snake. And the snake isn't interested in her anyway. The snake much more interested in eating lizards. And guess what the lizard wants to eat: Ants. Along comes a lizard that's noticed this ant struggling with the snake's tail. But in a split-second of time, the snake pops out of the sand and the lizard is food. That's how temptation works. The bait always looks good, but there's a big price to pay.

What Satan doesn't tell you is that his promises are a trap to ensnare you.

7. Eve caved in

It was all too much for her.

Gen 3:6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

You can only go so far along the track of temptation before you yield to pressure.

Let me give you a couple of illustrations; one is male, and the other is female.

ILLUS – A guy is surfing the net, looking for some info. Suddenly, a picture pops up. It's a very nice-looking girl wearing a tight-fitting, low-cut top. And the caption reads: "Sexy babes. Click here." He ignores it. But it keeps popping up, and his eyes keep wandering over to it. And after a while, he thinks to himself, "Maybe I'll check it out. Not that I'm interested in all that sex stuff. I just want to see what's there. Maybe it's all perfectly harmless." And after debating it with himself for a while, he clicks. His eyes just about pop out of his head. "Wow!" he says to himself. "No, this is wrong." He closes down the webpage. Then he starts thinking, "Did I really see what I thought I saw? Surely not. I'll just check. I won't stay there. I don't want to get hooked into all that stuff." And he goes back. And before you know it, he's back again, and again, and again.

Do you know when the easiest time to stop is?

Right back at the beginning, before you start.

ILLUS – A Christian girl wants a boyfriend, wants to get married. The Bible says, (2 Cor 6:14) "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?" Then along comes Joe. He's such a nice guy. He's better than some of the Christians she knows. And he asks her out for a cup of coffee. She thinks, "What's the harm in that? It's only a cup of coffee." She loves chatting to him. He makes her feel so special. Then she goes out with him again, and she thinks, "Hey, we're not dating, we're just going out together." A couple of nights later, he leans down and gives her a warm kiss on the lips. And she thinks, "What's wrong with that? It's not like we're having sex or anything." But before too long, she either is having sex with him, or they're planning their wedding day.

It's called emotional entanglement.

Do you know when the easiest time to stop is?

Right back at the beginning, before you start.

Remember what I said in the last message?

Satan works with our desires.

If you're a guy, you want sex; there's nothing wrong with that, it's the way God designed you.

But Satan will make sure you get plenty of opportunities to express that in a way that doesn't please God.

If you're a girl, you'll want to have a relationship; there's nothing wrong with that either, it's the way God designed you.

But Satan will make sure that you too get plenty of opportunities to express that desire in a way that doesn't please God.

Temptation: An attempted incursion by enemy troops into God's territory with a view to gaining control and establishing a stronghold.

Don't give him the opportunity to start building a stronghold.