

Keeping in Contact

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Staying Alert...

"Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."
1 Peter 5:8

"Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."
Matthew 26:41

"With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints". Ephesians 6:18

April Birthdays

26 Stori Rose Hoffman

May Birthdays

2 Peggy Woodruff 15 Kena Brown 22 Ana Munayco

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.
Sunday.....10:45 a.m.
Sunday.....6:00 p.m.
Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

Church of Christ

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Indio Informer

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"Stay Alert..."

Discerning Good and Evil

By Jimmy Ferguson

"But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Hebrews 5:14). In the context of the above passage, due to a lack of growth, some lacked the ability to discern between good and evil. Peter wrote, *"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby"* (1 Peter 2:2). These Christians had neglected the "milk" of God's Word and therefore could not bear the "meat." Many Christians today are guilty of this. Although the Bible does not list each individual sin that man can commit, it does give certain guidelines by which one may discern between good and evil. Let us note some of these.

Whatever weakens my Christian influence is wrong. The Bible states, *"For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself"* (Romans 14:7). Each of us has an influence on someone else. What kind of influence should we exert? Jesus said, *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven"* (Matthew 5:16). The Christian is to be an example: *"In word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity"* (1 Timothy 4:12).

Whatever hinders me from performing my Christian duty is wrong. There are many activities that are not wrong of themselves, but if they take us away from the Lord and His church, then they will cause us to be lost. Paul wrote, *"No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier"* (2 Timothy 2:4). Paul is simply saying that nothing in this life is to take us away from striving to please God. Jesus said, *"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness "* (Matthew 6:33). If anything else comes first, then it is wrong.

Whatever corrupts my body is sinful. When one becomes the child of God, he/she seeks to do the will of God in all matters. Paul wrote, "*I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me*" (Galatians 2:20). Paul realized that he was not to live a self-serving life. He was now a servant of Christ and he would seek to please Christ in everything. Jesus "*died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again*" (2 Corinthians 5:15). Paul wrote concerning our bodies, "*What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's*" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

Whatever corrupts my heart is sinful. Jesus said, "*Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God*" (Matthew 5:8). Sin begins in the heart (James 1:14-15). "*For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies*" (Matthew 15:19). If we fill our hearts (minds) with filth, then it will be evidenced in our lives. But if we fill our hearts with that which is pure, good, and holy, that also will be seen in our lives (cf. Philippians 4:8).

The requirements of the Gospel are not there for the purpose of making the Christian life hard and difficult. The Lord does not require the Christian to sacrifice a single thing that is good for him.

The Devil's Approach

By John Baker

When satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, he revealed many of his best tactics. Since Christians are not to be "*ignorant of his devices*," every sincere child of God ought to be interested in the following principles (2 Corinthians 2:11).

The devil attacks those who are determined to do right. Nobody can be at peace with God without picking a fight with the devil. Jesus is described as a person who "*went about doing good*" (Acts 10:38). Immediately before the account of His temptation in Matthew 4:1-11, Jesus had made it clear that He was interested in fulfilling "*all righteousness*" (Matthew 3:15). Anytime a person chooses to be interested in pleasing, serving, and honoring God, that person can also reasonably expect to begin receiving "*fiery darts*" from the devil (Ephesians 6:16).

The devil often attacks when people are weakest. Jesus had fasted for forty days and forty nights, and the Bible plainly tells us "*he was afterward an hungered*" (Matthew 4:2). From the context of Matthew 4 and the parallel account in Luke 4, it appears that the devil waited until Jesus was weak for this attack. Certainly it can be said that people today are weak when, like Jesus, they are physically and emotionally exhausted. However, it is also worth considering that people today are often especially weak and susceptible to sin when they are celebrating a great success or achievement (cf. Proverbs 16:18).

The devil knows and uses Scripture. In tempting Jesus to test God's love for Him, the devil quoted Psalm 91:11-12, which records God's promise to preserve and protect those who are faithful to Him. However, Jesus pointed out that while the promise itself was valid, Jesus' motive in jumping off the temple would have been sinful (Matthew 4:7). Multitudes of false teachers (witting or unwitting agents of satan, cf. 2 Corinthians 11:13-15) today are likewise guilty of wresting the Scriptures to their own destruction (2 Peter 3:16). Based on the temptation of Jesus, it should surprise no one that the devil knows the Word of God, and that he twists God's Word in ways that will cause people to lose their souls (cf. John 8:44).

The devil appeals to a person's sense of "rights" and "privileges." The devil wants people to believe that they are missing out on something great by being faithful (cf. Genesis 3:4-6). Look at how he tempted Jesus: "You have the power to change rocks into bread; why don't You use it?" "God has said He will preserve You; why not have Him prove it?" "The nations of the earth don't appreciate how great and special You are . . . let me help You get the recognition You deserve!" In every temptation the devil attempts to sow the seeds of doubt. He often does so by implying life would be better if one would take advantage of a sinful opportunity.

The devil is an opportunist. Luke 4:13 states, "*And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.*" The devil is constantly looking for opportunities to tempt the faithful. Scripture describes him as pacing about "*as a roaring lion . . . seeking whom he may devour*" (1 Peter 5:8). Christians are promised that if we "*resist the devil*," he will "*flee from you*" (James 4:7). However, the devil will continue to look for an opportune time.

May all Christians be aware of the tactics our enemy uses.