

Fear, Doubt, Envy, and Pride

1 Timothy 4:1, Part 3

Let me share some interesting quotes with you by way of introduction to what we are about to study.

“There are four great impelling motives that move men to action: Fear, Hope, Faith, and Love—these four, but the greatest of these is Fear. Fear is first in order, first in force, first in fruit. Indeed, fear is *‘the beginning of wisdom.’* **Scripture summarizes the chief cause of sin and crime:** *‘There is no fear of God before their eyes.’*”¹

“How often we trust each other.
And only **doubt** our Lord.
We take the word of mortals,
And yet **distrust** His word;

“But, oh, what light and glory
Would shine o’er all our days,
If we always would remember
God means just what He says.”²

- “No man is a complete failure until **he begins disliking men who succeed.** “

- “Few men have the strength to honor a friend’s success without **envy.**”

—Aeschylus

- “For one man who sincerely pities our misfortunes, there are a thousand **who sincerely hate our success.**”

—Charles C. Colton

¹ Tan, Paul Lee: *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: A Treasury of Illustrations, Anecdotes, Facts and Quotations for Pastors, Teachers and Christian Workers.* Garland TX : Bible Communications, 1996, c1979.

² Ibid.

- “**Envy** shoots at others and wounds herself.”
- “The man who keeps busy helping the man below him won’t have time to **envy** the man above him—and there may not be anybody above him anyway.
—Henrietta C. Mears.³

“A minister who was walking along a road saw a crowd of boys surrounding a dog.
‘What are you doing with the dog?’ asked the kindly minister.
‘Whoever tells the biggest **lie**, he wins the dog.’
‘Oh, my, my, my,’ exclaimed the minister, ‘when I was a little boy like you here I never told a **lie**.’
There was a moment’s silence. ‘Here,’ said one of the little fellows, ‘you win the dog.’”⁴

Now let us turn to our text for today.

1 Timothy 4:1-3 NAS:

¹ *But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,*
² *by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron,*
³ *men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth.*

Last week we closed by telling you that Satan has some very powerful weapons that he brings to the battlefield. The first weapon we look at is probably the most powerful.

1) **FEAR** - A solid majority of the people in this world are afraid of the truth. They do not want to learn they are sinners in need of a Savior, and if they do not accept the Savior, they go to Hell. So it is much more comfortable for them to make up a god that they are comfortable with, who accepts them for what and who they are, and places no demands on them to change.

Acts 4:12 NLT:

There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved.”

2 Peter 2:17-22 (NLT):

³ Tan, Paul Lee: *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations : A Treasury of Illustrations, Anecdotes, Facts and Quotations for Pastors, Teachers and Christian Workers*. Garland TX : Bible Communications, 1996, c1979.

⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷ *These people are as useless as dried-up springs or as mist blown away by the wind. **They are doomed to blackest darkness.***

¹⁸ *They brag about themselves with empty, foolish boasting. With an appeal to twisted sexual desires, they lure back into sin those who have barely escaped from a lifestyle of deception.*

¹⁹ *They promise freedom, but they themselves are slaves of sin and corruption. **For you are a slave to whatever controls you.***

²⁰ *And when people escape from the wickedness of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and then get tangled up and enslaved by sin again, they are worse off than before.*

²¹ *It would be better if they had never known the way to righteousness than to know it and then reject the command they were given to live a holy life.*

²² *They prove the truth of this proverb: "A dog returns to its vomit." And another says, "A washed pig returns to the mud."*

Another weapon that Satan uses against us is

- 2) **DOUBT** - Our sinful natures often make things quite easy for Satan. We are all too often willing to lay down our armor on the battlefield and say, "What is the use? Nothing ever goes right for me. I don't think God even knows I exist or why would He allow me to be so miserable?" One of the worst things that can happen to us is to doubt that we can trust in God, no matter how bad things might become.

Isaiah 43:2 NAS:

² *"When you pass through the waters, **I will be with you;** And through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, Nor will the flame burn you.*

Deuteronomy 31:23 (NASB):

²³ *Then He commissioned Joshua the son of Nun, and said, "Be strong and courageous, for you shall bring the sons of Israel into the land which I swore to them, and **I will be with you.**"*

Joshua 1:5 (NASB):

⁵ *"No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, **I will be with you;** I will not fail you or forsake you.*

Matthew 28:19-20 (NASB):

¹⁹ *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,*
²⁰ *teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, **I am with you always,** even to the end of the age."*

So according to the promise of God, when is He with you? Is He here with us now? If

you have accepted Jesus as your personal Savior, **He is here right now in the form of the Holy Spirit within each of us that believe.** So, Yes, God is right here in this room. Do you feel His presence? Let us take a minute to feel that presence and to feel the incredible love He has for each one of us.

If fear and doubt don't work, then Satan may attack us with

- 3) **ENVY** - What a powerful weapon we put at Satan's disposal when we fall victim to this sin. You know the one that pops up in your mind every so often. "*He/she has it; I want it!*" How many times have you been guilty of that thought?

Proverbs 23:17 (NASB):

¹⁷ *Do not let your heart **envy** sinners, But live in the fear of the Lord always.*

Proverbs 14:30 (ESV):

³⁰ *A tranquil heart gives life to the flesh, but **envy** makes the bones rot.*

Mark 7:20-23 (NLT):

²⁰ *And then he added, "It is what comes from inside that defiles⁵ you.*

²¹ *For from within, **out of a person's heart**, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder,*

²² *adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, lustful desires, **envy**, slander, pride, and foolishness.*

²³ *All these vile things come from within; they are what defile you."*

Statements like those can make you feel hopeless. If our hearts produce these evil thoughts and desires, aren't we doomed? No. Our loving God does not leave us in despair over our sin. He has a plan. Listen.

Titus 3:1-8 (NLT):

³ *Once we, too, were foolish and disobedient. We were misled and became slaves to many lusts and pleasures. Our lives were full of evil and **envy**, and we hated each other.*

⁴ *But—"When God our Savior revealed his kindness and love,*

⁵ *he saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. **He washed away our sins**, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit.*

⁶ *He generously poured out the Spirit upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior.*

⁷ *Because of his grace he declared us righteous and gave us confidence that we will inherit eternal life."*

⁸ *This is a trustworthy saying, and I want you to insist on these teachings so that all who trust in God will devote themselves to doing good. These*

⁵ To make unfit for use by the introduction of unwholesome or undesirable elements; Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (eleventh edition).

teachings are good and beneficial for everyone.

Another weapon of the devil is

- 4) **PRIDE** - Let us look at a single verse in 1 John 2:16 (NAS) that pretty much sums up the problem with pride, "*For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.*"

Satan utilized the same basic **threefold battle plan** whenever he wanted to inflict battlefield casualties. Adam and Eve fell before Satan's military strategy in Genesis 3:6, making them his first two victims. "*When Eve saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was beautiful to the eyes, and that the tree was capable of giving a person great wisdom, she took its fruit and ate it. Then she gave it to her husband, and he ate willingly.*" The devil appealed to Eve's desire for food (**lust of the flesh**), her desire to have something attractive (**lust of the eyes**), and her desire to have wisdom (**pride of life**). He had now recruited the first two citizens of his kingdom on earth.⁶

Satan used basically the same tactic with Jesus when he tried to tempt Jesus into sin. The first thing he tried was to go after one of Jesus' fleshly desires. Jesus must have been starving after a few days in the desert without anything to eat. So **Satan offered him food**. When that did not work, **Satan showed Jesus a panorama of the world hoping Jesus would be tempted by all that splendor**. Again Jesus refused to take the bait, so Satan played his trump card, pride. **Jumping from the highest point of the temple would have presumed on God's protection and gained Jesus extra prestige** when He landed safely. But all three tactics that Satan had worked so well in the past were unsuccessful in tempting Jesus. And the only weapons Jesus had to fight off Satan's attack were Old Testament prophecies. The Word of God is the most powerful weapon in anyone's arsenal.

Deuteronomy 8:1-3 (NASB):

¹ **"All the commandments that I am commanding you today you shall be careful to do**, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the Lord swore to give to your forefathers.

² "You shall remember all the way which the Lord your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.

³ "He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that **man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord.**

Jesus used this Old Testament verse to answer Satan in Matthew 4:4 (NASB):

⁶ Need citation

⁴ *But He answered and said, "It is written, **'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'**"*

Deuteronomy 6:13, 16 (NASB):

¹³ *"You shall fear only the Lord your God; and you shall worship Him and swear by His name.*

¹⁶ ***"You shall not put the Lord your God to the test, as you tested Him at Massah.***

Jesus used this Old Testament verse to answer Satan in Matthew 4:7 (NASB):

⁷ *Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'*"

Deuteronomy 10:20 (NASB):

²⁰ ***"You shall fear the Lord your God; you shall serve Him and cling to Him, and you shall swear by His name.***

Jesus used this Old Testament verse to answer Satan in Matthew 4:10 (NASB):

¹⁰ *Then Jesus said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, **'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.'**"*

Even though Satan was not successful in tempting Jesus, he had used this tactic successfully on many occasions. So he continues today to use what he knows works very well, these same three pathways of temptation. He further utilizes the sinful nature of corruption to achieve the greatest evil. Fortunately God has provided those who believe in the atoning work of Jesus with the indwelling (to inhabit, infuse, or abide within a person)⁷ of the Holy Spirit, who in any given situation can help us to successfully resist Satan's temptations.⁸

So we have provided information regarding four of Satan's most lethal weapons. He has a whole arsenal that we could go through, but this provides us with a pretty good idea of how he works.

Here in the early twenty-first century the Church must be keenly aware of the evil nature of this "last days" prophecy. Terms such as "heresy" and "apostasy" seem to have little meaning in many churches today. People think these are words used to describe conditions back in the Middle Ages, but that they could not possibly apply to the sophisticated, intelligent people we have become. Well, do not believe it. There is just as much heresy and apostasy in the Church today as there was in the Middle Ages, and maybe a whole lot more. A clear understanding of what is to take place in these "last days" and of the aims of the enemy will prevent our being taken by surprise and may help

⁷ Encarta © World English Dictionary © & (P) 1998-2005 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

⁸ John MacArthur, *MacArthur New Testament Commentary – 1-3 John*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 2007), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 90.

in maintaining a healthy church.⁹

Lest we get our perspective off, however, let us be reminded of something. First Timothy 4:1 is in the middle of a paragraph that begins in chapter three. If you recall, chapter divisions were added by translators for convenience, they are not necessarily inspired. So before Paul gives these dire warnings in verse one about later times and the methods of demons, he proclaimed 1 Timothy 3:16 NAS:

By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory.

Like Peter sinking into the water when he took his eyes off Christ (Matthew 14:28-30), we can sink into negativity and despair if we focus more on what Satan is doing in the world than on our powerful, victorious Christ. Let us go forth into our worlds this week wise to the ways of the devil, but even more focused on the sovereignty and power of God. When the devil comes to tempt us through the lust of the eyes, the flesh, or with pride, let us also be prepared to answer him with God's Word: "*Greater is He that is in us [the Holy Spirit] than he that is in the world [Satan]*" (1 John 4:4).

⁹ Ibid.