

Christian Ministry Unit 1
Introduction to Theology
Week 8 – Satanology Part 2

Introduction

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

Covert tactics (continued)

TEMPTATION: Temptation is Satan's enticement to mistrust God's love and wisdom and violate His moral will. Temptation is a sub-set of seduction through the world-system.

- COMMON AVENUES:

- Circumstance*

- Thought*

- PURPOSES:

- Satan hopes to enslave you (or keep you enslaved) to sin (Rom. 6:16; Jn. 8:34).*

- Satan hopes to destroy Christ's reputation (Titus 2:7,8).*

- Satan hopes to infect the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 5:6).*

- Satan hopes to set you up for accusation (see below).*

- COUNTER-MEASURES:

- Practice prevention by staying actively involved in growth and ministry (2 Sam. 11:1-5).*

- Consider beforehand the consequences of falling to temptation (Ps. 32:8,9; Prov. 5:9-14; 6:26-29).*

- Don't toe-dangle (Matt. 6:13; Rom. 13:14; Prov. 5:8; 6:25)!*

Remember God's sovereignty over Satan in the midst of temptation (1 Cor. 10:13; Lk. 22:31,32; 1 Pet. 5:8-10).

Cry out to God for his help and determine to take "the way of escape" (Heb. 4:15,16).

When under sustained temptation, share this with your Christian friends and ask them to pray with/for you and advise you (1 Jn. 1:6,7).

When under recurrent temptation, ask God to reveal what need(s) you are not trusting him to meet (Jas. 1:14,15).

ACCUSATION: Accusation is personal denunciation based on real or alleged sins in order to alienate you from God and demoralize you from serving God (Rev. 12:11; Zech. 3:1-5).

- **COMMON AVENUES:**

Directly (through your conscience) and indirectly (through other people)

New Christians concerning assurance of salvation

Older Christians concerning their identity, ability to change and/or minister, etc.

Key differences between God's conviction and Satan's accusation:

- Conviction focuses on specific sinful actions and attitudes, while accusation uses these lead us to false general conclusions about our relationship with God.
- Conviction is constructive and forward-focused, while accusation is destructive and backward-focused.

- **COUNTER-MEASURES:**

Satan will accuse you even if you have not sinned. If you are unclear on this, get objective input from trusted Christian friends.

Satan's accusations usually have some factual basis because we are sinners! When this is the case:

- Don't defend yourself by rationalizing, minimizing, blame-shifting, etc.

- Confess – agree with God that you have sinned and take full responsibility for what you have done (Ps. 51:4), and then agree with God that He forgives you fully based on Jesus’ full payment for this sin (Rev. 12:11*).

Rev. 12:11* *And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.*

Confessing to a trusted Christian friend and praying together is often needed to experience the healing grace of God (Jas. 5:16).

- Choose by faith to draw near to God (Heb. 10:22), and to step out to serve (Heb. 9:14).

DIVISION: Division is personal alienation between Christians (especially workers). It is rooted in sinful attitudes like envy, pride, and selfish ambition (Jas. 3:14-16), and it manifests itself in relationships damaged by unresolved anger, personal resentment, malice, bitterness, etc. (Eph. 4:26,27,31).

- **PURPOSES:**

Division destroys effective outreach, because a key to our witness is the love that we show toward each other (Jn. 13:34; 17:23).

Division demoralizes and demotivates all who are involved in it.

Division prevents effective leadership.

- **COMMON AVENUES:**

Passive division

Active division

NOTE: Issue-oriented conflict (e.g., doctrine and methods) is not division.

NOTE: Christians often deny that they are engaged in affective conflict because they know that sustained affective conflict is wrong. How would you know if you are doing this?

- *A recurrent memory of offenses committed against you*
 - *A focus on the negative aspects of the person*
 - *A habit of mentally rehearsing telling the other person off*
 - *An aversion to being around the person*
 - *Being angry/unable to rejoice when he/she is blessed, and being (secretly) glad when he has misfortune*
 - *Using “humor” to express your negative feelings*
 - *Gossiping about the other person*
- COUNTER-MEASURES: Think of division as a spiritual cancer. We overcome it in much the same ways we fight against cancer in our own bodies:

Prevention

- Consistently initiate love toward your Christian friends (Heb. 10:24,25).
- Work together on reaching outward to others (Phil. 1:27; 2:2).
- Maintain a proper attitude toward your leaders (1 Tim. 5:19; Heb. 13:17; 1 Thess. 5:12,13).

Early Detection

- Monitor your thoughts about others and repent from any underlying sinful attitudes (Jas. 3:14,16; 4:1,2).
- Help your Christian friends turn away from division (see below).

Aggressive Treatment

- Try to talk out personal conflicts as soon as you become aware of them (Matt. 18:15; 5:23,24).
- Apologize where appropriate—even if not reciprocated (Matt. 7:3-5).
- Choose to forbear and forgive—even if not reciprocated (Col. 3:13).

- Ask for help from others if necessary (Phil. 4:2,3).
- *Formal church discipline is appropriate for unrepentant divisive members* (2 Tim. 2:26; Titus 3:10).

REMEMBER: We cannot stop all divisive conflict in the church. The key is to promote and model unity, and deal with conflict in a godly way. Ken Sande's book, *The Peacemaker*, provides excellent practical guidance on this subject.

Overt tactics

Overt tactics are more obvious manifestations of Satan's attacks. Christian workers should be able to identify and counter at least three different kinds of overt tactics:

- **DEMON-POSSESSION:** The Gospels and Acts describe instances in which individuals have been "demonized"—substantially overtaken by specific demonic spirits.¹ These authors are careful to distinguish demon-possession from physical sicknesses (see Lk. 4:40,41), even though demons can sometimes cause physical sickness (Lk. 13:11-17). Mk. 5:2-13 describes a classic case of demon-possession. Note the symptoms, many of which (signified by #) are psychologically unexplainable:

Supernatural strength# (5:4)

Paroxysms (5:5)

Self-destructive behavior (5:5)

Personality-split (5:6-10)

Resistance# (5:7)

Transference# (5:13)

NOTE: The Bible infers that genuine Christians cannot be demon-possessed because they transferred from his dominion (Col. 1:13) and indwelt by God's Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19), who is stronger than Satan (1 Jn. 4:4*).

*1 John 4:4*⁴ You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.*

However, scripture clearly teaches that Christians can be destructively affected by Satan if we allow his influence into our lives (see below).

- **SUBJECTION:** This term refers to situations in which true Christians seem to be controlled by demons (2 Tim. 2:24-26; Acts 5:1-10). Though they are presumably not possessed (see above), they manifest symptoms similar to (though usually less

¹The biblical incidence of demon possession appears to be concentrated around the ministry of Jesus and (to a lesser degree) the apostles. It is significant that the epistles do not mention demon possession or teach Christians how to exorcise.

pronounced than) possession. Christian workers have observed the following symptoms, but we have no specific biblical examples that describe these symptoms.

Resistance to Christ and spiritual truth (abnormal difficulty in conversion and growth)

Excessive immorality or blasphemy without control

Strong depression after conversion, with no previous history of such depression

Medium and/or occult powers (visions, telepathy, astral projection, divination)

POSSIBLE REASONS FOR SUBJECTION & POSSESSION:

- Demonic powers passed on from family members who have been involved in occult practices
- Past or present involvement with occult practices which God has forbidden (Deut. 18:9-13**). These practices may include tarot cards, ouija, new age channelling, spirit guides, etc.

*Deuteronomy 18:9–13***⁹ “When you enter the land which the LORD your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations.”¹⁰ “There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer,¹¹ or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead.”¹² “For whoever does these things is detestable to the LORD; and because of these detestable things the LORD your God will drive them out before you.”¹³ “You shall be blameless before the LORD your God.”

- Involvement in open and blasphemous sin—especially for those previously involved in the occult (cf. Eph. 4:26,27).
- **INDIVIDUAL DEMONIC PERSECUTION:** This term refers to unusually strong attacks on Christians. All Christians may experience demonic persecution—but it is more common for those who are committed to ministry. This is not a biblical category, but is supported by Christian experience. Symptoms may include:

Severe depression, especially when there is no apparent reason to be depressed or history of clinical depression

Nightmares and night terrors, especially preceding teaching or other ministry activity

Voices, demonic visitations, etc.

Severe accusation that persists despite confession and appropriation of God’s grace

Deliverance from overt satanic attacks is promised by Christ as we appropriate His authority by faith. This deliverance may be instantaneous and dramatic, or it may be more gradual and subtle. The following steps may be necessary:

- Possessed or subjected persons must be willing to turn in faith to Jesus Christ, who alone has the power to deliver them from Satan (Lk. 11:24-26).

- Possessed or subjected persons must be willing to confess and forsake sins that may be the grounds for Satan's control (Acts 19:18,19).
- Christian workers seeking to deliver possessed or subjected persons must engage in prayer (Mk. 9:29) and rely exclusively on God's Word.
- After possessed or subjected persons have turned to Christ, workers should announce their forgiveness and security in Christ (see Rev. 12:10; Col. 1:13; 2:15; 1 Jn. 4:4), and urge them to devote themselves to the means of growth (especially Body-life).
- Demonically persecuted Christian workers should claim God's promises (see especially 1 Pet. 5:8-10), rebuke Satan aloud, and determine to move forward with their ministry responsibilities. They should also seek prayer help from other Christian workers. Sooner or later (often after fulfilling a ministry responsibility), the attack will give way to power of the Spirit for ministry (see Lk. 4:1-14).

Memory Verses

1 Peter 5:8* - Christians need to be alert to Satan's attacks.

1 Jn. 4:4* – Christians need not be afraid of demons because of Christ.

Deut. 18:9-12** – Occult practices are forbidden.

Homework Assignment

- 1) Read Ps. 2:1-12; Isa. 11:1-12; Zech. 14:1-11,16-19 and record what role Israel will play in God's future kingdom.
- 2) Church Visitation assignment (due last week of class)