

# EXPOSING THE ENEMY:

*5 Days to Uncovering Satan's Schemes Against You*

*a devotional by*  
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## DAY ONE: SATAN'S PLAN AGAINST YOU

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*"For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world."* —1 John 2:16

Something I pray on a regular basis is that God will give me a keen awareness of the enemy's plans and schemes against me. I want to be able to recognize his traps and avoid them.

I believe part of His answer came one day as I studied the story of Satan tempting Eve in Genesis 3 and our key verse: *"For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world."*

As I compared these passages, I had a serious epiphany about how Satan goes after us. These verses outline Satan's three-pronged plan of attack on our hearts. And it's the same plan we see him using while tempting Jesus in the desert in Matthew 4:1-11! A fact that tells me that while the enemy may be powerful, he's also predictable.

Let's take a closer look at Satan's plan as revealed in Eve's story and Jesus' story:

### **1. Make them crave some sort of physical gratification to the point they become preoccupied with it. Be it sex, drugs, alcohol, or food.**

Satan tempted Eve with fruit, which *"was good for food"* (Genesis 3:6).

Satan tempted Jesus while on a fast with bread.

Satan tempts us with whatever physical stimulation we are too preoccupied by—be it taste, smell, sound, touch, or sight. These things are good within the boundaries where God meant for them to be enjoyed. But venture outside God's intention for them, and they become an attempt to try and get our needs met outside the will of God.

### **2. Make them want to acquire things to the point they bow down to the god of materialism. Keep them distracted by making their eyes lust after the shiny things of the world.**

Satan tempted Eve by drawing her attention to what was *"pleasing to the eye"* (Genesis 3:6).

Satan showed Jesus the kingdoms of the world and told Him that He could have it all.

Satan flashes the newer, bigger, and seemingly better things of this world in front of us, trying to lure us into thinking we must have it: *This will make me fulfilled. This will make me happy.* And then it wears out, breaks down, gets old, and reveals just how temporary every material thing is.

**3. Make them boastful about what they have or do. Keep them distracted and obsessed with their status and significance. Choke the life out of them using the tentacles of their own pride.**

Satan tempted Eve by promising an increased awareness that would make her become more like God.

Satan tempted Jesus by telling Him to throw Himself off the highest point of the temple, and then command the angels to save Him. This would impress everyone watching and certainly raise Jesus' status and significance.

Likewise, Satan tempts us to try and elevate ourselves over others. We wrongly think we have to become something the world calls worthy. This creates a need within our flesh to have people notice us, commend us, revere us, and stroke our pride. We then dare to boast about all we are.

Oh sweet sisters, this is where we must stop and remind ourselves that we don't have to be held hostage by Satan. We are on to him and his schemes. And his power over us is nothing compared to the freeing promises of God.

There was a huge difference between Eve's response to Satan and Jesus' response to Satan. Eve dialogued with Satan and allowed him to weave his tangled web of justifications. Jesus, on the other hand, immediately quoted truth. With every temptation, Jesus quoted Deuteronomy as He answered, *"It is written . . ."* and He shut Satan down with the truth of God.

What will our response be?

It's our choice.

Moment by moment, decision by decision, step by step, will we operate in God's all-powerful truth or allow Satan to entangle us in his lies?

*Dear Lord, thank You for making me aware of the enemy's plans against me. I declare today that he has no place in my life. No place in my mind. No place in my decision-making process. No place in my heart. No place in my future. All of me is reserved and preserved for life. Your life. Thank You for helping me walk in Truth and Light. I know the enemy has already been defeated. With You, I fight from victory, not for victory. In Jesus' name, amen.*

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## DAY TWO: THE SEDUCTION OF SATISFACTION

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*"And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus."* —Philippians 4:19

Have you ever been tempted to make seemingly small compromises in the short term that had the potential to take you away from God's best in the long term?

I know this struggle all too well. But I also know that those small compromises build upon one another until they become a big pile of regret.

Temptation of any kind is Satan's invitation to get our needs met outside the will of God.

One of the subtle ways he does this is to plant the hesitant thought in our mind that God will not meet our needs—that God is not enough. Satan wants us to feel alone and abandoned, so that we turn to his offerings instead. It's the seduction of satisfaction.

Often the script that plays in our heads is like the one I mentioned in yesterday's devotion, *I need \_\_\_\_\_ so I can be satisfied.*

It's what sends the wife on a budget off on a spending spree. She feels the thrill of the sale in the moment. But as she's hiding the bags from her husband, shame creeps in.

It's what pulls at the businesswoman to work harder and longer and refuse to build boundaries in her schedule. Always chasing that next accomplishment or that next compliment, but it's never enough.

It's what sent me on many eating sprees. The kids were loud, the house was messy, the demands felt beyond my control. So with great justification I'd indulge, only to have a bloated stomach and a deflated heart.

This subtle message sold to us by Satan can be exposed when we understand the difference between a *need* and a *want*.

All the examples above were wants—not needs. But oh, how Satan wants to make them one and the same.

When the difference between these two words starts getting skewed, we start compromising. We start justifying. And it sets us up to start getting our needs met outside the will of God. The abyss of discontentment invites us in and threatens to darken and distort everything in our world.

Listen: Satan is a liar. The more we fill ourselves with his distorted desires, the emptier we'll feel. That's true with each of the desires mentioned above. The more we overspend, overwork, or overeat, the emptier we feel. Remember, Satan wants to separate you from God's best plans. He wants to separate you from God's proper provision. He wants to separate you from God's peace.

Satan's temptation drains life. *God's provision sustains life.*

Satan's temptation in the short term will reap heartache in the long term. *God's provision in the short term will reap blessings in the long term.*

Satan's temptation gratifies the flesh. *God's provision satisfies the soul.*

Oh, sweet sister, we must consider these realities when making choices today. We're all just a few poor choices away from doing things we never thought we would. Especially when our hearts are in the vulnerable place of longing for something that God hasn't yet provided.

And the time to prevent destruction from temptation is before it ever starts.

We are either holding fast to God's promise or being lured by a compromise. And isn't it interesting that the word *promise* is right there in the midst of that word *com*(promise)?

God promises, "I will meet all your needs according to the riches of My glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19, paraphrased). He is everything we need and is so perfectly capable of filling in the gaps of our wants as well. We must let truth seep deep into the longings of our souls. Otherwise lies are prone to creep into this place of our desire.

Yes. We must trust God. Embrace truth. Live His promise.

*Dear Lord, help me focus only on Your provision in my life today. I don't want to be separated from You, Your best plans for me, or Your peace. Help me notice when the enemy is trying to entice me with false desires, because they only lead to emptiness. In Jesus' name, amen.*



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## DAY THREE: THE SLIPPERY SLOPE

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*"... to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God." —Acts 26:18*

Some of the most dangerous lies we listen to are the ones we tell ourselves.

If you've ever felt yourself being pulled into a forbidden but exciting situation, you may know exactly what I'm talking about. It's the script we can end up turning to when we sense red flags but we want to convince ourselves we can handle it. "I'm just having a little fun. This won't ever amount to anything. It just gives me a little something to look forward to."

That's the way a friend of mine felt when a nice guy at work started paying attention to her. Her marriage was hard and she was tired of trying so much. She found herself putting extra effort into getting dressed in the morning and being more than willing to work late.

She felt a spark in her heart every time he came near. Soon, they were talking in secret. Texting in secret. Meeting in secret. And down the slippery slope she went.

The slippery slope has one major tell-tale sign: things are done in secret.

The minute we start hiding things from those who love us, doing things in a sneaky way, lying or telling half-truths, and figuring out ways to cover up evidence of our activities, we're on the slippery slope. And we're headed downhill fast.

Satan is the master of darkness. As long as he can keep us operating in our dark secrets, we are deceived. In *The Message*, Acts 26:17-18, we are reminded:

"I'm sending you off to open the eyes of the outsiders so they can see the difference between dark and light, and choose light, see the difference between Satan and God, and choose God. I'm sending you off to present my offer of sins forgiven, and a place in the family, inviting them into the company of those who begin real living by believing in me."

Oh sweet friend, we need to see the difference between dark and light and choose light. We need to bring our choices out into the light of Jesus so He can expose the truth. Only then can we truly discern the difference between being led by Jesus or deceived by Satan.

Things done in secret are an indication of being led by Satan. That's a strong statement but one worth really considering.

Satan keeps dangers off our radar screen and blinds us to the harsh realities coming our way. My friend was blinded. And when she finally woke up to the deception, the devastation horrified her.

If you're keeping secrets today, bring them out into the light:

- Find a trusted Christian friend and ask that person to help you hold your choices up to the truth.
- Get honest with people who love you.
- Build accountability measures in your life.
- Ask Jesus for help, forgiveness, and a clear understanding of how to put on the brakes and throw things in reverse. Let His truth speak louder than the feelings that are begging you to keep things hidden. Like the end of verse 18 says, "begin real living by believing in me."

The path to real living—the living that will sustain you and lead you to a true discovery of real love, real provision, and real satisfaction—is found only by following Jesus.

Dear Lord, protect me from the darkness of Satan today. Help me to bring my choices into Your light, because only You can expose the truth. You are the only way. In Jesus' name, amen.



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## DAY FOUR: THE MOST POWERFUL NAME

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*"But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.'"* — Matthew 1:20

In the first three devotions we talked about how the enemy wants us to make choices that will leave us compromised. But we must know that he also loves to leave us feeling terrified. Because if we're terrified, we're more likely to end up paralyzed.

Let's take a close look at the story of Joseph and his soon-to-be bride in Matthew 1.

I picture Joseph in the moment he found out Mary was pregnant. He knew the child wasn't his. His mind must have fired off all kinds of assumptions and dreadful possible scenarios that could have caused this situation.

And Joseph's response? He made plans to divorce Mary in secret.

The very next thing written in verse 20 states that after Joseph considered the divorce an angel visited him in a dream. Joseph went to sleep with the crushing reality of his decision weighing on him and God sent an angel to direct him and protect God's plan.

God had a plan for Joseph. His assignment was to bring forth the child and name Him Jesus (Matthew 1:21).

And the enemy's tactic to mess that plan up could have been many things. Shame. Anger. Confusion.

But the angel of the Lord saw what was really keeping Joseph from staying in alignment with his assignment from God: fear.

Make no mistake, the enemy wanted Joseph to be afraid.

The enemy wants you to be afraid today too.

Not the healthy kind of fear that keeps us safe. No, the horrible kind of fear that whispers worst-case scenarios absent of hope and haunted by hurt.

With death on his breath fear says, "Entertain my entanglements. Linger in my lies. And drink deeply from my darkness."

While we're distracted with fear, the enemy pickpockets our purpose. Cripples our courage. Dismantles our dreams. And blinds us to the beauty of the Lord's great plans.

On the surface it may not seem like your assignment is like Joseph's at all. But it's actually incredibly similar. You are to bring forth and proclaim the name of Jesus.

Is there a person with whom you've been afraid to share your testimony? Is there a relationship causing you confusion and anxiety? Is there a problem you're facing where there seems to be no solution?

Proclaiming the name of Jesus brings power, protection, and a perspective that crushes fear. It is the name above every other.

Joseph went to bed afraid. In his dream he hears the name Jesus for the first time and wakes up empowered to be obedient to God's plan.

There is power in the name of Jesus.

Calling on the name of Jesus shouldn't be our last resort. It should be our first response. He is Immanuel, God with us.

Today, let's speak the name of Jesus over every worry, every stress, every uncertainty, and every need. There is no other greater power or more assuring calm.

And let's make this bold declaration together as we put fear in its place:

*Fear, you have stolen enough. I am not a slave to your death-based schemes. I will not fall prey to your wicked whispers. I will not be infected by your poison-laced lies.*

*I am saved by Grace.  
I am empowered by Truth.  
And I am held strong by my Jesus.*

*Fear, you thought I was a cornered coward.*

*But at just the mention of my Jesus I saw you shake and quake and flee from me.*

**Prayer:** *Heavenly Father, I acknowledge that all the power I need is in the name of Your Son, Jesus. I declare His name to be higher than any name I have given this situation. I will not declare hopelessness or fear or anxiety, or anything else threatening to make me run from Jesus. I declare all hope, all courage, all assurance, all power in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen.*

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## DAY FIVE: GOD'S GREATEST SORROW

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*"Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful."* —Hebrews 10:23

It's easy to believe God when everything is going according to our plans. But when we assume we know what a good God would do, and He doesn't do it? Well. That's when things can start to get a bit complicated.

It's the place where doubts are formed and disappointment grows. The place where we can be tempted to distance ourselves from God with hearts of distrust as questions about His goodness and His love for us begin to form. Questions the enemy loves to reinforce with his whispers and his lies. That's why I want to expose this tactic today.

God has been showing me that one of the deepest sorrows we could ever drape over Him is our refusal to believe He loves us. Because the minute we diminish His love is the minute we doubt every other promise He gives us. And when we doubt His promises, we disconnect from His hope.

Diminished love.

Doubted promises.

Disconnected hopes.

Isn't this such a slimy scheme of Satan's? He doesn't at all mind if we believe God loves people. He just doesn't want us to believe God personally loves us. The enemy wants us to define our love for God based on how we feel about our circumstances.

Can't you just see the subtle invitations to this scheme of the enemy every time something hard happens to us?

Satan wants us to believe we are forsaken. He wants us to think we are forgotten. He wants us to give up hope.

But listen to the symphony of truth that crescendos in this verse from Hebrews 10:23: *"Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful."* It overrides the enemy's lies with these most glorious realities:

1. We just have to hold on to God's hope. We don't have to feel the hope, fulfill the hope, or even understand the hope. We just have to picture ourselves holding onto this lifeline between God's heart and ours and declare, "I am going to be an unswerving holder of this hope from God!"

2. We must profess the promises over our problems. Every problem we have can be made less painful by declaring a promise of God over it. It may still hurt but it won't cripple us and hold us back if we remember that God promises through it all, He will hold us up.

3. God will carry the weight of making sure His promises are carried out. He is the faithful one. He is the sure one. It doesn't depend on us; therefore, we don't have to have a perfect performance in order for His promises to be fulfilled. We just have to hold on to Him and His love.

I don't know what you are facing today. But I can tell you from the midst of my own issues and problems, that I'm choosing to believe in His love for me personally and deeply. I'm proclaiming His promises over my problems. And I'm holding onto God's hope as my greatest lifeline. I pray He will help you to do the same.

Our God is good. His love for us is sure. And we can trust Him at all times.

**Prayer:** *Heavenly Father, thank You for loving me. I confess that far too often I have forgotten this simple truth. But You tell me that Your love is a fact that does not change. It is a certainty above every circumstance. As I go about my day, help me to feel the depth of Your love. Help me quiet the lies of the enemy with the absolute truth of Your love. And continually remind me of the hope that I have in You as my Savior and Lord. In Jesus' name, amen.*



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