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Testing and Satan's Plan

523-B

Series: Testing

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INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO

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Testing and Satan's Plan

God tests His children for many reasons. He tests us to develop His mind in us, because our responses, apart from Him, are not His. He tests us to expose our weaknesses because we tend to believe that we are somebody we are not. He tests us to humble us. He tests us to advance the kingdom. He tests us to draw us to the Word. He tests us to enlarge our vision of Him and to teach us that God is all that He says He is. He tests us to equip us to minister to others around us. He tests us and puts us through certain experiences to give us comfort so that we might comfort others. He teaches us experientially how to pray through the tests of life.

For the last few lessons we have been dealing with the ninth reason God tests His children. This one is a little harder for some to grasp. It is harder for some to accept or deal with, yet, it is the reality of the Christian experience. God tests His children because, in a very real sense, there is a war out there. There is a spiritual war going on in our lives twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week until the Lord graciously calls us home.

It is an exciting battle. It is a battle that is already won. But in the midst of the battle, there are skirmishes. These skirmishes go on day and night. If we are honest with ourselves, as we read in the Scriptures, we see that we are not wrestling against circumstances or people or pressures. We are actually wrestling against spirit beings. The wrestling and warfare is against the principalities, the powers and the rulers of darkness of this world. In reality, there are various echelons of satanic authority.

If we are to be honest with ourselves, as Christians we lose skirmishes day after day in various areas of our lives. Often we fail to become the men and women God wants us to be simply because we are not aware of the conflict and we are not aware of the enemy. If you don't believe the reality of Satan and the reality of spirit warfare, I want you to teach on this subject. As I have been teaching this subject these last few weeks, I have seen an onslaught of spiritual warfare from various sources and

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areas that involve a variety of people in more ways than I have seen in years. In a sense, it is exciting, but I will not tell you my responses to these tests. As the Scripture tells us, God tests us to humble us. He has humbled me through these things. It is exciting when you begin to meditate on this concept and become aware of it or when you begin to teach on it. You will experience warfare. That warfare tends to surface a lot of weaknesses in us.

There is a very real war going on and in the process of that battle, God and Satan are locked in an intense conflict over you. Read the book of Job to see this. This book was given to us to remind us of the reality of the personal conflict between God and Satan for the control of our lives. Satan is a roaring lion. He is literally a stalking lion. This means that he is looking around seeking those he may devour. The word "devour" literally means to take control of and remove from the scene. If you devour something, is it going to be good for anybody else? If you sit down and devour a meal and leave a crumb or two, you don't invite someone else to sit down and eat the meal. It has been devoured. It is gone. There is nothing left. This is what Satan wants to do with the effectiveness and efficiency of your Christian life. He wants to devour it. He wants to render you useless. This is his goal. He is stalking about seeking and being actively engaged in the pursuit of finding believers in their weak positions so that he can render them useless.

We have been dealing with the fact that one of the reasons God tests His children is to win the victory and to show Satan who God is. Satan knows, but he needs to be reminded. One of the reasons we have been dealing with the reality of this is because every test is accompanied by spiritual warfare. Because it is a spiritual conflict, the stakes are high.

THE BATTLEFIELD IS THE MIND

In the last lesson we began to discover the reality of the battle by looking at the battlefield itself. The battlefield that Satan and God are locked in is a war against the spirit in your life and in your mind. We began by taking a look at Genesis 3:1-13. It is the most real, graphic, dramatic picture we have of Satan attempting to deceive. The battleground took place in the human mind in a conflict between Satan and Eve. The process he used was deceit. He uses different methodologies with each of us, but his basic tactic doesn't change. In Matthew 4, we see the means that

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he used to deal with Jesus were not fresh and original. As we superimpose Matthew 4 on Genesis 3 we get a re-run. If we are honest with ourselves, we can see that he is not all that original. He is, however, crafty.

This lesson will continue with the fact that the battlefield is the human mind itself. We dealt with just two points in that lesson which I will review briefly and then go on to the rest. We will discover the enemy's approach to defeat us.

Every one of us has a different weakness. Some of us may have a weakness in the same area, but every believer has a different point of tenderness. Satan knows this. In a previous lesson, we dealt with the fact that Jehovah rebuked and removed the enemies of Israel because they attacked His children on the weak side where they were crippled and lame. They attacked the women, children, elderly and those not engaged in battle. This is the where Satan likes to attack. He always attacks our weakest point.

I want to superimpose in your mind some of the areas of your life in which there is constant conflict and, at least, occasional defeat. See if Satan's approaches to you are not identical to those he made with Eve.

In the last lesson, we began with the fact that some of us have a problem with anger. Or perhaps a problem area in your life is jealousy. Perhaps it is lust. It may be fear, self-pity, pride or another weakness. Whatever your problem or problems are, stop and realize that you and I were not meant to be defeated in that area of our lives. It was not meant to be. We were meant to be victors. I think that Satan has so deceived us into believing that the Christian life is satisfactory when compromised. We have come to the conviction that mediocre Christianity, which is running with the weights on our ankles that Paul talked about, is adequate. Do you know where that comes from? It is a lie. Where do the lies come from? They come from the father of lies. We were never intended to run the race spiritually crippled. There is a real conflict and a real war. You and I were called to be warriors on the front line fully clothed, fully armored, and healthy in the spirit and prepared to fight the battle. Most of us are crawling around with dazed eyes wondering where we left our rifles and not sure we remember how to use them.

I want to encourage you to believe that the battle is real.

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The enemy is real. You and I have a victory guaranteed if we will simply pay attention to who he is, what he is doing and then crawl up inside of Christ and claim the victory. It is ours. This half-defeated, semi-victorious Christian life is a lie. It is not what was meant to be.

Tactic 1- Get your attention- engage in conversation with the voice of the enemy.

In the last lesson, we saw that the very first tactic Satan uses is to try to lure Christians into defeat by beginning a conversation. He did this with Eve in Genesis 3:1. The King James Version begins with the word "Yea", and the Living Bible uses "Indeed". These two words indicate that this was not a new conversation. If you have ever watched television when the signal goes out, it usually breaks in at the middle of a conversation when the program comes back on. We have to let our imagination try to figure out what went on in the meantime. This is the same situation here. I don't believe that the conversation began in the King James Version with "Yea." I think this was a continuation of a conversation.

Eve's problem was that she listened to the voice of a stranger as we see in John 10:3-5. In this passage, Jesus tells us that we can hear the Master's voice and follow Him as sheep hear their shepherd. He said that a sheep will not follow a stranger, because they don't know the voice of a stranger.

In the last lesson, I asked how many of you have been engaged in a conversation with yourself where you are thinking and talking back and forth to yourself. I asked you to re-appraise who you were talking to. You may say, "I was talking to myself." How many of you are there? One. Basically if you are hearing the Word and meditating on the Word, you are listening to God, and any other voice is Satan.

I gave you a list in the previous lesson. In I John 4 we are told to try the spirits to see if they be of God. If you are talking to yourself and your thoughts are negative, questioning, self-exalting, confusing, inconsistent, apprehensive, fearful, judgmental, divisive and impure, who are you talking to? You are listening to the voice of a stranger. You are giving him an inroad. This is the first mistake that Eve made. If she had never allowed that conversation to begin, she would not have ended up where she did. We would not have ended up where we did, not to

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mention Adam in between. The problem is that she listened to the voice of a stranger. She carried on a conversation with that which she knew was not the Word of God. That was her first mistake. She should have used the way of escape to try the spirits, and if they were not of God, she needed to reject the enemy.

Tactic 2- Question the Word of God

Once Satan got into Eve's soul by conversation, he began to get her attention and question the Word of God. He said, "Hath God said?" Satan's trademark and imprint that is upon everything is a question mark. He always asks questions. Follow his statements through Scripture, and you will find that he is always asking questions. He asks unanswerable questions and gives questionable answers, but he is always asking questions. Usually he is questioning some basic premise of the Word of God, "Hath God said?"

Sometimes he is not that blatant. You and I have to pay attention. He does not always tap you on the shoulder and say, "Hath God said?" He uses little subtleties to question the authority of the Word of God in our lives. We need to realize that in these situations our wrong response is to reason with him rather than rebuke him.

You don't reason with an enemy. If someone comes into your house to shoot you, you don't sit down with him and say, "I like your gun. It looks great. How many people have you shot before?" You resist him. You shoot him. You run. You do something to get away depending on how well you are equipped to wage warfare. You don't stay around for an argument.

You and I will not accept the fact that Satan has declared war on us personally. His goal is to destroy us spiritually. He wants to devour us. He wants to render us useless. He wants to take us out of the battle. There is not one of us here that he does not want to render, through some means or method, useless in the spiritual warfare that is involved in leading other people to Jesus Christ. He wants to render our testimonies futile and your lives useless. You and I need to accept the fact that if these areas plague us, we need to recognize this as real warfare. Satan's goal is personal.

You may say, "He wants to deal with the body as a whole." Yes, this is true. He knows something that most Christians don't. The

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way to build the body is by adding one person at a time. The way to destroy the body is one person at a time. This is the strength and the power of you and I sharing our faith with other people. One on one is the real strength and the underlying support of the church of Jesus Christ. By the same token, it is the way that Satan knows to destroy the body, one at a time.

In James 4 we read what we are supposed to do. This passage has been memorized by many of you. If you haven't memorized it, I suggest that you do.

But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. (James 4:6-7 NASB)

Have you ever stopped to realize that the first step in resisting the devil is found in verse 6? It tells us to humble ourselves. Any time you think you have the authority and the power to deal with the devil you are through. You have to humble yourself because God gives us the grace to do it. You can't do it.

The second thing you have to do is found in verse 7. You have to submit yourself to God. You humble yourself before Him and then submit yourself to Him. This is how you resist the devil. I have heard many people say, "I resist the devil. I clench my fist and scream at him." That doesn't scare him. He is not afraid of you. He is petrified of the Word of God, but he is not afraid of you. He is not afraid of me. He knows our weaknesses, and he is not afraid of us.

Usually, we do not read the whole passage. It says to humble ourselves and God will give us the grace. The first thing we have to do is to fall down before God. It has to happen in a split second as we say, "God help me!" Then we are to submit ourselves to Him and say, "Lord, You alone can do it. Rebuke him." Then in His power, we are to resist the devil. The word literally means to set oneself against and to stand as an immovable object against a force that is endeavoring to trap you, ensnare you or overcome you. Stand and resist the devil.

If we resist him properly, that is in the Spirit, immediately we have a promise. What will he do? Hang around and mope? Change his tactic? Continue to defeat you? He will flee from you. You may say, "I'm sorry, I haven't experienced that in my life." That experience does not make this false. Experience does not

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make the Word of God true or false. The Word of God makes our experience true or false. The Word of God is the authority. The fact that we may not have experientially entered into that stage of maturity on a relatively consistent basis does not invalidate the truth of the Word. It makes it that much more important that we find out what it means.

The Scripture tells us to humble ourselves and to ask for grace. We are then to turn ourselves toward God and submit ourselves to Him. In Him, we are to immediately resist the devil. The devil will put on his track shoes and run around the wrong track and head the wrong way. He does not stand against the power of God and the Word of God. You and I need to remind ourselves of that. We do not experience continual victory because we do not submit ourselves to God, humble ourselves and resist him. The key word is "resist". It means "to set oneself against immediately". I contend that if we get nothing else out of this lesson that the key to victory or defeat in the Christian's life regarding the day-to-day problems that we face is the immediacy of our resistance. All we have to do is give Satan one little thought and he is gone. Give him one little piece of ground, and he sets up camp.

You may have a problem with anger. Satan begins to speak to you. You hear the voice of a stranger. You think about the wrong that somebody did to you this week. You think, "He had no right to do that to me. I've known him to do that to others. My reputation is at stake." You go on and on. You are listening to the voice of a stranger. You have given him an inroad. From that point on, it is difficult to resist the devil. The minute that thought comes into your mind, at that precise mini-second, if you say, "Satan, in the Lord I rebuke you," or if you begin to quote the Word or if you simply begin to praise God or take any of these ways out, he will flee.

If you are dealing with a matter of lust, it is in the first microsecond of that look that you are able to rebuke him. At that moment, the thought is gone, your power is back and you have the energy with which to overcome the temptation.

You may be dealing with self-pity. You are feeling discouraged. You think, "Woe is me. I got all of the bad deals in life." Have you ever thought that? How many of you other than me have gotten all these bad deals? God just didn't give you a square shake. Where did that thought come from? You are listening to the voice

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of a stranger. If the minute that word, "God" and "bad" come up in the same sentence you ought to know where that comes from. The minute that thought hits your mind, you need to begin to sing praises, quote Scripture, seek a way of escape, and rebuke the enemy immediately so he does not get a foot in the door and he is gone. He will flee. Resisting him is not inviting him into the living room, serving him hot chocolate and snacks and having a mini-conversation then asking him to leave. He is not going to go. Once he is in, he is there. It is going to take warfare to get him out. The key is don't open the door and invite him in.

If you get nothing else out of this lesson, each of us needs to hone our spiritual sensitivity to how he operates. The minute we begin to get hit with depression, discouragement, anger, jealousy, self-pity, pride, lust or whatever your struggle is, at that microsecond rebuke him. Go to the Word. I don't care if you are in the middle of a sale and you are talking to a customer. It only takes a half of a second to rebuke the enemy. I don't care if you are in the middle of a term paper. I don't care if you are driving down the freeway, you don't have to close your eyes and take them off of the road. You can at that second rebuke Satan. The battle is won or lost at this point.

You may say, "I have a problem with envy. When I go shopping and see all of the things other people have, I am not happy. I want more." The very second that thought enters your mind defeat it. The very second.

The battle is won or lost in the mind. We need to remember that God is sovereign no matter what Satan says to you. We need to remember that God is omnipotent no matter what Satan says to you. Satan is going to raise questions in your mind, "But this is different!" God is perfect love. Satan will say to you, "But you don't deserve it." Sure you don't deserve it. Whatever God says in His Word hinges around the word "grace." Whatever God says hinges around worthiness and works. Satan will say, "You don't deserve God's love and grace. You are really not all that good. You really have this other horrible problem." Or Satan will take another tactic and say, "You are really greater than you think you are." Satan's attacks will always hinge around you or me. It will never hinge around the grace of God. Satan detests the grace of God.

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Tactic 3- Satan alters the Word of God

Satan's third level of attack is even more subtle. He begins to alter the Word of God. When he alters the Word we at times come back and begin to alter it, too. In Genesis 3, Satan says, "Hath God said you shall not eat from any tree in the garden?" He slightly alters the Word of God. Eve comes back and slightly alters the Word of God as well.

In the last lesson, we dealt with the fact that Satan often overstates his case to get us to defend the Word. He said, "Eve, did God say that you aren't supposed to eat from any tree in the garden?" He will overstate his case with you. If you are dealing with the principle of authority or submission or finances or the concept of love, Satan will overstate the case in order to get you on the defensive against the Word. You will start arguing in your mind about the Scriptures. We dealt with this in the last lesson. How many of you argue with Satan about the Word? Don't do it. You do not argue with the enemy about the Word of God, you use it. The Word of God is its own argument. You never defend the Scriptures. The Scripture will defend itself.

Satan, then, begins to alter the Word. What we do as he alters the Word, if we are honest with ourselves, is begin to accept the reduction of absolutes to areas of question. How could a loving God send all of those people to hell? What about the heathen who have never heard? What about that infidel that seems so successful? How could there only be one way to heaven? If God is a god of love, why is there so much suffering? We begin to listen to the voice of the enemy as he questions the motives of God. We begin to reduce absolutes to areas of question.

We do this in practical ways. We know that we are supposed to love our wives as Christ loved the church. Then Satan gets in and says, "Yeah, but what about this situation? That is different." You respond, "Yeah, it is different. You are right, Satan." We begin to reduce absolutes to areas of question. Wives may think, "I know I must submit to my husband in this area, but God never had to live with my husband." Not true. At work you may think, "Sure, he is my authority, but he is not a good boss." You reduce areas of absolutes to areas of question. Someone may think, "Well, maybe it will divide the flock and create dissension, but I need to do this." We go ahead and allow Satan to make inroads by questioning and reducing absolutes to areas of question.

Tactic 4- Denies the Word of God

The fourth thing Satan does when he has gotten this far in our lives is to begin to cause us to deny the Word itself. "God never really said that," is what he said in Genesis 3:4. The serpent said to Eve, "You've got to be kidding. You've misunderstood." By now Eve was ripe. She had played enough games with Satan to where she was ripe. He said, "You won't die." She answered, "Of course, I won't. That's not what God meant at all." What Satan wants us to do is to philosophize and generalize and throw the Word of God away as our final authority. When you do that, you step off of the rock and into the quicksand and you are through. But, there is a way out. It is found in Ephesians 6.

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.
(Ephesians 6:11,12)

Tactic 5- Offers an alternative to the Word- you will become as gods

The fifth thing Satan does after having gotten your attention, having questioned the Word, altered the Word and denied the Word, is that he offers us an alternative. What is Satan's alternative? He said, "Eve, God knows that in the day that you eat of the tree your eyes will be opened and you will be like Him. Don't you want to do that? You and God together could be running the world. What a combination. You and God together could be running your life. It is an unbeatable deal. You and God. Pretty soon it could be just you." Satan begins to offer an alternative that makes you a god.

Tactic 6- Questions God's motives

Turn to Romans 11. This is another good verse to memorize if you haven't already.

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways are past finding out!

For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?

Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?

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For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen. (Romans 11:33-36)

I mention this passage because when Satan gets our attention at this stage, he usually has caused us to question the motivation of the Living God. No matter what issue is at stake, we begin to question God's motives. Who is He to run my life anyhow? The answer is that He is the Creator of the ends of the earth. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. That is who He is. But at this point in time we don't reason that way. We say, "What is my mind for anyway? I need to learn to think for myself. God and I can be co-gods together." But the Scriptures says,

...lean not on your own understanding;

In all your ways acknowledge him and he shall direct your path. (Proverbs 3:5,6 NKJV)

How many times have you met with people to counsel or encourage them, and they say, "But God is out to get me." They question the motivations of the Living God. At this point in their lives they have been listening to the voice of a stranger. They have gradually begun to question the Word and then deny the Word. They come to the conclusion that God is out to get them.

Ask them this question, "Why would someone out to get you die for you? Why would anyone who didn't have your best interest at heart die in your place?" There is a logic to that. They may say to you, "He hasn't given me a square deal." You may even say this to yourself. I guess that is right. All He did was trade all of His righteousness for all of your sins at no charge. That is not a square deal. You say, "You don't know the circumstances of my life. I've got a rough deal." He never promised you anything different. But in the spirit realm, He has given you everything He ever promised you. He has given you the capacity to bear anything that this world might bring your way. One day He will reward you and give you an eternity filled with His presence. What more do we want? Yet, we say, "Gosh, He hasn't given me a square deal."

Satan has real control of our lives when we reach this point. We have involved ourselves with such satanic warfare that we are questioning the motives of God. It takes real spiritual surgery at this point to get us back out of the mess we are in. Look again at Romans 11:33-36. It is an important passage and I encourage you to memorize it.

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For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen. (Romans 11:33-36)

If you ever think that you are ready to become God, I encourage you to do three things. First of all, look in the mirror. Second, read your personal diary. Third, look in the Word of God. If you think you can better decide than God what is best for you, then that is Satan's story.

Tactic 7- Makes evil appear attractive

Having given the reigns of your life over to you and causing you to question God's motivation, Satan's next move is obvious. The seventh thing that Satan does is begin to make evil appear to be attractive. Blinded by the enemy, Eve looked at that tree, and said, "You know that looks great. I've never seen anything quite so ripe." It looked good to the eyes. It sounded good to the taste. It was going to make her wise. We see here the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life. They were all together in one neat package. As she did, we begin to consider the physical benefits of sin. It is just a little lie. It is just a little cheat. It is just a little steal. It is just a little lust. It is just a little greed. It is just a little compromise. It won't make any difference.

By this point in time, we have compromised the validity of the Word of God as our final authority. He has appealed to our sense of reason. We have argued with him. We have come down to the place where we have acknowledged the fact that we have a right to make these choices. Rather than base them on the Word, we base them on our feelings. Boy, I'm hungry. Boy, that looks great. Do you see the downhill trend?

At this point in time, we need to flee. The word "flee" literally means to scam, go, leave. At this point, I don't care what it takes, you need to move. If you are in the midst of a situation where you are reasoning with yourself or with the enemy, and you are beginning to look upon sin as an acceptable alternative, scam and get out of sight. We are told in I Thessalonians 6:8 to flee

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fornication. In I Corinthians 10:14 we are told to flee idolatry. In II Timothy 2:22 we are told to flee youthful lust. In John 10:5 we are told to flee that stranger who is trying to talk to us.

The word “flee” literally means that if you want victory in spiritual warfare, the instant you begin to succumb and you realize it, you scam. That means different strokes for different folks. In some people's lives that means that there is certain reading material that is off limits. It may not be for other people. There may be certain movies that are off limits. There may be certain friendships that are off limits. There may be certain relationships that are off limits. There may be certain shopping sprees that are off limits. If you have a problem with greed, you don't go to the department store and spend your day shopping. Don't do this if you have a problem with wanting things. If you open the paper with 27 sales ads, you throw the paper in the wastebasket. You don't sit there and stare at it and say, “I've really got a problem. I want to buy things all the time.”

If you have a problem with lust, you don't drive by some of the places that cause you to lust and peer then say, “I've really got a problem with this area.” You don't pick up magazines and books and then say, “That is not good at all.” Don't ever get near them. Throw them away. Do away with them.

You may have a problem with envy or another specific area. In every one of these areas there is a way of escape. One of the ways is to flee, if at all possible, the source of the evil itself. Sometimes we can't, and we have to deal with it head on. So much of the time we make our own problems.

Tactic 8- Offers an opportunity to sin

The eighth thing Satan does is to offer an opportunity for sin. She reached out and took it. I don't know what was going through Eve's mind. Before she took it, she may have been thinking that she was going to just look it over for Adam. She may have thought, “If I don't like it, I will glue it back.” Once she had it in her hot little fist it was all over. You and I need to recognize that we don't toy around with sin. You don't get that close to it. Deuteronomy 6:16 would be another good memory verse.

Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God, as ye tempted him in Massah. (Deuteronomy 6:16)

After Satan has provided you with an opportunity to sin,

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he disappears. I've heard so many people say, "Where is Satan now that I need him?" He will entice you and speak to you and encourage you until you lose your temper or yield to that temptation or get involved in that situation. You turn around and say, "Satan. Satan?"

I can imagine that Eve took a bite and then didn't like the taste. Her eyes were opened. She didn't like what she saw. Can't you imagine her turning to Satan saying, "I want a refund. Here is my credit card. I want my money back. Satan, where are you?" He is gone. He makes evil appear attractive. He leads you to it and the minute you reach out to touch it, he vanishes.

You say, "Why isn't he here to comfort me?" Satan is not there because he is not the Comforter. He is the deceiver. You scorn the Comforter when you listen to Satan. That is why there is no comfort. There we stand confused, frustrated and empty. We say, "Now what?" There is a way of escape. We find it in I John 1:9.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness.

(I John 1:9)

You may say, "I know that verse." How long does it take you to use that verse after you realize you have yielded to sin? How long? Is it an hour? Thirty minutes? Twenty minutes? Fifteen minutes? Ten minutes? Five minutes? Ten seconds? Two seconds? One second? Three days? The key, once again, is in the timing. How long, after you know that you have yielded, even if it is just a thought, should you ask the forgiveness of God? Instantly. The quicker you ask for forgiveness, the quicker you are cleansed. The quicker you are cleansed, the quicker Satan is removed from the scene. The very instant that you realize you have yielded, ask for forgiveness. Satan will say, "You've done it. Now wallow in it for a while." God says, "You've done it. Confess it. Let's start over." The instant we do, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin.

Tactic 9- Encourages you to involve someone else in your sin- Sin is contagious.

The final steps of a man deceived are seen in Genesis 3:6. Eve decided to involve somebody else. Have you ever done that? Once you realize that you have lost your temper, gotten involved with jealousy, impurity or another area, you, oftentimes, turn to those closest to you and you get them involved in the same mess.

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Genesis 3:8 says that they began to hide from God. Genesis 3:7 tells us they were burdened with guilt. Genesis 3:12-13 shows that they found ways to shift the blame to someone else.

Adam said, "It wasn't my fault, God. This woman that You gave me made me do it."

Eve said, "The devil made me do it."

I want to encourage you to realize two things. God is going to test us daily in the midst of spiritual warfare. There is a real war going on out there. God never intended us to live compromised Christian experiences. The gospel is radical. It is powerful. It is complete. You and I were meant to be complete, powerful radicals in the spiritual realm. We have sacrificed spiritual purity by compromising with Satan. Today and tomorrow, if you begin to listen to the voice of a stranger and allow him to question the Word, alter the Word, deny the Word, become a god and make your own decision and then reach out to touch others with your sin, remember that Satan's tactics haven't changed. His goal is to destroy you. Don't let him. Greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world. There is a way of escape. Our problem is that we don't take it.

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