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# **Satan Kills the Roots**

**524-B**

**Series: Testing**

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# Satan Kills the Roots

God's children will be tested. In the process of that testing, there will be a battle going on. That battle is what we have been discussing in the last few lessons. The primary battlefield is the battlefield of the mind in which Satan and God fight for control of the mind. Satan's goal is to undermine the authority of the Scriptures. His secondary methods of attack are just as vicious and also very subtle. In the previous lesson, we began a three-fold study of the strategy of a thief. This is found in several passages. It indicates a perfect definition of Satan and his tactics in the life of a Christian.

We concluded from Scripture that Satan is a thief. The object of his deceit is that he steals the seed of the Word of God before it takes root in the Christian's life. How does he do it? In the last lesson, we compared two passages. The first one was found in John 10:10. We paralleled that with Mark 4:13-20. John 10:10 tells us that Jesus said,

I have come that they (you) might have life, and that they (you) might have it more abundantly. (John 10:10 NKJV)

In the same passage we are told that Satan, the thief, on the other hand comes to steal, kill and destroy.

We found a parallel to this in Mark 4:13-20. We looked at a secondary understanding of the parable of the sower. This describes the three-fold way that Satan endeavors to take the Word of God out of your life so that it cannot be productive.

## SATAN TRIES TO STEAL THE WORD

The first thing Satan tries to do is to steal the Word. We are told in this passage that the seed which is sown is the Word of God. Some of the seed falls by the roadside. The birds come and pluck up the seed and it becomes unprofitable. Satan snatches the seed. The explanation in Mark 4:13-20 tells us that Satan is the bird who snatches the seed. So we know that one of Satan's primary goals in the Christian's experience is to steal the seed of the Word of God.

SATAN COMES TO KILL THE ROOTS

The second thing we are told in John 10:10 is that the thief comes to kill. This lesson will focus on what “kill” means in this passage. There is a progressive line of defeat. If Satan cannot steal the seed, his next desire is to kill the roots. He does this through heat and the sun. We found this in Mark 4. It says that some of the seed falls on rocky soil and doesn’t take root. When the heat of affliction and persecution come, the people turn away and the Word does not bear fruit.

SATAN COMES TO DESTROY

If Satan is not successful in the first two, the third thing is that he comes to destroy. He tries to destroy the Word by choking it through diversion. He uses the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches and the lust of other things entering in to choke the Word. It then becomes unfruitful.

These are the three ways that Satan tries to steal, kill and destroy. In the last lesson, we looked at the first one: how he tries to steal the seed before it ever has a chance to get into our lives. We found in John 10:10 that the word used was “*kleptos*” which is the same word that we get kleptomaniac from. It means to snatch away from someone, not to hold at gunpoint. It means to snatch away unnoticed. In other words, Satan is a spiritual pickpocket.

In the last lesson, I gave nine ways to preserve the seed of the Word of God:

- 1- Deal with unconfessed and besetting sins in your life.
- 2- Ask God to develop and preserve the spiritual fruit.
- 3- Learn how to take notes.
- 4- Learn the power of repetition.
- 5- Learn to share the seed with somebody else.
- 6- Learn to pray it into your life.
- 7- Learn to deal with your priorities.
- 8- Learn how to memorize and meditate.
- 9- Learn to deal with the things that hinder: distractions, condemnation, busyness, idleness and unfaithfulness.

In this lesson, we come to Satan’s second wave of attack. If he does not succeed in stealing the seed, his next move is

## Satan Kills the Roots

to send the heat. In John 10:10 the next word that is used is “*thuo*”. It means to murder for sacrifice. You never find this word used to slay someone or to murder ruthlessly. The word is used continuously in Scripture as a verb that indicates an animal was slain for sacrifice. We can attach a significant definition: to render ineffective by using as an offering in the fire.

We can take the parallel passage in Mark 4 in which some of the seed falls on rocky places. Immediately, it is received with joy, but having no firm root, when affliction or persecution arises because of the Word they fall away. Satan’s second goal is to kill the root system of your life. If he can’t keep the Word through repetition and meditation from taking root in your life, his next move is to kill the root by sending affliction into your life. He hopes that the affliction will cause you to turn against God. There are two responses to affliction, to turn toward God or to turn away from God. Many fall away.

Can you imagine such a thing? After someone receives the Word, takes it into their lives and it begins to take root, Satan will then send problems into their lives. As a result of the problems or afflictions, they turn away or they reject the principle. Can you imagine such a thing? It is hard to admit, but we all have done this. It is “Plan Two” of Satan’s attack.

Let’s suppose that you are getting into the Word and the Word is getting into you. Satan’s next subtlety is to attack the spiritual root system of your life through affliction and persecution. An interesting thing to keep in mind is that these are the same root words that Paul used in II Corinthians 12 to describe what he took pleasure in. He said, “I take pleasure in these things. I get excited about them.” He basically uses the same root word found in Romans 8 that cannot separate us from the love of God. So we know that God’s divine purpose in these tests is ever prominent. Nonetheless, Satan is the instigator of these four things that we will deal with in this lesson. I believe that if we will pay attention to these things when they come, we might be a little bit more able to withstand the attack.

Satan’s goal is to destroy the seed of the Word. God’s goal is to perfect the saints for the work of the ministry. So the battle goes on. Our responses determine the fate of the roots and ultimately the quality of the fruits. Satan’s attacks through affliction are four-fold. Two are from without and two are from within. Two are

## Satan Kills the Roots

to our personal body. Two are to the corporate body of Christ. Let's take one at a time and see if any of them sound familiar to you.

### 1- Satan attacks the seed through physical and emotional illness.

I believe that the Bible teaches that most sickness is not the result of our sins. But I do believe that all sickness is the result of sin. It is not the result of our sins, but the result of sin as a whole. I believe that there was no sickness before Genesis 3. I believe that there would have been no sickness in the world had it not been for Genesis 3. I do not believe that sickness was a part of the perfect will of God. Now with the temporary title of this world having been handed over to Satan, physical and emotional illness is a big part of Satan's method of attack. It is a fruit of sin in the world. Ultimately, God's "all things" will create and develop in us spiritually through the ultimate failure of the physical. This is God's goal.

In other words, Satan authors sickness to destroy man's spirit by destroying man's body. God uses sickness to develop man's spirit as his body is being destroyed. This is a transfer of dependence from the flesh to the spirit. We see this in Job's life. I believe that Satan is the author of sickness. You may disagree with me and that is fine. I believe that sickness is one of Satan's primary means of attack. But we need to remember that God is perfectly sovereign and is in control. Satan has to have the permission of God before he can afflict or inflict sickness upon your body. Let's look at Luke 13:

And He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath.

And behold, there was a woman who for eighteen years had had a sickness caused by a spirit; and she was bent double, and could not straighten up at all.

And when Jesus saw her, He called her over and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your sickness."

And He laid His hands upon her; and immediately she was made erect again, and began glorifying God.

And the synagogue official, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, began saying to the multitude in response, "There are six days in which work should be done; therefore come during them and get healed, and not on the Sabbath day."

## Satan Kills the Roots

But the Lord answered him and said, “You hypocrites, does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the stall, and lead him away to water him?”

“And this woman, a daughter of Abraham as she is, whom Satan has bound for eighteen long years, should she not have been released from this bond on the Sabbath day?”

(Luke 13:10-16 NASB)

Satan was the cause of her illness. She had been sick for 18 years, bent over, not being able to straighten up. She had a severe physical problem caused by Satan.

We can also look at II Corinthians 12. We recall Paul’s affliction. It was designed or allowed by God. Paul realized that he was becoming spiritually proud. God, as a protective influence, saw to it that he had a thorn in the flesh. Paul also knew that God had the power to remove it. He went to the Father three times to ask that it be removed. The Father replied, “No, My grace is sufficient for you.” However, we read that,

And because of this surpassing greatness of the revelation, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given to me, (obviously by God or allowed by God,) a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me...

(II Corinthians 12:7 NASB)

Satan is God’s agent to inflict sickness. Satan originates it and God allows it. But Satan does initiate these sicknesses. I believe a messenger of Satan was given to Paul, but God had a divine plan. He allowed for His perfect will to be done in Paul’s life.

In Mark 5 we see another example. This passage is about the man from the tombs with an unclean spirit. He had been bound in shackles and chains. The chains had been torn apart. He was inflicted with a mental illness.

And they came to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gerasenes.

And when He had come out of the boat, immediately a man from the tombs with an unclean spirit met Him,

and he had his dwelling among the tombs. And no one was able to bind him anymore, even with a chain;

because he had often been bound with shackles and chains, and the chains had been torn apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces, and no one was strong enough to subdue him.

## Satan Kills the Roots

And constantly night and day, among the tombs and in the mountains, he was crying out and gashing himself with stones.

And seeing Jesus from a distance, he ran up and bowed down before Him;

and crying out with a loud voice, he said, "What do I have to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God, do not torment me!"

For He had been saying to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!"

And He was asking him, "What is your name?" And he said to Him, "My name is Legion: for we are many."

And he began to entreat Him earnestly not to send them out of the country.

Now there was a big herd of swine feeding there on the mountain side.

And they (the demons) entreated Him, saying, "Send us into the swine so that we may enter them."

And He gave them permission. And coming out, the unclean spirits entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, about two thousand of them; and they were drowned in the sea.

And those who tended them ran away and reported it in the city and out in the country. And the people came to see what it was that had happened.

And they came to Jesus and observed the man who had been demon-possessed sitting down, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the "legion"; and they became frightened.

And those who had seen it described to them how it had happened to the demon-possessed man, and all about the swine.

And they began to entreat Him to depart from their region.

And as He was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed was entreating Him that he might accompany Him.

(Mark 5:1-18 NASB)

There are many, many other passages in Scripture that tell us of people who had mental illness caused by demons controlling their lives and how Satan influenced their lives. We know that Satan initiates this kind of illness. We also know that God allows it to perfect Himself in the saints and to accomplish His purposes. In many cases God will remove this affliction.



## Satan Kills the Roots

In I Corinthians 5 we can see a little more of the divine plan of God. One of the reasons, and certainly only a small part of the reason, that Satan is allowed freedom in our lives in these areas is for divine discipline. Most of the time it is for the growth and perfecting of the saints and the growth of the body of Christ. But there are occasions when we are handed over to Satan for him to do things to us in order for God to discipline us. In this passage, Paul is talking about someone in the body who is involved in immorality.

In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled,  
and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus,

I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the  
destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the  
day of the Lord Jesus. (I Corinthians 5:4-5 NASB)

Here we see divine discipline. In I Timothy 1 we read about a similar situation.

This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in  
accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning  
you, that by them you may fight the good fight,

keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have  
rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith.

Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have  
delivered over to Satan, so that they may be taught not to  
blaspheme. (I Timothy 1:18-20 NASB)

In other words, there are times when God gives Satan divine permission, though Satan thinks it is his idea. We learned this from Job. Satan wants to needle us physically in order to get us rearranged spiritually.

I hope this is not too heavy of an idea for some of you. I want to repeat that I am in no way implying that most of our sickness, if any, is caused by our sin. But I am saying that sin itself, which was inflicted upon mankind when Adam and Eve sinned, is the cause. Sickness is the product of that sin. Satan is the author of it. He is the one who thinks he is using it to destroy the body physically and spiritually. God, on the other hand, is using it to develop the body spiritually and to develop the individual in terms of dependence upon God.

Our primary illustration is Job. Satan's ultimate weapon in his life was physical sickness when all else failed. Satan said, "Now can I have at his body? I am going to inflict him with a

## Satan Kills the Roots

sickness.” God said, “Okay, you have My permission.” Satan gave him a terrible sickness. Ultimately, Job was healed, but there was no medical help for him. All he had were three psychologists, who were not licensed, who came to visit him. They gave him some counsel that didn’t help.

I asked myself the question, “Was Jesus ever sick?” We know that He suffered severe pain at Calvary. I think He was in total agony at Gethsemane. I do know this, the Scripture tells us in Hebrews 4,

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:14-16 NASB)

I think the Scripture teaches that He was tested in all points as we are. Therefore, I think He experienced sickness as we have.

Sickness is a tool of Satan to destroy the seed of the Word of God through affliction. How we respond to our sickness will determine whether or not it is turned to glory by the grace of God or whether it is turned to ashes by the enemy. We have that choice. Many times we are told that the heat of sickness destroys the seed of the Word and the roots are burned up. We have to start all over with a transplant. We are still saved, but the fruits of our lives and the principles that are buried there, if we do not respond properly and apply them properly, are lost. We lose the blessing and we get to go through it again.

2- Satan destroys through our physical, emotional and spiritual weaknesses.

Satan’s second means of destroying through affliction is to attack you and me in our areas of weakness physically, emotionally and spiritually. Those of you who don’t have any weaknesses have very little problem with this. I believe there are three areas, physically, emotionally and spiritually, in which we have weaknesses. Satan knows what they are. The second means of destroying through affliction is for him to put his finger on the pressure points of our lives. There is a different pressure point

## Satan Kills the Roots

in each one of us. Some of us seem to think we are cut out of the same mold, and there may be similarities. There is, however, a slightly different pressure point in every Christian's life. I believe that Satan's design and desire is to continually harass us in our areas of weaknesses. He does this both in terms of timing and in terms of the area of our lives.

Let's turn to Deuteronomy 25 where Moses is training Joshua.

“Remember what Amalek did to you along the way when you came out from Egypt,

how he met you along the way and attacked among you all the stragglers at your rear when you were faint and weary; and he did not fear God.

“Therefore it shall come about when the LORD your God has given you rest from all your surrounding enemies, in the land which the Lord your God gives you as an inheritance to possess, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven; you must not forget.”

(Deuteronomy 25:17-19 NASB)

I think this means that Satan's design is always to attack from the rear. He attacks the stragglers, the weak, the sick and the lame. He attacks the areas of our lives where there is an inroad or a weakness. He always knows where that is. Psalm 18:16-19 is a good memory verse. I want to read it from the paraphrased Living Bible.

He reached down from heaven and took me and drew me out of my great trials. He rescued me from deep waters.

He delivered me from my strong enemy, from those who hated me—I who was helpless in their hands.

On the day when I was the weakest, they attacked. But the Lord held me steady.

He led me to a place of safety, for he delights in me.

(Psalm 18:16-19 TLB)

Isn't that a beautiful passage to claim? “On the day that I was weakest they attacked, but the Lord held me steady.” That is Satan's principle. On the day that you are weakest, he will attack.

Another illustration of this is in Matthew 4. Jesus had just come out of the wilderness after 40 days and 40 nights of fasting. This is when Satan chose to attack.

We see this in Job's life. Satan attacked him at his weakest point.

## Satan Kills the Roots

In II Samuel 17 we see another example of this.

Furthermore, Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Please let me choose 12,000 men that I may arise and pursue David tonight.

"And I will come upon him while he is weary and exhausted and will terrify him so that all the people who are with him will flee. Then I will strike down the king alone,

and I will bring back all the people to you. The return of everyone depends on the man you seek; then all the people shall be at peace."  
(II Samuel 17:1-3 NASB)

This is Satan's path. He will come upon us while we are weary and discouraged. Note three things First of all, we see the timing of his attack. In Matthew 4, it was after Jesus had a time of great blessing, just after his baptism. He was physically exhausted. He had fasted for 40 days and 40 nights. Jesus expected the attack. He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. He expected to be tested. The problem is that we don't. Pay attention when you get to a place when you are at a point of physical weakness. The timing of his attack is split-second.

a) Satan likes to attack after a time of great blessing. You may have just had a great answer to prayer after you have prayed for quite a while. God has answered, and you have seen the victory. At that instant, Satan can create doubts and will attack. It may be at that instant that you are flooded with physical, emotional or spiritual problems. Expect it. Begin to rejoice in the Lord when it comes and He will give you the victory.

b) The second thing to consider is the cycles of attack. We see this with Jesus. Satan began an offensive then backed off. There was another offensive then he backed off. Then he became so offensive that he left. The whole idea is that he would attack, attack, attack and then he would leave. The Scripture says that the devil left Him for a season. Satan works this way in our lives.

It seems like the pressures and afflictions in my life come in cycles or waves. I believe this is true. For one thing, attack upon attack weakens you. Anybody who has been involved in any kind of combat knows this. The army will thrust up and then be pushed back. Then they will thrust up again. Before long, the army will have weakened the enemy to the point of defeat. Football teams will also do this. They keep driving away at the opponent and will not let them have an opportunity to regroup.

## Satan Kills the Roots

This is how Satan attacks our lives. We have to recognize it when it comes.

c) The third part of the progression of the attack, both in Job and in Matthew 4, is that it gets a little more serious as it goes along. Satan will start out testing in little areas and then a middle-sized one and then a big one. By then our guard is down, and we think we have passed the small test and we need a badge. We get puffed up and excited. When our guard is down, Satan comes up with the real thing. He will camouflage his test by giving us little victories that are easy and pride gets in the way.

We see this in the life of Moses. We see this in the life of Job. *First, Satan took away his possessions and the people he loved.* Then, as Job was reeling and rocking, he was afflicted physically. Notice the succession of it. God gave him a little bit of freedom to do this. The Scripture says Satan attacked Job,

While he was yet speaking... While he was yet speaking...  
While he was yet speaking... (Job 1:16,17,18 NASB)

Satan just couldn't wait. Bam! Bam! Bam! Then came the less subtle attack. But notice the depth of the attack gets deeper and deeper and deeper.

I think that for some of us, it might help to list the areas in our personal lives that we know we have weaknesses. We then will know where and how and when to expect the attack. We can then put on the armor of God and stand against it. There are physical, emotional and spiritual attacks. Physical weaknesses are an area that Satan will attack, especially when we are exhausted. I've never seen it fail.

*Secondly, he attacks when a certain physical cycle takes place in their lives.* (I think, women in particular.) There is a physical change in someone's make-up and they are attacked emotionally. Satan knows that and he is waiting to try to have inroads into a person's life at that time. Satan knows what times and seasons in our life that we are more vulnerable. He will attack relationships with our children, with our friends and with our business. He knows exactly when he can attack certain lives.

Is there a thorn in your life? Satan knows these areas. For some people it may be an allergy that continually flares up. Doesn't it always seem to flare up at the wrong time? It flares up at a time when you are about to have a ministry opportunity or when you are going to get into the Word or be used of God. You

## Satan Kills the Roots

may have asthma or a blood sugar problem or a pain problem. It is amazing how cyclical it is and how those cycles come at times when you are weakest. Satan knows exactly what he is doing.

*Thirdly, Satan always attacks us at certain emotional times in our lives.* I think that right after a spiritual or emotional high he will attack. We are all pumped up, and he hits us. You come down to earth and there is nothing there. When we are idle or lonely, he will attack. Satan knows these are good times to attack. Others are attacked when their self-image is questioned. They know that they cannot take anything more in their lives that destroys their self-image. When they are confronted with a situation that deals with their self-image, they falter. Satan knows the exact and precise moment to begin attacking them with doubts, frustrations, anxieties and hostilities.

3- In the spiritual realm, Satan usually attacks in the areas of our besetting sins. We all have them. There are certain sins in our lives that seem to stay there or continually occur whenever our guard is down. What yours are, I don't know. What mine are, I hope you don't know. But regardless, we all think we know what they are and we all have some. The point is that Satan knows. For Paul his weakness was spiritual pride as we see in II Corinthians 2. For David, his weakness was lust. For Solomon, his weakness was greed for possessions. For Peter, his weakness was a combination of pride and cowardliness. These were areas of besetting sins in which Satan hammered and hammered and hammered at until there was failure. God turned the failure into victory, but nonetheless the problem was that Satan hammered away at their point of great weakness.

You and I must know that if we have these besetting sins in our lives, we must put on the armor of God around those areas because Satan will continually attack. About the time we think we have victory is the time that we are the most vulnerable of all.

Remember Satan's motto is, "Hit him while he is down." Satan afflicts through weakness. God uses the affliction to reveal blind spots and turn the weaknesses into strengths. Things do come in cycles.

I was reading a comic strip this morning named Cathy. She comes into the room and says, "My car never broke down. My landlord never raised the rent. My career never gave me problems. My teeth never needed major dental work." In the next frame she

## Satan Kills the Roots

throws everything up in the air and says, “Now everything in my life is going wrong at once.” In the last frame she has a woe-be-gone look on her face and says, “My warranty must be up.”

### SATAN DESTROYS THE BODY OF CHRIST THROUGH PERSECUTION.

The third area of Satan’s battleground is persecution. He attacks the corporate body of Christ from without. You will find this in many places in Scripture. Revelation 2:10 is a good reference.

Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.

(Revelation 2:10 NASB)

Satan was responsible for having them thrown into prison. We read in many other places how the enemy uses persecution of the believers. God uses it to build quality into their lives. He also uses it to refine the body. Isaiah 51:11-16 is another good passage. This has a good memory verse to claim when you feel you are being persecuted. I want to read it out of a paraphrased translation.

The time will come when God’s redeemed will all come home again. They will come with singing to Jerusalem, filled with joy and everlasting gladness; sorrow and mourning will disappear.

I, even I, am he who comforts you and gives you this joy. So what right have you to fear mere mortal men, who wither up like grass and disappear?

And yet you have no fear of God, your Maker—you have forgotten Him, the one who spread the stars throughout the skies and made the earth. Will you be in constant dread of men’s oppression and fear their anger all day long?

Soon, soon you slaves shall be released; dungeon, starvation and death are not your fate.

For I am the Lord your God, the Lord of Hosts, who dried a path for you right through the sea, between the roaring waves.

And I have put my words in your mouth and hidden you safe within my hand. I planted the stars in place and molded all the earth. I am the one who says to Israel, “You are Mine.”

(Isaiah 51:11-16 NASB)

## Satan Kills the Roots

The whole point is that God is in total control and knows when we are being persecuted. Don't look for persecution. When you are persecuted, be sure that you are being persecuted because of the Word not because of your obnoxious spirit.

I Peter 4:1-5 tells us how we are to respond to persecution.

Since Christ suffered and underwent pain, we must have the same attitude he did; you must be ready to suffer too. For remember, when your body suffers, sin loses its power, and you won't be spending the rest of your life chasing after evil desires, but will be anxious to do the will of God.

You have had enough in the past of evil things the godless enjoy—sex sin, lust, getting drunk, wild parties, drinking bouts, and the worship of idols, and other terrible sins.

Of course, your former friends will be very surprised when you don't eagerly join them anymore in the wicked things that they do, they will laugh at you in contempt and scorn.

But just remember that they must face the Judge of all, the living and the dead; they will be punished for the way they lived. (I Peter 4:1-5 TLB)

### SATAN DESTROYS THE BODY OF CHRIST THROUGH DISSENSION.

The fourth battleground of the burning of the seed through affliction is disunity in fellowship. This is destruction of the roots from within. This is Christians not getting along. In Matthew 13:39 Jesus tells us,

The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and reapers are the angels.

Therefore just as the tares are gathered up and burned in the fire, so shall it be at the end of this age.

The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that can offend, (stone and rocks) and those who practiced lawlessness

and will cast them into the furnace of fire.

(Matthew 13:39-42a NKJV)

The whole point of this verse is that it is not our responsibility to ferret out the unbelievers in the body of Christ as it exists in the world today. *The general point of attack is to dilute the body of Christ by including unbelievers and letting them into leadership and the background of the fellowship of Christ.* I think that you



## Satan Kills the Roots

will find this in general in the world at large.

*Secondly, he has a specific plan of attack.* This is to create dissension among believers both inside of a fellowship and between churches and denominations. In other words, instead of building on what we have in common, Satan's desire is that we be contentious. We see this in I Corinthians 3:1-3. Paul was admonishing the Corinthians because they had taken sides. They had decided that they were going to have a denominational conflict. They were going to argue over which of the denominations had the most authority, which one had the best doctrinal program and which one had the biggest Sunday school. Paul admonished them and told them that they had a serious problem and they were babies in the faith.

In II Corinthians 2:7-11, we find that *an unforgiving spirit within the fellowship of Christians is a third method that Satan uses to attack the body.* Paul was dealing with one who had caused much sorrow in the body. They had punished him, but Paul told them:

...you should rather forgive and comfort him, lest he be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow.

Wherefore I urge you to reaffirm your love for him.

For to this end I wrote, that I might put you to the test, to find out whether you are obedient in all things.

But one whom you forgive anything, I forgive also; for indeed what I have forgiven, I have forgiven anything, I did it for your sakes in the presence of Christ,

so that no advantage be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes. (II Corinthians 2:7-11 NASB)

So the fourth battleground is through dissension in the church. If anyone of you have any kind of a spiritual problem, any kind of hostility with any other person in this room or in this church or in the body of Christ, you are not only damaging your own life personally because you are developing and allowing a bitter spirit to take such root in your life that the Word of God falls on rocky soil. You, in essence, are destroying the effectiveness of the body of Christ at large. If there is someone, through the sharing of this lesson, who comes under conviction that this is a sin in their life, I would exhort you and encourage you in the name of Christ, during this next week, to go to that person or to write that person and ask their forgiveness. I urge you to mend,

## Satan Kills the Roots

as much as it relies upon you, the broken bridge across the cavern that exists within the body of Christ. The healing in that one relationship will spread and spread and spread. It will bring joy, comfort, healing and unity within the body of Christ.

These are the four ways in which Satan attacks the Christian who has allowed the seed to go into his life. He does it through weakness, sickness, persecution and dissension. Why is it that you can put some plants out in the heat and they grow while another plant that you put out in the heat melts? I believe that some plants have a better root system. I want to give you a list of the things that I believe make the difference.

1- Hunger. I am talking about a hunger and thirst after righteousness.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after  
righteousness. (Matthew 5:6)

2- Humility. Almost every passage in Scripture that deals with resisting Satan has a parallel phrase tucked within that we should

Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he  
may exalt you in due time. (I Peter 5:6)

We see this in I Peter 5:6-8 and James 4:6-10.

God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.  
(I Peter 5:5 JB Phillips)

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.  
(Matthew 5:5)

I think that if you are having a problem with the seed taking root in your life and the fruit in your life is not being effective, you need to deal with humility.

3- Praise. Do you know how to praise? Some people just know how to praise.

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute  
you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for  
my sake.

Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: (Matthew 5:11,12a)

How many of you do that? Most of us don't. Some people have an inherent ability to rejoice in the midst of everything. That ability is available to all through God.

4- Perspective. Is the total view of your life spiritual or carnal? Are you rocking back and forth between these two trying to grab

the best of both worlds?

5- Patience. We see this in Hebrews 10:36,

For ye have need of patience, that, after you have done the will of God, you might receive the promise.

(Hebrews 10:36)

I recognize that these five things are not things you can get overnight. Spiritual maturity is not something you get overnight. You get it over a long period of time. I believe that each one of us has at least four things to do in order to gain these qualities. If you find that you are having difficulty when the heat comes out and the seed begins melting and you just can't stand it, you may be getting the Word into your life, but when affliction comes you blow it. Let me encourage you to pray and ask God for those five character qualities. Do it this way.

Ask God to give them to you. You may think this is too simple, and we have been through this before. We have a simple gospel for simple people. Ask God for it. You may say, "Why do I have to ask Him? He knows my needs." You need to ask because the Scripture tells us to ask. Have you ever asked God to give you a hunger and thirst after righteousness? Some of you have. Most of us haven't. If you haven't, don't be surprised if you don't have it.

Ask others to ask God for you. The power of intercession on behalf of other Christians for us is the greatest single force that changes the world. I believe that Paul's prayers on behalf of those churches and the prayers of the people around him are what turned the world upside down. He prayed for character, not circumstances, continually. Ask God to ask others to ask God for you. If somebody asks me if I have a prayer request, my first response is to give them character qualities that I know that I lack. We know that this is the will of God. If we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

Abide in the book.

If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, (then you can) ask what you will and it shall be (given) done for you.

(John 15:7 NASB)

You can ask for hunger, humility, praise, perspective and patience.

Learn to be alone with God enough to feed your life. All of the wiles of Satan are clever but subtle. He wages war on the

## Satan Kills the Roots

battlefield of the mind. He steals the seed so that it cannot settle. He kills the roots by sending the heat of affliction through sickness, weakness, persecution and dissension. I would like to close with this poem.

### SATAN DESIRES TO KILL THE ROOTS

Satan's desire is to kill the effects  
Of the Word within my heart.  
He tries to deceive and He tries to steal  
The Word 'ere it gets a start.

But should the seed begin its course  
Of changing into life,  
Then comes the heat, the pressure,  
The affliction and the strife.

He laughs, he scorns, he ridicules  
And knows within his mind  
That in the heat the roots will die  
And leave but nought behind.

But, oh, our sovereign, loving God  
Has plans so far above  
The scope of what the enemy  
Has planned to thwart that love.

And through the very heat of day  
Which Satan deems to kill,  
There comes when we respond aright  
Roots that are stronger still.

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