

## Caught in the Web

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A spider lives in the corner of my office window, just beside my computer monitor. I have noticed some interesting parallels between the spider and the devil by watching how the spider catches its prey:

1) Spiders have limited ability; they are not the biggest or fastest predator around, so they spin a sticky web to catch insects which might otherwise elude or overpower them. Likewise, Satan cannot force himself upon us and capture us against our will. God has limited his power to temptation and enticement (Jas 1:13-15). But how sticky this web can be!

2) Spiders are patient. They spin a web and then retreat to a dark lair to wait for an unwary victim to blunder along. Satan, too, is patient. In times of spiritual strength he will depart and leave us alone. *“Resist the devil and he will flee from you”* (Jas 4:7). But he won’t forget about us; he will wait until we fall into spiritual weakness and then renew his attack.

3) When an insect unwittingly stumbles into the web, the spider does not immediately come out and attack. Instead, it allows the victim to struggle itself into exhaustion before rushing upon it and injecting it with paralyzing venom. This lessens the threat of injury to the spider.

In the same way, a strong Christian might become entangled in temptations that play upon his or her desires so strongly that their defenses are weakened. Perhaps they do not actively seek the way of escape which God has promised (1 Cor 10:13). Rather, the pleasures of sin are imagined and indulged until lust overwhelms and we are under the “control” of Satan. This is the great danger of not studying the Bible diligently, missing the occasional worship gathering for no good reason, avoiding association with other Christians and other things which signify a lack of interest. These things lower our resistance to sin and leave us overmatched against the devil.

4) The light color of the spider’s web renders it nearly invisible. Unfortunately, the insects cannot see the shriveled shells of past victims littering the window sill and decide to avoid the area. But of course human beings are a lot smarter than insects. Ahem.

5) The spider’s first bite often paralyzes rather than kills. This keeps the insect alive for a later meal. Similarly, some Christians seem to have Satan’s “poison” in them; they waver back and forth between right and wrong, strength and weakness. This is why God says, *“reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin”* (Rom 6:11; see also Col 3:5-10). Let us learn from the lowly spider.