

The Path of Sin

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The “wiles” of the devil (Eph 6:11). The “deceitfulness” of sin (Heb 3:13). Satan’s “devices” (deliberate schemes – 2 Cor 2:11). Satan as an “angel of light” (2 Cor 11:14). Satan’s tactics involve lying, deceit, crafty twisting of the truth which impugns the purity of God and perfumes the stench of sin. We are up against a formidable, hateful enemy who has no scruples.

Satan is exceptionally adept at leading us down the path of sin without our realizing it. To keep us ignorant, he doesn’t offer us the full experience all at once. Instead, he entices us with “harmless fun,” just a little peek at how the “other side” lives. Nothing really *sinful*, mind you, just the excitement of being on the edge. Anyway, we can rein it in at any time, because *we are in control*, right?! We don’t want to actually *eat* the forbidden fruit, just hold it, look at it, ponder it. After all, it looks so ... *luscious*.

And then, seemingly without warning: **WHAM!!!** Blindsided. “Where did *that* come from?!” we grope in a state of shock, trying to get a handle on this ghastly thing we have just done which seems so foreign to the person we think ourselves to be. *Touche*. Satan wins again.

Satan is brilliant at hiding the true nature of our attitudes and choices until it is too late. The tears of those we have hurt dissolve the whitewash. Shame snuffs out any delight enjoyed. The gaze of disappointed friends sears us to the core. Once committed, the shroud falls away and we finally see sin in all its ugliness and putrefaction. It is a wonderful thing that God forgives penitent ones. But the truth is, this is not good enough – not for the God who deserves so much better from us. We must fight this weakness on a more basic level: the level of *recognition* and *prevention*.

We tend to place too much emphasis on the forbidden act itself rather than the *process* that makes us vulnerable to the commission of the act. We *know* it is wrong, but we repeatedly give in to it because we have naively followed the path that erodes our resistance.

If you have a weakness toward some illicit behavior, it is not enough to vow that you will never do it again. *Don’t go to the hangout where it is available. Break the associations that pressure you to engage in it. Learn to recognize the danger signs of weakening resolve and implement an emergency “escape route.”* Call a friend you have confided in; tell them of your temptation; ask them to pray with you *immediately, right over the phone*. Invite intervention. Make yourself accountable to someone. Don’t try to fight this battle alone. ***You will lose.***

David’s adultery with Bathsheba is instructive. Earlier in his life, David hardly made a move without consulting God (1 Sam 23:2, 4, 10-13; 30:7-8; 2 Sam 2:1; 5:19-23). But note the progression into sin (passages in 1 Samuel):

- 1) He did not avert his eyes from the bathing beauty (11:2).
- 2) He sent and inquired further of her identity (11:3).
- 3) He sent for her to be brought (11:4).
- 4) He plotted Uriah’s murder, even as Satan had schemed to entice him into grievous sin (11:6ff).
- 5) At no time did he consult God.

I believe David didn’t ask because he already knew the answer, and it was one he didn’t want to hear. The key here is *honesty*. Look, God already knows the truth, and the people you think are clueless probably already suspect something. Come clean. Admit it to yourself and to God when you are in over your head. Be proactive. Break the cycle. *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour”* (1 Pet 5:8).