

4 Ways Satan Hinders Our Pursuit Of Wisdom Pleasant Plains 5-7-2017AM NICK ANGEL

- ***READ Ephesians 6:10-13/PRAYER*** As Christians soldiers engaged in battle for the souls of men, we must acknowledge that we are facing a most capable adversary. Satan, our enemy in this spiritual war, pulls no punches in his efforts to defeat us. In fact, Paul tells us that we must be strong in our faiths and put on the full armor of God so that we might be able to stand firmly against the many schemes of the Devil. These schemes are what makes Satan so formidable. He is cunning as an adversary and seeks to attack us in ways that will make his job easier. He will seek to place roadblocks in our way that will make us easier prey to attack and destroy. This is a popular practiced tactic in war. One side might block a road to impede the progress of their enemies, or they might do so in hopes of pushing them in a direction in which a trap has been laid.
- This year, we have been giving attention to the idea of seeking God's wisdom from above. We have noted that seeking God's wisdom is extremely beneficial to us because it will produce positive attributes and characteristics in our lives. Because God's wisdom is pure, peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, and without hypocrisy...we have the ability to possess these things in our lives. But Satan doesn't want that! He wants to do nothing but hinder our growth in God's wisdom. He wants us to be hindered in our bearing of good fruit in our lives because of God's wisdom. He seeks instead to send us in the way of the fools of this world who seek after things other than God's wisdom. He does this because he recognizes that our obtaining of God's wisdom is bad news for His plans. Though God's wisdom we are able to better battle and defeat him in this warfare. Of course Satan doesn't want us to be strong warriors for the Lord, thus he seeks to weaken us through a lack of godly wisdom.
- So how does Satan do such a thing? How does Satan hinder us in our pursuit of Godly wisdom? Let's take few minutes to consider some very practical ways in which Satan will try to set up roadblocks in this life that will stop us from becoming wise with the wisdom that is from above. Just as Satan has a plan of attack, we can also devise a plan to defend ourselves against his attacks by know just how he might come at us with temptation and struggles.

I. Satan causes us to not care about pursuing God's wisdom.

- A. The easiest roadblock that Satan can put in our way is to cause us to simply not care enough to pursue God's wisdom. If he can plant seeds of apathy in our hearts to where we don't see the need or have the desire to pursue God's wisdom then Satan has accomplished his goal.
- B. What might this look like practically speaking? I think this might look like a couple of the churches that Jesus's writes to through John in **Revelation 3**. Consider the churches in Sardis and Laodicea. The church in Sardis is said to be alive, but in reality the Lord saw them as being dead. They seem to be a church that was doing nothing, but going through the motions in their service to God. They cared not to give a strong effort, but instead just floated along. Much of the same could be said about the church in Laodicea. They were neither on fire for the Lord or cold in their service to God. Instead they saw themselves as in need of nothing. They had no need to grow and seek the things of God. Satan had strong roadblocks set up in these churches, and he seeks to set the same things up in our lives.
- C. Growth in our faith, whether it be the pursuit of wisdom, better Biblical knowledge, or anything of the sort demands that we give great effort! (**Romans 12:9-13; II Peter 2:5**) Our faith is not passive! Any growth that comes in our faith is not passive, but it requires great effort! Furthermore, it wouldn't make sense for a person who lacks conviction or belief in the need to pursue God's wisdom to give great effort or really any effort to pursue it. We pursue those things that we see as beneficial and Satan would love nothing more than to convince us that God's wisdom isn't worth the effort to pursue. We must rise above and not allow that roadblock to hinder our pursuit.

II. Satan distracts us from our pursuit with other things.

- A. It might not be that Satan is able to set that roadblock of apathy before us. Instead, it might be that we recognize the need to pursue wisdom, but Satan sets before us the roadblock of having a bunch of other things that our time is taken up pursuing.
- B. This life is full of the blessings of God. He is so gracious to us and allows us to enjoy so many blessings. However, Satan would love to turn the blessings given to us by God into his own weapons of destruction. He wants to cause us to give too much attention to pursuing these things when we ought to have our priorities in order and seeking God, His will, and His wisdom. He would love for us to be like the former Kingdom worker of Demas, who abandoned Paul and instead pursued those things of the world that he loved more. (**II Timothy 4:10**)
- C. Sure it might be that Satan tries to cause us to pursue after things of the world that are actually sinful and not love the wisdom of God enough to pursue it instead (**I John 2:15-17**), but it might be that he takes an easier angle of attack by simply getting us to give more time to things of this world that aren't bad in and of themselves. It might be that we give all of our attention to things of our family and we don't give time to godly pursuits. It might be our jobs that take up all of our time. Maybe it's hobbies, interests, wealth, or anything else that might eat up all of our time. Any number of things of this world that are good and wholesome can quickly become idols that eat up our time, effort, and energy to the point that we don't have anything to offer to pursuit of God, His will, or His wisdom. (**Matthew 6:19-33**)
- D. We must be sure to keep first things first and keep everything in its place. Seeking God, His will, and wisdom must come first before all other things. What good will it be if we focus only on our families, hobbies, wealth, or any other number of things yet we fail to seek God or have His wisdom that shows us how we can most enjoy these things? What good is it if we gain the whole world, but remain as the fool without God's wisdom? Satan would love for this to be our circumstances, but we must stay strong and overcome this devilish roadblock in our pursuit of God's wisdom.

III. Satan allows us to think we wise enough on our own.

- A. Going back to the church at Laodemia (**Rev. 3:14-22**), it might also be said of that church that while they might have been lukewarm and apathetic...it might have been fueled by their belief that they were without need from God. This was a church that had been abundantly blessed...what need had they for God?
- B. Satan would love to plant seeds of these kinds of thoughts into our heads. These seeds would grow up into major roadblocks that would seek to inhibit us from seeking God's wisdom. These roadblocks come before us and get us to question why we would need to seek God's wisdom when we seem to be doing so well on our own. There are a couple of really big issues with this type of thinking.
- C. The first issue is that we are failing to give God credit because He is the giver of every good blessing we have. (**James 1:17**) God's blessings are a result of His goodness and lovingkindness and not a product of our own being. Secondly, we probably wouldn't want to really see where we would be if we only relied upon our own wisdom. It is God's Word and His wisdom that lights our way (**Psalms 119:105**) and sets us in a good place. (**Psalms 40: 1-3**) He allows us to be successful through the things He provides and His wisdom. It would be much more accurate to describe where we would be on our own in terms of being blind leading the blind and ending up in a ditch. (**Matthew 15:14**) Satan would love to block us from pursuing God's wisdom by making us think that we are good on our own, but we must not allow these thoughts to cause us pain in our arrogance.

IV. Satan gets us to look for God's wisdom in the minds of men.

- A. The final satanic roadblock in our pursuit of godly wisdom is that of Satan causing us to look for God's wisdom in the minds of men. It might be that we see the need for pursuing and obtaining godly wisdom. So we begin to dig into God's Word, and we also seek out those who teach and preach that can help to give us the sense of God. God is writing to us. (**Neh. 8: & Rom 10:14,15**) These are good things to do, but where we get ourselves in trouble and come up against a satanic roadblock is when we don't demand that those teachings us actually teach what is in the Bible!
- B. We might think that this isn't that serious of a roadblock, but isn't this exactly what hinders so many people from knowing God's will and wisdom? So many big name preachers such as Joel Osteen, Joyce Meyers, TD Jakes, Benny Hinn, Jimmy Swaggart, and the like have such huge followings that come to them for God's Word, but they receive anything and everything but it. You all know my love for the Babylon Bee religious satire website. Recently they posted an article depicting Joel Osteen diving off the stage because he spotted someone in attendance opening up his Bible. *"While preaching a sermon entitled "Claiming Your Comfort Zone," Pastor Joel Osteen made a diving save from Lakewood Church's stage Sunday to prevent a man in the front row from opening his Bible and checking the validity of the popular pastor's words, sources confirmed. The incident reportedly occurred after Osteen made a claim from the pulpit that the power to speak prosperity into existence is "inside each one of us," causing a visitor in the front row to furrow his brow and begin leafing through his Bible to find any kind of proof for Osteen's claims. The televangelist's ears perked up at the unfamiliar sound, and he sprang into action, shouting "NOOOOOOOOO!" and making an amazing twenty-foot-long dive into the crowd before snatching the Bible out of the man's hands at the last possible moment, according to witnesses."* <http://babylonbee.com/news/joel-osteen-dives-off-stage-prevent-man-opening-bible/>
- C. Behind satire is often at least a little if not much truth and that's exactly what we see in that piece from the Babylon Bee. The truth is that if more people actually would open up their Bibles and consider the words spoken to them then these individuals wouldn't have near the following they currently do. But really the truth is that men leading others away from God is nothing new. False teachers have been leading others astray for thousands of years. Specifically in New Testament times we can find instances where groups of people were lead away from God by the false words of others.
- D. Paul and Peter both address and warn their readers of the dangers of false teachers. Paul warns Timothy in both of his letters to his preaching protege about the false teachers who would rise up and lead disciples away. (**I Tim. 4 & II Tim. 3**) Peter then also gives strong warnings against false teachers in **II Peter 2**. Satan obviously wants these false teachers to lead as many away as possible, so what needs to be done? It is our responsibility to hold teachers and preachers to the high standard of only teaching and preaching what is of the mind of God. We must be like the Bereans and be sure that the things taught to us are so. (**Acts 17:11**) In doing so, this roadblock that Satan tries to set before us will not hinder us from pursuing God's wisdom in this life.

Satan is never resting in his desire for us to fall short of God's glory in this life. If he can make his job easier through putting roadblocks in our way then he will most certainly use that tactic if necessary. May we be strong in our resolve to not allow our pursuit of God's wisdom to be thrown off course by Satan's roadblocks. May we pursue and lay ahold of God's wisdom so that we might be strong disciples and warriors in the battle for the souls of men.