



sometimes he uses the desire for preeminence, or the problem may even be a turning from the Truth of God's Word. Any of these can divide the church and, inevitably, souls will be lost eternally as a result.

◆ Time-consuming entertainment can be spiritually deadly. No, Satan's temptation in this case is not *sinful* activity, in itself. The sin comes because the entertainment becomes a distraction from God, and a waste of time. Hours sacrificed every day to television or video games or any number of other "fun" things become robbery from God. Christians would do well to keep a log, tabulating the hours spent in prayer, study, worship, and sharing the Gospel with others in one column, and the hours spent in entertainment in a parallel column. Over the course of a week, how does the time compare?

◆ One of Satan's most effective tools is "busy-ness". Christians have been left in the world to be instruments in bringing the Gospel to the lost. They know their purpose, and they intend to be tools in God's hands — but, first, *a thousand necessary things have to be done*; and so the days and weeks go by without any time left to do the work.

Because the people succumbing to many of these temptations are not doing *sinful* things,

they may go through life without ever recognizing Satan's scheme: to keep Christians so busy with guests, ball games, cleaning, TV, etc., etc. that there will be no time left to study the Word or to share it with others. When the conscience niggles, Satan soothes it with the expectation that *tomorrow...*

◆ **Ultimately, any distraction or any personal dedication that takes precedence over God's preeminence in the Christian's heart is Satan's tool. True, he would prefer that everyone be as evil as he is, but he knows that many want to *do right and to be right*; so he is satisfied with his success as long as he has cooled their devotion to God to lukewarmness. And, still, he wins....**

Yes, Satan comes in many guises. Christians can defend themselves against his onslaughts by being vigilant, wearing the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-18).

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# Satan — Do You Recognize Him?

Betty Burton Choate



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*“Be serious! Be alert! Your adversary the Devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour” (1 Peter 5:7-9).*

God warns us that we have a deadly enemy who incessantly seeks to destroy us. In Scripture he is identified as “Satan”, “the Devil”, “the dragon”.... The list continues, and we understand even from the names that he is evil personified. Artists, painting their ideas of his appearance, usually portray him as a frightening red monster with horns, fangs, and a menacing pitchfork. Admittedly, they are using paint and imagination to help us understand his evil intent.

Forewarned should be forearmed... but the problem is that no one ever sees that red monster, so he is able to sneak in — effectively disguised — and to create havoc in the lives of the unsuspecting.

Again, our Father warns us: *“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves”* (Matthew 7:15,16). These words alert us to the fact that Satan is not only the father of all lies (John 8:44) but he is also a master of deceit. He knows that all of us would run from a wolf or a monster; but who runs from a harmless sheep? So what are some of Satan’s most common dis-guises?

◆ Often he approaches people through their appetites and pleasures: beer and other alcoholic drinks, and illicit drugs bring great pleasure to many people — and it is only the bite of the “morning after” or ruined health — that alerts them to the fact that Satan was hiding in those “fun” things. Sadly, even gluttony is one of his tools. Foods can seem too appetizing to resist, and the resulting obesity that ruins health and shortens life is the price Satan imposes.

◆ Satan may come in the form of achieving a coveted goal through lies and other unethi-

cal dealings. Some entire cultures operate on the basis that no one can be trusted, stark evidence of Satan’s control of the general populace.

◆ Satan may entrap victims in the mires of lust through the “beauty” of some woman or the “sexual appeal” of some man, both flaunting their bodies with the single purpose of drawing weak people into illicit and immoral situations.

◆ Satan will use counterfeit “churches” and counterfeit “gospels” to blind people to the truth. Some of his most effective teachers are not those who preach atheism but those who claim to be preachers and leaders — but they are in false religions. He knows that the need for God is buried deep in every soul, so he fills that void with lies, and the deceived soul confidently walks down the broad road to its promised end.

◆ Satan is also a subtle thief. He tempts Christians to give God whatever might be left of their income after the bills and personal indulgences have been covered. He tempts churches to spend perhaps 95% of *God’s* money on every local “need” — nicety, indulgence, physical extravagance, rather than on evangelism and benevolence.

◆ Satan destroys souls through creating discord and enmity among brethren. Sometimes he uses personality differences as his wedge;