



the GREAT DECEIVER

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# the GREAT DECEIVER

Is Satan a real being, or is he just an outdated representation of evil? The Bible speaks of him as a rebel angel leading his minions against God, the holy angels, and all God's children. But recent surveys suggest a majority of Christians in the United States don't believe Satan really exists.

In this Bible study Rev. Mike Newman explores what the Bible has to say about our ancient foe with the help of seminary professors Dr. Joel Biermann and Dr. John Pless, as well as pastors and individuals who have experienced the deadly guile of this great deceiver.

## For the Study Leader

### Group Discussion:

- Please feel free to move at your own pace through this study and take as much time as you need for each lesson.
- You are welcome to dig in as deep as you want for your personal study, or you might use just the Bible passages and questions included in the discussion guide.
- If you have a limited time for this session, have the guys take a few minutes to look through the session questions and choose as a group which ones they would most like to discuss.
- We have designed our questions to be open-ended, thus allowing the men in your group to share their experiences and unique perspectives.

A downloadable PDF for this study can be found at [lhm.org/greatdeceiver](http://lhm.org/greatdeceiver).



## Using Our Digging Deeper Icons

This is an interactive study guide. We designed it to be flexible so it will fit both group and personal use. It includes icons that link the user to internet sites where he or she can browse and explore a subject more thoroughly.

We encourage you to look through the Digging Deeper icons to see which ones your group might want to discuss. While you may use the paper discussion guide during your group study, you may want to assign homework for those in the group to check out the various internet sites on their own time. Doing so makes the study much more interactive.

Once you have downloaded the electronic PDF copy of the discussion guide, click on the icons in the text or at the end of the session. When you click on an icon, it will take you to that specific link, which will then open up the corresponding website.

There are only two steps you need to find the Digging Deeper links for this study:

- 1) Visit [lhm.org/greatdeceiver](http://lhm.org/greatdeceiver).
- 2) On the bottom of this page, click “Additional Resources.”

Now you can click the links that interest you and start digging.

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# INTRODUCTION

SESSION 1

the GREAT DECEIVER

**Opening Prayer:** Lord God, we live in a world filled with evil and cruelty. Guide us as we study the sources of this evil so that we may always look to You for protection, comfort, salvation and strength. In Jesus' name. Amen.

**Watch the Video: Session 1**

## First Things First: Is Satan Real?

- If you had been questioned for the recent Barna Survey, how would you have responded to the statement “Satan is not a living being but is a symbol of evil”?
- Why do you think so many Christians deny the existence of Satan?



[Find about more about angels and demons by clicking here.](#)

Jesus certainly had no doubts about the existence of the devil and his army of fallen angels. He frequently confronted demons throughout His ministry, and went toe to toe with the devil himself at times. In John 8 Jesus confronts a number of people bent on stoning Him to death. He reveals the source of their murderous intent.

## Read John 8:44.

<sup>44</sup> You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

The third chapter of Genesis establishes Satan as a murderer from the beginning. The serpent boldly contradicted God's clear warning that Eve would die if she ate the forbidden fruit. He deceived her into believing the fruit was desirable, and then he was ready to accuse both her and her husband, Adam, once they ate the forbidden fruit.

- Why is it significant that God chose this moment of Satan's victory over Adam and Eve to first reveal His plan to crush Satan and save mankind by sending His Son as a descendant of Eve? (See Genesis 3:15.)

Luke records that after His Baptism, “Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. ...” (Luke 4:1-2a).

## Satan's Deceitful Nature

Matthew describes Satan's last three cunning lies and Jesus' responses in Matthew 4:3-11.

- <sup>3</sup> And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread."
- <sup>4</sup> But He answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that comes from the mouth of God.'"
- <sup>5</sup> Then the devil took Him to the holy city and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple
- <sup>6</sup> and said to Him, "If you are the Son of God, throw Yourself down, for it is written, 'He will command His angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear You up, lest You strike Your foot against a stone.'"
- <sup>7</sup> Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" <sup>8</sup>Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.
- <sup>9</sup> And he said to Him, "All these I will give You, if You will fall down and worship me."
- <sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve.'"
- <sup>11</sup> Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to Him.

- Satan first tempted Jesus to distrust His Father and take matters into His own hands. Describe a situation in which you were tempted to take matters into your own hands instead of trusting God. How did it work out?



[Learn more about what the devil is like by clicking here.](#)

## Jesus Resists Temptation

Jesus resisted this first temptation by trusting His Father to provide His needs. The second time around, Satan tried to use Jesus' trust in the Father against Him. If He didn't jump off the pinnacle of the temple, it would look like He didn't rely on His Father.

- Explain a time you took a big chance and stepped out in faith.
- How is that different from recklessly putting God to the test?

Satan's third temptation offered Jesus a way to avoid the cross by compromise.

- What compromises have you been tempted to make to get ahead in life and avoid difficulties?

In Luke 10:18 Jesus told His disciples, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.” In Revelation 12:7-9, 12, the disciple John describes that very battle as Michael, the leader of the angel armies, wages war against Satan who is called “the great dragon.”

<sup>7</sup> Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back,

<sup>8</sup> but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven.

<sup>9</sup> And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him ....

<sup>12</sup> Therefore rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!

Before being cast from heaven, Satan came before God to accuse His people of being unworthy of heaven because of their sins (see Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7 and Zechariah 3:1-7).

- How did Jesus’ victory on the cross silence those accusations?
  
- What evidence do you see that Satan is busy here on earth carrying on his war against God’s children?

Peter warned us, “Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

- What is the danger of forgetting about Satan’s schemes and letting him lull us into a false sense of security?
  
- How should our awareness of Satan’s prowling and predatory nature impact our roles as husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, and leaders?

Always remember we don’t have to fight this battle alone; the holy angels are fighting at our side and God Himself battles for us.



[Learn how churches in other cultures use exorcism as an act of mercy.](#)

**Closing Prayer:** Holy Father, Your Scriptures show us the grave threat Satan poses to all of us on earth. Thank You for giving us victory over him through Your Son Jesus Christ. Keep our hearts and minds centered on Jesus that we may resist the devil’s temptations and escape his fiery fate. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

# THE DEVIL IS IN THE DETAILS

SESSION 2

the GREAT DECEIVER

**Opening Prayer:** Lord God, You have given us many good and worthwhile things to do while we are in the world, but our commitments often exhaust us and makes us lose focus on what is most important. Teach us how to balance the work You have given us with the rest we need. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

## Watch the Video: Session 2

### Is Rest All That Important?

- On a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is well-rested and 10 is complete exhaustion, where would you place yourself right now?

A good workout at the gym teaches us a lot about how God made us. During your sets you are working your muscles, breaking them down, wearing them out. During rest time between sets and between workouts, your muscles are rebuilding themselves stronger than before. Effective physical training requires this regular rhythm of workout and rest. That same work/rest rhythm is just as essential for your mind and spirit as it is for your body.

God established a regular work/rest rhythm for us when He created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. He set aside that seventh day and blessed it as a day of rest for us. He even established one of His Ten Commandments to provide this regular rhythm of rest for His Old Testament people:

### Read Exodus 20:8-11.

- <sup>8</sup> Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.  
<sup>9</sup> Six days you shall labor, and do all your work,  
<sup>10</sup> but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates.  
<sup>11</sup> For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

### Worship

To restore and rebuild our exhausted hearts, minds and spirits, God calls us to gather together and rest in His presence. Worship renews our Baptism by washing away the sins we confess. In Communion God gives us His own body and blood sacrificed on the cross to remove God's wrath from us. Through His Scriptures He reminds us of our glorious, eternal future, bringing perspective to our chaotic lives. Jesus sends us back into our homes, communities and workplaces, rested, renewed, and equipped for another week of service to Him and His world.

- What distractions keep us from getting everything out of worship we should?
- What advice can you give someone who doesn't feel restored after worship?



[Learn more about worship and how God blesses us through it.](#)

## Prayer

Along with weekly worship, daily prayer is an important way God strengthens and restores us for life's struggles. Jesus certainly found strength and resolve through prayer (even when He gave up sleep to do it).

### Read Mark 1:32-39.

<sup>32</sup> That evening at sundown they brought to Him all who were sick or oppressed by demons.

<sup>33</sup> And the whole city was gathered together at the door.

<sup>34</sup> And He healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons. And He would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew Him.

<sup>35</sup> And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, He departed and went out to a desolate place, and there He prayed.

<sup>36</sup> And Simon and those who were with him searched for Him,

<sup>37</sup> and they found Him and said to Him, "Everyone is looking for You."

<sup>38</sup> And He said to them, "Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out."

<sup>39</sup> And He went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.

- What is the most difficult prayer you have brought to God?
- What prayer requests would you like us to include in our prayers (both at the close of this study and in our individual prayers throughout the week)?



[Find out more about prayer.](#)

## Resting in the Wilderness

Some men see taking a vacation as a waste of time that could be better spent getting work done.

- What did your father think about vacations?



- What do you think about them?

God gives each of us work to do, work which contributes in some way to the smooth running of our society. This work is certainly important, but does He want us to keep working non-stop?

### **Read Mark 6:30-32.**

<sup>30</sup> The apostles returned to Jesus and told Him all that they had done and taught.

<sup>31</sup> And He said to them, “Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while.” For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat.

<sup>32</sup> And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves.

- Why did Jesus insist on this rest when there was so much work to do and so little time in which to do it?
  
- What are some ways you like to de-stress, relax and recharge?

### **Those Frustrating Distractions**

We read above how Jesus and His disciples got into a boat to cross the lake to a desolate place where they could get some rest. It didn't quite work out that way.

### **Read Mark 6:33-34.**

<sup>33</sup> Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them.

<sup>34</sup> When He went ashore He saw a great crowd, and He had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And He began to teach them many things.

Jesus was trying to give His disciples a much needed rest. He could have been really irritated by the distraction of the crowd. Instead, He saw their need and felt deep compassion for them. He taught them for many long hours; then He fed the huge crowd of five thousand men with five small loaves of bread and two fish.

We face those frustrating distractions too. At work, while we're focused on that important project with a deadline, the phone rings. After a long day's work and a grueling drive home, we just want to sit, relax and read the paper to unwind. But just at that moment, our wife and children want our attention instead.

- Describe a distraction that really frustrated you this past week.

When you find yourself irritated by family distractions, that could well be a sign you need to step back and re-examine your priorities in life.

- What are some positive ways to change your thinking about and your response to the frustrating distractions which come at home or work?

## **A Light Burden**

There are times when no amount of rest or vacation is enough. Ultimately Jesus Christ is the only answer to our weary lives.

### **Read Matthew 11:28-30.**

(Jesus said,)

<sup>28</sup> “Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

<sup>29</sup> Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

<sup>30</sup> For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.”

The yoke Jesus invites us to take up is a double yoke that connects a pair of animals side by side to pull a common burden together. As He invites us to step into the second space in His yoke Jesus promises to do all the heavy lifting and pulling for us. All we need to do is stay by His side. That makes every burden in life a whole lot lighter.

In the regular rhythm of work and rest in worship and prayer, Jesus reminds us He is our ever-present help who will keep us at His side and do the heavy work for us.

**Closing Prayer:** Lord Jesus, thank You for taking my sins on Your shoulders and sacrificing Yourself to save me from God’s wrath. Help me set aside times for rest in Your presence that I may have the strength to do the work You set before me. Amen.

### **Some Prayer Suggestions:**

**Make a prayer list.** Write down the names of people in your life—parents, spouse, children, brothers, sisters, friends, neighbors, co-workers, etc. Choose a need or thanksgiving for each of these people.

**Keep a prayer journal.** On a calendar jot down the prayer requests you bring before God. Later, go back and revisit those prayers to see how God has answered them. Give a prayer of thanks for His answers, and don’t forget to pray again for unresolved things that still concern you.

**Read through Psalms.** Most of the Psalms in the Bible are prayers that we can read and make our own.

**Repeat God’s promises back to Him.** Many of the Bible’s greatest prayers hold God to His promises. Write down God’s promises as you come across them at church, in Bible class, or in your own personal Bible reading and devotions. Be bold to bring them before God as they fit the needs in your life. (Consider how great people of faith did this throughout the Bible: Exodus 32:7-14; 2 Samuel 7; Isaiah 37:14-20; Daniel 9:1-23; Acts 4:18-31.)

# THE POWER OF PRAYER

SESSION 3

the GREAT DECEIVER

**Opening Prayer:** Lord God, as sinners each of us does harm to ourselves and others—and often those closest to us. In this session teach us to recognize and grieve those sins, and draw us to our Savior Jesus where we will always find forgiveness and peace, and the strength to do better. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

**Watch the Video: Session 3**

## Living in the Past

King David knew how difficult it is to live with a guilty conscience. He had an affair with a married woman and got her pregnant. But instead of manning up about his sin, he arranged for her husband to be killed in battle to cover it up (see 2 Samuel 11-12). He may have fooled many, but as he wrote in the following psalm, he couldn’t fool his conscience.

## Read Psalm 32:1-5.

- <sup>1</sup> Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.
- <sup>2</sup> Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.
- <sup>3</sup> For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.
- <sup>4</sup> For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.
- <sup>5</sup> I acknowledged my sin to You, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,” and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.

- Describe some of the ways a guilty conscience affects a person’s life.
  
- What are some unhealthy ways people try to deal with them?

Satan continually tries to dredge up our past sins and stir up our guilt to make us doubt God’s forgiveness. David learned the only way to find true peace was to admit his sin to God and then receive the Lord’s full, free forgiveness. This underlines the importance of regular worship where we confess our guilt to God and are reassured of His complete and free forgiveness through His Word of promise, Baptism and Holy Communion.



[Learn more about temptation.](#)

## Prayer Is Another Key

To quiet our guilty conscience, God has added His tremendous gift of prayer to worship. When we confess our sins in prayer, the Holy Spirit Himself prays for us, reminds us of God's promises and the saving acts of God's Son Jesus Christ, and takes away all our sin and guilt.

Psalm 107 gives us many examples of God's people falling into great trouble in life. In these selected verses, these troubles are a result of sinful actions. Notice God's action when His sinful children cry out to Him.

### Read Psalm 107:1-3, 10-22.

- <sup>1</sup> Oh give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever!
- <sup>2</sup> Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He has redeemed from trouble
- <sup>3</sup> and gathered in from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.
  
- <sup>10</sup> Some sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, prisoners in affliction and in irons,
- <sup>11</sup> for they had rebelled against the words of God, and spurned the counsel of the Most High.
- <sup>12</sup> So He bowed their hearts down with hard labor; they fell down, with none to help.
- <sup>13</sup> Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them from their distress.
- <sup>14</sup> He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and burst their bonds apart.
- <sup>15</sup> Let them thank the Lord for His steadfast love, for His wondrous works to the children of man!
- <sup>16</sup> For He shatters the doors of bronze and cuts in two the bars of iron.
- <sup>17</sup> Some were fools through their sinful ways, and because of their iniquities suffered affliction;
- <sup>18</sup> they loathed any kind of food, and they drew near to the gates of death.
- <sup>19</sup> Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them from their distress.
- <sup>20</sup> He sent out His Word and healed them, and delivered them from their destruction.
- <sup>21</sup> Let them thank the Lord for His steadfast love, for His wondrous works to the children of man!
- <sup>22</sup> And let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving, and tell of His deeds in songs of joy!

- What encouragement do you find in reading these reminders that God has pity on undeserving sinners and acts on their behalf when they cry out to Him?

This psalm keeps stressing God's "steadfast love"—a never-fading, never-changing love that is always there for us no matter what we have done.

- In what ways do you see this "steadfast love" in action when you consider Jesus' suffering and death on the cross?
  
- What answer does Jesus' cross give to deceptive lies like "God can't be bothered with your problems" and "You can't change your life"?

## Jesus Dealt with That Sin

How can we deal with the crushing load of guilt from our sinful choices that have shattered our family, our friendships, or other peoples' lives? First, we must realize there is nothing we can do to erase the sins, the guilt, or the devastating effects they have had. Nor can we do anything to earn God's forgiveness or His fatherly love. We must look outside ourselves to God's steadfast love in sending His only Son to pay the price for our sins by His suffering and death on the cross. John writes about this.

### Read 1 John 3:19-24.

- <sup>19</sup> By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before Him;  
<sup>20</sup> For whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and He knows everything.  
<sup>21</sup> Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God;  
<sup>22</sup> and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do what pleases Him.  
<sup>23</sup> And this is His commandment, that we believe in the Name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as He has commanded us.  
<sup>24</sup> Whoever keeps His commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

John writes about our hearts condemning us. That happens when we realize we have not loved our brother as we ought—also, when we live in the past, dwelling on the devastation we have caused by our sins.

- What encouragement can you give to a friend who feels guilty over the fallout from his past sins?
- How does the regular rhythm of worship and prayer keep the condemnation of our heart from drowning out God's words of pardon and forgiveness?



[Find out more about dealing with guilt.](#)

## We Can't Change Ourselves, But God Can

Jesus said, "Everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin" (John 8:34). It is a slavery from which we are powerless to free ourselves. Jesus encountered many people trapped in self-destructive lives: prostitutes, adulterers, greedy tax collectors, to name just a few. He forgave their sins and set them free.

Mark tells us of a man helplessly possessed by demons. One day by the Sea of Galilee he met Jesus Christ. His life was never the same.

### Read Mark 5:1-20.

- <sup>1</sup> They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes.
- <sup>2</sup> And when Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit.
- <sup>3</sup> He lived among the tombs. And no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain, <sup>4</sup>for he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles in pieces. No one had the strength to subdue him.
- <sup>5</sup> Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones.
- <sup>6</sup> And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before Him.
- <sup>7</sup> And crying out with a loud voice, he said, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me.”
- <sup>8</sup> For He was saying to him, “Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!”
- <sup>9</sup> And Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” He replied, “My name is Legion, for we are many.”
- <sup>10</sup> And he begged Him earnestly not to send them out of the country.
- <sup>11</sup> Now a great herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside,
- <sup>12</sup> and they begged Him saying, “Send us to the pigs; let us enter them.”
- <sup>13</sup> So He gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out, and entered the pigs, and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea and were drowned in the sea.
- <sup>14</sup> The herdsmen fled and told it in the city and in the country. And people came to see what it was that had happened.
- <sup>15</sup> And they came to Jesus and saw the demon-possessed man, the one who had had the legion, sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid.
- <sup>16</sup> And those who had seen it described to them what had happened to the demon-possessed man and to the pigs.
- <sup>17</sup> And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their region.
- <sup>18</sup> As He was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons begged Him that He might be with Him.
- <sup>19</sup> And He did not permit him but said to him, “Go home to your friends and tell them how much the LORD has done for you, and how He has had mercy on you.”
- <sup>20</sup> And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled.

One of the most striking things in this reading is how the man was totally enslaved to the demons who possessed him. He was unable to act in his own best interest or that of others.

- In what ways are people who are addicted to alcohol or drugs similar to this man when he was demon possessed?
- What other “lesser sins” have you seen have this same addictive or slave-making quality?

When Jesus asked their name, one demon spoke for the others and used the Roman military term “Legion.” A Roman legion contained anywhere from 4,000-6,000 soldiers. They were ferocious fighters who could impose their will upon those they attacked. Perhaps the demon was trying to intimidate Jesus—for if this one man could not drive away all these demons, then how could Jesus?

- What confidence does it bring you to see Jesus imposing His will on this many demons?
- How does Jesus' mastery here strengthen John's argument above: "Whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart"?

**Closing Prayer:** Lord Jesus Christ, You overcame Satan and all his demons by the power of Your Word alone. Thank You for Your Word of promise and salvation. Cheer me by Your gracious salvation and Your promise of forgiveness whenever my heart condemns me to keep me from despair. Amen.

# DON'T FORGET ABOUT ME

SESSION 4

the GREAT DECEIVER

**Opening Prayer:** Lord God, sometimes we find ourselves lulled into a false sense of security. Keep me awake and alert to Satan's schemes, and give me self-control that I may resist his temptations and cling to Jesus my Savior alone. I pray in Jesus' holy name. Amen.

**Watch the Video: Session 4**

## False Sense of Security

One of Satan's greatest tools is to lull a person into a false sense of security by allowing them to go untroubled so they gradually drift away from God.

That was the case with one of Israel's most gifted judges—Samson. From his mother's womb he was filled with the Holy Spirit and placed under a Nazarite vow, which among other things, required him to never cut his hair. Unfortunately, he used his extra-human strength largely for his own lusts and desires rather than for the benefit of God's people (see Judges 14-15). One by one, he broke every Nazarite law. The only thing that remained was his uncut hair. When Samson fell in love with a woman named Delilah, Satan saw his opportunity. He didn't use a full-frontal assault, but set a subtle, backdoor ambush.

**Read Judges 16:4-6, 15-22.**

- <sup>4</sup> After this he (Samson) loved a woman in the Valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah.
- <sup>5</sup> And the lords of the Philistines came up to her and said to her, "Seduce him, and see where his great strength lies, and by what means we may overpower him, that we may bind him to humble him. And we will each give you 1,100 pieces of silver."
- <sup>6</sup> So Delilah said to Samson, "Please tell me where your great strength lies, and how you might be bound, that one could subdue you."

This was a tempting sum for Delilah, enough to support her for 15 years.

- What should have been Samson's first clue he shouldn't trust Delilah?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Why did he entrust himself to her?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What lessons does Samson's experience teach us about our choice of friends and lovers?



- <sup>15</sup> And she said to him, “How can you say, ‘I love you,’ when your heart is not with me? You have mocked me these three times, and you have not told me where your great strength lies.”
- <sup>16</sup> And when she pressed him hard with her words day after day, and urged him, his soul was vexed to death.
- <sup>17</sup> And he told her all his heart, and said to her, “A razor has never come upon my head, for I have been a Nazarite to God from my mother’s womb. If my head is shaved, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak and be like any other man.”
- <sup>18</sup> When Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called the lords of the Philistines, saying, “Come up again, for he has told me all his heart.” Then the lords of the Philistines came up to her and brought the money in their hands.
- <sup>19</sup> She made him sleep on her knees. And she called a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his head. Then she began to torment him, and his strength left him.
- <sup>20</sup> And she said, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson!” And he awoke from his sleep and said, “I will go out as at other times and shake myself free.” But he did not know that the Lord had left him.
- <sup>21</sup> And the Philistines seized him and gouged out his eyes and brought him down to Gaza and bound him with bronze shackles. And he ground at the mill in the prison.
- <sup>22</sup> But the hair of his head began to grow again after it had been shaved.”

- How had Samson’s arrogance and false sense of security kept him from being the strong judge God had equipped him to be?
- How could God use Samson’s blindness, imprisonment and forced labor to break through and bring him to repentance?
- In what ways could prayer have been an important tool to reestablish the relationship between Samson and God?

### **Tools for Overcoming Satan:**

After his brothers sold him into slavery, Joseph proved himself trustworthy to his master—an Egyptian military officer named Potiphar. This situation led to a powerful temptation that would have proven too much for many young men.

#### **Read Genesis 39:6b-12.**

- <sup>6</sup> Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance.
- <sup>7</sup> And after a time his master’s wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, “Lie with me.”
- <sup>8</sup> But he refused and said to his master’s wife, “Behold, because of me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my charge.
- <sup>9</sup> He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except yourself, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?”

<sup>10</sup> And as she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie beside her or to be with her.

<sup>11</sup> But one day, when he went into the house to do his work and none of the men of the house was there in the house,

<sup>12</sup> she caught him by his garment, saying, “Lie with me.” But he left his garment in her hand and fled and got out of the house.

Joseph demonstrated his self-control by his ability to stay and speak to his master’s wife the first time she tried to seduce him. He also refused to listen to her or even be in her presence, though day after day she kept trying to seduce him.

- What practical things did Joseph do to insulate himself from her temptation—Satan’s temptation?
- Though the text does not mention prayer specifically, how could prayer have helped fortify Joseph against these temptations?

Finally, Satan provided the perfect opportunity: Joseph was doing his work alone in the house with Potiphar’s wife. Instead of just speaking, she grabbed Joseph’s outer garment to begin undressing him.

- Why do you think Joseph turned and ran away instead of staying to take his outer garment back or reason with her?
- How successful do you think Joseph would have been resisting these temptations if he had let himself drift away from a close relationship with his God?
- What is the danger in surrounding ourselves with ungodly friends or saturating our minds with the ungodly things that pour into our minds from TV, radio, movies and the internet?



[Learn more about how the devil tries to stop you from growing close to God.](#)

In the next reading Paul reminds us how worship and prayer can prepare and protect us like armor as we prepare to battle against Satan and his schemes.

## Read Ephesians 6:10-18a.

<sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.

<sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

<sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic forces over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

<sup>13</sup> Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

<sup>14</sup> Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

<sup>15</sup> and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

<sup>16</sup> In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;

<sup>17</sup> and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God,

<sup>18</sup> praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.

- Talk through each of the items of armor (belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, shoes of readiness, shield of faith, helmet of salvation, and sword of the Spirit), describe the part of us they protect and how the element associated with it (truth, righteousness, readiness, etc.) serves to protect us from Satan's cunning.



[Find out more about the armor God gives you.](#)

## Satan's Destiny

One last reminder—we must always be mindful of Satan's destiny—hell. At the same time, we must remember this is the same destiny for us if we forsake God to follow the tempter and never return through repentance and faith.



[What about hell?](#)

## Read Revelation 20:10.

<sup>10</sup> And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Satan will not be free to tempt the world forever. When Christ returns on Judgment Day, the prince of darkness will be cast into hell. And contrary to common thought, he will not be the ruler of hell, standing with his demons to inflict torment on those humans who are damned for their unbelief. Both he and they will be eternally tormented for their continual rebellion against God's will.

Christ Jesus will rule over all, and God's people will live in perfect joy, peace and bliss "day and night forever and ever."

**Closing Prayer:** Lord Jesus Christ, guard me against the devil's deceitful temptations. Through Your Bible and Your gift of prayer, enable me to stand firm resisting him so I may live with You in paradise forever. Amen.

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