

The Enemy's Strategies Against You (2)

5. He attempts to wear down the saints

How many of you know that a lot of the things that we do not do for God, is because we are tired. We can try and spiritualise these things but often it is because we are fatigued. Some of you are so eager to do great things for God and the devil knows that he cannot stop you, so guess what, he will try to get you distracted and make sure that you get exhausted. So he will make you do a lot of things in the flesh and your whole life becomes stressful until you are literally worn out and before you know it you drop out of church.

Daniel 7:25 *He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and the law.*

Wear out speaks of harassing continuously (done by an accusing person).

This is the fourth beast and some translations say "oppress" the saints.

Matthew 11:30 (NIV) *For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.*

Matthew 11:30 (NLT) *For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.*

The devil wants to weigh you down, but God wants you to operate in grace, according to the grace that He has given you. **Do not do things that He has not called you to. When you are flowing under the anointing you are energised by it. What are you doing today that is out of guilt or because you just want to perform for people?** What is your grace zone? What is your area of strength? Your area of grace is not just what you are good at, it is what you are good at but you are also energised by it when you do it. **Having boundaries is important; Space boundaries and setting limits. You will say Lord I did all those things for people and He might say "you did it for yourself because you were afraid of their disapproval. What about my agenda and wishes for your life?"**

1 Corinthians 15:10 *But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.*

We feel very drained, stressed and shamed because of debilitating rules we have created for ourselves. These often manifest in 'shoulds' (weights) that Christ has not put on us. **If you live by 'shoulds' you will always live in guilt, shame and self-loathing because it is a standard that has erected itself above the knowledge of Jesus Christ.** Beware especially of 'shoulds' that are not in the Bible. "I should speak to people like this", "I am 30 therefore I should be doing...", "By now I should be this far." Who said? Have you received a prophetic word that said "because you are this age you should be doing this or that by now? That is another lie from the devil. Perhaps you put 'shoulds' on other people, for example, telling your spouse how they 'should' dress. **What 'shoulds' have you got in your life that are not based on the Word of God? Don't SHOULD on people unless you can back it up scripturally.** Tear down the "shoulds" because they are strongholds causing conflict in your life. Remember God knows you better than you know yourself. What are the debilitating rules you have created for yourself? How can you replace these with empowering rules?

Luke 11:46 *Jesus replied, "And you experts in the law, woe to you, because you load people down with burdens they can hardly carry, and you yourselves will not lift one finger to help them.*

Sadly, we do this to ourselves.

One of the ways the enemy wears you down is through legalism.

- Legalism is teaching human traditions as if they were the Word of God.
- Legalism is putting rules above God and above human needs. (Luke 13: 10-17).
- Legalism is accepting or rejecting people on the basis of rules and regulations rather than faith and love.
- Legalism involves adding human rules to divine laws and treating them as divine
- Legalism is making laws, which God does not make. I like to ask people, "what verse is that?" when they dish out "shoulds".
- The Pharisees were experts in legalism. (Matthew 12:1-8 and Matthew 12: 9-14).
- Legalism is about external behaviour rather than heart relationship.
- Legalistic behaviour is a dead work because it is a religious observance which does not come out of faith and love.

Often the enemy drains us using debilitating rules which we create for ourselves.

One of the ways to monitor your energy levels is to conduct emotional logging. This is where you see the relationship between certain activities and interactions and your emotional state.

Be careful of statements like "That's weird", as it can be a judgement. It's weird for you.

1. He is a strategic liar

The devil is a strategic liar but the problem with a lot of Christians is that they do not know how to differentiate between the voice of the devil, or their own voice which comes from their carnal self and the voice of the Holy Spirit. When you get close to God it becomes very easy to recognise His voice. The only power that the devil has over you is the power that you give him. Do not be deceived by the wiles of the enemy, the craft of his deceit.

John 8:44 *You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and **the father of lies**.*

The word "father" also speaks of a nourisher. The devil nourishes lies, if you start to consider something that is not true about yourself or about God or about others or the world, he nourishes it. The word "father" also speaks of source, it speaks of sustainer, the devil sustains lies. The one thing that gives power to demonic strongholds in our minds is guardian lies. I believe that God wants us to rejoice in the truth, the Bible says rejoice in the truth, love what is good and hate what is evil, Many Christians have become friends with fear. Many Christians have become friends with lies. How often do you sit back and just start to imagine things that are actually lies? **It is not sin that the thought comes into your mind, it is sin that the thought alights.** The strongholds that develop in your minds are often because you allow yourself to consider the enemy's lies and allow them to nest and hatch in your mind.

He lies through false accusation

Rev 12:10 *Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.*

Acts 6:8-15 *Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, did great wonders and miraculous signs among the people. Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called)—Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia. These men began to argue with Stephen, but they could not stand up against his wisdom or the Spirit by whom he spoke. Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, "We have heard Stephen speak words of blasphemy against Moses and against God." So they stirred up the people and the elders and the teachers of the law. They seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin. They produced false witnesses, who testified, "This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law. For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us." All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.*

The issue for Christians is not whether you are going to be falsely accused, it is about how you are going to react when it happens. When God uses you mightily, you will come against the powers of darkness and you will be attacked by the enemy so just be comfortable with it. When you speak the oracles of God, and when you speak the Word of God people cannot resist it, it is a mighty force.

He tempts us to believe lies about ourselves, others, God and the world

Some research was done by McKinsey on successful women in the work environment; particularly women who were successful and remained healthy. They concluded that there were five common denominators amongst them and one of them was that they positively framed the world around them. They were not pessimists. Ask yourself, "am I living in hope?" Am I dreaming? Am I believing? Am I in faith? Some of you hide from love because of the lies you have believed. If you cannot trust people, you will never get to a place where you are vulnerable. You can only be effective to the degree that you make yourself vulnerable. You have to come to a place where you overcome your mis-beliefs and replace them with counter-arguments. You begin to dismantle strongholds in your life by the Word of God, the Word of God is your counter argument. Everyone who is called by God has some misbeliefs, Gideon, "...but I am the least in my father's house", Jeremiah, "Lord I am but a youth". What's your BUT. **Your emotions influence your behaviour, but your emotions are primarily triggered by the guardian lies you have believed.** Negative self-talk or self-criticism and tension make an already anxiety provoking situation much more difficult. In fact, we know that negative thinking creates anxiety, and interferes with attention and concentration. According to recent research, "we feel the way we think". Therefore, if you have negative beliefs about yourself or others you will not have positive feelings about yourself, other people, or most social interactions. **Be careful of cynicism.** I call this chronic negativity. It is one of the pillars of burnout.

- **Guardian lies give power to strongholds in your mind.**
- **Inner villagers affect your interpretation of situations and result in over reactions and hurt.**
- **We are hurt not so much by other people's words but by our own rehearsal of those words.**

He lies by coming in the form of something that appears to be good

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 *For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.*

Below is a sample of some of the lies: Think of the implications of believing these.

- “God doesn’t love you.” – lie! God sent his son to save the whole world. God loves us unconditionally and does not want anyone to perish.
- “Jesus’ miraculous ministry stopped when he left the earth” – lie! Miracles happen all the time.
- “There’s no such thing as having the gifts of the spirit” – lie!
- “I don’t exist.” -lie! The devil does exist.
- “God brought this other person to me because I was so unhappy with my spouse” – lie! God hates divorce.
- “If I Could Just X, Then My Life Would Be Amazing.” - No one single act will solve all your life issues. E.g. If they just respected me.....No, it’s to do with your feelings of unworthiness.
- If only I had the time, then I would.... (I was extremely busy and sometimes training at night when I prepared for marathon)
- Telling yourself you feel angry when you actually feel hurt. “Feeling angry also feels empowering. When one feels angry, one tends to feel stronger and more in control, as opposed to the way feeling hurt causes one to feel vulnerable or even helpless.” Seth Meyers
- I’m not good enough.
- No one likes me. If they knew me, they’d hate me.
- I’m better than them. I’m better off doing it myself.
- “If the kids would be less demanding, I’d have time to take care of myself.” Rather than linking the causality to the effect, say “I’d have time to take care of myself If I had the guts to carve some me-time every week.”
- This won’t matter. What will it hurt? I won’t do it again.
- I don’t regret anything. *Regretting things from the past doesn’t mean that you regret where you are today.*
- I have to be perfect to be accepted and loved.
- I can’t mess up.
- I’ll be happy when...If this happens, then I’ll be okay.
- I am just not good at X - everything that you do, including all the things that you are good at today, started with you being terrible at it. Think about walking, talking, eating, biking, driving, math, and reading—all of those. You learned these things. Mindset Change - Instead of “I am just not good at X,” say, “Right now I know very little about X, but I can learn and practice it, and I’ll get better.
- If I don’t say anything then nobody will think I am wrong.
- I never had a chance
- I can’t survive without X
- That’s just who I am

Behind every bit of bad behaviour there is a misbelief.

Reflection Questions

1. What are the activities in your life that drain your energy and leave you feeling fatigued, even though they seem important?
2. How can you discern the difference between serving out of guilt or obligation and serving out of grace and calling?
3. In what areas of your life are you placing unrealistic "shoulds" on yourself or others that are not based on the Word of God?
4. What are the boundaries you need to establish to protect your energy and stay in your grace zone?
5. How do you monitor your emotional and spiritual well-being, particularly in relation to activities that either energize or exhaust you?
6. What lies have you believed about yourself, others, or God that may be influencing your decisions or behaviour?
7. How can you more clearly distinguish between the voice of the enemy, your own voice, and the voice of the Holy Spirit?
8. Are there legalistic tendencies in your life that add unnecessary burdens on yourself or others? How can you counter them?
9. How can you practise dismantling strongholds in your mind by replacing lies with biblical truth?
10. In what areas are you allowing fear, self-criticism, or "guardian lies" to limit your potential or keep you from stepping into God's purpose for your life?