

CHAPTER 4: SATAN'S Strategies to KEEP SAINTS IN A State of SADNESS, DOUBTING, QUESTIONING & Discomfort

[8 devices and their remedies]

Satan cannot steal a believer's salvation. Yet, he is so envious that he will try to rob believers of their comfort and peace. He tells believers, "You have no true grace in Christ. You have no grace except what you pretend to have. Any confidence you have is only in your own mind. Whatever joy you think you have is a delusion."

Let me show you some specific ways he does this.

Looking behind or forward:

¹³ Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. Philippians 3:13–15 (ESV)

³⁰ The Lord your God who goes before you will himself fight for you, just as he did for you in Egypt before your eyes, Deuteronomy 1:30 (ESV)

Device 1: He gets our minds focused on our sins but not on Jesus. That way we neglect to think of Him (By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵ choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. Hebrews 11:24–25 (ESV)). The believer's eyes are so focused on the disease of personal sin that the remedy Christ offers is invisible. In this way Satan keeps our souls filled with sadness, doubts, and questions we cannot answer.

Remedy 1_ – Remember that Jesus freed you from the damnation of sin, not the presence of sin.

There is no condemnation for the believer (There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Romans 8:1 (ESV)). The law can no longer condemn a believer because Christ fulfilled the righteous requirements of the law for the believer. A believer's sin does not condemn him or her because Christ's blood pardons the believer. Christ has acquitted the believer.

Remedy 2 – Although Jesus Christ hasn't delivered you from power to discourage you, he has freed you from the reign of sin over your life. You are not under the law but under grace (We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. Romans 6:4 (ESV)).

Remedy 3 – Keep one eye on the promise that your sins are taken away and the other eye on the inner working of sin in your heart. Three times Paul asked God to deliver him from his thorn in the flesh, only to be told "My grace is sufficient for you." (But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 2 Corinthians 12:9 (ESV)).

Remedy 4 – Whenever you think of your personal sins see them as being charged to the account Christ has paid in full (For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV)).

Remedy 5 – Tell yourself that God is using the presence of sin in your life to keep you humble.

There are three ways God keeps us humble when we struggle with our sins: (1) We can only move forward by reaching out to God for help [Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Matthew 11:28–29 (ESV); but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint. Isaiah 40:31 (ESV)] (2) We become sanctified as we learn to depend on Christ to perfect us [but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint. Isaiah 40:31 (ESV); I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. Galatians 2:20 (ESV)] and, (3) We grow more and more disgusted with sin, and more and more in love with Jesus [The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate. Proverbs 8:13 (ESV); You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions." Hebrews 1:9 (ESV)].

Remedy 6 – Repent for being discouraged by your sins[Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy. Proverbs 28:13 (ESV); For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. 2 Corinthians 7:10 (ESV);]. If you don't, you will find that you will pray less, rejoice less, and become more and more discouraged, and sin more and more. This kind of spiritual discouragement springs from ignorance of the richness, freeness, fullness, and everlastingness of God's love[so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses

knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Ephesians 3:17–19 (ESV); In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 1 John 4:9–10 (ESV)]. **It comes from ignorance of the power, glory, sufficiency, and effectiveness of the death and sufferings of Jesus Christ**[but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. Romans 5:8–11 (ESV); For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. Colossians 1:19–20 (ESV)]. **It comes from ignorance of the worth, glory, fullness, largeness, and completeness of the righteousness of Jesus Christ** [I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. Isaiah 61:10 (ESV); And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, 1 Corinthians 1:30 (ESV)]. **It comes from ignorance of that real, close, spiritual, glorious, and the inseparable oneness between Christ and the believer’s precious soul** [“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. John 17:20–23 (ESV); I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. Galatians 2:20 (ESV); But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. Romans 8:10–11 (ESV)]. **If Christians could only believe these things, they would never feel dejected or overwhelmed over the fact that sin is still a part of their life.**

God did not give believers a new heart just so that it would lie bleeding and broken ... torn to pieces by discouragement.

Questions:

1. *Why is it a sin to be discouraged by our own sinfulness when we know Jesus Christ as our Savior? (Remedy 6)*
2. *Why do Christians need two spiritual eyes? (Remedy 3)*
3. *Consider the very last sentence:” God never gave a believer a new heart that it should always lie a-bleeding, and that it should always be rent and torn in pieces with discouragements.” What would be the advantage for Satan if your new heart is “rent and torn in pieces with discouragements?”*