

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

Suppose it's 10 degrees outside and your cell is 55 degrees, would you say the the heat is working because it raised the temperature 45 degrees?

DEVICE 2: Satan fills our minds with false definitions of God's grace.

Satan throws everything he's got into this. He fills Christians minds with a mistaken understanding of faith. Sometimes he does this by convincing Christians that faith should be so full of assurance that even the slightest shadow of doubt should vanish. He spreads his lies by telling Christians, "So you think you have saving faith in Christ? Don't you know that faith is absolute assurance of God's love for you, and an unwavering confidence in the forgiveness of your sins? You know you haven't got that. Face it, you've got more than a few doubts and questions. So, when it comes to saving faith, you haven't got any. Face the facts." When Satan manages to deceive Christians this way he keeps them in a state of sadness, doubting, and questioning that fills their days with sorrow. Tears fill their cups whenever they try to drink waters of refreshment. Whenever they seek sustenance from eating, their food is tainted with the spice of sorrow. Every minute of their workday is filled with sighing and fretting.

Remedy 1 – True faith can be accompanied by some periods of doubt. The Canaanite woman had strong faith, but no assurance of her salvation. John wrote to believers so that they would "know that" they had "eternal life." (1 John 5:13 - I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.). You can see from John's words that they did believe and had eternal life, but they weren't sure about it. They needed reassurance. It is one thing to possess eternal life, and other to know it.

There are more examples: "tell a man that his name is written in the book of life (Luke 10:20 - Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.)" – he didn't know and had to be told; Paul told the Ephesian Christians that "after you believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise (Eph 1:13 - In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,) – they needed to receive reassurance of their salvation; Micah the prophet said, "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned" (Micah 7:8&9 - Rejoice not over me, O my enemy; when I fall, I shall rise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light to me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord because I have sinned against him, until he pleads my cause and executes judgment for me. He will bring me out to the light; I shall look upon his vindication.) – indicating Micah didn't realize that he was saved; those in Isaiah 50:10 (Who among you fears the Lord and obeys the voice of his servant? Let him who walks in darkness and has no light trust in the name of the Lord and rely on his God.) had faith, but not assurance.

Remedy 2 – Scripture provides a different definition of faith than the one Satan uses to deceive believers: "as many as received him" (John 1:12 - But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God); "as many as believed on his name (Acts 11:23 - When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose). The best and safest definition of faith God has given in the Bible is to receive Christ. The only way the human soul can find peace about these things is to accept the definition of faith God has given, and to experience such faith.

Remedy 3 – True faith can be accompanied by lots of doubting. There were lots of times when Jesus said to the disciples, "Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?" (Mat 6:30 - But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?; Mat 14:31 - Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"; Mat 16:8 - But Jesus, aware of this, said, "O you of little faith, why are you discussing among yourselves the fact that you have no bread?; Luke 12:28 - But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith!).

Remedy 4 – Assurance is a product of faith. It is not the same thing as faith. The cause and the effect are two different things. The fruit is not the root. Likewise, assurance flows out of faith as well as the witness of the Spirit of God (Eph 1:13 - In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit). The Spirit bears witness that we are believers, but only after we have actually become believers, and not before the moment that we come to believe (Gal 4:6 - And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"). Therefore, assurance is not the same thing as faith. No. Assurance comes from faith.

Questions

- 1. If we let the enemy Satan define all the words describing God's grace, what will go wrong?*
- 2. What do you think about the idea that a person could be saved and not be completely sure of his or her salvation?*
- 3. How did you learn this before now, or why do you think you never heard this before?*