

“Quiet Talks On Marriage”

Session II

“Satan’s Weapons For Destroying A Marriage”

In our previous discussion, we talked about “The Good Hand” -- the “good” things God desires for man and woman to experience in marriage. As we put these basic principles on the fingers of our hand – we saw some very helpful truths, didn’t we?! We saw the basic need of “Companionship” leading to “Sexual Union”; we saw the importance of “Teamwork” and “Spiritual Unity”; then, we saw the basic need of “Security” for a woman and “Self-worth” for a man.

Now in this second discussion, we need to use our other hand! We need to discuss what too often happens in marriage -- it is not the “good”; it is the “bad”! It is the opposite of what God intended! Rather than “happiness” – it is “unhappiness”! “It is the lack or loss of meaningful relationship! So, we must call this second hand . . .

The “_____”!

As we go through the fingers of the “Bad Hand” we will show the step by step progression of how our “spiritual enemy”, Satan, attempts to destroy everything God desires!

Please note: **Satan is real!** He is not merely a symbolic representation of “evil” – He ***is*** evil! He is a spiritual being, created by God in eternity past, who rebelled against God and was cast out of Heaven. These events are described in the Bible in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28. But most importantly, Jesus, the Son of God, taught that Satan is real! He dealt with Satan face to face while He was here on earth.

“He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in Him. . . . he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

John

8:44

This is what Jesus said about Satan. He “exists” and he is a “murderer” and a

“liar”! Yes, I know that the modern, educated world we live in does not believe Satan is real. But Jesus’ words about Satan are very clear → **he is real!** Think about it in this way:

If what the Bible says about Jesus is true, then, what the Bible says about Satan is true!

Now, contrast what Jesus said about Satan with what He said about Himself → in the

in the very next verse in John 8, Jesus says,

*“ . . . I speak the **truth**, you do not believe Me.”*

In these words we find the most basic fact about our human existence:

→ As our Creator, God speaks “truth” to us!

→ As the enemy of God, Satan speaks a “lie” to us!

Do we believe what Jesus says in the Word of God, or do we believe what Satan, the “God of this world”, says is true? In life, “Every thought can be traced back to either God or Satan!” Every thought! Everything we believe!

Well, if this is true →

--“Q”: Where do our thoughts about “marriage” come from . . . do they come from the

“world” or from “God”? The fact is . . . it is hard for us understand the degree to

which our thoughts are formed or influenced by the world around us!

So, Jesus clearly taught two things about our spiritual enemy, Satan:

1) He is a “_____” → he always perverts or misrepresents the truth. As the

“God of this world”, he wants mankind to believe his “lies” and to miss God’s

“truth”!

2) He is a “_____” → he likes to kill. Whatever is alive, he puts to death!

--This is true spiritually – about heaven or hell;

--This is also true about every part of our earthly lives!

Let’s apply this to “marriage”.

1) Whatever is “true” about marriage, Satan wants to pervert, to misrepresent, to cause us to misunderstand!

→ He wants to “_____” to you about your marriage!

2) Whatever is “alive” and “meaningful” in marriage Satan wants to put to death!

→ **Satan wants to put your marriage to “_____”!**

The Apostle Paul adds another warning about Satan’s desire to destroy. Speaking to the Christians in the city of Corinth, Greece, he says,

“In order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes.” II Cor. 2:11

Let’s add what Paul says here to what Jesus said in John 8:44 → This is a “summary”

statement about our spiritual enemy!

Be warned, Satan is real; he is a “murderer” and a “liar”; and he wants to gain the

upper hand in our lives and marriages by his “schemes”. **But**, the good news is that

we do not have to be “ignorant” of his schemes . . . we do not have to be caught

“off-guard”!

Note: God has made His “Truth” available to us! We can “see through” Satan’s lies!

Okay, let’s talk about Satan’s “**schemes**” – about how he “plots” and “plans” to destroy our marriages. We need to begin with Two Observations about marriage:

First, when a couple marries, both the husband and wife have “**Expectations**”! They have thoughts, hopes, and dreams about what marriage will bring to their lives!

--These “Expectations” are like an “Unwritten List” – an “unwritten list” of thoughts and

images that are in their minds, but rarely ever discussed, and almost never written down!

--Simply put: Everyone brings “expectations” into marriage, but most often these expectations have not been discussed! So, in this sense, we marry with a high level

of “ignorance” about the other person! We don’t really know them!

Secondly, where do our expectations come from? There are many possible sources, but perhaps the most important source is our “**Family**” – the place we

grew up!

--On the positive side, we assume that what was “good” or “safe” about our family will

be true in our marriage!

--On the negative side, we assume that what was “bad” or “hurtful” about our family will

not be true in our marriage!

So, we “expect” the good; we don’t expect the bad! . . . but, most marriages

have some of both!

Satan’s Weapons of Destruction begin with these “expectations” that we bring into our marriage – this “unwritten list” of hopes and dreams! We all have them!

As we look at the “**Bad Hand**”, let’s begin with the thumb of your hand. On the “thumb”

let’s identify Satan’s First Weapon →

“ _____ ”!

--An Unfulfilled Expectation is the “**disappointment**” we experience when we realize

that our basic hopes and dreams, our “expectations”, are not being fulfilled!

--It happens like this: In the early months or years of marriage, our partner does something that “disappoints” us in a significant way – not just a surface or trivial way!

Often, it is described as “something I never expected to happen”! or, “I never thought

would be dealing with this!”

--At that point, we communicate to our partner, that what has happened has been

disappointing and hurtful . . . and, we ask them not to do it again! We are confident

that because they “love” us, they will hear and honor our request -- that the problem

will not repeat itself! But, in the reality of marriage, the hurtful or disappointing exper-

ience often happens again . . . and again . . . and again! After repeating this process

several times – we recognize that a “**pattern**” of behavior has been established.

--The recognition of this “pattern” brings a significant question:
“**Does he/she really love me?**”

Or, “How could he/she continue to disappoint me in this way,
if he/she truly loves me?”

--So, the thought comes, “**If you love me**, you would **not** do what you are doing!”

Key: Notice the importance of this . . . how the “Unfulfilled Expectation” causes us to

question “**if**” we are loved!

--This is the initial “crack in the foundation” that Satan is looking for! The “disappointment” has led us to question “**if**” we are truly loved! We start to ask

hard questions about the person we have married!

Q: May I ask, “Have you had this experience – this question burning deep within you,

causing you to question if you are loved?”

“Does he/she really love me?” . . . **if** he/she truly loves me,
how could they continue to disappoint me in this way?”

--Husband?

--Wife?

The **second finger** of the “**Bad Hand**” is the word,

“ _____ ”!

--“Hurt” is our “emotional response” to Unfulfilled Expectations!

--Illustration: I love my wife – but I can be deeply “disappointed” – I can feel deeply

“hurt” by her . . . even betrayed by the development of this
“pattern”!

But, let's admit that "every" marriage has some "Unfulfilled Expectations" that lead to some degree of "Hurt"? We all have had some "disappointments"! Right?!

--Why?

--Because every man and woman possesses a "sinful", "selfish" nature which causes

the failure of love, care, and consideration! By nature, we are "selfish people"! So,

even in the best of marriages, we see these first two things:

→ "Unfulfilled Expectations" that leads to "Hurt"!

The question then becomes: "What will I do with my "**Hurt**""?

Key: This is very important! At this point . . .

There are two possibilities; there are two choices!

1) The first → Will I do what God wants me to do? → "To cast my hurt on Him"?

--I Pet. 5:7 says, "*Casting all your anxiety (care) upon Him, because He cares for you.*"

2) The second → Will I do what seems natural to me? → "To hold on to my hurt"?

--Eph. 4:26-27 warns, "*Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down*

on you anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity (a foothold; a place

to stand)."

--Notice: Two kinds of "anger" are mentioned in this verse → one is a "good"

or "righteous" anger; the other is a "bad" or "sinful" anger!

--May I paraphrase this thought? God says, "*There are times when anger is a*

necessary response to what happens, but don't let your anger be sinful!

Sinful

anger is "retaliation" or "vindictiveness"! That's not God's way! Sinful

anger

opens the door to Satan's destructive plans!"

We've come to a "Turning Point"! We have to make a decision! On this "Bad Hand" imagine that you can see an "arrow" pointing down between your index finger and next finger of your hand -- between the second and third fingers of this progression!

This is a **“Turning Point”**!

1) If you do what God wants you to do, to “Cast your hurt upon Him!” → His grace and

love will enable you to deal with the “Hurt”! The destructive progression will stop!

2) But, if you do what Satan wants you to do, to “Hold on to the hurt!” → Satan knows

that the destructive progression will continue . . . he will still be in control!

Think about this “Turning Point”: Perhaps you have come to this point many times in your marriage.

--Perhaps there was a time when an “Unfulfilled Expectation” became a “pattern” and

caused deep “Hurt”, but you looked to God for strength to deal with your “Hurt”

-- you

“Cast your hurt upon Him!” and experienced how God’s grace and love can enable

you to deal with the “Hurt”!

--But, perhaps **now** you are at a different place – **now** you are choosing to “Hold on to

the Hurt” and this has allowed Satan to proceed with his destruction → to the third

step . . . and, this third step will put Satan in firm control!

How important this “Turning Point” is! It determines “who” is in control!

The next step in Satan’s progression of destruction, the **third finger** on your hand?

→ It is the stage of . . .

“ _____ ”!

--The “Anger” we are describing is the “unavoidable result” of my choice → to Hold On to my “Hurt”!

--This anger is always “Sin”! This is the “advantage” Satan seeks, the “foothold”,

the “place to stand” to do his damage!

Two kinds of “Anger” are manifested when Satan gains control:

- 1) “Physical Abuse” → Hitting or bodily harm caused by uncontrolled anger!
→ This violence communicates total rejection of the other person!
→ Physical abuse usually leads to separation and divorce!
- 2) “Verbal Abuse” → Using our words like a “sword” to hurt or kill!
→ This verbal attack communicates progressive rejection of the other person! Prov. 12:18 says,
“There is one who speaks rashly like to thrusts of a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.”
→ So the “tongue” can be used like a sword that wounds or kills!

Most of the time in our modern culture, “Verbal Abuse” is seen as less damaging than “Physical Abuse”. The truth, however, is often quite different: “Verbal Abuse” can be equally damaging!

How is this true?

--Some men or women can truthfully say, “*I’ve never lifted a hand to my wife/husband.*”

“I’ve never been guilty of any physical abuse!”

--Yes, this might be true, but while there has been no pattern of “Physical Abuse”,

there has been a pattern of “Verbal Abuse” which has been as damaging inwardly

as “Physical Abuse” is outwardly!

Dr. James Dobson once interviewed a woman on his national radio program, Focus

On The Family, who had been physically beaten for years by her husband – broken

bones and days in the hospital . . . I’ll never forget what she said to Dr. Dobson --

she said that while the “physical abuse” was horrible, “*The things he said to me, and*

names he called me, hurt me even more!”

--So, a pattern of “Verbal Abuse” can be as damaging inwardly as physical abuse is

outwardly!

“Q”: This is a difficult question → may I ask about your marriage? . . . Has there been

a pattern of “Verbal Abuse” in your marriage? On your part as a Husband?

On your part as a Wife?

--Husband?

--Wife?

Here is a powerful, helpful observation → The same “tongue” that can be used like a

“sword” – to damage and destroy, can also be used like a surgeon’s “scalpel” – to bring healing!

*“There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword,
but the tongue of the wise brings healing.” Prov. 12:18*

Think of it → Our “tongue” can be a “sword” to kill or a “scalpel” to heal?

The **fourth finger** on the “Bad Hand” is what the Bible calls a . . .

“ _____ ”!

--A “Wounded Spirit” is the progressive, long-term **death** of the relationship!

What are the signs? How does a “Wounded Spirit” manifest itself?

1) Emotionally, there is **no** “ _____ ” left in the relationship!

A wife will say, “*I just don’t feel anything anymore . . . I’m dead on the inside!*”
“*I’m just going through the motions of life!*”

2) Motivationally, there is **no** “ _____ ” left!

A husband will say, “*I just don’t care . . . it’s not worth the effort . . . leave me alone!*”

“*I find an excuse to stay away from home as much as possible!*”

“A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city,

and contentions are like the bars of a castle.” Prov. 18:19

So, the signs are: No “feeling” left . . . No “desire” left . . . Being “dead” on the inside!

Here is a sobering observation:

--Some couples come to this stage of a “Wounded Spirit” -- the stage where their relationship is “dead” – but they just continue to live together for the rest of their lives.

Often, they will go to different bedrooms; sometimes even divide the house into “zones”, one living in one end of the house, the other living in the other end!

a. This allows the marriage not to end in “divorce” -- if they are Christians; and God

does say that He “hates” divorce!

b. But, this hides nothing from those who know them well, especially their children!

How many young adults have told me, “*Pastor Jerry, if marriage is what my parents have, I don’t want it!*”

What a painful and seemingly hopeless place to come to in a relationship – a relationship that was once full of joy and hope for the future!

--A “Wounded Spirit” has progressively allowed the “life blood” to drain out of the marriage . . . the relationship has died!

--Is this the end? Too often, it is!

--Is there any hope? Absolutely . . . if a couple will bring their broken marriage to Jesus

Christ, there is hope!

--Remember, **He is the One who brings “life” out of “death”!**

What is the **fifth** and final stage in Satan’s plan to destroy a marriage? It is . . .

“A _____ Of _____”!

--A “Root of Bitterness” is the stage where “Bitterness” gains control of the marriage!

--In the previous stage of a “Wounded Spirit”, something happened to **you** →

the “relationship” **died** – it was gradually, progressively **killed**!
--In this last stage, Satan wants **you** to do something →
he wants you to **kill** the “marriage” – to bring it to an end!

*“See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no **root of bitterness** springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled.”* Hebrews 12:15

--This verse is **so** important → It holds **four points** of great significance:

1) “See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God . . .”

--This is a promise that deals not with salvation, but with the “grace” God provides

for living as a Christian, after salvation → His “grace” that is always “sufficient” or “enough”!

--God tells Paul in II Cor. 12:9, “. . . *My grace is sufficient for you . . .*”

Now, there are times in a difficult relationship where these might seem like empty

words, but are they? Once again, God asks us to look to Him – to trust Him, not ourselves!

--When we turn to Him and depend on His “**grace**”, it will “always” be **sufficient**!

2) “. . . that no **root of bitterness spring up . . .”**

--When we reject the “grace” that God offers to deal with our situation – when we

say “No” to God, Satan remains in control! He is free to finalize His plan!

“Bitterness” is free to be our master; we become its slave!

--What is a “Root of Bitterness”?

This phrase simply means that “Bitterness” is like a “Root”!

The “root” system of a tree is something that grows slowly over a period of time,

but, when it is mature, when it “takes hold”, and the tree is made very strong!

“Bitterness” is like a “root” – it grows slowly over a period time (and Satan doesn’t

care how long it takes), but when it matures, it becomes strong enough to control

us -- to “tell us” what to do! Bitterness is “positioned” to determine our final choice about our marriage!

--How do you “identify” Bitterness? Listen for what I call the “**but**” of Bitterness!

It sounds like this, “*Pastor Jerry, I know what the Bible says, I grew up in a Church that taught that God does not want a marriage to end in divorce,*

BUT . . .

I am so ‘Hurt’ and ‘Angry’, I have decided to do what I think is right!”

--Did you hear the “**BUT**” of Bitterness?

*“I know what God says . . . **but** . . . I’m going to do what I think!”*

3) “ . . . **that no ‘Root of Bitterness’ springing up causes trouble . . .**”

--“Trouble” is the outworking of “Bitterness” in a marriage! It is the place where

bitterness “comes to the surface” → bitterness “expresses” itself!

It is the place where “Bitterness” **justifies** all kinds of “sinful” behavior → words,

thoughts, actions! It **justifies** any level of hurt or destruction that I choose to

carry out against the one who has hurt me!

--Few people can live with the “Trouble” of bitterness! So, over time, it bears its

“fruit” and the marriage ends! The hope is that the “burial” of the “dead” marriage

will put an end to the “Bitterness” I feel and the “Trouble” it has caused!

--However, “Trouble” usually is not removed by divorce . . . the “Trouble” seems to

continue! The truth is . . . divorce cannot get rid of the “Bitterness” – it just hides

or masks over the unresolved issues that caused the “Trouble”! And, once a

marriage has ended in divorce, we have **no** control over how much “Trouble” the

“unresolved” Bitterness will cause in the future!

--So, rather than putting an end to “Bitterness”, too often, the end of the marriage

only “locks” a man and woman into future “Trouble”!

4) “. . . *that no ‘Root of Bitterness’ springing up causes trouble, and by it . .*

.

many be defiled!”

--The word “defilement” means “moral defilement” – immorality!

Because “Bitterness” can **justify** almost any human behavior, “immorality” often

enters the marriage before a divorce occurs and then becomes the legal “ground”

for a divorce.

--Then “Immorality” also often occurs after divorce, even on the part of the person who did not want the divorce, because of “loneliness” and struggling with

personal doubts about “still being desirable” to another person!

--This leads to one of the most insightful diagrams taught in the Word of God; it is

the explanation of so much of human behavior:

“B _____” → “B _____” → “B _____”!
”!

a. “**Bitterness**” is the attitude, *“In light of what has been done to me, it’s okay for me to get even or do what I think is right!”*

b. This “attitude” produces “**Blindness**” → the inability to make right decisions!

→ we are so “Bitter”, we cannot see!

c. Our wrong decisions lead to “**Bondage**” → we make choices that bring lasting

consequences!

→ we make choices which cannot be

changed! There is no going

back!

The “**Bad Hand**”! What a horrible progression! What a painful place to come to in life! But as ugly as it is, it is so, so true!

--Remember: Without God’s gracious help, Satan is always stronger than we are;

His cunning and deception always outweigh our human intelligence!

Q: Where are you? Has Satan been able to pull you along through this painful progression? Would you like for God Himself “break” the hopeless pattern of destruction that is occurring in your home?

→ Medicine provides a good example → proper “diagnosis” enables proper treatment and healing!

→ Spiritually, proper “diagnosis”, based on the Word of God, opens the door to

“new life” → “life out of death”!

A “Warning” and “Encouragement”:

If we do not allow God to “Examine” our lives, we will never accurately detect the “bondages” that have been established in our lives, and we will never experience the “freedom” God has provided! Would you pray the prayer King David prays in Psalm 139:23-24? Remember, as the King, he was very powerful, but he made many very poor decisions. But, he wanted his “heart” to be right with God, so he prayed,

*“Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Try me and know my anxious thoughts;
And see if there be any hurtful way (any ‘way of pain’) in me,
And lead me in the everlasting way.”*

Heavenly Father, this is our prayer, in Jesus Name, Amen!