

“The Essentials Of Our Faith”

Session XXXIII

June 12, 2011

“The Christian Family”

Part Two: “Satan’s Weapons For Destroying A Marriage”

Introduction:

God is a "good" God! Everything He has done is "good"! Therefore, when God created “marriage” for the man and woman He had made “in His image”, it was “good” – it met their basic human needs!

We summarized these basic needs in our last study:

1. Companionship – emotional intimacy (being “best friends”!);
2. Physical Union – physical intimacy (reserved for the marriage commitment!);
3. Teamwork – mutual contribution to the success of the marriage relationship;
4. Spiritual Unity – mutual agreement about the “work” and “will” of Jesus Christ;
5. Basic Need – of a woman (“security”); of a man (“self-worth”).

We have pictured these good things by putting them on the fingers and thumb of our hand. They are . . .

--the "Good Hand"!

Tragically, to fully picture what too often happens in marriage, we must also use our other hand. We must call it . . .

--the "Bad Hand"!

On this second hand we want to picture a progression of how Satan attacks and attempts to destroy the "good" things God designed for a marriage.

--Note: Satan is "real"! He is not merely a symbolic representation of "evil". He is a spiritual being, created by God in eternity past who sinned and was cast out of Heaven (See Isaiah 14:12-14; Ezekiel 28:12-17) Jesus dealt with him personally, face to face, Matthew 4:1-10, and spoke of him repeatedly, John 8:44.

“You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because the truth is not in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me.”
John 8:44-45

A. An Observation About Our Spiritual Enemy -- "Satan":

--He can "take advantage" of us by "schemes" he works against us:

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

1. Satan can gain the "advantage" in our life -- if we allow him to do so by not being in fellowship with Jesus Christ!

"But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh."
Galatians 5:16

2. We should not be "ignorant" of what he is attempting to do!

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil."
Ephesians 6:10-11

B. Two Observations About Marriage:

1. When a couple marries, both the husband and wife have "_____ "
about their marriage.

--These are the thoughts, hopes, or dreams about what the marriage will bring to their lives.

--Basically, they expect to be "_____ " . . . to be "_____ "!

- a. These "Expectations" are like an "_____ **list**".

--Most couples are never asked to think about their expectations before they get married;

--Most couples have not thought or talked about the long-term importance of bringing expectations into their marriage.

- b. "**Expectations**": **Everybody has them!**

- c. **Note:** "**Expectations**" affect every part of a marriage relationship!

2. We Get Our "Expectations" from two sources?

- a. From our "_____ ":

- 1) Positive: We assume that what was good about our family will be true about our marriage.

--If a girl's father was loving and kind, she naturally assumes that her new husband will be also!

--If a man's mother was quiet and gentle with her words and manner, he often assumes that his new wife will be also!

2) Negative: We assume that what was bad or hurtful in our family will not be true about our marriage.

--If a girl's father was cruel and verbally or physically abusive (perhaps due to alcohol), she assumes that her new husband loves her enough not to do any of these things to her!

--If a man's mother was disorganized or lazy and did not keep a neat or clean home, he assumes that his new wife not be like his mother!

b. From our "**Life** _____".

--All the negative and positive relationships of life "**mark**" us and leave us with expectations. This is especially true if we do not marry at an early age, but live on our own as a single adult for a period of time before marriage.

Satan's Weapons For Destroying A Marriage

--Satan uses the "Expectations" that we bring into our marriage as his point of attack. His destruction of a marriage begins with . . .

I. First Weapon: " _____ Expectations"!

A. Definition:

An "Unfulfilled Expectation" is the " _____ " that comes when we experience the reality of failure in a major expectation!

B. Development:

--Early in the relationship or marriage, when our partner does something to "disappoint" us, we speak to them about it, or in some way let them know we are displeased.

--Because we are in "love", we assume that if we ask our partner not to do this thing again, he/she will not. We think our request will be the end of the matter! Or, we think one or two requests will end the matter!

C. Recognition:

--Recognition normally comes when our partner does not change -- the problem or issue continues!

--A Pattern emerges -- we realize there is an ongoing problem!

D. Statement: At this point, we think or say something like this . . .

"If you loved me, you would not do what you are doing!"

--**Key**: Notice how the "Unfulfilled Expectation" causes us to question if we are loved!

II. Second Weapon: " _____ "!

A. Definition:

"Hurt" is the normal "**emotional** _____" a husband/wife will experience as a result of the "Unfulfilled Expectations" of their marriage.

--Note: **Every marriage has some "hurt"!**

This is due to the fact that both husband and wife still have a "selfish" sin nature which causes failure of true love, care, and consideration)

B. Question: What will I do with my hurt?

--There are two possibilities:

1. I will do what God wants me to do: **"Cast my hurt on Him!"**

"Casting all your anxiety (care) upon Him, because He cares for you."

I Peter 5:7

2. I will do what Satan wants me to do: **"Hold on to my hurt!"**

"Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity."

Ephesians 4:26-27

C. Results:

1. If I obey God -- **the progression stops!**

-- **Satan is defeated in His attack!**

2. If I "hold on to my "hurt" -- **the progression continues!**

-- **Satan gains the position of control!**

--Note: This is the "**turning point**". The control of Satan's weapons . . .

a. stops at point two ("hurt"), or,

b. continues to the final three weapons of Satan's destruction!

III. Third Weapon: " _____ "!

A. Definition:

"Anger" is the "**unavoidable** _____" of my choice to "hold on to my hurt"!

B. Warning: This kind of "Anger" is always a sin!

In Ephesians 4:26-27 the Christian is warned not to allow "the sun to go down on your anger." Why such a warning? Because "anger" that is allowed to remain as an unconfessed sin "gives opportunity" to Satan! (See I John 1:9)

--Note: This Greek word "opportunity" is the word for "a place to stand" -- "a foothold"!

--**All Satan needs is a "place to stand"; a "foothold"!**

C. **Results:** The rejection of God's will -- the choice to allow "the sun to go down on your anger" -- is a **sin**! It allows the development of "Satan's weapons" to continue. He has a "place to stand". He can control the movement of events toward the final two steps of destruction!

D. **Observation:** "Anger" usually expresses itself in two ways . . .

1. "Verbal Abuse" -- Using our words like a "sword" to hurt!

"There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing." Proverbs 12:18

2. "Physical Abuse" -- Hitting or bringing bodily harm in anger!

--Physical Abuse communicates total rejection!

IV. **Fourth Weapon: A "_____ Spirit".**

A. **Definition:**

A "Wounded Spirit" is the progressive "_____" **Of The Relationship!**

B. **Manifestation:** What are the signs of a "wounded spirit"?

1. Emotional: **No "_____"** left.

--Statement: "I just don't feel anything anymore!"

2. Volitional: **No "_____"** left.

--Statement: "I just don't have any desire to try anymore."

C. **Scripture:**

"A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city, and contentions are like the bars of a castle." Prov.18:19

--This verse refers to brothers who should "love" each other -- but their love has been blocked because of an "offense". One brother (or both) has done something to break the relationship.

--How serious is this? The verse answers by giving an illustration -- it would be easier to conquer a "strong city" than to get these brothers back together!

--The verse goes on to say that "contentions" (between people who once had a relationship) are like the "bars" of a castle (fortification) -- it is like being in jail!

D. **Observations:**

1. A "Wounded Spirit" is a **stage** in the relationship.

--There is no way to predict how long it will take for the "hurt" and "anger" to move to this stage.

2. At the stage of a "Wounded Spirit", the hurtful relationship seems to **kill** you!

--In the next (final) stage, **you kill the relationship**!

V. Fifth Weapon: A "_____ Of _____".

A. Definition:

A "Root Of Bitterness" is the stage in the relationship where "_____" gains final control!

B. Scripture:

"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

--The verse makes four important statements:

1. An Appeal: *"See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God . . ."*

--What does it mean to "come short of the grace of God"?

The writer is not talking about "salvation" or saving grace in this verse -- he is talking about the grace of God provided for the Christian to live a Godly life. Sanctification or "Christ-likeness" is the issue!

--Put into the realities of a marriage, it means that when my marriage partner does something to "hurt" me, God provides His "all-sufficient" grace to deal with it (II Cor. 12:9)! But, because I have chosen to allow "anger" to grow into a "wounded spirit", I also resist the Holy Spirit when He whispers, "Jesus Christ will give His strength to deal with your hurt."

--I tell God, "**No**", when He offers His grace!

--This leaves me in the power of "self" and Satan!

2. A Picture: *"That no root of bitterness springing up . . ."*

--What is a "Root of Bitterness"?

The writer is painting a helpful picture at this point. He is saying that **Bitterness** is like a "Root". What does he mean? Just as a tree puts down a "root-system", so Bitterness puts down "**Roots**"!

--Illustration: Suppose you plant a young tree or "seedling" in your yard. During the first year, a small child could take hold of the seedling and pull it out of the ground. But, give that seedling twenty years to grow, and the strongest man on earth could put his arms around the trunk of the tree and not be able to pull it out of the ground!

--Application: The lesson is clear -- **Bitterness is like a root – allow Bitterness to "put down roots" and it gains control!**

3. A Warning: *"That no root of bitterness springing up . . ."*

--Bitterness not only is "like a root", it also "springs up"!

The Greek word used here refers to a plant that "grows up quickly". The emphasis is on speed! The exact time frame is unpredictable, but, **the bondage of "Bitterness" comes quickly and unexpectedly!**

4. A Result: ". . . *causes trouble and by it many be defiled.*"

--The marriage and family will be "troubled" by the control of "Bitterness" and, in many cases, moral "defilement" will enter the life of the one who is bitter.

C. Observations:

1. A "Root of Bitterness" is one of the most dangerous conditions a Christian can face.
 - a. The condition develops because the Christian has resisted the control of the Holy Spirit.
 - b. The condition is a "sin" that is unconfessed.
 - c. The control of the life is placed into the hands of Satan. He has gained the "advantage", II Cor. 2:11.

2. Illustration:

Many times through the years, a Christian has come for counseling saying, "Pastor, I am a Christian. I was reared in a Christian home. I am attending a good Church. I know what the Bible says -- it says I should not leave or divorce my husband/wife. **But**, I am so unhappy in my marriage, I am going to leave and get a divorce, even if I have to disobey God!"

--Notice: The "**but**" of "Bitterness" -- "I know what God wants,

but,

I am going to do what I think is best!"

--Bitterness is in control!

Concluding Transition

If our discussion of "Satan's weapons" to destroy a marriage were to end at this point, it would present a seemingly **hopeless** conclusion. However, the Word of God presents a radically different possibility for Christian marriage – the victory of Jesus Christ over all of Satan's attempts to destroy!

*"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but **divinely powerful** for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ."*

II Corinthians 10:3-5

God's Weapons are greater than Satan's Weapons!