

**“THE BATTLE FOR OUR MINDS”**  
**Learning Some of Satan’s Key Tricks**  
**Ephesians 6:11**  
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INTRODUCTION

Paul has told us that it is necessary for us to “put on the whole armor of God that we may be able to stand against the tricks of the devil.” *Today, we look at some of His favorite tricks—especially against your mind!*

Satan wants to control the way you think. He will attack you in the area of **false teachings**, but he will also attack you personally in the area of your **intellect** and of your **emotions**.

**You must know about Satan’s tricks so that you will stand against His tricks.**  
**Your mind is too precious to waste—yield it to God, not to Satan.**

I. SATAN’S GENERAL TRICKS: FALSE TEACHINGS

The favorite false teaching Satan would like you to believe is one of two options.

- He doesn’t exist, or at least act like it by totally ignoring his schemes.
- He is more powerful than God.

But through the centuries Satan has developed many other twisted and distorted “doctrines.” In fact, He has raised up many **heresies** and **cults** to promote false doctrine.

A. Heresies—Within the Church (cf. the parable of the tares)

Most of the early creeds (Athanasian, Nicene, Apostles’, etc) and later confessions of faith (New Hampshire, Philadelphia—Baptists; Westminster—Reformed) were written in order to counteract false doctrinal views and to preserve Biblical truth.

*If you think: “What a waste of time! Why is all of this important?” you have already been seduced by Satan’s wiles!*

Note I Cor. 15:33—“Bad company corrupts good morals.” In that context the doctrine of the resurrection was at stake!

**Professing believers often fall away during times of trouble—or when the cares of this world begin to dominate life. (parable of the sower).**

Note how Paul exhorted Timothy to refute and correct false teachers, and not to permit them to function within the local assemblies (I & II Timothy—e.g. II T. 2). Note how Moses stood for God against the calf worshipers (Ex. 32).

See Gal. 1:8—beware of **heresies**.

B. Cults Outside the Church

These are *supposed Christian groups*; We are not speaking here of other world religions. These are not mere “heresies” or “schisms”.

### **General Characteristics of Cults:**

1. They Resemble Biblical Christianity. (Often using Christian terms with different meanings.)
2. They are of Recent Origin. (Mostly within the last two centuries)
3. They have a tendency to Major on Minors.
4. Their devotees are often sincere and diligent.
5. They have a tendency toward perfectionism.
6. They generally maintain an attitude of superiority toward other groups.
7. They usually offer short cuts to spirituality.

### **Distinctive Traits of the Cults**

1. Extra Scriptural source(s) of authority. (Compare Rev. 22:18-19)
2. Denial of Justification by faith alone  
Good works are essential—keeping the rules of the cult (Gal. 5:4; Tit. 3:5; Eph. 2:8-9)
3. Devaluation of Christ
  - His Person (Mormons—spirit child of Elohim; so are we. Chr. Science—only a man; JW’s—created by Jehovah.
  - His Work—not sufficient for salvation (See Heb. 10:11-14; 9:24-27; Jn. 1:1-4; etc.)
4. Exaltation of Their Group—the exclusive community of the saved.
5. The Group’s Central Role in Future Things.  
God raised them up for the last days to fill the void left by all other groups.

But, Satan also has some personal tricks that he uses against your mind and emotions.

## II. SATAN’S PERSONAL TRICKS: Attacks upon the Intellect and the Emotions

### A. Attacks Upon the Intellect

1. The Desire to be Wise in the Eyes of the World
  - The Sin of “New Evangelicalism
  - We can’t know God by human reason (I Cor. 1:21; 3:18)
  - We must recognize our foolishness (I Cor. 1:17)
  - The “cross” is an offense to the world (I Cor. 2:14)
  - Efforts at compromise: *theistic evolution; liberal theology*
2. The Desire to understand everything of the divine revelation
  - See Dt. 29:29—We need to accept the things that we cannot explain
  - I Tim. 3:16—The “mystery” of godliness
3. The Desire to supplement Biblical truth with contemporary ideas
  - I Tim. 6:20; 1:19
  - Or mysticism—sinking into ourselves as though we are the fountain of truth! Looking for immediate knowledge in meditation.
  - Such a search often opens one to occult experiences.
  - Charismatics are especially susceptible to such dangers.
4. Becoming merely Theoretical in our Bible knowledge—academic only

- The Bible must never become merely a text for our sermons, or a book for our lessons.
  - We must not listen to the Bible as an “expert”—in a merely theoretical manner.
  - We then cease to be under the power of the truth.
  - The Word will often make us feel uncomfortable; cause us to see our shortcomings, our unworthiness, our failures.
  - The Word must expose the **secret things of our hearts**.
  - We are in a dangerous condition if the Word never *moves us, thrills us, makes us feel like shouting in praise!*
5. Intellectual Pride (I Cor. 8:1)
- Knowledge “puffs up”
  - Are we proud of our Biblical knowledge? Proud of our knowledge of doctrine?
  - Love builds up.
  - Now “we see through a glass darkly” (I Cor. 13:12).
  - Our glorying must only be in the Lord (I Cor. 1:31).
6. Obsession with one aspect of truth—our pet theories and ideas.
- We can become “spiritual cranks”.
  - We can go to seed on issues like the *translation issue, prophecy, Calvinism, numerology, etc.*
7. Doubts Watch out for Satan’s fiery darts!  
**But Satan today especially attacks the emotions of professing believers.**

## B. Attacks Upon the Emotions

We live in a feeling oriented society—an anti-intellectual, anti-rational society. Post modernism is the rage today. There is no “absolute truth.”

### 1. Emotionalism

- One’s feelings are the gage of “truth.”
- Emotion is often “worked up, artificially produced.
- Genuine spiritual emotion is wholesome and healthy.
- Emotionalism lack true understanding.
- It has no Biblically objective basis.
- It often manifests itself with rowdiness and excss.
- Such emotionalism does not positively affect one’s life.

### 2. Sentimentalism

- The affect of a sad story—the story produces the effect—not the truth.
- The tug of many invitations; superficiality, not really life-changing.
- The focus can be on the presentation, not on the truth itself.

### 3. Confusion between the Physical, psychological, and spiritual

- Mistaking a purely physical condition for a spiritual one; one may simply be tired and overworked rather than being ungodly.
- Mistaking the psychological for the spiritual—areas of temperament than do not necessarily imply sinfulness

- Mistaking the spiritual for the physical—temper, bitterness, fears, addictive behavior, etc. Today sins are called “mistakes” or “diseases.”
  - Many spiritual problems are explained as psychological.
  - We are a culture of victims.
4. Letting emotions govern our Decisions
- E.g. Balaam—after his great Messianic prophecy.
  - A Christian leader, husband, father who chucks aside everything of real value for **sensual attraction**, or because of **discouragement**, or **frustration**.

## CONCLUSION

There is a real battle for our minds! Satan will do all that he can to gain control!  
He will use false teachings both within and without the church.

But, he will also attack our rational and Biblically based thinking processes and our human emotions in order to accomplish his purposes.

He want the believer to become ineffective for God.

**Will you allow him to have his way, or will you submit yourself to God?**

I Cor. 9:27

Encourage one another to do right; don't take chances. Take temptation seriously!  
Slay the adversaries in our own lives and in the lives of others!