

# Satan's Tactics

by Zac Poonen

---

*The devil's tactics to deceive man are to question God's word, make man doubt God's love, and lead man to live according to his own reason, which leads to sin and a defeated life.*

**Duration:** 25:35

**Scripture:** Genesis 3:4, Proverbs 3:5-6, Proverbs 14:12, Luke 3:38, Romans 1:5, Romans 8:13

**Topics:** "Satanic Deception", "Faith Obedience"

---

## Description

This sermon delves into the origins of sin in the human race as described in Genesis 3, highlighting the tactics of Satan to deceive by questioning God's word and love. It emphasizes the importance of total surrender to God for a satisfying Christian life and warns against living by our own reasoning, urging dependence on God for wisdom. The obedience of faith is contrasted with the obedience of reason, stressing the need to trust in the Lord and not lean on our understanding.

---

## Transcript

In our last two studies, we were considering what God's purpose for man was when he first created him and how he made him different from the animals and how he had made provision for all his need. If we understand these basic concepts, we will open our whole being to let God have his way in us all the time in every area. It's because we don't understand or accept or believe these clear teachings right in the beginning of scripture.

We don't see them, the devil has blinded our eyes to them. And yet, we find our Christian life so unsatisfactory. The average Christian believer, born again believer, if you were to ask him, and if he were to give you an honest reply, he would admit that his Christian life is not satisfying.

And yet, God intends our life to be satisfying, but it will never be satisfying until we believe that total surrender to God is the best for us. Now, we want to look at the origin of sin in the human race as we read it described in the third chapter of Genesis. In those first few chapters of Genesis, we get certain basic concepts concerning a number of things in man's relationship with God, which help us to know how it should be in our lives too.

In Genesis 3, for example, we see a number of things related to temptation. If we look and meditate on this, I believe it can give us some insight into the tactics of Satan, so that we are not deceived in the same way. Here we read that the first thing that the devil did was to come to Eve and make her question the

word of God.

And this is how he comes today too. Is this really God's word? Has God really said this? Is it necessary to do what God has said? Is it dangerous to disobey God? And the devil tries to take away that foundation from our lives of God's word, so that we're like the man who built his house on sand and collapsed. And that's what he did with Eve.

He came and said, has God really said? And through the centuries, the devil's always been questioning God's word. The Bible says faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ. So if the devil succeeds in removing the word of Christ from underneath your life, you're not going to have any basis for faith at all.

And the opposite of faith is fear. And that's why you find the world full of people with fear. Their life is built on sand and it crumbles.

And in this, you see another thing and that is, Satan is trying to tell Eve that it's not so serious if you disobey God. You know, implying as it were, well God is such a loving good God and he's not going to let you suffer and be cast out just because you disobeyed him once in one area. Oh no, he will ignore, he's a God of love.

And even though he said you will die if you disobey and partake of this tree, you won't die, don't worry. Sin came when the woman decided to believe what the devil said rather than what God said. That is the origin of sin, when we begin to believe what the devil says rather than what God says.

What are the type of things the devil says? He says sin is not serious, you will not be punished if you do wrong, and there is no such thing as hell, there is no such thing as eternal death. These are some of the things which the devil's been feeding humanity with, lies. You surely shall not die, he says in Genesis 3 verse 4. We apply this to the Christian life today.

What will happen to a Christian who lives according to his flesh? I'm talking about a born again Christian who's not careful about his Christian life, but who continues to live according to the desires of his flesh. Romans chapter 8, we read these words, written to born again believers, it's very clear because it says that in Romans 8, 12, brethren, he's not talking to non-Christians there. He says dear brethren, we are not under obligation to the flesh to live according to the flesh.

If you live according to the flesh, Romans 8, 13, you will surely die. But if through the spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. So, what is he saying to born again believers? If you believers live according to the flesh, the desires and passions of this sinful nature in our body, you must die.

Just like God told Adam, you will surely die. And what did the devil come and tell Eve? You will not surely die. And what is being preached to many believers by many preachers today? If you're born again, if you once accepted Christ, and you happen to live according to the flesh, you will not die.

You are eternally secure. Isn't it the same language of the devil? When God says, and compare these two verses, God told Adam, if you eat of this tree of knowledge of good and evil, you will surely die. God says today in Romans 8, 13, brethren, if you live according to the flesh, you will surely die.

The devil took that word of God and said, you will not die. And today the devil takes this word of God and says if you live according to the flesh, you will not die because you accepted Christ once. How can you

die? It is impossible.

And do you know the number of millions and millions of believers whom the devil has fooled by making them believe that once they have accepted Christ, it's not possible for them to die. The Bible says in Luke chapter 3, the last verse, Adam was a son of God. Adam was a son of God.

It says that in the last verse of Luke chapter 3. But he died. He was eternally lost finally because he disobeyed. What about today a son of God when he decides to live according to the flesh? Is God's word in Romans 8, 13 going to be fulfilled? You will surely die.

It will. But the devil questions God's word. His whole purpose is to deceive man, make him live in sin so that finally he spends eternity with the devil in hell.

That's his aim. Paul once said in one of his letters in 2nd Corinthians 2, we're not ignorant of Satan's schemes. Satan has tactics and schemes and we must not be ignorant of them.

And we need not be ignorant of them if we read scripture. Because all his tactics are the same tactics he's used once before. Here is one example.

To make you question God's word and to negate it, to cancel it, say it will not happen. So that's the first thing we can learn and take a warning from in Genesis chapter 3. If you want to overcome, if you want to live as God wants you to live, you better accept God's word exactly as it is written. The second thing I want you to see here is when the devil communicated with Eve.

He says to her something which implies that God doesn't really love you as you think he does. He doesn't really have your best in mind. He's trying to withhold something from you.

Notice what it says in Genesis 3, in verse 5, the next sentence he says is God knows that in the day you eat from this, your eyes will be opened and you'll be like God, knowing good and evil. And of course, he doesn't want you to be like him. What a lie and it's amazing how the devil succeeded in making Eve believe that.

And it's amazing to see how God, how the devil has succeeded today in making a lot of people believe a lie. As if God is trying to withhold from you something that's good for you. How can that be? Did God create man in order to withhold from him? He need not have created him at all.

The whole purpose with which God created man was to bless him and to give him all that he had to make him partake of his nature and to make him rule over all of his creation. But the devil portrayed another picture of God as a hard task master and one who didn't love and one who was trying to withhold something from man and so he told man, you better fend for yourself. Take care of yourself because God's not going to care for you.

What a lie. When he had created man with the very purpose of blessing and providing for him, the devil convinced him that that was not true. And we find the same today.

The devil is out there convincing believers that God doesn't really care for them. That's why he didn't grant them this request. He implies, why did God allow your child to die? Why did he allow that sickness to continue? That proves God doesn't love you.

And there are lots of believers who believe that. And when they believe that, you know what it leads to? Depression, discouragement, anger at God, which also leads to sickness in the body, many other problems. If the devil can succeed in making you believe this lie, that God doesn't love you, that he doesn't care for you, he's not going to provide all your needs.

He would have succeeded in making you take the first step towards sin, the first step to a defeated life, is to believe that God doesn't love you. You know, faith is really, the New Testament speaks a lot about faith. Faith is to believe that God loves you.

That's more important than even not falling. When Peter was about to deny Jesus three times, the Lord warned him. You're going to deny me three times, Peter.

But I'm not praying that you won't deny me. That's probably needed to break your pride. But I am praying that after you've denied me, and you've let me down, and the devil's got a hold of you, and you reach the bottom, you reach rock bottom, I want you to remember there that God still loves you.

That's what I'm praying for you, that your faith will not fail. The Lord told Peter, I'm praying that your faith will not fail, meaning that if you have come to that end of yourself, I want you to believe right there that God loves you still. He still loves you.

That is faith. To believe that even though I've made a mess of my life, even though I've done something wrong, God still loves me. How much more when I'm trying to please him? When we were sinners, he loved us.

When we were his enemies, he loved us. How much more now that we are his children? So one of the things we learned right from the beginning of man's creation and man's fall is that the aim of the devil is to make us doubt God's word and to doubt God's love. And if he succeeds in those two areas in your life, I want to tell you right now that you're doomed because you'll definitely fall.

He doesn't lead us to fall straight away. He removes our foundation and then we just fall on our own. We get discouraged.

You say, if God doesn't love me, if he doesn't answer my prayer, what hope is there for me? We get discouraged, then the devil leads us into more sin. The other thing I want you to notice further down is the woman trusted her senses. She saw with her eyes that the tree was good for food.

You know, the other thing we need to learn from this passage is that we can't trust our senses. If you trust your senses, you'll be deceived. You'll go astray.

You can't trust your senses. For example, if you trusted your senses, you would think that the sun goes around the earth because every day you see the sun rise, move in the sky and set in the west. And if you trusted your senses, you'd say, hey, the sun is moving.

It's not moving. It's an appearance. It's the earth revolving on its own axis that gives you the impression that that stationary sun is moving.

God has put it there to teach us every day. Don't trust your senses. Don't trust what you see.

We know from geography that the earth revolves around its own axis. On the equator, it's at a speed of about a thousand kilometers an hour. And when we look down at the earth, we don't feel it moving at all.

The earth looks very stable and stationary. And yet the earth under your feet is revolving at a thousand kilometers, thousand miles, sorry, 1,600 kilometers an hour. That's how fast the earth is spinning and yet you don't feel it.

You can't trust your senses. That's the message that comes through from that. You go by your senses, you'll be deceived.

That woman saw, she went by her senses. This appears good to me. It is not good for you.

Look at the people who take alcohol and cigarettes and harmful drugs today. They look at it and they say, that appears to be good for me. I get a kick out of it.

It'll destroy your body. So that's the other thing that we see here. And when man falls like this, what did God expect from Adam and Eve? Just to trust him.

Believe that I love you, even though you may not know the reason why I have forbidden you from eating this tree. It's very interesting to see that God never gave Adam and Eve a reason. If you obey after you get an explanation why you should obey, that's not really the obedience of faith.

The highest form of obedience is the obedience of faith. That is the way to maximum spiritual growth. If you obey God because you know the reason, well, that's good that you obey God, but it's not the best form of obedience.

In Romans chapter 1 and chapter 16 you read this expression, the obedience of faith. And what is that? It is an obedience. What is the opposite of the obedience of faith? It's the obedience of reason.

That means I know why I need to do this, therefore I do it. What if you don't know the reason? That's a higher level of obedience, you know. And God, when he gave Adam a command saying, don't eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, he never gave him a reason.

He never told him, God could have easily given him 25 reasons why you shouldn't eat of it. He just said, don't eat it. I'm telling you, don't eat it.

If you eat it, you'll die. But he never gave him a reason. Now today, because God's given us the Holy Spirit, we know the reason.

See, the essential difference between these two trees, tree of knowledge of good and evil, and the tree of life on the other side, the essential difference is that in one, Adam could choose a life centered in himself. That means if I want to know what's good and what's evil, I don't have to go to God. I know it myself.

I can consult my own reason and decide what's good and what's evil. That's the way of death. The other tree was the tree of life, symbolizing God himself and the power of his Holy Spirit.

And if I choose to live by that tree, what I'm saying is, Lord, I want to live in dependence on you. Every time I want to know what's good and what's evil, I'm not going to trust my own reason. I'm going to come to you and say, Lord, is this good for me to do this? It's a life of constant dependence upon God for wisdom, for life.

Every day. And the fact that I've got so many years of experience doesn't make a difference. Think of a branch in a tree.

Maybe it's had 50 years of experience bearing fruit, but it still needs to abide in the tree if it is to bear fruit now. So, it's constant. It's constant dependence.

That new branch has to abide in the tree to produce fruit as much as this other branch that has been producing fruit in it for 25 years. It doesn't make a difference. After 50 years, Jesus said, apart from me, you cannot bear fruit.

You can do nothing. So, the tree of life symbolized a life of dependence upon God. That's the meaning of faith, living by faith.

Lord, tell me, is this good or evil? And it's a moment by moment revelation from God that keeps me from what he shows me is evil. That's how Jesus lived. And that's how God wants you and me to live.

But as I said earlier, the other is the tree of knowledge of good and evil where I don't need to consult God at all. And that's how all human beings in the world live. Do you think everybody in the world is living evil lives? No.

A lot of people do a lot of good things. But they don't live in dependence upon God. God has not created us just to do good things.

He's created us to be dependent on him. He said, go and live by that tree of life. Not by the tree of knowledge of good and evil where you depend on yourself.

Because there is a way that seems right to a man. It says in Proverbs 14 and Proverbs 16. But the end of it leads to death.

Proverbs 3, verse 5 and 6 says, Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean upon your own reason, your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge him and then he will direct your paths. So we see here in that verse that the enemy of faith is our reason.

If I depend on my reason, I'm going to go astray. And so it says, trust in the Lord and don't lean upon your reason. Leaning upon reason is partaking of the knowledge of tree of knowledge of good and evil.

My reason tells me what's good. My reason tells me what's evil. I don't do that.

I don't need to pray. I don't need to consult God about anything. When you live your Christian life without seeking the will of God as to what is good for you.

You choose yourself what's good for you. You're living according to the principle of good and evil. Which Adam chose.

We've all got that infection. So I try to expand this passage to show you how sin has come into the human race. This is how it came.

By living according to our own reason. We ourselves deciding what's good for us. Now, what is the obedience of faith? Supposing Eve said, the devil said to Eve here, the reason why God is not allowing you to partake of this tree is because he knows that you'll be like him and he doesn't want you to be like him.

Supposing Eve had said in response, well, I don't know all the reasons but one thing I know God loves me. And when he loves me, he cannot possibly withhold from me anything that's good for me. Supposing she had said that.

I can't understand. It looks according to my reason that yeah, this is a good tree and it looks as if God should give it to me but he hasn't. But I know God loves me.

And so, even though I can't understand why he's forbidden it, I'm going to obey him. What a different story it would have been. And what a different story it will be in your life when you face a situation that you can't understand and you say, well, I can't understand this.

I don't have the explanation for it all. But I know God is a good God and he's mine. And I'll do what he says.

You can make all the difference in your life. So let's learn from this passage and learn to live by dependence upon God for wisdom concerning what is good for us and what is evil. God bless you.

---

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/cuTCna5lc6U.mp4>  
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/satans-tactics/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**