

OVERCOMING OUR DESTRUCTIVE HABITS! - (PART THREE) SETTLE THE QUESTION - IF SATAN IS REAL, THEN HOW MUCH POWER CAN HE HAVE OVER YOUR LIFE?

Whenever the subject of the existence of Satan, or "the Devil" comes up, I have always thought it strange that so many people become uneasy. But then again I guess it is to be expected. For years Hollywood has personified this "evil being" in Technicolor, computer designed horror, as an overpowering force that can only be contained until the next sequel is released. The image presented is one of unlimited power, evil, and control.

Someone once asked C. S. Lewis, the noted English author, if he believed in the Devil. To which he replied, "Now, if by 'the Devil' you mean a power opposite to God, and, like God, self-existent from all eternity, the answer is certainly, no. There is no uncreated being except God. God has no opposite. The proper question is whether I believe in devils. I do. Devil is the opposite of angel only as bad man is the opposite of good man. Satan, the leader or dictator of devils, is the opposite, not of God, but of Michael [the Archangel]"

Now can this "evil being" have a great influence in yours and my life? Sure he can. But the real question you should be asking yourself is . . .

HOW MUCH POWER DOES SATAN NOW HAVE OVER MY LIFE?

To help answer that question, I want you to think about something. The writer in the book of Revelation in the Bible wrote these words of God to *Christians* in the third chapter, verse 20 . . .

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man [anyone] hears My voice, and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him and he with Me."

In other words, God is at the door of my heart, and your heart, knocking. He knows every need we have, every pain we feel, and every wound or hurt that we need healed. But He, the all-powerful creator of the universe, is standing outside of our lives *refusing* to come in . . . **unless we open the door.**

Now why would He do that? God, who is unlimited in power, uncontrolled by time, and who has no equal . . . *is locked outside of our heart?* I have always wondered why He just didn't knock the door down? Or speak a word and watch it melt away! ***Why is He just standing outside?***

Think about this. God is all-powerful, but He is also a "just God". In other words, His actions govern the universe and establish what is "right" and "wrong".

Could it be possible, that by His action of choosing to *limit His control over our lives*, to not enter our lives unless we invite Him in, that He has created a law which also "justly" governs the entire universe for all of eternity? A law that now states, **God will work within you to influence you toward the best for your life, but He has chosen not to violate your free will, nor the free will of any person!** And as such, if you choose not to "open the door" to Him, in any area of your life, He will respect your choice, . . . and wait outside the "door".

Now if this is true, then by choosing to never violate your free will, nor the will of any person, hasn't God also "justly" set a law in place that also limits the control and power of the "evil side", with all of its demons and their dictator, Satan, . . . within your life?

And if "legally" true, then doesn't Satan and all of his followers now also have to stand outside the door of your heart, just as God does, waiting and watching, never violating your free will, and only *able to enter through a door you open?* **Let this sink in!**

**SATAN CAN ONLY ENTER YOUR LIFE THROUGH A DOOR!
. . . AND ONLY A DOOR THAT YOU ALONE HAVE OPENED!**

Now what does all of this "theology" have to do with your day after day struggle with the destructive habits in your life? Because, if this is true, (the law governing the degree to which Satan can become involved in the destructive habits within your life) then he must have your approval. And so the only way Satan can enter your life . . . *is if you open the door to him.*

Now I know that probably none of you reading this letter have ever knowingly opened the door to Satan to come into your life. I know that. *So how does he ever get involved in our lives?* Do you remember? The answer to that question was in the first letter in this series. He does it this way . . .

**SATAN WORKS TO SOMEHOW CONVINCING YOU THAT GOD CANNOT MEET YOUR NEEDS, WILL NOT MEET YOUR NEEDS, THAT YOUR NEEDS CANNOT BE MET RIGHTEOUSLY, OR VERY SIMPLY,
THAT THE WORLD CAN MEET YOUR NEEDS BETTER!**

Now listen very closely to me, if you have neglected your relationship with God, (maybe just got too busy with other things or other people, or things have become your first source of expected emotional fulfillment) and/or consequently, God has just not seemed "touchable and tangible" to you, then probably . . . a "God void" is now created within your life. And if so - you feel His absence! You sense that you are alone, uncared for, and unprotected. And even though you may be surrounded by people who love you, somehow . . . you still feel unwanted, unneeded, and unloved.

Yet now, out of a need to escape your hurting and tormenting emotions, *(those created by the absence of God's touchable and tangible presence)* you suddenly feel almost overwhelmingly forced to look for some form of emotional relief. And remember from the first letter, *Satan has only one motive in your life . . . to separate you from God!* So how does he accomplish that goal? . . . *He accomplishes that goal by deceiving you with a source that can provide you momentary, though not lasting, relief from the pain of your greatest need!*

And once that source has been found, sadly, **YOU WILL ALSO NOW FIND YOURSELF ADDICTED TO A DESTRUCTIVE HABIT!**

Understanding this, *can you see why an addiction to a destructive habit could be almost anything?* It doesn't have to be alcohol, drugs, or some form of sexual immorality. It is anything that you find yourself habitually drawn toward out of a need to escape the emotional pain or pressure caused by the responsibilities within your everyday life.

Your "destructive habit" could be the escape found in food, video games, time spent on the Internet or in front of a television. It could be the sense of "zoning out" that you feel from reading novels or magazines hour after hour. It could even be the endless religious activities you are now involved in. Ask yourself, *"Is the reason I spend so much time on this activity . . . because of the escape it provides from the painful emotions I feel each day?"*

Now please realize, I am not saying activities like reading, nor time spent on video games or the Internet, or some church involvement are wrong. But what I am saying, is that if you are using any activity "excessively" in your life to "fill the emptiness" inside, then that activity has become a destructive habit and is now being used to replace the void left by the absence of God's actual touchable and tangible presence. And, *your habit will maintain it's control over your life, until God once again become the "first love", or first source of emotional fulfillment within your heart.*

Now can you see how important it is to never have a closed door to God in your life? Because, if you are in emotional pain within your lives, due to your lack of intimacy with God . . . you will always be tempted to unknowingly open the door to any destructive habit Satan is offering you for a "God replacement" in your life. . . . Can you see that?

This is the reason Jesus said, *"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heaven laden and over burdened, and I will cause you to rest - I will ease and relieve and refresh your souls. . . . And you will find rest - relief, ease, and refreshment and, blessed quiet for your souls.*

Please understand, and grab a hold of this thought! *God is desperate in His love for you! Desperate to ease and relieve the emotional pain in your life by His very presence inside of you.*

And that is because, *He knows if you never find the touchable and tangible intimacy He is offering you . . . you will spend the rest of your life wandering from one destructive habit after another after another!*

Now please take the time and go back and reread the last two letters, and then read this month's letter again. And when you do, remember to really pay attention to the parts in **bold print**.

Because, if you reread these letters, then next month, I believe all of the pieces will come together for you, when I talk about . . .

- ❖ What are "emotions of empowerment"?
- ❖ Are there "emotions of empowerment" in your life? And if so, how do they push you over the edge into embracing a destructive habit in your life?
- ❖ How do I find my own "emotions of empowerment"?
- ❖ And finally, how to open a door to God in your life and finally end your own need for destructive habits!

We love each of you so much. And count it a great privilege to be on this spiritual journey together with you. Please, if you have ANY prayer request, take the time to write them on the response, and send them to us . . . *even if you cannot financially support us at this time.*

. . . And I promise, Kathy and I will be faithful to pray.