

SERMON NOTES

From *In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley*



Facing a Satanic Attack

KEY PASSAGE: Ephesians 6:10-12 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES: 1 Corinthians 10:13 | 1 John 1:9

► SUMMARY

When was the last time you felt vulnerable to a temptation?

We've all experienced this, and sometimes the pull is so strong that we begin to come up with reasons why yielding isn't so bad. However, we need to stop and consider that the voice we're listening to is Satan's, and what he's offering is a path to destruction.

► SERMON POINTS

Today we are living in a sensual age in which enticements are everywhere, and we could respond in several ways. Will we yield quickly without a struggle, successfully fight against it, try to resist but eventually give up, or make excuses for surrendering?

Temptation began with Adam and Eve shortly after creation. Satan lied to Eve about the wonderful benefits of eating the forbidden fruit, and he's been doing the same thing to humanity ever since. Only the elements of his temptations vary according to the desires and weaknesses of each person.

The devil knows when we are the most vulnerable, what suggestion is most appealing, and how to make us think we must have it. He is ready with a long line of excuses: "You deserve to have this. No one's perfect. God still loves you and will forgive you."

However, for those of us who belong to Christ, we are not without a defense strategy. It's described at the end of the book of Ephesians. The first three chapters of this

letter deal with the spiritual wealth that belongs to us when Christ is our Savior. The next two chapters tell us how we are to walk with the Lord in righteousness. Chapter 6 addresses the reality of spiritual warfare and the provisions Christ has made for us to successfully resist temptation and deception.

"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. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:10-12).

What is a satanic attack?

It's a deliberate, willful assault by Satan upon an individual for the purpose of doing harm in the spirit, soul, or body, or all three. These attacks could come at any time or from anywhere. The devil tries to trip us up when we are at our weakest, and he knows exactly who or what to use as a lure. He often tempts us with what we do not need or should not have as he seeks to bring us down.

What are Satan's objectives?

- **To draw us away from God.** One of his goals is to take our minds off the Lord and spiritual matters in order to get us to focus on material and sensual desires.
- **To thwart God's purposes.** Although the Lord is infinitely more powerful, Satan is always trying to undermine what He desires for us.
- **To deny God the worship and glory He deserves.** Satan hates the fact that God alone is worthy of all worship

and honor so he offers us a plateful of other options to distract us from Him.

- **To destroy us.** The devil wants to demolish our relationship with God, our interest and faith in Him, our desire to pray, and confidence in our eternal security. However, we know that God's Word says nothing can separate us from Christ. Yet the devil keeps trying to move us in a direction away from the truth by convincing us that we don't have time to read the Bible or that we won't understand it. We must remember that he is our enemy who feeds us lies to keep us from living faithfully and righteously as God desires, which is the best possible life.

What are Satan's strategies?

- **Deceive.** Believing Satan's lies is the first step toward following him. Those who love their sin are quick to question or twist the truth of God's Word in order to justify their choices. They make excuses for their sin based on their situations and needs.
- **Divide.** The devil seeks to cause division in nations, churches, families, and friendships. He wants to create chaos by stirring up criticism and distrust.
- **Destroy.** This is Satan's ultimate purpose—to destroy our testimonies, lives, finances, marriages, and families by deceiving and dividing us.

Since Satan is always seeking to deceive, divide, or destroy us, we must be alert and watchful at all times and never think that we are too strong to be tempted. This kind of overconfidence is no foundation at all because our only hope is to be strong in the Lord and His might, not in our own power.

We have a promise from the Lord that teaches us to rely fully on Him: "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it" (1 Cor. 10:13).

Because God is faithful, we don't have to yield to temptations. Therefore, we must choose to trust Him and reject the enticements Satan offers us. To do otherwise leads us down his path of destruction. Temptations should prompt us to turn away from every excuse and realize that what the devil is offering has no place in the life of a follower of Jesus.

When we have trusted Jesus Christ as our Savior and are surrendered to Him, we face temptations from a platform of strength because the Holy Spirit lives within us. He identifies Satan's lies and helps us discern their destructive nature. Those who are sensitive to the spiritual realities He reveals are more cautious regarding temptations, but the undiscerning find themselves submitting without a fight.

God's Word is our greatest defense against the devil. It helps us discern the truth, and His promises provide the faith and strength we need to resist temptations. However, if we keep our Bible closed, or open it only once a week on Sundays, we have lost our defense and will become victims of the schemes of the devil.

We need to bring every weakness and temptation to the Lord immediately, asking Him for the strength to resist. The more often we successfully stand firm, the stronger we'll become. But if we stumble and fall, we have God's promise to forgive and cleanse us (1 John 1:9).

► RESPONSE

- What kind of temptations do you regularly face? Do you have a particular weakness that makes you more vulnerable to these enticements?
- What reasons have you used to excuse yielding to temptation?
- How has successfully overcoming temptations affected your ability to resist next time?

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