

False Religion's Tactics

- I. This study investigates the methods of Satan to draw men into false worship where God's truth takes a back seat to something else.
 - A. Make no mistake about it: Satan wants to be worshipped. **ISA 14:12-14; MAT 4:8-9; 2TH 2:3-4.**
 - B. The obvious “circus acts” like the Church of Satan and Anton Lavey are only a small part of the problem.
 - C. Ignorant superstition thinks it worships God but is actually worshipping devils. **1CO 10:20.**
 - D. The more subtle “white collar” tactics of Satan are where the battle lines are most commonly drawn for believers. **2CO 11:1-3; COL 2:4.**
 - 1. Remember the principle of deception that the best counterfeit is the one that most looks like the real thing.
 - 2. Satan and his agents appear as *light* and *ministers of righteousness*. **2CO 11:13-15.**
 - 3. We should not be ignorant of his *devices*. **2CO 2:11.**
 - E. We are warned about being led away by the *error* of the wicked (**2PE 3:17**). It is not simply a matter of being aware of the wicked, but by being led by the error which has the wicked captivated.
- II. Per **2CO 11:3**, a concise review of **GEN 3:1-6** is in order.
 - A. God's word was simple and straightforward. **GEN 2:15-17.**
 - B. Satan isolated Eve for “talks.” Beware those “talks” where the adversary wants to get you alone. **GEN 4:8; 2JO 1:1, 10; 2TI 3:6.**
 - C. Satan cast doubt on God's words: “...Yea, hath God said...?” (**v. 1**).
 - D. Satan amended God's words: “Ye shall not surely die...” (**v. 4**).
 - E. Rather than sticking to God's words, Eve added to them: “...neither shall ye touch it...” (**v. 3**) and buffered them: “...lest ye die” (**v. 3**).
 - F. Satan completely reversed God's words by implying God's agenda was deceitful: “That's not what God really meant; he selfishly withheld information that would have been for your promotion.” **v. 5.**
 - G. The error appealed to the natural senses. **v. 6.**
 - H. A perceived dissatisfaction with God's provision was developed. c/w **HEB 13:5.**
 - I. A basic human need was met by an improper means. c/w **MAT 4:2-4.**
 - J. Oratory, unheavenly wisdom (**JAM 3:15**) and human nature are dangerous combinations.
- III. As saints are presented as *chaste virgins* to Christ (**2CO 11:1-3**), Biblical instruction concerning chastity is relevant.
- IV. **Proverbs 5-7** provide an excellent instruction manual for avoiding evil associations with the opposite sex.
 - A. These chapters are written in the form of parental instruction.
 - B. The father warns his son against involvement with a strange or whorish woman.
 - C. False religion is described as whoredom. **EXO 34:10-17; ISA 57:3-8; REV 17:1-5.**
 - 1. Religion and sex are two dynamic passions of mankind.
 - 2. As sexual union is only right within marriage to one's spouse, so also is religion only right by devotion to the true God. **HEB 13:4; ROM 7:4; 2CO 11:2-4.**
 - 3. Therefore, these chapters may also be applied to identifying false religion.

4. Compare this strange woman with the heretics of **ROM 16:17-18**.
 - a. Both seduce the simple. **PRO 7:6-7**.
 - b. Both use fair speeches to seduce. **PRO 7:21**.
 - c. Both are to be avoided.
- D. The believer must beware of entanglements with strangers---those who do not share his faith. **PRO 2:16-17; 2CO 6:14-18**.
- E. Special attention to THE WORDS of God will keep one from being seduced by the strange woman. **PRO 7:1-5, 24**.

V. False religion (the strange woman) will reflect the nature and attributes of Satan.

- A. Since Satan is characterized by musical instruments, merchandizing, beauty and corrupted wisdom, these elements appear in his religion.
EZE 28:12-18; REV 17:4; 18:21-22.
 1. Nebuchadnezzar's idol-worship had much that appealed to the senses. **DAN 3:5-6**.
 2. "This mirth and gaiety in the worship would be very agreeable to carnal sensual minds, that are strangers to that spiritual worship which is due to God who is a spirit....That way that sense directs the most will go; there is nothing so bad which the careless world will not be drawn to by a concert of music, or driven to by a fiery furnace. And by such methods as these false worship has been set up and maintained." (Matthew Henry)
 3. NOTE: Musical instruments are "...without life..." (**1CO 14:7**) and Biblical N.T. worship is rather characterized by *living* things:
 - a. We have been begotten again "...unto a lively hope..." (**1PE 1:3**).
 - b. By faith and the Spirit, out of us flows "...living water..." (**JOH 7:38**).
 - c. We in public worship enter into the holiest by "...a new and living way..." (**HEB 10:20**).
 - d. We in duty present our bodies "...a living sacrifice..." (**ROM 12:1**).
 - e. As God's temple, we are "...lively stones..." (**1PE 2:5**).
- B. By contrast, a woman's true adornment is not outward beauty but character (**PRO 11:22; 31:30**), so also is the adornment of God's religion. **1TI 2:9-10; TIT 2:10**.
- C. Satan fell by pride (**1TI 3:6**). Beware the religion that boasts of its accomplishments, success, numbers, etc.
- D. Satan obviously knows how to use speech effectively.
 1. History is replete with individuals whose oratorical skills were so powerful that they mesmerized the masses. c/w **ACT 12:21-22**.
 2. Whenever you are powerfully affected by a speaker's prowess and charisma to where you are left with a feeling of awe more about the delivery than the substance of the message, beware! You are under a virtual spell.
 3. False teachers *bewitched* the Galatians. **GAL 3:1**.

VI. Beware of being flattered or "sweet-talked" by a loose woman or a false teacher.

PRO 5:3; 6:24; 7:5, 21.

- A. flatter: 1. *intr.* Of an animal, bird, etc.: To show delight or fondness (by wagging the tail, making a caressing sound, etc.). Const. *upon, with*. *Obs.* 2. To try to please or win the favour of (a person) by **obsequious** speech or conduct; to court, fawn upon. 3. To praise or compliment unduly or insincerely. 4. To gratify the vanity or self-esteem of; to make self-complacent; to make (one) feel honoured or distinguished.
 1. When warning about false teachers, Paul said, "Beware of dogs..." (**PHIL 3:2**),

- which may allude to the dog's attractive traits as well as its negative traits of greed, biting and devouring.
2. The charms of a wagging tail can make one overlook the fact that a dog is known for uncleanness. **DEU 23:17-18; 2PE 2:22.**
 3. (**PSA 22:20**) Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog.
 4. obsequious: Compliant with the will or wishes of another, esp. of a superior; prompt to serve, please, or follow directions; obedient; dutiful.
 - a. We are warned against the self-server who "...speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage" (**JUDE 1:16**).
 - b. Tertullus feigned admiration for someone whom both Jewish and Roman writers condemned as a debased, cruel, oppressive ruler. **ACT 24:2-4.**
 - c. This is one of the express methods of false teachers to lead saints into doctrinal and moral corruption to exploit them. **2PE 2:1-3, 18.**
 - d. Learn to distinguish between genuine praise of good character (**2CO 8:18**) and false praise which butters you up to take advantage of you. **PSA 55:21.**
- B. Flattery is a means of trapping another. **PRO 29:5.**
1. True ministers do not use flattery. **1TH 2:5.**
 2. (**PRO 26:28**) A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin.
 3. (**PRO 20:19**) He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips.
- C. The strange woman tries to make her victim feel like he is personally special and important to her. **PRO 7:15.**
1. Compare this with Absalom's method of winning followers. **2SAM 15:1-6.**
 2. Once you are "under the ether" of such a flatterer, you are easy prey to be manipulated for the flatterer's benefit. **GAL 6:12; 2PE 2:18.**
 3. This power is strong enough to turn you against the righteous. **GAL 4:16.**
 - a. Communication which implants negative attitudes in the believer's heart towards brethren should be avoided. **PRO 6:19; 16:28 c/w GAL 2:11-12.**
 - b. Any relationship which leads a believer away from sound Biblical hermeneutics and standards should be guarded against or cut off. When you start redefining Christianity, you are already deep in trouble. **1CO 15:33.**
 4. Beware of the praise of men (especially that which gratifies ego) and seek it not! **PRO 25:27; JOH 5:44; ROM 2:29.**
 5. "But honour is like the shadow, which, as it flees from those that follow it, so it follows those that flee from it." (Matthew Henry)
 6. God rewards them who diligently seek Him and His truth (**JOH 7:17; HEB 11:6**) but if something other than the truth is most important to you, God has something else in store. **2TH 2:10-12.**

VII. Beware the deceptions of *lightness* and also of apparent *depth*. Satan plays both fields.

- A. False religion may be characterized by superficiality, ease and smoothness. **ISA 30:10; JER 23:32.**
1. A counterpart of the strange woman is the foolish woman. **PRO 9:13-18.**
 2. She is simple and attracts the simple.
 3. What she lacks in knowledge, she makes up for with advertising.
 4. Her bait is the same as the strange woman: the lusts of the flesh.

5. The church that is little more than a social club where you can wallow in comfortable ignorance is a decorated morgue. **v. 18.**
 6. What the simple need is not what facilitates their ignorance, but the wisdom of God's words. **PRO 9:4; PSA 19:7; 119:130.**
- B. False religion may also be characterized by depth. The masters of false religion are not all mental flakes.
1. The strange woman is characterized by depth. **PRO 2:18; 5:5; 7:27.**
 2. We read of "...the depths of Satan" (**REV 2:24**).
 3. The wicked may have *deep thoughts*. **PSA 64:6.**
 4. There is counterfeit wisdom which rivals God's wisdom. **ROM 1:22-23.**
 5. We are warned against being spoiled *through philosophy* and the *vain puffing up of the fleshly mind*. **COL 2:8, 18.**
 6. It was through *subtilty* that Eve was beguiled from the simplicity of God's words. **2CO 11:3.**
 - a. subtilty: Acuteness, penetration, perspicacity; = subtlety 1.
 - b. False religion, like the strange woman is "...subtil of heart" (**PRO 7:10**).
 - c. It should not take reams of paper and sophistry to explain what God really meant when He forbade graven images. **EXO 20:4.**
 - d. The multiplying of words is no proof of correctness. **JOB 34:37; 35:16; PRO 10:19; ECC 5:3.**
 - e. Measure the validity of the complex by the simple: What does the verse SAY? "Nevertheless, what saith the Scripture?..." (**GAL 4:30**).
 - f. If, when all is said and done, you become convinced that understanding of Scripture is impossible for the average saint and that an initiate of some kind of enlightened order decides truth for you, you have been hoodwinked.
 - (1) Satan played the role of the enlightened initiate in Eden.
 - aa. Angels are indeed of a higher order. **PSA 8:5; LUK 1:19.**
 - bb. God later even gave His law by angels. **ACT 7:53.**
 - cc. But God communicated His will directly to man in plain terms that depend not upon an angel's interpretation, nor anyone masquerading as such.
 - dd. The saints are rather to measure, instruct and judge angels from the truth God has given men. **1CO 6:3; EPH 3:10; GAL 1:8.**
 - ee. Consider the insidious folly of those who presume to receive special revelation and to speak in angels' tongues.
 - ff. (**COL 2:18**) Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,
 - (2) Some things are hard to understand (**2PE 3:16**), not ALL things, nor IMPOSSIBLE.
 - (3) False religion specializes in self-contradiction and enigmas that are relegated to the realm of "inscrutable mysteries" in order to evade their obvious inconsistencies and implications. Darkness is the strange woman's ally. **PRO 7:9.**
 - aa. Example: an *eternally generated son*: How can someone be eternally coming into existence?

- bb. Remember that the ways of the strange woman "...are moveable, that thou canst not know them" (**PRO 5:6**).
- cc. Beware of the system of religion that has a fluid, shifting doctrine or a capricious method of Bible interpretation that changes according to the whim of its leadership.
- dd. False religion's leadership may even declare concerning its enigmas and inconsistencies, "Thou canst not know them."
- ee. "Error loves ambiguity, either because it has no explicit position to state, or if stated, would stand condemned in the eyes of all God-fearing men." (Martin L. Wagner, *paraph.*)
- (4) God's truth should be *plainly* declared. **2CO 3:12; 4:2.**
 - aa. plainness: Openness, honesty, or straightforwardness of conduct; frankness or directness of language.
 - bb. "We speak not only with all confidence, but with all imaginable plainness; keeping back nothing; disguising nothing; concealing nothing: and here we differ greatly from the Jewish doctors, and from the Gentile philosophers, who affect obscurity, and endeavor, by figures, metaphors, and allegories, to hide every thing from the vulgar. But we wish that all may hear; and we speak so that all may understand." (Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible)
- (5) Scripture has nothing froward or perverse in it, and God's promise is to bless sincere inquirers. **PRO 8:8; ISA 45:19; HEB 11:6.**
- g. If, when all is said and done, you end up concluding that definitions of words and grammar are just slavish literalism which must take a back seat to a superior method of interpretation, you have been hoodwinked.
 - (1) God chose to communicate to man in language, not signs, symbols or feelings. The Second Person of the Godhead is the WORD.
 - (2) All languages have signification/meaning. **1CO 14:10.**
 - (3) It follows, therefore, that the successful communication of ideas depends upon an understanding of words and grammar common to both the transmitter and the receiver.
 - (4) Be wary of anyone who trivializes the importance of a reliable glossary of terms (dictionary), primary definitions and recognized conventions of the arrangements of words (syntax). **2TI 1:13.**
 - (5) You cannot know the context of a passage without first knowing the meaning of the words in that passage.
- h. If, when all is said and done, "depth" ends up concluding that you should not do what Jesus or the apostles plainly said to do, or that what they left us in Scripture is inadequate (as Satan implied in **GEN 3:5**), then you have been hoodwinked.
- i. Jesus died to take away your sins, not your Bible or your mind. **2TI 1:7.**
- j. (**2CO 11:3**) But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

VIII. Here is a review of some earmarks of false religion that poses as Christian.

- A. It will offer personal gain, liberty, power, security, peace, happiness, ease, entertainment,

activities, etc. as necessary adjuncts of, or substitutes for, God, His provision, protection and promises.

- B. It will appeal to the natural man, and even be relatively popular in a corrupt society.
- C. Scripture may be used in it but whimsically or corruptly to support its own agenda.
- D. Tradition will be emphasized over God's word.
- E. It will erect barriers God has removed and/or take down barriers which God requires.
- F. It will forbid liberty in Christ and/or promote as liberty that which God forbids.
- G. It will be virtually burdenless or heap burdens on men that God never gave.
- H. It will assume that spiritual power is equated with political power or needs the support of political power.
- I. It will advance false proofs of its validity: numbers, success, prosperity, harmony, zeal, beauty, popularity, cooperation, etc.
- J. It will always somehow be in conflict with God's words.

IX. Satan knows your heart very well and will play to your genuine needs, perceived needs and emotional pressure points. His agents will do likewise. **2PE 2:18.**

- A. "Are you lonely? Our church has many potential friends and mates who love the Lord." ct/w **PRO 9:18; LUK 6:46; JOH 14:21.**
- B. "Is your church dry and routine? Our church has lively services, many activities, meetings and help-groups. There is always something going on and we are dedicated." **1KI 18:26-28 ct/w 1CO 14:26, 40; MAR 7:13.**
 - 1. Entertainment, activities and busy-ness are poor substitutes for truth and righteousness but they do attract many people.
 - 2. This is what fuels the mega-churches and reflects ADHD issues in society.
 - 3. If what a church offers appeals to carnal man, what kind of people are most likely to be drawn there?
- C. "Is your church not growing in number? That's embarrassing. Maybe it's dysfunctional. Our church is growing steadily." ct/w **2CO 10:12; LUK 12:32.**
- D. "Too much emphasis on the strictness of Scripture in your church? Our church has seen the wisdom of honoring the spirit of the law rather than the letter. We won't beat you over the head with the Book." ct/w **1TI 3:15; ROM 16:17-18; 1JO 4:6.**
- E. "Not getting ahead in life? Maybe God is withholding blessings from you whereas He is blessing us with good jobs and a robust economy around us." ct/w **1TI 6:5; REV 3:17.**
- F. "Is your church more about obedience than love? Our church is all about loving one another and not worrying about fine details of obedience." ct/w **PRO 27:5-6; MAT 5:19; ACT 20:27.**
- G. "Your church doesn't seem to have much for the children."
 - 1. The truth of Christ is good for children. **2TI 3:15; PSA 119:9; MAT 19:14.**
 - 2. Learning distinction between amusement and soberness is good for children. **ECC 3:4.**
 - 3. Learning self-denial is good for children. **MAT 16:24.**
 - 4. Learning quietness is good for children. **1TH 4:11.**
 - 5. Experiencing public order is good for children. **1CO 14:40; PSA 46:10.**
 - 6. There are 168 hours in a week. One and a half hours of biblical worship is less than 1% of that and will not damage the child's development.
- H. Mind that issues like the above are all false standards of right and wrong but they appeal to our basic desires for companionship, acceptance, power, comfort, success, happiness, pleasure, etc. These things may be attained after a godly sort:

1. Seek companionship of true believers. **PSA 119:63.**
2. Seek acceptance with God and you will find approval of men. **2CO 5:9; ROM 14:18-19.**
3. We are well empowered through Christ and His word. **PHIL 4:13; 2TI 1:7.**
4. Truth gives us the comfort of bearable burdens and hope. **MAT 11:28-30; ROM 15:4.**
5. Happiness (joy) is a matter of faith, not circumstances. **ROM 15:13; JAM 1:2-3.**
6. Pleasure is best at God's right hand (**PSA 16:11**), from whence came His law which should be our delight. **DEU 33:2 c/w PSA 1:1-2.**

- X. We are warned against having fellowship with unbelievers. **2CO 6:14.**
- A. This is important from both the standpoint of not mingling true religion with false religion but also because we will be affected by the company we keep. **PRO 13:20; 1CO 15:33.**
 - B. fellowship: a. Partnership; membership of a society. Also, in political sense, alliance. *Obs.* b. Participation, sharing (in an action, condition, etc.); 'something in common', community of interest, sentiment, nature, etc.
 1. True fellowship is in the gospel and of the Spirit. **PHIL 1:5; 2:1.**
 2. Saints are to be united in the apostles' **doctrine** and fellowship (**ACT 2:42**): the truth is the unifying issue.
 3. There is a difference between "like precious faith" (**2PE 1:1**) and "no faith" or "kinda-like our faith."
 - C. There are various categories of unbelief.
 1. Atheists.
 2. Heathen.
 3. Professors who have not submitted to the truth.
 4. Erring brethren who may be saved by solid brethren. **JAM 5:19-20.**
 5. Apostates.
 - a. This category is especially out of fellowship since they have come to the knowledge of the truth and then left it. **2PE 2:20; HEB 10:38.**
 - b. Recall that wicked Jezebel was more useful to this world than an apostate. **2KI 9:37 c/w LUK 14:34-35.**
 - c. The church that goes into apostasy becomes a harlot. **ISA 1:21; EZE 16:35.**
 - d. To pretend that God's restrictions on joining affinity with apostates can be dispensed with for personal benefit is to follow the error of Jehoshaphat. **2CH 19:1-2.**
- d. Be cautious to not equate biblical fellowship in Christ with "common grounds" with unbelievers on some points.
 - (1) Fellowship is walking together in the light of the truth. **1JO 1:6-7.**
 - (2) This fellowship belongs to those who believe and follow the truth.
 - (3) There are all manner of errant religions which share some "common ground" with Bible-believers, from monotheistic Muslims to moral Mormons. Acknowledging some commonalities is one thing. Making no difference between darkness and light is another.
 - (4) Recognizing "common ground" with unbelievers may be helpful to introduce the gospel but if the "common ground" is what's most important, then Paul went too far in **ACT 17:28-31.**
 - (5) What is more important to you: the pleasure of company or the salvation of company?

XI. Satan and false religion are likely to most affect the following:

A. The unlearned and the unstable. **2PE 2:14; 3:16; MAT 13:19.**

1. Satan's great need is to separate God's people from God's words which expose him and his deceptions.
2. Satan is to be resisted *in the faith* (**1PE 5:9**), overcome with the word of God. **REV 12:11; 1JO 2:14; EPH 6:17.**
3. Jesus overcame Satan with "It is written" (**MAT 4:1-11**).
4. Is it any wonder that Satan tries to allure the believer away from the word of God?
5. Consider five ways that Satan could separate us from God's word:
 - a. By destroying it. But God forbids this. **MAT 24:35.**
 - b. By force. But God frustrates such efforts. **2TI 2:9.**
 - c. By inducing us to exchange the true word of God for a counterfeit.
 - d. By blinding us to the existence of a preserved Bible.
 - e. By directing our attention to other things so that we neglect our Bibles. **MAR 4:18-19.**
 - f. By introducing a method of interpreting the Scriptures that explain away the sense of its words so that we are not led by the words themselves but rather by another's false interpretation of them. **2CO 4:1-2; 11:3; 2PE 3:15-16.**
 - (1) This underscores the importance of the Bible's rules for studying it.
 - (2) Review previous lessons on this topic from time to time.
 - (3) Remember the importance of primary definitions (the sense, **NEH 8:8**), and that exceptions to this rule do not nullify it.
 - (4) Beware of the man who capriciously defines words to deny what God plainly says, as did Satan in Eden. This is a means to have mastery over others.
 - (5) "When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less." ¶ "The question is," said Alice, "whether you *can* make words mean so many different things." ¶ "The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master—that's all."
(Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass*, p. 72)
6. The double-minded are particularly at risk of being drawn away since they are unstable. **JAM 1:8.**
 - a. double-minded: Having two 'minds'; undecided or wavering in mind.
 - b. He can't decide for truth or compromise; he halts between two opinions (**1KI 18:21**), unwilling to fully commit, perhaps "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (**2TI 3:7**).
 - c. Underlying this condition is a heart in need of purification: there is a sin problem that needs to be addressed. **JAM 4:7-8.**

B. Those who desire a trouble-free religion. **MAT 13:20-21.**

1. This kind expect what God has not promised. **JOH 16:33; PHIL 1:29; 2TI 3:12.**
2. These fear man or personal loss more than God. c/w **HEB 13:6; PHIL 3:8.**
3. These will sell out the truth for personal gain. **JER 44:17-19; HOS 2:4-5.**
4. These would rather synthesize truth and error to make religion more pleasant. **2KI 17:32-33; EXO 32:5-6 c/w 1CO 10:7.**
5. These grasp not the promises of temporary troubles. **1PE 1:6; 5:10; PSA 71:20.**
6. These have not the faith of Job or Moses. **JOB 13:15; HEB 11:24-26.**

7. These want a crown without a cross. ct/w **LUK 9:23**.
 8. These are likely to blame the righteous for their troubles. **EXO 17:3; 1SAM 30:6**.
 9. Satan provides many easy alternatives to the way of truth. There is a narrow gate of heaven, but wide gates of hell. **MAT 7:13-14; 16:18**.
 10. Those who abandon faith because of trouble have not truly appreciated the cost the Savior bore for sinners nor the trouble they deserve because of sin. **HEB 10:25-29; ROM 6:23**.
- C. Those who don't weed out competing lusts. **MAT 13:22; 2TI 4:3-4**.
1. These may actually see the weeds as their dainties.
 2. God is not their first love and their affections are not most on things above. **REV 2:4 c/w COL 3:1-2**.
 3. Their pleasure, not God's, is foremost. **LUK 8:14**.
 4. They allow lusts too much leeway, and the lusts take over.
 - a. Personal gain is more important than personal growth.
 - b. They don't know where to draw the line on pleasures. Pleasures rather than principles become their motivators.
 - c. They are careful about far too much. c/w **LUK 10:41-42; 1CO 7:32**.
 - d. The sheer burden on one's time which carnal interests demand is so great that spiritual things starve for attention.
 5. These may think they can flirt with unlawful lusts with impunity, as the simple young man who thought he could stroll unaffected in the strange woman's street. **PRO 7:8 ct/w ROM 13:14**.
 6. These may think that lawful desires need not be regulated when moderation in all things is needed. **PHIL 4:5; 1CO 6:12; 9:27**.
 7. Lusts (lawful or unlawful) are deceitful. **EPH 4:24**.
 - a. Unlawful lust made a lie and forbidden fruit seem good to Eve, and death preferable to immortality to Adam.
 - b. Lawful lusts can deceive us into thinking that liberty is an occasion to the flesh. ct/w **GAL 5:13**.
 - c. When Satan can't capture a saint with an offer of outright evil, he may do so with an offer of apparent good. **MAT 4:3; 2PE 2:19**.
 - d. Those that are ruled by lusts have many enslavers, good and evil.
 8. Remember that Satan, false teachers and false religion "...allure through the lusts of the flesh..." (**2PE 2:18 c/w 2TI 3:6**). Appealing to our natural desires is their strong suit.
 9. Consider **2TI 4:3-4**.
 - a. These warnings are not unique to the church at Ephesus. They apply to all who are not well grounded in Christ when a time of testing comes along.
 - b. "...they will not endure..." The thrill of their conversion wears out over time. c/w **HEB 10:32-36**.
 - c. They become weary with Biblical religion. c/w **MAL 1:13; 3:14**.
 - d. Watch out for that weariness! **GAL 6:9**.
 10. Remember that lust is a heart issue (**ROM 1:24**) and it is with good reason that Solomon warned about the strange woman, "Let not thine heart **decline** to her ways, go not astray in her paths" (**PRO 7:25**).
 - a. decline: The process of declining or sinking to a weaker or inferior condition...
 - b. Those who let their hearts decline from knowledge to sentiment set

themselves up for captivity, per **2TI 2:26**.