

Seduction - using distraction to entice us from Christ.

Purpose: to steal our affections from Christ through distraction/idolatry

Avenues: The *kosmos*—the whole system of values that is Satan's influence for evil. This is a huge theme in the New Testament! Consider the following representative verses:

Satan is the creator and ruler of the *kosmos*.

(1 John 5:19) We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

(2 Cor. 4:4) . . . in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

(Eph. 2:2) . . . in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

Therefore, the goal of the *kosmos* is to directly oppose God's goal for our lives.

(1 Cor. 2:12) Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God . . .

There are two totally different ways of viewing things, and the "spirit which is from the world" is not morally neutral (see 1 Cor. 3:19; Isa. 55:8,9; Jn. 10:10).

(Titus 2:11) For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age . . .

God's way for a fulfilled and effective life is diametrically opposed to worldly desires.

(2 Pet. 1:4) For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

(Same as Titus 2:11,12)

(2 Pet. 2:20) For if after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first.

The world "defiles," "entangles," and can "overcome" people—including Christians. How sad it is to see people who have been rescued from its bondage to allow themselves to be sucked back into it! (See Isaiah 57:10; Hebrews 3:13)

(James 4:4) You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

Loving the world is incompatible with loving God.

Key Components of the *Kosmos* (from 1 John 2:15,16):

(1 John 2:15,16*) Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (16) For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

The *kosmos* takes areas that are potentially good, but twists them into idols that distract us from coming to Christ and/or neutralize us as Christians. These are the "things of the world" mentioned in vs 15.

- **"Lust of flesh" (Hedonism):**

There is nothing wrong with physical pleasure in itself. God gave us bodies with the capacity for enjoying pleasure.

The "lust of the flesh" is the inordinate desire for physical pleasure. It includes not only obvious things like DRUG & ALCOHOL abuse, SEXUAL perversion, etc.—but also COMFORT (*indolence* as higher priorities than serving Christ), GLUTTONY; CIGARETTES.

- **"Lust of eye" (Materialism):**

"Lust of the eye" refers to inordinately desiring things that our eyes see (see Achan in Josh. 7:21). There is nothing wrong with owning and even enjoying material objects. But this easily becomes a form of idolatry so that we derive our sense of meaning, significance, security, etc. from owning and enjoying them (more in 2 WEEKS).

Materialism includes not just people like BILL GATES. It also is a crucial part of the American dream ("PERSONAL PEACE & AFFLUENCE").

We do not need to have a lot of possessions to be materialistic, materialism is a mindset. We find ourselves consumed with thoughts of wanting more rather than considering how thankful we are for what we have and how we can use our resources to serve others. Remember that materialism is competitive for many. It's not important to have a nice car, but to have a "nicer" one than the next guy. For others, it is the pursuit of comfortable living (the absence of material suffering) that drives it.

- **"Boastful pride of life" (Egotism)**

It is an inordinate desire for the praises of men. There is nothing wrong with having a healthy sense of self—knowing that you are a significant person who can accomplish valuable goals, impact others, etc. But Satan twists this into something very different (Lamech in Gen. 4:19-24).

As Christians we are significant because we are forgiven, adopted and gifted by God. Instead of living based on these realities, we try to attain significance based on other humans' approval.

Not just HITLER/ROCK STAR—also justification of selfishness vs. sacrificial, serving lifestyle (CORPORATE LADDER-CLIMBING; SPORT CELEBRITIES; LUST FOR PEOPLES' "RESPECT"; STAY-AT-HOME MOMS WHO FEEL INSIGNIFICANT).

Not only that we seek positive attention, but we fear the censure of others when we make decisions to serve God. EG the stay-at-home parent or the person who declines career advancement to serve his/her family or church.

When we are into this lifestyle, we are enslaved to the opinions of others. Do you want the final verdict on your life to be, "People really admired me?"

Note: The "law of diminishing returns" operates in all three of these areas!

The more we pursue and wrap ourselves up into these areas, the less true fulfillment we experience and then we try even harder in these areas. We need a clean break from the beliefs (lies) and practices that say these areas will fulfill us.

The kosmos is effective because of its extreme subtlety (i.e. — it is easy to be deceived. i.e. — you could be hip deep as we speak and not be aware).

(Eugene Peterson) "The world is an atmosphere, a mood. It is nearly as hard for a sinner to recognize the world's temptations as it is for a fish to discover the impurities in the water. There is a sense, a feeling that things aren't right . . . but just what it is eludes analysis." (Eugene Peterson, quoted in Stephen Eyre, *Defeating the Dragons of this World* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1987), p. 19)

Satan with the world-system is like a fisherman with a sparkling lure. The lure is the imitation of the real food, and is designed to hide the barbed hook. We follow it along, enticed by our senses, convinced it will satisfy. We find the hook lodged in our throats, and ourselves being reeled in before we are aware of what has happened. And like the fish, once caught, we have to be willing to endure some pain as we fight to free ourselves.

Countermeasures:

1) Do not withdraw from non-Christians or secular culture

(FUNDAMENTALIST PROTECTIONIST CULTURE) **This response doesn't really protect anyone from kosmos**, since the *kosmos'* values flourish in religious cultures. More importantly, **it betrays our mission to reach the lost.**

(John 17:15) I do not ask Thee to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one . . . As Thou didst send Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

(1 Cor. 5:9,10) I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; (10) I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters; for then you would have to go out of the world.

(Phil. 2:14,15) Do all things without grumbling or disputing; (15) that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world . . .

2) Reject the kosmos on an ideological level.

Through the revelation of scripture, we need to realize that it is ultimately unfulfilling, temporary, and dehumanizing.

(1 John 2:17) And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever.

(2 Pet. 2:18-19) For speaking out arrogant words of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error, (19) promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved.

Consider that desire for things of the world is coveting and leads to lack of contentment and bitterness.

"Coveting is the negative side of the positive commands (found in Matt.22:37, 39)...there are two practical tests as to when we are coveting against God or men; first, I am to love God enough to be contented; second, I am to love men enough not to envy...A quiet disposition and a heart giving thanks at any given moment is the real test of the extent to which we love God at that moment... *True Spirituality*, Francis Schaeffer, excerpted from pp.8-10.

(Notice in Ephesians 5:3,4 that)...the "giving of thanks" is in contrast to the whole black list that stands above...

3) Repentance may be necessary if you realize you have been enmeshed in it.

(James 4:4-10) You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. (5) Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"? (6) But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE." (7) Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. (8) Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. (9) Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom. (10) Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.

Choose to end this spiritual adultery! This may involve some radical steps. Some may see the need for career changes, a budget overhaul with consultation, a break with a certain group of friends, cessation of sinful habits are just a few examples of changes that may be needed. (WHAT TYPE OF LIFE CHANGES WOULD ONE BE WILLING TO MAKE IF TEMPTED BY LITERAL ADULTERY?) Remember God's grace if you realize you have been an "adulteress."

(2 Cor. 6:14-7:1) Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? . . . (1) Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

Admit to God that you haven't been trusting him to meet your needs. Choose instead to entrust yourself to his care.

(Matt. 6:32,33) For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. (33) But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

4) Actively pursue spiritual growth and ministry.

Unless we fill the void with God's way of life, we will be drawn back into the kosmos. Wherever God puts us we should appreciate and pursue doing his work, whether in the spotlight or behind the scenes; in fact he will probably insure we experience behind the scenes work. Our fulfillment will be complete as we pursue evangelism and discipleship in the context of home group ministry. Serving includes becoming a faithful financial steward (more in subsequent weeks).

(1 Tim. 6:11) But flee from these things, you man of God; and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.

(2 Tim. 2:22) Now flee from youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

As we gain God's perspective we begin to experience true joy and our perspective on the kosmos changes.

(Romans 12:2) And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

C.S. Lewis. *The Screwtape Letters. xiii.*

"It remains to consider how we can retrieve this disaster (his conversion). The great thing is to prevent his doing anything. As long as he does not convert it into action, it does not matter how much he thinks about this new repentance. Let the little brute wallow in it. Let him, if he has any bent that way, write a book about it; that is often an excellent way of sterilising the seeds which the Enemy plants in a human soul. Let him do anything but act. No amount of piety in his imagination and affections will harm us if we can keep it out of his will."

Temptation

Definition: existential enticement and suggestion to sin

Avenues: Satan tempts us through both thoughts (Acts 5:3) and circumstances (1 Cor. 10:13; Lk. 4:1-13).

All temptation involves a rejection of God's truth. Through temptation, Satan tells us (like he told Eve in Gen. 3) that God's way is unfulfilling, unreliable, etc.—and that by choosing to disobey God's moral will we are only doing what we need to do to achieve fulfillment, happiness, security, etc.

Purposes: Since Satan knows that sin won't cause you to lose your salvation, what is his purpose in tempting you?

- **He hopes to enslave you (or keep you enslaved) to sin**, which will keep you from being an effective worker for God (Rom. 6:16; Jn. 8:34). Especially if you are responding to God's conviction to get free from a certain sin-habit, expect the devil to heap on the temptation.
- **He hopes to destroy your witness to the world**

Titus 2:7,8 In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.

If Satan can tempt you to fall in a way that non-Christians see, your credibility and witness can be damaged. (EG Lazy worker, gossip, outbursts of anger at work, self-righteousness, selfishness, etc.). Of course, we cannot be perfect and therefore must be prepared to admit failures and apologize when necessary to maintain integrity.

- **He hopes to infect the Body of Christ.** If you submit to defeat, this attitude may begin to spread to others (1 Cor 5:6).
- **He hopes to set you up for accusation** (see below).
- **His ultimate goal is to hurt God.** (If an evil man wished to hurt an enemy he may choose to seduce his child and steal his affections.) Eph. 4:30; Hos. 2:16.

Countermeasures:

Question: "How do you know when Satan is tempting you or it is just your flesh?" We can't always tell the difference—both are probably always involved. It is more important to respond victoriously than it is to discern the primary source.

1. Practice prevention by staying actively involved in growth and ministry!

David was especially vulnerable to temptation because he wasn't in the battle where he belonged. "Idle time is the devil's playground."

(2 Sam. 11:1-5) Then it happened in the spring, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him and all Israel, and they destroyed the sons of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. **But David stayed at Jerusalem.** (2) Now when evening came David arose from his bed and walked around on the roof of the king's house, and from the roof he saw a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful in appearance. (3) So David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, "Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" (4) And David sent messengers and took her, and when she came to him, he lay with her; and when she had purified herself from her uncleanness, she returned to her house. (5) And the

woman conceived; and she sent and told David, and said, "I am pregnant."

2. Don't toe-dangle!

If you know you are weak in a certain area, stay away from situations where this temptation is likely to occur (SEXUAL TEMPTATION; GOING TO PLACES WHERE PEOPLE ARE GETTING HIGH; INTERNET PORN AND CHAT ROOMS; MALL & CATALOG BROWSING; etc.).

(Rom. 13:14) But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.

(Prov. 5:8; 6:25) Keep your way far from her, And do not go near the door of her house . . . (25) Do not desire her beauty in your heart, Nor let her catch you with her eyelids.

3. Remember the consequences of falling to temptation.

(James 1:14,15) . . . each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. (15) Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.

(Prov. 5:9-14) . . . Lest you give your vigor to others, and your years to the cruel one; (10) lest strangers be filled with your strength, and your hard-earned goods go to the house of an alien; (11) and you groan at your latter end, when your flesh and your body are consumed; (12) and you say, "How I have hated instruction! And my heart spurned reproof! (13) And I have not listened to the voice of my teachers, nor inclined my ear to my instructors! (14) I was almost in utter ruin In the midst of the assembly and congregation."

(Prov. 6:26-29) For on account of a harlot one is reduced to a loaf of bread, and an adulteress hunts for the precious life. (27) Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? (28) Or can a man walk on hot coals, and his feet not be scorched? (29) So is the one who goes in to his neighbor's wife; whoever touches her will not go unpunished.

What consequences have we seen?

What consequences have you experienced in this area?

What have you learned by observing others? Learn vicariously! Only beasts have to learn everything the "hard way!"

(Psalm 32: 8,9) I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you. (9) Do not be as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding, Whose trappings include bit and bridle to hold them in check, Otherwise they will not come near to you.

Be willing to alert those who are being tempted—Wake them up!

4. Remember God's sovereignty over Satan in the midst of temptation.

God is sovereign and he limits Satan's temptations to what we can bear. He uses Satan's temptations to strengthen our faith. This is why the Greek word *peirasmos* is translated both "trial" and "temptation."

(1 Cor. 10:13) 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, that you may be able to endure it.

Through all adverse situations, Satan wants to work through them to destroy your faith—but God wants to work through them to strengthen your faith. Proper response to temptation, therefore, results in greater stability, increased faith and confidence, proven character, etc.

(1 Pet. 5:8-10) Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. (9) But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished

by your brethren who are in the world. (10) And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.

(Luke 22:31,32) Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; (32) but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.

5. Pray for God's help when you are being tempted.

Pray for the spiritual strength to resist, for God's reminder of the truth, and to see the "way of escape."

(Heb. 4:15,16) For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. (16) Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.

(Matt. 26:41) Keep watching and praying, that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

6. When under sustained temptation, share this with your close Christian friends.

Since sin thrives in secrecy, bringing the issue out into the light helps to break its power. This also makes you more accountable to handle the situation righteously.

(1 John 1:6,7) If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; (7) but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

Accusation

Definition: personal denunciation based on real or alleged sins in order to alienate from God and demoralize.

Example: You have succumbed to a temptation. You've gotten angry, again. Now you are confronted with the accusation that you are completely ill-suited for ministry, and that there is little hope for significant change. You find yourself defeated and depressed. Satan is the source of this accusation.

(Rev. 12:10) And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for **the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down**, who accuses them before our God day and night.

Avenues: both directly and through other people

What is the difference between *accusation* and *conviction*?

Note: Both work through the conscience, by registering a painful or discomfiting verdict on your actions. Accusation will commonly follow on the heels of conviction. You must accept conviction while rejecting accusation.

- **Conviction draws us near to God** while accusation alienates us from God.
- **Conviction focuses on our actions** while accusation uses our actions as an inappropriate basis for undermining our relationship with God. (EG we feel unworthy, inadequate, judged, rejected, etc.)
- **Conviction will normally be clear and specific**, while accusation tends to be vague and generalized.
- **Conviction is constructive and forward-focused** while accusation is destructive and backward focused. God wants us to learn from our failures, and as soon as we have learned he wants us to move forward. Satan wants to keep hammering us about past actions even if we have repented.

Levels:

- **Satan will attack new Christians' assurance of salvation** ("And you call yourself a Christian?").

- **Older Christians will be accused about their identity, ability to change &/or minister.** ("You'll never change. You'll always be _____." "You are completely ineffective in evangelism—why even try?" "After being in the flesh all week, what makes you think you can teach with spiritual impact?")

Countermeasures:

1) If untrue:

- **Affirm what God has promised you, what he has done through you.**
- **Get objective input and affirmation from others.**

2) If true (And it often is):

- **Don't defend yourself as righteous.** RATIONALIZING, MINIMIZING, and BLAME-SHIFTING are all ways of doing this. The answer to this kind of accusation is God's grace, not your righteousness!
- **Confession:** Agree with God about your sin, and take full responsibility for what you have done (Ps. 51 & its relationship to Ps. 32).

You should also agree with God about your forgiveness.

Note: Sometimes you will not get relief until you confess to others.

- **Action:** Choose to draw near to God (Heb. 10:22), and choose to step out to serve.

(Heb. 9:14) how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Note: If you can't tell whether it is true or not, get objectivity from a mature Christian who knows you well.

Memory Verses

1 Jn. 2:15,16* - Loving the *kosmos* is antithetical to loving God. The key components of the *kosmos* are the lust of the flesh (HEDONISM), the lust of the eye (MATERIALISM), and the boastful pride of life (EGOTISM).

Rev. 12:11* - Christians overcome Satan's accusations through grace, his deception through the Word, and his persecution through radical commitment to Christ.

1 Pet. 5:8* - Be on the alert for Satan's attacks!