

Four Effective Lies

Introduction. A publisher's review of Cameron Barnes's book is shocking. It describes it as "a thoughtful, detailed discussion of every aspect of considering, preparing for, beginning, and conducting a successful and emotionally fulfilling extramarital affair." The name of the book is *Affair! How to Manage Every Aspect of Your Extramarital Relationship with Passion, Discretion, and Dignity* (UPublish.com, 1999). So for as easy as logging on to amazon.com, you can get a practical summary of how adultery is cool.

Isn't that amazing? This book is a total lie! While a marriage may be troubled, committing sin is not the way out! This is the work of the devil.

What do we know about the devil? From John 8:44, we know he is the father of lies — the greatest liar the world has known. In Mathew 13:39, we know he is the enemy of God's disciples. In 1 Corinthians 7:5, we know he is the tempter of man. In 2 Corinthians 4:4, we know he is the god of this world. In 1 John 3:4, he is the originator of sin. In 1 John 5:18-19, he is the evil one. In Revelation 12:9, he is the deceiver of the world, the great dragon, and the serpent of old.

It's tough to be vigilant and restrain ourselves from his devices, so what are four effective lies that he tells to people every day to tempt them to sin?

I. "Sin Is The Right Choice"

- A. This first lie is perhaps the greatest of all lies. The devil's overwhelming roar urges us to take the "the lesser of two evils" or to justify our actions based on "the end justifies the means."
 1. When someone sins, there will always be a sympathizer: "Don't worry about it. You couldn't help it. It wasn't your fault."
 2. This teaches that I am not accountable when I sin. When situation ethics is the code of our conduct, we actually begin to think that we are wise for committing sin against God.
- B. The devil tempts us the most at the weakest moment of our lives (Matthew 4:3-10).
 1. Jesus had fasted for forty days, and when He was hungry, the devil came on the scene and offered Him all sorts of allurements.
 2. These would have entrapped a weaker man, or one in which there was not the indelible desire to do right (cp. Luke 2:49; John 4:34).
- C. It's so easy for sin to seem like the right choice all of the time.
 1. The proverbial "little white lie" is normally the "go to" of people who hold to this philosophy. "You can't tell a man his toupee looks bad, you have to tell him he looks distinguished." Yet the Bible still says not to lie (Colossians 3:9; Revelation 21:8).
 2. I brought up adultery in the introduction, and I have seen articles which argue that adultery is understandable for various reasons (emotional needs aren't being met, feeling neglected or unappreciated, verbal abuse, hatred, etc.). But that does not change the fact that it's a sin to God (Galatians 5:19; Hebrews 13:4).

- D. The desires of the flesh are strong within humans (1 John 2:15), but the tempter can be overcome (1 Corinthians 10:13; 1 Peter 2:11; 5:8-9; James 4:7).

II. "No One Will Know"

- A. The secrecy of one's own home or room, the darkness of night, or the seclusion of some back road or alley, has always been a deceptive means by which the devil fools people into believing that "no one will know."
1. What the lie does not reveal is that although it is possible that no other person here on earth will know, you will know!
 - a) You will wake up at 2 a.m. some morning and you will remember and will be terrified; your conscience will scream, "Guilty!"
 - b) In the middle of a sermon a point will be made that touches your heart and you will know you are guilty! Why? Because the word is designed by God to pierce and divide (Hebrews 4:12).
 2. If you ignore it and do not change, that guilt will eat at your conscience, destroying the fiber of your being and character.
- B. Sometimes private sins can become publicly known and everyone can plainly see the consequences of these actions.
1. Judah (Genesis 38:11-26).
 2. Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11).
- C. Yet, the most serious aspect of this lie is that it tries to make you forget that there is an all-seeing God in heaven who knows exactly what you are doing (Numbers 32:23; Luke 12:1-3; Hebrews 4:13).

III. "Look The Other Way"

- A. These attitudes prevail among some brethren:
1. Don't preach too hard against sin. You might run people off.
 2. Don't rock the boat. There has always been problems in this church. We aren't going to solve them by taking them on now.
 3. We have gotten along just fine up to now, as a church, without confronting these issues. Just leave them alone.
- B. Unfortunately, the devil has been very successful in this lie. He has convinced generations of Christians to look the other way.
- C. Sometimes he simply wearies them of the "good fight of faith" (1 Timothy 6:12). Like all soldiers, they eventually get tired of battle and just stop fighting. Unfortunately, with this work stoppage, there is often a softening of their attitude toward sin.
1. We have to expose the unfruitful works of darkness (Ephesians 5:11).
 2. We have to continue to wage "the good warfare" (1 Timothy 1:18).
 3. We can't stop fighting until the battle is over (2 Timothy 4:2, 7).

IV. "You Have Plenty Of Time"

- A. Many people know what they need to do, and intend to serve God some day, but they have a lot they want to do first.
1. The question they should ask is what do I have to do that is more important than serving God?

2. And if it is more important, then I should have no part of it!
- B. "This day" has always been the day God has given us to be saved; tomorrow has never been an acceptable time (Joshua 24:15; 2 Corinthians 6:2).
- C. The devil is very good at lulling us into a false sense of security (James 4:14; cp. Luke 12:20; Matthew 24:36-44).

Conclusion. The timelessness of the Bible is amazing; truths penned 2,000 years ago find relevant, fertile soil in our hearts. Yet, this fact also tells us that we have not learned much about the wages of sin over the past 2,000 years, for there is truly "nothing new under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:3).

Satan is no more clever today than he has ever been; he has simply convinced us that we are more clever and can avoid the consequences that men have never been able to avoid. Do not listen to Satan no matter how good it sounds.

A lot of consciences are seared because of sin, but you would not be here today if your conscience were seared. Therefore, your heart may still have room in it for the cleansing power of scripture. If you are tired of being tricked by the devil and tired of the constant feelings of guilt because you know you should be holy, then come forward to day and cleanse yourself of all past sins by having them washed away in baptism. Our prayers are for you and we will sing this appropriate song to encourage you.