

How Would You Destroy Young Christians? #2

Introduction. Continuing from this morning, we investigated four answers suggested from ChatGPT as to how Satan would destroy young Christians: Isolate them, distract them, feed their pride or shame, and normalize compromise. Now we'll turn to four more ways Satan can destroy young Christians.

From a religious standpoint, the devil is the ultimate adversary of good, tempting humans to stray from righteousness. Part of what we do is teach people that succumbing to the devil's temptations can lead to eternal condemnation (Matthew 25:41-43). This teaching is beneficial because it promotes a moral compass, guiding individuals to live virtuous lives and resist evil.

As we're seeing, the dangers of the devil are multifaceted, encompassing spiritual, psychological, and societal dimensions. Let's look at the final four ways from ChatGPT that Satan can destroy young Christians.

I. Twist Their Identity

- A. Make them question who they are. Feed them lies about their worth, sexuality, calling, or future. Confusion in identity breeds confusion in everything else, especially as they try to work out who they are in Christ.
- B. Scriptural principles to consider:
 - 1. You are "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14), having been created in the image of a holy God (Genesis 1:27; 1 Peter 1:16).
 - 2. You've been raised up by obedience to Christ to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, and are now a part of the body of Christ (Ephesians 2:4-6; 1 Corinthians 12:27).
 - 3. You're part of a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and one of God's special people (1 Peter 2:9). Christ lives in you, and you now live by faith in the Son of God (Galatians 2:20).
 - 4. Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).
 - a) Part of my responsibility is to help you grow in Christ by convincing, rebuking, and exhorting you to put sin to death and live in a consecrated way (2 Timothy 4:2; Colossians 3:5-11).
 - b) Unfortunately, that's sometimes a difficult process (for you and me). Ken Burns used the illustration of an irritant getting into the shell of an oyster (my preaching or talking to you), but this friction, irritation, and resistance can produce a beautiful pearl (2 Timothy 2:21).

II. Use Relationships

- A. Encourage toxic romantic or social connections that lead them away from Christ. Use heartbreak, co-dependency, or lust to cloud judgment.
- B. Scriptural principles to consider:
 - 1. Someone once told me, "It's easier for someone to pull you down from a chair, than for you to pull someone up onto it." Your friends and romantic partners will influence you, your thinking, the way you speak, your behavior, and therefore also your spiritual condition.

2. David said God's way is always perfect, so He should be your main relationship (2 Samuel 22:31). Seek God like David did (Psalm 63:1).
3. You've got to guard your heart because it's the gatekeeper of all your relationships (Proverbs 4:23).
4. Two relationships that can be promoted or exploited:
 - a) God created the marital relationship as something good where two people would function together physically, emotionally, and spiritually (Genesis 2:18, 24; Ephesians 5:22-33).
 - b) Proverbs tells us that the way of the wicked will lead a young Christian away, and that you should leave the presence of a fool (Proverbs 12:26; 14:7-11).

III. Make Them Doubt

- A. Plant seeds of intellectual or emotional doubt: "Is God even real? Is He good? Does He care?" Attack their trust in Scripture and authority in faith.
- B. Scriptural principles to consider:
 1. We need to have mercy on people who are doubting (Jude 22, NASB).
 - a) Doubt is a common human experience and shouldn't be ignored or treated as a sign of weak faith.
 - b) Struggling with faith is simply part of growing — even people in the Bible did this:
 - (1) Peter doubted and sank in front of Jesus (Matthew 14:31).
 - (2) However, Abraham didn't waver in unbelief, but was strengthened because of his faith (Romans 4:20).
 2. You need to embrace curiosity about God, Jesus, and the Bible like a child. Keep asking hard questions, even if you don't seem to be getting answers. And talk to someone you trust (parent, elder, Bible class teacher) about how you're struggling with faith.
 3. There are spiritual realities for which we have no material evidence, though they aren't the less real for that. Faith enables us to know that they exist and, while we have no certainty apart from faith, faith does give us genuine certainty (Hebrews 11:1).
 4. In prayer, God wants you to ask without doubting (James 1:6). We can be of good courage because God will strengthen our heart (Psalm 31:21-24).

IV. Exhaust Their Faith

- A. Overwhelm them with unrealistic expectations, so they burn out and feel like giving up entirely.
- B. Scriptural principles to consider:
 1. The apostles asked for their faith to be increased, but Jesus responded that it's not so much great faith that's required as faith in a great God (Luke 17:5).
 2. If you'll walk by faith, not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7), and trust in the Lord and don't lean on your own understanding (Proverbs 3:5), then you can do all things through Christ who strengthens you (Philippians 4:13).
 3. Faith is built by delighting ourselves in God's statutes, and by not forgetting God's Word (Psalm 119:16). Here's some distinct suggestions:

- a) Read a specific passage or select a specific topic. Engage in focused prayer and contemplation, connecting with God on a personal level (Psalm 63:6; cp. Mark 1:35).
 - b) Tap into the assembly of faithful people here at the Loop. You'll find tremendous mentorship or guidance from devoted members (Deuteronomy 31:7-8; Proverbs 15:22).
 - c) Practice gratitude (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Pinpoint the positive aspects of your life and express thanks for blessings received.
4. If faith doesn't have works it's dead (James 2:17). Therefore, engage in acts of service to provide purpose (Galatians 5:13).

Conclusion. The flip side of all of what we've studied is hope and defense. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 2:11 that we're "not ignorant of [Satan's] schemes." God equips His saints with the armor of God (Ephesians 6:14-17), a congregation of faith, and His Word to withstand attack.

You don't have to fight the enemy in your own strength — you're not called to be strong on your own. You overcome the devil not by willpower, but by the blood of the Lamb and the word of your testimony (Revelation 12:11).

After telling us about Satan, Peter said to resist him. Stand firm, don't be afraid, and be alert. Don't live in fear — walk in victory.

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