

## SATAN'S STRATEGIES—EIGHT DEADLY TRAPS (#s 1,2,3)

**Believers are warned in I Peter Chapter 5** to be sober, alert, vigilant and self-controlled because they (we) have an enemy called the adversary or the devil, who is on the prowl—roaring like an enraged lion—looking for a victim to tear apart and destroy. **What is our defense?** The Bible tells us to **stand firm in our faith** in God and His promises to protect us (**Ephesians 6:10--19**). **Trust the Lord (Psalm 37)** and **remember** that we are not the only one Satan is attacking; believers all over the world are also suffering from the devil's efforts to weaken their faith, turn them away from the only true God, and ultimately destroy their souls (**Rom. 6:23**). **James wrote:** "*Resist the devil and he will flee*" (**James 4:7**).

**Satan works on human weaknesses.** He uses **lies and deceptions**. He talks big but he has a little bite. **He succeeded** in tempting Adam and Eve and gained a foothold in the human race; **but throughout history he lost** in every attempt to totally defeat God's plan and purpose. Yes, he led many astray and caused sin to abound, but **the redeemer came. He lived. He recruited disciples. He died** for the sins of humanity and **He rose** from the grave and **He lives today**.

**Satan talks big**—he deceives multitudes. He **roars** like a fierce beast (**1 Pet. 5:8**)—**But he is a loser!** Based on Scripture God can erect walls that Satan cannot penetrate (**Job 1:10**). He continues to tempt and deceive but he must bow, bend and break before people of faith when we use the spiritual weapons found in **Ephesians chapter six**; and we have the examples of Daniel in the lion's den, his three friends in the fiery furnace, (read the **Book of Daniel**); and Jesus example in **Matthew 4** when He successfully resisted Satan's temptations. Understanding this—**we also need to understand some of the devil's strategies**. Somewhere in my travels I came across an article about Satan's eight deadly traps and copied their names. I don't remember the author or what he wrote; but the Lord inspired me to write about these deadly traps to challenge boys and men (**women too**) to be aware, alert and armed for battle. This I have done in three consecutive lessons. We have the **authority of Jesus Name**, the **indwelling Holy Spirit**, the **Word of God**, the **armor of God** and many precious and powerful promises and examples in the Bible, to learn about and practice on our journey of faith.

### Look with me at eight deadly traps Satan uses to snare and destroy human lives

**1 The Maze** Trapped in social demands and activities and you can't make progress? Like the little animal in a maze—there are many side roads but no doors to let you escape. So you keep running, taking this path, then another. You turn this way and that looking for purpose, peace and joy. **Being trapped** in a meaningless life, like an animal in a maze, can cause confusion and anxiety. Even Christians can get caught in Satan's **Maze trap** and exhaust their faith, energy and hope. **Unfulfilled** self-effort can lead to depression. **Satan traps** many people in just such a life-style knowing that the end is depression and failure—perhaps addictions to escape reality—even death. Keeping people—believers and unbelievers alike—too busy running this way and that way; pursuing their own selfish goals in life; can snare them in one of Satan's deadly traps. So what can you (we) do to escape the **Maze trap**?

We can take time to think, pray and plan. Make a list of the things you have to do—school, job, family, daily Bible reading, time to be quiet and pray. Then make a list of things you would like to do, that you enjoy—hobby, sports, music, read, time with friends, places to go: beach, mountain, museum. Evaluate these activities with Bible verses/values in mind. For starters: **Psalms 1; 15; 24; Galatians 5; Ephesians 6; Hebrews 10**. Choose godly friends and become active in church where you can develop your talents and hone your natural skills for future assignments. According to **Psalm 33** God is ever watching and He will fashion or shape your heart in preparation for a major assignment in His kingdom here on earth.

Make a third list of your goals for life, what you would like to accomplish, what do you think or know God has planned for your life—include biblical concepts you need to live by in order to have purpose and have God's blessings. You need to refer to these lists occasionally in order that your life has God's favor and blessing—and Jesus—to avoid the **maze trap**, in fact all of Satan's traps. **Jesus said:** "*I am the way, the truth and the life*" (**John 14:6**). Jesus is the only way out of a meaningless life. He is the only way to find purpose, the power to fulfill that purpose—and the resulting peace. Follow Jesus and you can **avoid the maze trap**.

**2 The Pumpkin Trap** The American Indians were enterprising and clever. Living in a primitive world they found ways to hunt and survive. One method is called **the pumpkin trap**. The Indians observed the ducks on the lakes and rivers. When they approached the ducks with primitive weapons the ducks would swim away—and if necessary—fly away to safety. As the Indians tried day after day they noticed that each day the ducks didn't fly so far away. The idea came: float a **pumpkin** toward the ducks. As the **pumpkin** came near, the frightened ducks would fly away from the perceived danger. After several days of floating **pumpkins** the ducks observed no real danger but they still moved away from the approaching **pumpkin**. The day came when the ducks were no longer concerned about the floating **pumpkin**.

So the clever Indian hollowed a large **pumpkin**, put it over his head and swam slowly underwater toward the ducks. The ducks were no longer concerned about the floating **pumpkin**—it had become familiar to them—and it came close enough for the Indian to reach up and grab the duck by its feet. Too late the duck realized it had fallen into **the pumpkin trap**. And the wily Indian had accomplished its purpose: **duck for dinner**.

**Familiarity with sin**—and the sinner's neighborhood—can cause you to let down your guard. As time goes by sin doesn't seem to have any danger, until the day you yield to temptation. You may still go to church, read your Bible and everything seems to be o.k. You can repent, maybe more than once, but one thing can lead to another until you fall into Satan's trap and the Holy Spirit departs. You can lose your relationship with the Lord as well as your testimony and—most importantly—without true repentance leading to total forgiveness and a transforming life change, you can lose your eternal salvation.

**The Bible says:** “*Abstain from all appearance of evil (1 Thes. 5:22).*” It says “*Think about things that are above (Col. 3:1).*” The Bible says “*Keep your heart with all diligence (Prov. 4:23).*” **Psalm 1:1** tells us three things we should not do: *walk in the counsel of the ungodly, stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of the scornful.* Simply stated—don't patronize places where sinful activity abounds, or watch immoral TV programs, or listen to questionable programs on the radio, or read books with sexy passages. Familiarity weakens resolve and maximizes the danger of falling into **Satan's pumpkin trap**.

**3 The Frog Trap.** You may have heard the story about putting a **frog** in a pot of cold water. Then you light a fire and the water slowly warms up. The warming process is so slow the **frog** doesn't realize it's danger until it is too late. Then the **frog** can't control it's muscles and therefore it can't jump out of the water and it dies. This is the “**put things off until later**” syndrome. You can become busy and have too much fun in life to think about death and eternity, and you don't recognize the danger signs. You may go to Sunday School, you may have heard the Gospel and sensed the wooing of the Holy Spirit—but you didn't want to give up worldly friends and pleasures. You may have thought: yes—it is important to prepare for heaven, but I want to enjoy the pleasures of this world and will repent later. You may be familiar with the occasion in the **Book of Acts (Chapter 24)** when Paul was making his defense before Felix. As Paul taught about righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix stopped the session with the famous words: “*Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you.*” There is no biblical record that Felix ever found a convenient time.

How many well-meaning people have heard the Gospel but delayed making a decision to change their ways and follow Jesus? **How many** well-meaning believers put off the correction of the Holy Spirit or the Word of God? **How many** hear the call to ministry—or to missions—and put off making the commitment to follow God's purpose for their lives? **Procrastination** is one of Satan's all too effective schemes to catch believers and unbelievers in **the frog trap**. In the **pumpkin** trap you learned that sinful pleasures can become so familiar that you can become a borderline believer—even turn away from the church, the Bible and eventually from God. You can put off the most important decision in your life until it is too late—and you find yourself in the **frog trap** and there is no escaping the consequences. If you make the wrong choice, the torments of hell await you.

These lessons can help you make the right decisions, fulfill your divine destiny and prepare you for heaven and eternity. **Romans 6:23** states that the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life. Also read **John 3: 14—21** and **Rom. 10: 9,10**. The next two lessons complete the series on **Satan's deadly traps**, and will define additional Christian principles that get you on—and keep you on—the pathway that leads to heaven and eternity with the Lord; and many relatives and friends who have made the right decisions in life.