



take it home



Tactics—Part 1 The Subtle War



Tricks - No Treat

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” Genesis 3:1 (ESV)

Here’s Satan’s first appearance in the account of our early days in God’s creation being crafty and asking a question that insinuates that either Eve’s recollection is wrong, or the direction given by God is a liability. That’s the thing to look for in life, the places where you question your own conscience that has been shaped by God’s authority, or you entertain doubts about God’s intent.

When God gives us direction, it’s for our good. His love has constructed the best path for us. When we look at the alternative (temptation) and doubt the calamity along that alternative road (deception) we are listening to the question coming out of Satan’s mouth.

The good news is that God gives us His Spirit to see Satan’s lies for what they are and opens the good path to follow. *The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.*

1 Corinthians 10:13 (NLT)

Do you hear Satan whispering questions? What are they about? Lay this option out to God in prayer asking to see His path clearly and the dangers involved in Satan’s alternatives.

Your Blind Side

...Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Ephesians 6:17 (NLT)

The magician is expert at calling your attention to one thing, while he’s busy maneuvering something else. Viola! The quarter comes out of your ear, the flower blooms in your pocket, the Ace of Hearts travels across the room.

Satan is a master of misdirection. He’s happy to clutter our lives with felt needs and greeds. He puts the bling on what is really just stuff. We rush on the treadmill he is happy to keep at high speed when God invites us to slow down and abide in Him.

How do we take off the blinders and see the reality of God’s plan for us? Slow down and listen to God speak in His Word. Spend time daily re-orienting life with God. This is your defense against the distractions Satan will send during the day. Use this Psalm verse as a prayer for your day. *Turn me away from a life of lies. Graciously provide me with your teachings.* Psalm 119:29 (GW)

Take the Sword

Okay, whether or not you will admit you've played it, you probably have heard of *Dungeons and Dragons*. This is the classic role-playing game that still enjoys high popularity. In it, each player takes on the role of a hero battling monsters, exploring castles and dungeons, etc. If you happen to play a Wizard-type character, it's necessary each morning to prepare your magic spells for use in the day's battle. If not, you may think you are a stalwart warrior, but you're going into battle unarmed...

There is a big push both here at Trinity and across Christianity to have people in the Word every day. 'Read your Bible' is the anthem. If you've ever asked why, this is the week for you.

Satan comes at us with temptations and distractions to pull us away from the life with and promises of God. How do we fight back against his efforts? Paul's letter to the Ephesians contains the familiar "Armor of God" passages where the Sword of the Spirit is described as the *Word of God*. In other words; your sword is the Bible! (Eph 6:17)

When we have absorbed Scripture through daily reading, the Holy Spirit can then turn that Word loose as a weapon in our hearts to resist the efforts of the enemy. In one sense, reading your Bible is like the Wizard preparing his magic spells for the day. I pray you will be ready for that battle by investing yourself in God's Word.

Early morning warfare

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:9-11 NIV

I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world. John 16:33 NIV

Read these verses, first letting your eyes dance over the words. Close your eyes and repeat these verses envisioning all beings above, on, and below the earth bowing down and taking a knee at the most powerful name ever to exist. Meditate on this verse and let your heart soak in with awe the truths that with Jesus's victory on the cross and we as God's beloved children, we have access to this power and authority. Take heart in the fact that by invoking the name of Jesus Christ, our King, we can resist the devil and make him flee (James 4:7-8 NIV). Confess this verse with your mouth and declare with boldness that you are no longer held captive by the things that bind you and you will *Carry out your own salvation with fear and trembling*. Philippians 2:12 CEB.

Now you're ready to start the day!

Pray

"I thank you, my Heavenly Father through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil that all my doings and life may please You."
Luther's Morning Prayer

This little prayer gem is used by Christians around the world as they begin their day. It not only thanks God for His protection, it asks for it to continue during the day..... especially protection from Satan.

Temptation creeps into our lives, prompting little steps away from God.....a little more of something not good for us, a little juicy gossip, a little lie, a little of something not ours, and on and on.....; embracing these temptations, we find ourselves along a path leading away from God. The "evil one" makes temptations seem so small and salacious St. James (4:7-8) encourages us, *Submit yourselves then to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Come near to God and He will come near to you*. How can we resist these temptations which often come to us as subtle whispers and deception? We can know God's word, we can trust the Holy Spirit, and we can PRAY. Use Luther's Morning Prayer each day as a reminder of God's protection. It ends:

"For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have not power over me. Amen"