

WHY ME? HELP AND HOPE FOR THE HURTING: FACTOR TWO

We Reap What We Sow – The Consequence/Chapter Two: The Devil’s Position

What role does the devil play in sinful human behavior that so often results in personal suffering? With the exception of demonic possession, nowhere does the Bible portray Satan or his demon host as having the capability of “making” a person sin. Yet there is much Scriptural evidence that reveals their capacity for exerting a powerful pressure upon each of us toward sin. This influence is commonly referred to as temptation. The Greek word is *peirasmos* and can be used in a positive sense of “testing loyalty,” as in the example of Job where God put him to such a test. But the word is also used negatively to describe an attempt to lure someone toward evil conduct. No one is more uniquely qualified to carry out this task than the devil (1 Thessalonians 3:5). This means that temptation isn’t limited to an internal, individual conflict. It can be only that, but it can be more than that. An external influence can be exerted by Satan. His temptations, like missiles, can land on the “beachhead” of our sin nature, contributing to our sinful demise. However, the likelihood of being directly tempted by the devil is minimal. This is due to his network of vile henchmen who carry out most of his dirty work for him in regard to the allurements of sin. Such a web of evil influence is described by Paul, as he warns us about its dangers, in Ephesians 6:10-12 –

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.”

If this demonic network weren’t enough to influence sinful human beings toward evil, the Word of God tells us that there is a “world system” in place on planet earth, providing the ultimate environment for the encouragement of sin. In 1 John 5:19 we are told that “the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.” The devil is the “god” and “ruler” of this cosmos (2 Corinthians 4:4; John 12:31). He controls and orchestrates it in a manner which keeps people away from God, by keeping them enamored with their sin; encouraging and eliciting sinful behavior through “the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life” (1 John 2:16). This world system in which we all must function, motivates people toward sinful behavior and in the direction of certain suffering and death, all the while mesmerizing them as to what is actually taking place. Yet the devil, who oversees and micromanages the entire process, knows exactly what is going on; with the political realm a special focus of his manipulations (Daniel 10:10-21).

Therefore, Satan’s contribution to the reap/sow dynamic is twofold. Through his demon host, he exerts an external influence known as **temptation**, upon people that are naturally prone toward evil. He also provides a subtle context for this persuasion known as **the world**, a network of activity in which a lost and fallen human race eagerly participates.

In our next post, we will discuss the very dangerous temptation that is unique to Christians, contained in Appendix A of the previously published book.