

CROSSING ATTITUDES

Study Guide

Lesson Two – Lies, Fantasies, & Idols

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When Satan lied to Eve she began to lust for fruit that God told her was harmful. We learned in the last lesson that sinful lusts are desires to enjoy or possess anything more than we enjoy our relationship with God and trust in His will for our lives. When we lust, we long for something rather than resting in God's love and waiting for His provision. Lusts can become a preoccupation in our minds and we begin to fantasize about how wonderful life would be "if only..." When left unchecked, fantasies can become a "must have" that we chase after. It could be a love relationship, the promotion at work, affirmation from others, a smaller pant size, a bigger home, or a million other desires. We cannot chase after a lust and chase after God at the same time. We will surrender to one or the other. What we surrender to, we will serve. If we are not serving God then we are serving an idol. One Bible dictionary defines an idol as, "Something we ourselves make into a god. It does not have to be a statue or a tree. It can be anything that stands between us and God or something we substitute for God."¹

Chasing after the "wonderful life" without resting in God's will becomes an exhausting journey filled with anxiety and fear. Our attitudes are filled with discontentment and frustration as we compare our imaginary life with our perceived reality. (Fantasies tend to warp our view of what is real.) The more anxious and fearful we become, the more we chase after the imagined wonderful life thinking it will relieve the anxiety, but instead, we become even more anxious. It becomes a vicious cycle, sort of like a dog chasing his own tail. He just goes around and around in circles and if he does end up getting his tail, the bite hurts! If we actually attain the fantasy outside of God's provision, we'll get hurt in the end.

1) Read the following verses. What do you learn about the devil, Satan?

John 8:44 (*Jesus is speaking to the Jews who sought to kill Him.*) –

2 Cor 11:14 –

Rev 12:9 –

1 Peter 5:8 –

Eph 6:11 –

¹ Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers

- 2) Read 2 Corinthians 10:5. To put this verse in context, Paul is speaking to the Corinthian church led by false teachers. In this verse, a speculation or argument is a thought. A thought that is lofty (arrogant) and raised up against the knowledge of God is a lie. Every false teaching begins with one thought in someone's head. Evolution began with a lie in Darwin's head. Psychoanalysis began with a lie in Freud's head. Mormonism began with a lie in Joseph Smith's head. Paul is teaching that we should take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, which brings us to truth.

Satan lies to all of us. While the lies we believe may not influence the culture, they can certainly lead us down a dark path of destruction, sometimes for years. For example, a young woman who is raped may believe the lie that she is "damaged goods" and unworthy of love from a good guy. She responds to that lie by longing for acceptance, which she finds by dating guys that sexually use her.

Take a few minutes and think about your own life. What lies does Satan whisper into your head that you tend to believe? Examples would be, "I'm not worthy," "I will always be a failure," "I'm better than others," or "God won't provide." Warren Wiersbe's commentary on this verse states, "Once the walls in the mind have been torn down, the door to the heart can be opened."²

- 3) What are some practical ways you can take ungodly thoughts captive?

Note: One simple question will help you decide if the thoughts you are dwelling on are from God or a lie from the enemy. That question is, "Am I trusting God and loving others, or am I loving myself?" Pray that God will reveal your self-centered attitudes to you.

- 4) A lie of Satan will always turn people to self-centered motives. Once the heart believes a lie, selfish actions will follow. Read Mark 7:20-23. What proceeds out of the heart (attitude)?

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- 5) Read the story of Rachel and Leah in Genesis 29:16-35. It's easy to feel sorry for Leah and yet we don't know if she was a willing participant in Laban's deception. Look again at verses 32-34. What seems to be Leah's fantasy? In verse 35, how did her attitude change? What did she name her son in light of her new attitude?

- 6) Read Revelation 5:4-5. How is Jesus described in verse 5?

- 7) Lies cause anxiety and fear. One common fear is that God won't provide. Read Matthew 6:24-34. Explain what verse 24 means in your own words. From the rest of the passage, why should we not fear that God will provide for us?

- 8) Take a quiet moment and write down the things that you fear (I don't mean spiders) that feeds anxiety in your life. For each fear, identify the lie attached to it.

- 9) Read Romans 5:3-5. What does tribulation produce? The word "hope" in the Bible means something we can confidently expect. Why does hope not disappoint?

- 10) **Psychology Myth:** *"Pursuing a happy life is the most important goal."* How does what we've learned in this lesson refute this myth?

Isaiah 41:10
Do not fear, for I am with you;
Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you, surely I will help you,
Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.