

## Beware of Satan's Secret Weapon!

**T**he Devil has many methods and devices which he uses to try to discourage the faith of believers. But out of all of Satan's strategies, he has a favorite "secret weapon" which has been more effective in destroying Christian lives than anything else in his arsenal. He delights in this weapon. Each time it succeeds, I imagine that he gleefully prances about, celebrating the downfall of another poor soul.

Unfortunately for many Christians, Satan's ultimate weapon still remains a secret. Even though its lethal strike has caused countless numbers of believers to stumble away from God and the fellowship of the Church, and into the clutches of the Devil, most never actually recognized what the weapon was.

By now I'm sure that you're very curious about this weapon and wonder why the Bible didn't warn us about it. However, the fact is, the Bible does warn us! As a matter of fact, Jesus taught about it repeatedly. He certainly knew its danger and made it a priority to instruct his followers of how to protect themselves against it.

What is this mysterious weapon? In the teachings of the Apostle Paul, he exposed the weapon, taught how to be protected from it and made it clear that believers shouldn't be ignorant of its dangers. He said, ***"A further reason for forgiveness is to keep from being outsmarted by Satan; for we know what he is trying to do"*** (2 Cor. 2:11 *The Living Bible*).

There! Did you see what the secret weapon is? Is it clear what Satan was

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trying to do? If it's not obvious to you yet, we see that John also taught how to overcome this weapon so that it would never make us stumble. He wrote, ***"He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him"*** (1 John 2:10).

Are you catching on by now? Satan's secret weapon is "unforgiveness... and an absence of love!" Satan knows that

if he can deceive us into harboring "hurt feelings, anger, or bitterness" toward our fellow Christians, he can cause us to fall from the grace of God. The scriptures say, ***"look diligently lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled"*** (Heb. 12:15).

It grieves the Holy Spirit if we will not forgive and love one another. The Apostle Paul said, ***"And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you"*** (Eph. 4:30-32).

Is it really possible to lose our salvation by merely holding a grudge against someone? Jesus left no room for doubt on the subject. He clearly stated that we cannot have God's forgiveness if we choose to withhold forgiveness toward others. ***"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses"*** (Matt 6:14-15).

Is it no wonder why Satan will work so hard to stir up turmoil and try to keep us from forgiving and loving each other? If he can deceive us into harboring offenses or bitterness, he knows that we would become exempt from God's forgiveness of our sins. The consequences of retained unforgiveness is reiterated in many scriptures: Matt. 18:21-35, Mark 11:25-26, Matt. 6:12, Luke 6:37, Luke 11:4.

It is very clear from scripture that the person who retains unforgiveness is not right with God. Their prayers go unanswered, they lack the Lord's joy and peace. Often there is a feeling of dissatisfaction with virtually everything, which produces a critical and judgmental attitude. They blame their unhappiness on any number of things, but the problem lies within themselves; They're simply out of fellowship with the Lord.

My friends, it's time that we wise up and become aware of Satan's most effective weapon! Many believers still seem to be ignorant of these tactics of the enemy. They coddle hurt feelings and offenses as though they were "pets" to be fed and watered. There is probably nothing else that has been more devastating to the body of Christ than unforgiveness. It has split Churches, destroyed marriages, and ruined lives forever! No wonder Christ spent so much time on the subject.

Jesus taught that loving God and loving one another were the highest ideals of His followers (*Luke 10:27*). Love and forgiveness is the most basic standard of Christianity - it is the mark of followers of Christ - the highest display of spiritual maturity! Love is the very evidence which convicts us as true followers of Jesus Christ (*John 13:35*).

Therefore, Satan's secret weapon is not really so secret after all! Every Christian can be totally protected and immune from its effect by merely obeying this simple scripture:

***"Dear friends, let us practice loving each other, for love comes from God and those who are loving and kind show that they are the children of God, and that they are getting to know Him better. But if a person isn't loving and kind, it shows that he doesn't know God - for God is love" (1 John 4:7-8 The Living Bible).***

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*Unless otherwise stated, all scripture references were taken from The New King James Bible, © Thomas Nelson Inc., 1982.*

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