

WATCH OUT FOR THE 3 "D's"

Paul exhorts us to not be ignorant of satan's schemes:

"...in order that Satan might not outwit us.

For we are not unaware of his schemes."

2 Corinthians 2:11

Let's be careful to watch out for the "3 D's," and not fall into the traps he would set for us. And what are the dreaded "D's" of which I speak? Glad you asked:

D #1 = Doubt: satan looks for ways to undermine our faith in God's promises and our trust in God's character. Look at his first appearance in Scripture, and observe the nature of his deception:

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say,

'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

Genesis 3:1

He even tried the "doubt" tactic with our Lord. Listen to the first words satan speaks to Jesus during their battle in the wilderness:

The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God..."

Matthew 4:3

The enemy is always looking for an opportunity to whisper his words of doubt into our minds - and *his best works are the most subtle*. Test the fruit of your thoughts; are they working peace, trust, & joy in your heart? Or are they causing you to doubt God's love & faithfulness, and inciting fear about the future? Remember: **when the fruit is bad, so was the seed**. Take the thoughts captive (2 Corinthians 10:3-5) and fill your mind with God's Word!

D #2 = Discouragement: The enemy loves to get us discouraged, because he knows what happens next: **we stop praying!** Effective prayer requires expectation that the God to whom we pray is listening, caring, and moving on our behalf. But discouragement distracts us from all that, and tells us in essence, *"Hey, give up! You're not doing any good with all this prayer, anyway. You're just wasting your time and effort."*

At the heart of the matter, discouragement is really all about us - things didn't work out the way we wanted, in the timing we expected. And we can even entertain thoughts that maybe God wasn't quite so good to us

after all. Oswald Chambers said, "Discouragement is disenchanting self-love." But listen to what Isaiah said about Jesus:

*"A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out.
In faithfulness he will bring forth justice;
he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth."*

Isaiah 42:3-4, NIV

Jesus didn't get discouraged because **He wasn't on His own mission**; He was doing the will of His Father. If we are really building God's Kingdom (and not our own), we have no right or reason to get discouraged, because we can trust our Father to do the impossible. We simply do what we can: pray, love, serve. Like Keith Green sang, *"Just keep doing your best, and pray that it's blessed – Jesus takes care of the rest."*

Speaking of singing, it's vital that we learn to recognize discouragement as a spiritual attack from a spiritual foe, and that we learn to **respond with the spiritual warfare of praise**. Isaiah talks about this:

*"...to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair."*

Isaiah 61:3, NIV

So the next time you feel discouraged, PRAISE HIM! Don't wait until you "feel" like praising – answer the attack with the goodness of God.

D #3 = Dismay: Perhaps this one should really be called "fear"... but then it wouldn't be the 3 D's! And what kind of title *"Watch Out for the 2 D's and the 1 F"* be?

Anyway, "DISMAY" is essentially an intensified form of fear. In other words, fear is the fiery dart with which satan first strikes. If accepted, heeded, listened to and reasoned with, it produces the fruit of dismay in our lives – a dreadful report about the future, a viewing of "facts" that forgets the goodness of God in the equation, and an ultimately hopeless outlook. This is **dismay**.

The good news: dismay is NEVER God's word for His covenant people! Listen to His words (again through Isaiah) unto His own:

*"So do not fear, for I am with you;
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you and help you;
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."*

Isaiah 41:10

*So this is what the Sovereign LORD says:
"See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure
foundation; the one who trusts will never be dismayed."*
Isaiah 28:16, NIV

GOD HAS NOT GIVEN YOU A SPIRIT OF FEAR! (2 Timothy 1:7) And you don't have to put up with lies, worries, & anxieties that leave you feeling dismayed and downcast. Remember, "**Perfect love casts out fear**" (1 John 4:18). So **receive** His love afresh, and **expel** any fear or dismay that has found residence in your heart or mind.

There they are: **Doubt, Discouragement, and Dismay** – 3 D's to watch out for. And remember: the best **Defense** is a good offense. The more we fill our hearts & minds with the **Word, worship, prayer, praise**, the less room we'll have for satan's **Deception Designed to Distract** us.

May the Lord richly bless you with His love today,

Pastor Matthew Casey