

How does Satan destroy love among brethren?

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Introduction: We should not be surprised at the tactics of Satan.

- A. When working with other men we must constantly be humbled and because of that be willing to follow the wisdom of God. **(James 3:13-18)**
 - 1. When we trust God it becomes all about Him and we empty ourselves.
 - 2. When brethren want to serve God there is not a problem we cannot work out.
- B. There will be some who seek to draw disciples unto themselves. **(Acts 20:30)**
 - 1. They will appear humble, loving and often have a great ability to speak. Sadly, they have a different motive than what is outwardly shown.
(Rom 16:18; Col 2:18-19, 23)
 - 2. How can I know when this is happening? How can I keep loved ones from being pulled into such a movement?
 - 3. Let us carefully look at the difference in how children of God work out problems and those who submit to the wisdom of Satan.

I. The three pillars of false movements - the components of Satan's wisdom (Jas 3:14)

- A. Bitterness towards brethren. **(Heb 12:15)**
 - 1. **πικρία** - **bitterness**; literally, of plants that produce inedible or poisonous fruit, *root that bears bitter fruit*; used metaphorically of a person whose influence or actions become harmful to a community *one who causes trouble* (HE 12.15; ..); figuratively, as a hostile attitude (*angry*) *resentment, animosity* (EP 4.31)
 - 2. It is *very easy* to spread anger and bitterness. The world is not concerned with justice and mercy. They are *quick to believe a falsehood!* Let us not do this.
 - 3. The “anger family” can accomplish much in Satan's plan. **(Gal 5:19-21)**
 - 4. The unstable are especially vulnerable to this powerful emotion. **(Eph 4:26-27)**
 - 5. “I am so fed up with churches of Christ” or “These legalistic brethren are telling lies against me!” **(Prov 18:17-19)**
- B. Pride towards brethren – **(Jas 3:14; 1 Jn 2:16)**
 - 1. Pride and bitterness are common partners. **(Lk 18:9)**
 - 2. Pride is often employed by those who have no foundation to artificially build one up. Many look down on their “ignorant” brethren. **(1 Cor 8:1-3)**
 - 3. Pride rejoices in the faults of others. You live in the land of “throw-away” people. You write them off with no attempt to work with them.
 - 4. They often discuss the faults of brethren as a means of building themselves up. **(2 Cor 10:12, 18)**
- C. A learned dishonesty. **(Lk 20:4-7)**
 - 1. This creates a heart that cannot receive the word of God. **(Lk 8:15 KJV)**
 - 2. Men of faith and conviction are open and bold. **(2 Cor 4:2; 3:2; Jn 1:47)**
 - 3. One brother described a man's preaching as “veiled subtleties that leave you uneasy after hearing the sermons.”
 - 4. They are always “misunderstood” and love to wear martyr's clothes. (Quote)
 - 5. How did Jesus teach others? Why do men hide their beliefs? **(Jn 18:20)**

II. Tools Satan uses to build his pillars

A. Wedge issues – How are differences among brethren are handled?

1. Satan's wisdom works to build wedges between brethren, the love of Christ shows mercy and patience.
2. "A crisis is a terrible thing to waste." Consider how differences are exploited to achieve worldly goals. The love of God is very different. **(1 Cor 13:4-7)**
3. Some issues: the term "church of Christ", opposing "legalism," how to best conduct our assemblies, use of restoration history, CENI and "worship."
4. By far, the biggest wedge issue used to spread bitterness amongst brethren is the care of the needy. This is not the first time where the needy are used as a prop and as a carnal tool. **(Mt 6:1-4)** (Quotes)

B. Secrecy and whispering – How is a fellowship is built upon bitterness and flattery? **(1 Thess 2:3-6)**

1. They complain about others "gossip" they work hard to destroy relationships with those that could answer their doctrine. "Ex. Don't give this to Larry!"
2. They do not have the spirit of open examination! **(Acts 17:11; 2 Pt 2:1-3)**
3. They use emotion to separate them from others. **(Gal 4:16-17)**

C. Discarding your brethren

1. How do people *suddenly* rebel against an eldership and destroy relationships that have been built for years? They have help. **(1 Jn 2:9-11)**
2. Consider what the scriptures describe as one being captured. **(2 Pt 2:18-19)**
3. I have been shocked to see the ridicule of brethren publicly. It is hard for those exposed to this over time to overcome it. Ex. Korah **(Num 16:41)**
4. Years ago I learned a truth from a proponent of the "house church movement." The average life span of a house church is 2 years.
5. These movements are a halfway house to denominationalism or worse.
6. Doctrines that are favored are those which are different from the "traditional."

III. How to defeat Satan's battle plan

A. We overcome darkness with the light! **(Jn 3:19-21)**

1. We must make local churches as a place where a strong faith is built.
2. We must solve problems and desire to be with each other. **(Eph 4:31-32)**

B. We must give greater emphasis to Bible reading and Bible preaching. **(2 Tim 4:1-4)**

1. When God is in view then my actions will be changed. **(1 Jn 4:20-21)**
2. One brother recently said: "In the church the reading of the books of men is on the decrease and the reading of the Bible is on the decrease."
3. Consider how the writings of Francis Chan and David Platt are being used.

C. Let us not become fearful but learn from these things to have a greater service.

1. I do not believe that this current movement will last.
2. What can I do to have an assurance with my God so that my heart overflows to be used by God as a servant? **(1 Jn 4:17-19; Gal 5:22-26)**
3. We do need watchful elderships who will protect their flocks. Failure to do so will affect many.

Conclusion: Let us have our eyes opened to God's word to see the tactics of Satan!