

Paul observes concerning Satan that “we are not unaware of his schemes”, a statement we need to be able to make with confidence as well. Satan is an adversary of God and of all who belong to God. Do you know your enemy? Here are some of the “devices” or “schemes” which Satan uses in his battle.

1. **Satan is glad to have some people deny his existence.** Such a strategy allows Satan to operate without having attention directed at him or it misdirects solutions away from the true cause of problems.
But the Bible clearly teaches that Satan does exist. He is a personal being, created by God as a holy angel who subsequently rebelled against God. His activities are presented from Genesis to Revelation with even detailed accounts in some places, e.g., the trials of Job (Job 1-2) and the temptation of Jesus (Mt 4 and Lk 4).
2. **Satan will try to make himself seem less dangerous than he really is.** He is neither a little, red, horned devil whispering bad suggestions, nor an impersonal, evil force to be used to one’s own advantage.
 - Biblical figures portray real danger: an enormous dragon that sweeps a third of the angelic host with him in his rebellion against God (Rev 12); a roaring lion who is seeking those he can devour (1 Pet 5:8).
 - Satan has power over lightning and wind (Job 1:16, 19), influencing and directing people to do his will (Job 1:15-16), afflicting Job with boils (Job 2:7). (See also Lk 22:3; Mt 16:23; Lk 13:11; 2 Th. 2:9).
3. **Satan can also attack by having people think that he is more than he is.** We sometimes wrongly overestimate Satan, but the Bible teaches that Satan has distinct limitations.
He must report to God (Job 1:6; 2:1; Mt 25:41). His thoughts are open to God (*cf.* Prov 15:11). He is not all powerful (Rev 12:7; 1 John 4:4). He does not know everything, since he could not foretell the future with certainty (Job 1). He cannot be everywhere at the same time (Job 1:7; 1 Peter 5:9). God limits his activities (Job 1:12; Lk 22:31). His schemes are knowable (2 Cor 2:11). He has been and will be judged (*cf.* Gen 3:15; John 12:21; 16:11; Rev 12:7-12; 20:1-3, 10). He can be resisted (Jam 4:7; 1 Pet 5:8-9).
4. **Satan wants us to think wrongly about ourselves, either that we can do more than we can or less than we can.** The believer should understand that in ourselves we have no power or authority to defeat Satan, but in Christ we have all that we need to resist Satan and stand victorious.
 - 1 Corinthians 10:13 – Temptations are divinely limited and bearable. We are responsible to make use of that provision. Resistance is therefore always possible.
 - Ephesians 6:10-11 – Our strength to resist, however, lies in the Lord and not in us.
 - James 4:7-8a – Our capacity to resist Satan is linked with our submission to God and drawing near to Him.
5. **Satan will try to lead us away from what we should be doing.**
 - We should draw near to God and submit to Him. We must put on the whole armor of God (Eph 6). Drawing near to God is not seeking an emotional experience but involves things which we can consciously do: living truthfully, righteously, and by faith, learning and applying the word of God.
 - It is a tactic of Satan to draw us away from God, tempting us in these areas and distracting us from God’s Word or causing doubt concerning its usefulness.
6. **Satan will try to trick us through false teaching and philosophies of the world.** This can come from false teachers who seek to come in (2 Peter 2:1), some from within the church who distort the truth (Acts 20:30), or from worldly thinking (2 Corinthians 10:4-5; Colossians 2:8; *cf.* 1 Timothy 4:1).
 - Do not let Satan and the world press us into a mold of thinking that is contrary to God, but let God’s word change the way we think (Romans 12:2).
 - A single seed of untruth can bear fruit in much evil. E.g., those who motivate giving with the promise of material blessings sow to our sinful nature. The desire for riches is the root of all kinds of evil (1 Tim 6:10).
7. **Satan will deceive with the appearance of good.**
 - False teachers will seldom look bad. “Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light”, his servants as servants of righteousness (2 Corinthians 11:14f).
 - If Satan cannot trick us with things that only appear good, he may yet distract us from that which we should be doing by truly good things which we can easily justify. But God has given us certain responsibilities which we must do first.
8. **Satan uses good and even God-given desires to tempt and trick us.**
 - Satan tempted Jesus to turn stone into bread when Jesus was hungry. Being hungry and desiring food is normal and okay. But satisfying our physical desires can never take precedence over satisfying God’s desires for our lives (Matthew 4:4).
 - Even a desire to serve God and do good can be wrong, which Uzzah discovered when God killed him for touching the ark of the covenant when he thought it might fall (2 Samuel 6). True good is defined by God’s Word. Therefore, we must know God’s Word.
9. **Satan can also use the good intentions of others.**
 - Satan used Peter who with good intentions rebuked Jesus in His intent to go to Jerusalem to die (Mark 8:33).
 - Attempting to encourage a young believer by giving authority in the church too soon may actually lead him to sin, so Paul forbids it (1 Timothy 3:6).

We should not be unaware of Satan’s devices nor of the protection which we have. Christ has won over Satan (John 12:31; Rev 12:11), and intercedes for us (John 17:15). We can prepare by knowing Satan’s devices (2 Cor 2:11) and protect ourselves by humbly submitting to God, drawing near to Him and resisting Satan (James 4:6-7), putting on the whole armor of God (Eph 6:10-17), and seeking protection from God in prayer (Eph 6:18; Mt 6:13).