

Spirit Warfare: NOT IGNORANT OF HIS SCHEMES
10 Strategies of Satan Against Churches and Families
Dr. John Carmichael

[2Co 2:11 NASB95] 11 so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.

- A wise military leader does not merely study his own army. He also studies the enemy.
- He wants to know: How does the enemy attack? Where does the enemy look for weakness? What methods does the enemy repeatedly use? How can those attacks be anticipated and resisted?
- Paul tells the Corinthian church that Satan desires to gain an advantage over believers. The language pictures someone being exploited, outmaneuvered, or defrauded.
- Satan does not need to possess everyone to influence them. He looks for thoughts, attitudes, wounds, appetites, offenses, fears, and relationships through which he can work.
- However, Paul declares: "We are not ignorant of his schemes."
- The word translated "schemes" refers to Satan's designs, intentions, thoughts, or strategies.
- The Bible does not give us an exhaustive catalog of every demon. It does, however, reveal recurring patterns of spiritual activity.
- We must avoid two extremes.
 - The first extreme says: "There is no spiritual dimension to our problems."
 - The second extreme says: "Every problem is caused by a demon."
- Not every sickness is demonic. Not every delay is demonic. Not every disagreement is demonic. Not every emotional struggle is demonic.
- Nevertheless, Scripture clearly teaches that demons can deceive, oppress, afflict, tempt, divide, intimidate, and resist God's purposes.
- Spiritual maturity does not blame demons for everything. Spiritual maturity also does not ignore demonic activity when Scripture tells us it is real.

What recurring satanic strategies must believers recognize so that the enemy does not gain an advantage in our churches and families?

Throughout Scripture, we can identify at least ten recurring strategies through which Satan attempts to influence individuals, disrupt families, and weaken the ministry of the church.

I. THE STRATEGY OF FALSEHOOD - The Lying Spirit

- a. [1Ki 22:21-23 NASB95] 21 "Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD and said, 'I will entice him.' 22 "The LORD said to him, 'How?' And he said, 'I will go out and be a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' Then He said, 'You are to entice [him] and also prevail. Go and do so.' 23 "Now therefore, behold, the LORD has put a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets; and the LORD has proclaimed disaster against you."

[Jhn 8:44 NASB95] 44 "You are of [your] father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own [nature,] for he is a liar and the father of lies.

[1Ti 4:1 NASB95] 1 But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,

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[2Th 2:9-11 NASB95] 9 [that is,] the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, 10 and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. 11 For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false,

- b. The first satanic attack recorded in Scripture involved a lie. The serpent asked Eve: "Indeed, has God said?" —Genesis 3:1
- c. Satan's primary weapon is not always obvious evil. Frequently, it is distorted truth.
- d. Jesus called the devil "a liar and the father of lies." Scripture also records a lying spirit influencing the prophets of Ahab.
- e. This does not mean every lie is caused directly by a demon. Human beings can lie from their own sinful hearts. Nevertheless, lying, deception, false doctrine, and spiritual counterfeits reflect the character and strategy of Satan.
- f. How Falsehood Affects Church Ministry
 - False teaching replaces biblical truth.
 - Prophecy can be manipulated for personal benefit.
 - Leaders may hide problems rather than address them.
 - Gossip spreads unverified stories.
 - People create false narratives about pastors, ministries, or fellow believers.
 - Spiritual experiences are accepted without being tested by Scripture.
 - A church can become more interested in what is dramatic than in what is true.
- g. How Falsehood Affects Families
 - Spouses hide conversations, purchases, relationships, or habits.
 - Children learn to conceal rather than confess.
 - Family members assume motives without knowing facts.
 - Secret addictions create double lives.
 - False accusations destroy trust.
 - Satan knows that trust is difficult to build and easy to destroy.
- h. The Believer's Response: We overcome falsehood through truth. "You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." —John 8:32
- i. Test every teaching. Test every prophetic word. Refuse gossip. Tell the truth. Bring hidden things into the light.

II. THE STRATEGY OF FRIGHT - The Spirit of Fear

- a. [2Ti 1:7 NASB95] 7 For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.
- b. [Rom 8:15 NASB95] 15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"
- c. [1Jo 4:18 NASB95] 18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.
- d. [Heb 2:14-15 NASB95] 14 Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.
- e. "For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline." —2 Timothy 1:7
- f. Fear is more than an emotion when it becomes a controlling spiritual force.

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- g. There is a natural fear that warns us of danger. There is also a tormenting fear that paralyzes obedience, distorts perception, and causes people to live under constant dread.
- h. The enemy uses fear to make believers retreat from what God has called them to do.
- i. How Fright Affects Church Ministry
 - Leaders become afraid to make necessary decisions.
 - Believers fear witnessing to others.
 - Churches avoid spiritual gifts because they fear excess.
 - Churches avoid deliverance because they fear controversy.
 - People fear criticism more than they fear disobeying God.
 - Ministries become controlled by the opinions of people.
 - Fearful churches preserve institutions but rarely advance the kingdom.
- j. How Fright Affects Families
 - Parents become controlling because they fear what might happen.
 - Spouses interpret every difficulty as a threat.
 - Children inherit the anxieties of their parents.
 - Families make decisions based on panic instead of prayer.
 - Fear of rejection prevents honest communication.
 - Fear of conflict allows serious problems to remain unresolved.
- k. The Believer's Response: We overcome fright through faith. Faith does not deny danger. Faith declares that God is greater than the danger.
- l. "When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You." —Psalm 56:3

III. THE STRATEGY OF FORLORNNESS - The Spirit of Heaviness

- a. [Isa 61:1-3 NASB95] 1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners; 2 To proclaim the favorable year of the LORD And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn, 3 To grant those who mourn [in] Zion, Giving them a garland instead of ashes, The oil of gladness instead of mourning, The mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. So they will be called oaks of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.
- b. [Psa 42:5 NASB95] 5 Why are you in despair, O my soul? And [why] have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him [For] the help of His presence.
- c. [Act 10:38 NASB95] 38 "[You know of] Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and [how] He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.
- d. Isaiah speaks of: "The mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting." —Isaiah 61:3
- e. The traditional expression "spirit of heaviness" describes a state of faintness, despair, darkness, and oppression.
- f. We should not assume that every experience of grief or depression is caused by a demon. Elijah experienced exhaustion and despair after a tremendous spiritual victory. He needed sleep, food, divine reassurance, and renewed purpose.
- g. Some struggles require pastoral care, counseling, medical treatment, rest, relational support, or a combination of these.
- h. Nevertheless, Scripture also recognizes spiritual oppression that weighs upon people and attempts to steal their hope.
- i. How Forlornness Affects Church Ministry

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- Worship becomes lifeless.
 - Prayer becomes mechanical.
 - Leaders lose vision.
 - Volunteers become chronically discouraged.
 - The atmosphere becomes marked by negativity.
 - People expect defeat before ministry begins.
 - The enemy wants a church to say: "Nothing is changing. Nothing will ever change. There is no reason to keep praying."
- j. How Forlornness Affects Families
- The emotional atmosphere of the home becomes continually dark.
 - Family members withdraw from one another.
 - Hope is replaced by cynicism.
 - Every conversation centers on what is wrong.
 - Persistent discouragement robs the family of joy.
 - Past disappointments become predictions of the future.
- k. The Believer's Response: We overcome forlornness through praise, presence, and hope. Praise is not pretending that the pain does not exist. Praise declares that pain does not have the final word.
- l. "Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God." —Psalm 42:5

IV. THE STRATEGY OF INFIRMITY - The Spirit of Infirmary

- a. [Luk 13:10-16 NASB95] 10 And He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. 11 And there was a woman who for eighteen years had had a sickness caused by a spirit; and she was bent double, and could not straighten up at all. 12 When Jesus saw her, He called her over and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your sickness." 13 And He laid His hands on her; and immediately she was made erect again and [began] glorifying God. 14 But the synagogue official, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, [began] saying to the crowd in response, "There are six days in which work should be done; so come during them and get healed, and not on the Sabbath day." 15 But the Lord answered him and said, "You hypocrites, does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the stall and lead him away to water [him?]" 16 "And this woman, a daughter of Abraham as she is, whom Satan has bound for eighteen long years, should she not have been released from this bond on the Sabbath day?"
- b. [Act 10:38 NASB95] 38 "[You know of] Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and [how] He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.
- c. [Mat 8:16-17 NASB95] 16 When evening came, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill. 17 [This was] to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: "HE HIMSELF TOOK OUR INFIRMITIES AND CARRIED AWAY OUR DISEASES."
- d. [Jas 5:14-16 NASB95] 14 Is anyone among you sick? [Then] he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; 15 and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. 16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.
- e. Luke describes a woman who had: "A sickness caused by a spirit" —Luke 13:11

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- f. Jesus later said: "This woman, a daughter of Abraham as she is, whom Satan has bound for eighteen long years..." —Luke 13:16
- g. Jesus explicitly connected her physical condition to satanic bondage.
- h. However, the Bible does not teach that every sickness is caused by a demon.
- i. Paul referred to physical infirmities without identifying them as demonic. Timothy had recurring stomach problems. Epaphroditus became physically ill. Trophimus was left sick at Miletus.
- j. Biblical discernment refuses both extremes:
 - We do not call every sickness demonic.
 - We do not deny that some sickness can involve demonic oppression.
- k. How Infirmary Affects Church Ministry
 - Chronic illness can discourage faithful believers.
 - Physical weakness can limit ministry participation.
 - A church may stop believing for healing.
 - People may normalize conditions Christ desires to confront.
 - Alternatively, sick people may be blamed for lacking faith.
 - The church must minister healing without condemning the suffering.
- l. How Infirmary Affects Families
 - Long-term illness creates emotional and financial strain.
 - Caregivers become exhausted.
 - Family life can begin revolving around sickness.
 - Hope can diminish after years of unanswered prayer.
 - Fear of illness may become as oppressive as illness itself.
- m. The Believer's Response: We respond with compassionate prayer, spiritual discernment, appropriate care, and faith in Christ. We pray for healing. We resist satanic oppression. We seek wise medical care. We support the suffering. We refuse condemnation.
- n. Jesus called the suffering woman a "daughter of Abraham" before He called her condition bondage. Her condition was not her identity.

V. THE STRATEGY OF SILENCING - The Deaf and Mute Spirit

- a. [Mar 9:14-29 NASB95] 14 When they came [back] to the disciples, they saw a large crowd around them, and [some] scribes arguing with them. 15 Immediately, when the entire crowd saw Him, they were amazed and [began] running up to greet Him. 16 And He asked them, "What are you discussing with them?" 17 And one of the crowd answered Him, "Teacher, I brought You my son, possessed with a spirit which makes him mute; 18 and whenever it seizes him, it slams him [to the ground] and he foams [at the mouth,] and grinds his teeth and stiffens out. I told Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not [do it.]" 19 And He answered them and said, "O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him to Me!" 20 They brought the boy to Him. When he saw Him, immediately the spirit threw him into a convulsion, and falling to the ground, he [began] rolling around and foaming [at the mouth.] 21 And He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. 22 "It has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!" 23 And Jesus said to him, " 'If You can?' All things are possible to him who believes." 24 Immediately the boy's father cried out and said, "I do believe; help my unbelief." 25 When Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You deaf and mute spirit, I command you, come out of him and do not

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enter him again." 26 After crying out and throwing him into terrible convulsions, it came out; and [the boy] became so much like a corpse that most [of them] said, "He is dead!" 27 But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him; and he got up. 28 When He came into [the] house, His disciples [began] questioning Him privately, "Why could we not drive it out?" 29 And He said to them, "This kind cannot come out by anything but prayer."

- b. [Mar 7:32-37 NASB95] 32 They brought to Him one who was deaf and spoke with difficulty, and they implored Him to lay His hand on him. 33 Jesus took him aside from the crowd, by himself, and put His fingers into his ears, and after spitting, He touched his tongue [with the saliva:] 34 and looking up to heaven with a deep sigh, He said to him, "Ephphatha!" that is, "Be opened!" 35 And his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was removed, and he [began] speaking plainly. 36 And He gave them orders not to tell anyone; but the more He ordered them, the more widely they continued to proclaim it. 37 They were utterly astonished, saying, "He has done all things well; He makes even the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."
- c. [Mat 12:22 NASB95] 22 Then a demon-possessed man [who was] blind and mute was brought to Jesus, and He healed him, so that the mute man spoke and saw.
- d. In Mark 9, Jesus confronted a spirit that made a boy unable to speak and attempted to destroy him.
- e. Jesus addressed it directly: "You deaf and mute spirit, I command you, come out of him and do not enter him again." —Mark 9:25
- f. This was a specific case of demonic affliction. It should not be used to suggest that every person with a hearing or speech impairment is demonized.
- g. However, the passage reveals a broader satanic strategy: the enemy wants to prevent people from hearing truth and speaking what is true.
- h. How Silencing Affects Church Ministry
 - People refuse to hear correction.
 - Believers become spiritually dull.
 - The church stops listening to the Holy Spirit.
 - Witnesses become afraid to speak about Christ.
 - Victims remain silent about abuse or misconduct.
 - Leaders silence questions to protect their authority.
 - Congregations hear sermons without responding in obedience.
- i. How Silencing Affects Families
 - Spouses stop listening to one another.
 - Parents speak but never hear their children's hearts.
 - Children feel unable to express pain.
 - Important issues remain unspoken.
 - Silence becomes punishment.
 - Communication breaks down and emotional distance grows.
- j. The enemy attacks both hearing and speaking because healthy relationships require both.
- k. The Believer's Response: We overcome silencing through prayer, listening, truth-telling, and Christ's authority.
- l. "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." —Revelation 2:7

VI. THE STRATEGY OF STRIFE - The Patterns of Korah and Absalom

- a. [Num 16:1-35 NASB95] 1 Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of

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Reuben, took [action,] 2 and they rose up before Moses, together with some of the sons of Israel, two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, chosen in the assembly, men of renown. 3 They assembled together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "You have gone far enough, for all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is in their midst; so why do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?" 4 When Moses heard [this,] he fell on his face; 5 and he spoke to Korah and all his company, saying, "Tomorrow morning the LORD will show who is His, and who is holy, and will bring [him] near to Himself; even the one whom He will choose, He will bring near to Himself. 6 "Do this: take censers for yourselves, Korah and all your company, 7 and put fire in them, and lay incense upon them in the presence of the LORD tomorrow; and the man whom the LORD chooses [shall be] the one who is holy. You have gone far enough, you sons of Levi!" 8 Then Moses said to Korah, "Hear now, you sons of Levi, 9 is it not enough for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the [rest of] the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself, to do the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to minister to them; 10 and that He has brought you near, [Korah,] and all your brothers, sons of Levi, with you? And are you seeking for the priesthood also? 11 "Therefore you and all your company are gathered together against the LORD; but as for Aaron, who is he that you grumble against him?" 12 Then Moses sent a summons to Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab; but they said, "We will not come up. 13 "Is it not enough that you have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey to have us die in the wilderness, but you would also lord it over us? 14 "Indeed, you have not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, nor have you given us an inheritance of fields and vineyards. Would you put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up!" 15 Then Moses became very angry and said to the LORD, "Do not regard their offering! I have not taken a single donkey from them, nor have I done harm to any of them." 16 Moses said to Korah, "You and all your company be present before the LORD tomorrow, both you and they along with Aaron. 17 "Each of you take his firepan and put incense on it, and each of you bring his censer before the LORD, two hundred and fifty firepans; also you and Aaron [shall] each [bring] his firepan." 18 So they each took his [own] censer and put fire on it, and laid incense on it; and they stood at the doorway of the tent of meeting, with Moses and Aaron. 19 Thus Korah assembled all the congregation against them at the doorway of the tent of meeting. And the glory of the LORD appeared to all the congregation. 20 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 21 "Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them instantly." 22 But they fell on their faces and said, "O God, God of the spirits of all flesh, when one man sins, will You be angry with the entire congregation?" 23 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 24 "Speak to the congregation, saying, 'Get back from around the dwellings of Korah, Dathan and Abiram.'" 25 Then Moses arose and went to Dathan and Abiram, with the elders of Israel following him, 26 and he spoke to the congregation, saying, "Depart now from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing that belongs to them, or you will be swept away in all their sin." 27 So they got back from around the dwellings of Korah, Dathan and Abiram; and Dathan and Abiram came out [and] stood at the doorway of their tents, along with their wives and their sons and their little ones. 28 Moses said, "By this you shall know that the LORD has sent me to do all these deeds; for this is not my doing. 29 "If these men die the death of all men or if they suffer the fate of all men, [then] the LORD has not sent me. 30 "But if the LORD brings about an entirely new thing and the ground opens its mouth and swallows

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them up with all that is theirs, and they descend alive into Sheol, then you will understand that these men have spurned the LORD." 31 As he finished speaking all these words, the ground that was under them split open; 32 and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, and their households, and all the men who belonged to Korah with [their] possessions. 33 So they and all that belonged to them went down alive to Sheol; and the earth closed over them, and they perished from the midst of the assembly. 34 All Israel who [were] around them fled at their outcry, for they said, "The earth may swallow us up!" 35 Fire also came forth from the LORD and consumed the two hundred and fifty men who were offering the incense.

- b. [Jde 1:11 NASB95] 11 Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.
- c. [2Sa 15:1-14 NASB95] 1 Now it came about after this that Absalom provided for himself a chariot and horses and fifty men as runners before him. 2 Absalom used to rise early and stand beside the way to the gate; and when any man had a suit to come to the king for judgment, Absalom would call to him and say, "From what city are you?" And he would say, "Your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel." 3 Then Absalom would say to him, "See, your claims are good and right, but no man listens to you on the part of the king." 4 Moreover, Absalom would say, "Oh that one would appoint me judge in the land, then every man who has any suit or cause could come to me and I would give him justice." 5 And when a man came near to prostrate himself before him, he would put out his hand and take hold of him and kiss him. 6 In this manner Absalom dealt with all Israel who came to the king for judgment; so Absalom stole away the hearts of the men of Israel. 7 Now it came about at the end of forty years that Absalom said to the king, "Please let me go and pay my vow which I have vowed to the LORD, in Hebron. 8 "For your servant vowed a vow while I was living at Geshur in Aram, saying, 'If the LORD shall indeed bring me back to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD.'" 9 The king said to him, "Go in peace." So he arose and went to Hebron. 10 But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then you shall say, 'Absalom is king in Hebron.'" 11 Then two hundred men went with Absalom from Jerusalem, who were invited and went innocently, and they did not know anything. 12 And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, from his city Giloh, while he was offering the sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong, for the people increased continually with Absalom. 13 Then a messenger came to David, saying, "The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom." 14 David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, "Arise and let us flee, for [otherwise] none of us will escape from Absalom. Go in haste, or he will overtake us quickly and bring down calamity on us and strike the city with the edge of the sword."
- d. [Rom 16:17-18 NASB95] 17 Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. 18 For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.
- e. [Jas 3:14-18 NASB95] 14 But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and [so] lie against the truth. 15 This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. 16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. 17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits,

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unwavering, without hypocrisy. 18 And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

- f. Jude warns about those who: “Perished in the rebellion of Korah.” —Jude 11
- g. Korah resisted the leadership God had established through Moses and Aaron. He gathered others around his grievance and presented rebellion as a concern for equality and holiness.
- h. Absalom employed a similar but distinct strategy.
- i. He stood near the city gate, listened to people’s complaints, suggested that David’s leadership was inadequate, and implied that he would treat them better.
- j. “So Absalom stole away the hearts of the men of Israel.” —2 Samuel 15:6
- k. Korah attacked authority openly. Absalom undermined authority relationally.
- l. Neither Jude nor Samuel calls this a “Korah spirit” or an “Absalom spirit.” It is safer to speak of recurring patterns of rebellion, ambition, offense, and division that Satan can exploit.
- m. The Korah Pattern
 - Challenges authority from a place of pride.
 - Gathers disgruntled people.
 - Spiritualizes personal ambition.
 - Treats accountability as oppression.
 - Claims that everyone is equally qualified for every role.
- n. The Absalom Pattern
 - Builds influence through private conversations.
 - Presents itself as more compassionate than established leadership.
 - Collects people’s grievances.
 - Promises what it does not have the authority to provide.
 - Wins hearts before openly revealing its ambition.
 - Uses relational closeness to create disloyalty.
- o. How Strife Affects Church Ministry
 - Ministries become divided into camps.
 - Offenses spread through private conversations.
 - People recruit others into conflicts.
 - Leadership decisions are interpreted in the worst possible way.
 - Ambition is disguised as concern for the church.
 - Members become loyal to personalities rather than Christ.
 - Spiritual energy is spent fighting one another rather than reaching the lost.
 - The context of 2 Corinthians 2:11 is especially important. Paul warns that unforgiveness can give Satan an advantage.
 - The enemy often enters through an offense and remains through unforgiveness.
- p. How Strife Affects Families
 - One parent recruits children against the other.
 - Family members keep records of wrongs.
 - Extended relatives are pulled into private disputes.
 - Children learn to manipulate competing authorities.
 - Offense becomes family identity.
 - Siblings compete for influence, attention, or inheritance.
 - Divorce or estrangement becomes more likely because no one will humble themselves.

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- q. The Believer's Response: We overcome strife through forgiveness, humility, honor, direct communication, and submission to God. Not every disagreement is rebellion. Not every concern is disloyalty. Not every leader is above correction. Healthy spiritual authority remains accountable, welcomes biblical correction, and refuses manipulation.
- r. At the same time, biblical correction is addressed honestly and directly—not through gossip, faction-building, or secret campaigns.

VII. THE STRATEGY OF SEDUCTION - The Jezebel Pattern

- a. [1Ki 16:30-33 NASB95] 30 Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD more than all who were before him. 31 It came about, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he married Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and went to serve Baal and worshiped him. 32 So he erected an altar for Baal in the house of Baal which he built in Samaria. 33 Ahab also made the Asherah. Thus Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel than all the kings of Israel who were before him.
- b. [1Ki 18:4 NASB95] 4 for when Jezebel destroyed the prophets of the LORD, Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifties in a cave, and provided them with bread and water.)
- c. [1Ki 19:1-3 NASB95] 1 Now Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. 2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So may the gods do to me and even more, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time." 3 And he was afraid and arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.
- d. [1Ki 21:1-16 NASB95] 1 Now it came about after these things that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard which [was] in Jezreel beside the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. 2 Ahab spoke to Naboth, saying, "Give me your vineyard, that I may have it for a vegetable garden because it is close beside my house, and I will give you a better vineyard than it in its place; if you like, I will give you the price of it in money." 3 But Naboth said to Ahab, "The LORD forbid me that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers." 4 So Ahab came into his house sullen and vexed because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him; for he said, "I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers." And he lay down on his bed and turned away his face and ate no food. 5 But Jezebel his wife came to him and said to him, "How is it that your spirit is so sullen that you are not eating food?" 6 So he said to her, "Because I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite and said to him, 'Give me your vineyard for money; or else, if it pleases you, I will give you a vineyard in its place.' But he said, 'I will not give you my vineyard.'" 7 Jezebel his wife said to him, "Do you now reign over Israel? Arise, eat bread, and let your heart be joyful; I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite." 8 So she wrote letters in Ahab's name and sealed them with his seal, and sent letters to the elders and to the nobles who were living with Naboth in his city. 9 Now she wrote in the letters, saying, "Proclaim a fast and seat Naboth at the head of the people; 10 and seat two worthless men before him, and let them testify against him, saying, 'You cursed God and the king.' Then take him out and stone him to death." 11 So the men of his city, the elders and the nobles who lived in his city, did as Jezebel had sent [word] to them, just as it was written in the letters which she had sent them. 12 They proclaimed a fast and seated Naboth at the head of the people. 13 Then the two worthless men came in and sat before him; and the worthless men testified against him, even against Naboth, before the people, saying, "Naboth cursed God and the king." So they took him outside the city and stoned him to death with stones. 14 Then they sent [word] to Jezebel,

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saying, "Naboth has been stoned and is dead." 15 When Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned and was dead, Jezebel said to Ahab, "Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth, the Jezreelite, which he refused to give you for money; for Naboth is not alive, but dead." 16 When Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, Ahab arose to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.

- e. [Rev 2:18-23 NASB95] 18 "And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this: 19 'I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first. 20 'But I have [this] against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit [acts of] immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. 21 'I gave her time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her immorality. 22 'Behold, I will throw her on a bed [of sickness,] and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds. 23 'And I will kill her children with pestilence, and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.
- f. Jesus told the church at Thyatira: "You tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray..." —Revelation 2:20
- g. Jesus may have been referring to an actual woman in Thyatira, but the name "Jezebel" deliberately recalls the Old Testament queen.
- h. The emphasis is not on gender. Men and women can both operate through manipulation, intimidation, seduction, false teaching, and control.
- i. The Jezebel pattern includes:
 - Spiritual seduction
 - Sexual immorality
 - False prophetic authority
 - Intimidation
 - Manipulation
 - Control
 - Opposition to the true prophetic voice
 - The use of power to obtain personal desires
- j. Jezebel intimidated Elijah, manipulated Ahab, killed Yahweh's prophets, and arranged Naboth's death.
- k. How Seduction Affects Church Ministry
 - Spiritual authority is used to control people.
 - Prophetic language is used to shut down questions.
 - Sexual compromise is tolerated because someone appears gifted.
 - Leaders manipulate people through guilt or intimidation.
 - Charisma is valued above character.
 - People are drawn away from Christ through personalities.
 - A ministry culture tolerates what Jesus commands it to confront.
 - The problem in Thyatira was not merely that Jezebel taught. It was that the church tolerated her influence.
- l. How Seduction Affects Families
 - One family member dominates through anger or intimidation.
 - Affection is withheld to gain compliance.
 - Sexual temptation destroys covenant faithfulness.
 - Manipulation replaces honest communication.

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- People use spiritual language to control spouses or children.
- Passive family members surrender responsibility to controlling personalities.
- m. The Believer's Response: We overcome seduction through repentance, purity, truth, courage, and submission to Christ. The answer to control is not counter-control. The answer is the lordship of Jesus.

VIII. THE STRATEGY OF SELF-INTEREST - The Balaam Pattern

- a. Numbers 22–25
- b. [Num 31:16 NASB95] 16 "Behold, these caused the sons of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, so the plague was among the congregation of the LORD.
- c. [Jde 1:11 NASB95] 11 Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.
- d. [2Pe 2:15 NASB95] 15 forsaking the right way, they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the [son] of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;
- e. [Rev 2:14 NASB95] 14 'But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit [acts of] immorality.
- f. Jude speaks of those who: "For pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam." —Jude 11
- g. Balaam had genuine spiritual awareness, but his appetite for reward corrupted his ministry.
- h. When he could not curse Israel directly, he contributed to a strategy that seduced Israel into idolatry and immorality.
- i. Balaam represents the corruption of spiritual influence by greed, ambition, and personal benefit.
- j. Again, Scripture does not use the term "spirit of Balaam." It identifies a recurring error and pattern.
- k. How Self-Interest Affects Church Ministry
 - Ministry becomes a means of personal enrichment.
 - Spiritual gifts are commercialized.
 - Leaders make decisions based on money rather than mission.
 - People flatter those who can advance them.
 - Truth is softened to protect income or influence.
 - Success is measured only by attendance, money, visibility, or status.
 - People desire the platform more than the presence of God.
 - Money itself is not evil. Scripture condemns the love of money and the use of spiritual ministry for selfish gain.
- l. How Self-Interest Affects Families
 - Financial gain becomes more important than relationships.
 - Work and ambition consume the family.
 - Spouses hide money or use it as control.
 - Children learn that possessions determine worth.
 - Inheritance disputes divide relatives.
 - Generosity is replaced by greed.
 - Debt accumulates because appearance matters more than stewardship.

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- m. The Believer's Response: We overcome self-interest through contentment, generosity, integrity, and stewardship.
- n. "Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have." —Hebrews 13:5

IX. THE STRATEGY OF STALLING - Spiritual Resistance and Delay

- a. [Dan 10:10-14 NASB95] 10 Then behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. 11 He said to me, "O Daniel, man of high esteem, understand the words that I am about to tell you and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you." And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling. 12 Then he said to me, "Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding [this] and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words. 13 "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia. 14 "Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet [future.]"
- b. [1Th 2:18 NASB95] 18 For we wanted to come to you--I, Paul, more than once--and [yet] Satan hindered us.
- c. [Luk 18:1-8 NASB95] 1 Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart, 2 saying, "In a certain city there was a judge who did not fear God and did not respect man. 3 "There was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, 'Give me legal protection from my opponent.' 4 "For a while he was unwilling; but afterward he said to himself, 'Even though I do not fear God nor respect man, 5 yet because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, otherwise by continually coming she will wear me out.'" 6 And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge said; 7 now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? 8 "I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?"
- d. [Eph 6:18 NASB95] 18 With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,
- e. Daniel prayed, and his prayer was heard from the first day. Yet the angelic messenger encountered spiritual resistance.
- f. "The prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days." — Daniel 10:13
- g. This passage reveals that spiritual conflict can involve resistance and delay. However, not every delay is demonic.
- h. Sometimes:
 - God is developing us.
 - The timing is not right.
 - We are unprepared.
 - Other people have free will.
 - Practical obstacles must be addressed.
 - God is redirecting us.
- i. Nevertheless, Scripture shows that some resistance is spiritual.
- j. Paul also wrote: "We wanted to come to you... and yet Satan hindered us." —1 Thessalonians 2:18
- k. How Stalling Affects Church Ministry

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- Evangelistic efforts encounter unusual resistance.
 - Necessary decisions are repeatedly postponed.
 - People become weary in prayer just before breakthrough.
 - Revival is resisted by distraction, division, or discouragement.
 - Key workers are attacked at critical moments.
 - Administrative confusion consumes spiritual energy.
 - The church mistakes resistance for divine rejection.
- l. How Stalling Affects Families
- Reconciliation is continually postponed.
 - Necessary conversations never happen.
 - People repeatedly say, "Someday I will change."
 - Spiritual habits are constantly delayed.
 - Family prayer is crowded out by busyness.
 - Generational cycles continue because no one confronts them.
 - Discouragement grows when answers do not come quickly.
- m. The Believer's Response - We overcome stalling through persistent prayer, patient faith, obedience, and discernment. Daniel did not stop praying because the answer was delayed. Delay does not necessarily mean denial.
- Resistance does not mean God has abandoned the assignment.

X. THE STRATEGY OF SUPPLANTING - The Spirit of Antichrist

- a. [1Jo 2:18-23 NASB95] 18 Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour. 19 They went out from us, but they were not [really] of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but [they went out,] so that it would be shown that they all are not of us. 20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know. 21 I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of the truth. 22 Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. 23 Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also.
- b. [1Jo 4:1-4 NASB95] 1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; 3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the [spirit] of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world. 4 You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.
- c. [2Jo 1:7 NASB95] 7 For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ [as] coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.
- d. [2Th 2:3-4 NASB95] 3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for [it will not come] unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.
- e. John writes: "Every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist." —1 John 4:3

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- f. The spirit of antichrist does not merely promote immoral behavior. Its central objective is to deny, distort, diminish, or replace Jesus Christ.
- g. “Antichrist” can mean opposition to Christ, but it also carries the idea of putting something in the place of Christ.
- h. Satan is satisfied with religion as long as Jesus is not truly Lord.
- i. How Supplanting Affects Church Ministry
 - Jesus is replaced by personalities.
 - The gospel is replaced by motivational speaking.
 - The Holy Spirit is replaced by human technique.
 - Biblical truth is replaced by cultural approval.
 - Ministry success is pursued without dependence on Christ.
 - Jesus is treated as one teacher among many.
 - The incarnation, atoning death, resurrection, or lordship of Christ is denied.
 - Churches become active but no longer Christ-centered.
 - A church may retain Christian language while slowly removing the supremacy of Christ.
- j. How Supplanting Affects Families
 - Career becomes lord.
 - Sports become lord.
 - Politics becomes lord.
 - Entertainment becomes lord.
 - Personal happiness becomes lord.
 - Children are taught moral values without being disciplined to know Jesus.
 - Family schedules leave no meaningful place for worship, prayer, or Scripture.
- k. The spirit of antichrist works wherever something is permitted to take the place that belongs to Jesus alone.
- l. The Believer’s Response: We overcome supplanting by confessing, proclaiming, worshiping, and obeying Jesus Christ as Lord.
- m. “Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.” —1 John 4:4

XI. Putting the Ten Strategies Together

- a. Satan attempts to gain an advantage through:
 - 1. Falsehood — the lying spirit and deception
 - 2. Fright — the spirit of fear
 - 3. Forlornness — the spirit of heaviness
 - 4. Infirmary — satanic affliction and bondage
 - 5. Silencing — the deaf and mute spirit
 - 6. Strife — the patterns of Korah and Absalom
 - 7. Seduction — the Jezebel pattern
 - 8. Self-interest — the Balaam pattern
 - 9. Stalling — spiritual resistance and delay
 - 10. Supplanting — the spirit of antichrist
- b. These strategies can affect thoughts, emotions, bodies, relationships, leadership structures, ministries, marriages, and entire families.
- c. But recognition is not the same as obsession.
- d. We do not study darkness so that we can become fascinated with darkness. We expose darkness so that we can walk in the light.

XII. Biblical Safeguards for Spiritual Warfare

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- a. Do Not Remove Human Responsibility - A person cannot excuse lying, greed, rebellion, manipulation, or immorality by saying: "A spirit made me do it." Demons may tempt or influence, but people remain responsible to repent.
- b. Do Not Diagnose People Carelessly - We should not casually label people: "She has a Jezebel spirit." "He has an Absalom spirit." "They have a Korah spirit." Such language can become accusatory, manipulative, and spiritually abusive.
 - i. It is better to identify behavior biblically:
 - This behavior is controlling.
 - This behavior is divisive.
 - This teaching is deceptive.
 - This attitude reflects greed.
 - This influence is drawing people away from Christ.
- c. Do Not Blame Every Problem on Demons
 - i. Some problems arise from:
 - The flesh
 - Poor decisions
 - Emotional wounds
 - Physical illness
 - Lack of wisdom
 - Relational dysfunction
 - Sinful habits
 - Systemic or organizational weaknesses
 - Spiritual warfare requires discernment, not superstition.
- d. Do Not Confront Spiritual Powers Without Submission to God
 - i. "Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."
—James 4:7
 - ii. Submission comes before resistance.
 - iii. Authority does not come from volume, emotion, or religious formulas. Authority comes through union with Christ and submission to His lordship.
- e. Do Not Forget Christ's Victory
 - i. "When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him."
—Colossians 2:15
 - ii. We do not fight for victory as though the outcome were uncertain. We stand in the victory Jesus has already secured.

XIII. Practical Protection for Church Ministries

- a. Churches resist Satan's schemes when they cultivate:
 - Biblical preaching
 - Doctrinal accountability
 - Transparent leadership
 - Financial integrity
 - Sexual purity
 - Healthy conflict resolution
 - Direct communication
 - Prayer and fasting
 - Spirit-led discernment
 - Compassionate healing ministry
 - Proper safeguarding

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- Christ-centered worship
- Forgiveness and reconciliation
- Accountability for prophetic ministry
- Courage to confront destructive behavior
- b. The strongest church is not the loudest church. It is the church that is truthful, prayerful, humble, united, holy, compassionate, discerning, and centered on Jesus.

XIV. Practical Protection for Families

- a. Families resist Satan's schemes when they practice:
 - Honest communication
 - Regular prayer
 - Forgiveness
 - Biblical instruction
 - Emotional safety
 - Financial integrity
 - Sexual faithfulness
 - Healthy boundaries
 - Mutual honor
 - Direct conflict resolution
 - Wise medical and pastoral care
 - Protection of children
 - Consistent participation in church
 - Christ-centered priorities
- b. The family altar is not merely a religious tradition. It is a place where truth is reinforced, relationships are healed, and the lordship of Christ is established in the home.

- **Satan gains an advantage when his strategies remain unrecognized, but believers who discern his schemes, submit to God, and stand in Christ's authority can protect their churches and families from his influence.**
- He gains an advantage when believers remain ignorant, tolerate sin, preserve offense, neglect prayer, reject truth, and abandon their spiritual authority.
- But today we declare:
 - We will not tolerate deception.
 - We will not be controlled by fear.
 - We will not surrender to heaviness.
 - We will not ignore spiritual oppression.
 - We will not allow the enemy to silence our witness.
 - We will not permit offense to divide us.
 - We will not tolerate manipulation or immorality.
 - We will not sell our calling for personal gain.
 - We will not quit because of resistance.
 - We will not allow anything to replace Jesus.
 - We are not ignorant of his schemes.