

April 25, 2021

# Viewpoint from the Valley Grove Church Of Christ

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## The Pain Of Love

By Ron Halbrook

Our love for others may cost us much pain. Do not confuse the pain of love with the pain of unbridled lust. Immorality is often glorified in our culture but the painful price of such living is also recounted in songs which tell of “the day after,” the loneliness, the emptiness of it all. One who commits fornication goes like an ox “to the slaughter” or a bird “to the snare” — “he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul” (Prov. 7:22-23; 6:32). Truly, “the way of transgressors is hard” (13:15). But, the wounds and sorrows we get from sinning is not the point of this study.

We should love others enough to make sacrifices and to suffer pain for their good. Such pain increases when a person whom we try to help does not realize what he needs and does not understand or appreciate what we are doing for him. As parents we see our children in tears at different stages of life because of decisions we make or our disciplinary action. Perhaps matches had to be taken away and little hands spanked. Maybe it was time for the child to give up the bottle or to quit sucking the thumb. Loving our children brings pain to both them and ourselves.

Genuine love is never cheap. *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life”* (John 3:16). Imagine God’s agony when He saw the way the world treated His beloved Son. *“He came unto his own, and his own received him not”* (John 1:11). This means that after many centuries of preparing the Jews to receive His Son, many of them rejected Him. Loving us cost Jesus Christ the glories of heaven. As Deity He was originally *“in the form of God,”* but He willingly *“took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross”* (Phil. 2:6-8).

True love requires teaching men the truth, which can be painful. It must be done if we love the lost, no matter how much pain it brings. Jesus said, *“Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”* (John 8:32). But those He taught did not want to hear about their sins. It was not easy for Jesus to tell them, *“Ye are of your father the devil,”* and not easy for them to hear it (v. 44). Men

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must be convicted of sin before they can be saved. Jesus told His Apostles to preach the gospel, including this: *“he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned”* (Mark 16:16). It is not easy for Christians to preach or for sinners to hear that all men are lost until they are immersed in water upon faith in Christ, but we must speak *“the truth in love”* (Eph. 4:15).

Paul regretted having to point out the sins of Christians in Corinth, but then he rejoiced to see them correct their lives (2 Cor. 7:8-11). It is never easy to deal with sin in the camp (Josh. 7). When Christians refuse to repent, the Holy Spirit commanded the church *“that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly”* (2 Thess. 3:6). The purpose is to cause him to repent that he may again be saved (1 Cor. 5:4-5).

Christian parents make hard decisions as their children approach teen-age. The family will miss ball games to attend worship rather than vice versa (Heb. 10:25). Young ladies are taught to quit wearing the shorts and other brief attire of childhood (1 Pet. 3:4). While their worldly friends go to dances, proms, mixed swimming parties, and “beer busts,” teen-agers in Christian homes learn to ask, “What would Christ do?” He must be our example at all times and not our worldly friends (2:21). We are sad to see our children sad at times, but we endure the pain of love in order to *“bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord”* (Eph. 6:4).

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## **The Devices Of Satan**

By Jim McDonald

*“That no advantage may be gained over us by Satan: for we are not ignorant of his devices”* (2 Cor. 2:11).

**I**n verses 6-11 of this chapter Paul admonished the Corinthian Christians to forgive the offending brother who was present with them. He feared that should they not do that and thereby confirm their love toward him, he might be swallowed up by his overmuch sorrow. He urges that such forgiveness be manifested and offered the brother that Satan might not gain an advantage over him.

In this passage is mentioned the “devices” of Satan. Vine defines device as “denotes thought, that which is thought out . . . hence a purpose, device” (W. E. Vine, Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, p. 307). A synonym for “device” would be “scheme.” While both “device” and “scheme” may be used in a proper and good sense, it is more often the words convey an idea of evil

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purposes. Certainly in the passage from 2 Corinthians the word describes a bad sense. Peter said it well: *“Be sober, be watchful, your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour”* (1 Pet. 5:8).

Foolish is the man who discounts the devices of Satan. Satan is pictured in Revelation as a great red dragon who lashes and thrashes about, and is so fearsome that with a might swoop of his tail he catches a third of the stars of the heavens and casts them to the earth (Rev. 12:3f). He has a great arsenal of weapons at his command and we should respect him in the sense that we recognize the danger of his potential injury to bring a flood of wickedness upon our world as well as to bring injury on us, personally. Consider some of his devices:

***Deception.*** Satan is a master of deception. Little wonder in this because Jesus identified him as a liar and father thereof (John 8:44). He used deception when he approached Eve in the very beginning of man’s existence on this earth. Although God had warned Adam that the first couple were not to eat of the tree which stood in the midst of the garden, clearly stating that in the day they did so, they would surely die (Gen. 2:17), Satan brazenly disputed God’s word. He approached Eve saying, *“Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?”* (Gen. 3:1). When Eve responded that God had indeed forbidden them to eat of the tree in the garden’s midst (thus showing she did understand God’s instructions); Satan responded, *“Ye*

*shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil”* (Gen. 3:4b-5). Eve believed Satan’s lie; she was deluded, deceived, beguiled (1 Tim. 2:14; 2 Cor. 11:3). He focused her attention on the fruit: it was good to eat, lovely to look at, and it was to be desired because it would make her wise as God. Satan, by thus directing her attention to these “desirable” items, tempted her through the three avenues he uses in bringing about man’s fall into sin: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the vain glory of life (1 John 2:15-16).

***Snares.*** Snares are traps set to entangle a victim. Snares take various forms, and there is usually a “bait” to entice the would-be captive. Paul urged the Ephesians to put on the whole armor of God that they might be able to stand against the wiles (snares) of the devil (Eph. 6:11). In a list of qualifications for prospective elders, Paul commanded that one who was a novice was not to be considered lest he be *“puffed up and he fall into the condemnation of the devil”* (2 Tim. 3:6). In 2 Timothy, he warns against pride so that men might repent and recover themselves out of the devil’s snare (2 Tim. 2:25f).

***Sickness, disease, and misfortune.*** When Jesus was teaching in a synagogue on a Sabbath, a woman came in who had for 18 years been bowed together so that she could not lift herself up (Luke 13:10-11).

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Jesus' opponents watched to see whether Jesus would heal the woman so that they might have something to condemn Him for, but in His answer to them, He put them to shame. He reminded them they would lose their ox or ass from a stall on the Sabbath Day that they might feed and water the animal, then He concluded, *"Ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham whom Satan hath bound, lo these eighteen years be unloosed from her bond on the day of the Sabbath?"* (Luke 13:16). Sickness, disease, and calamities are devices Satan uses to make us despair and curse God (as he attempted to do in the case of Job).

**Doubt.** Paul warned that we need the armor of God so we might be shielded from the fiery darts of the wicked one (Eph. 6:6). Satan is an expert in creating doubt and when we doubt God we are liable to fall. Guard against doubting by calling to mind all the evidences of both God's existence and His care for us.

The Corinthians needed to forgive the erring brother who sought their forgiveness. If they did not, they would give Satan an advantage to further entangle this brother so recently recovered from immorality. Put on the whole armor of God that we might be able to withstand the guiles and snare of our adversary.

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***Visitors — We pray that you benefit spiritually from our worship together and hope to see you again.***

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**This Bulletin** is a weekly publication of the  
Valley Grove Church Of Christ, Southaven, MS

**Sunday**

Bible Study . . . 9:30 A.M.

Worship . . . . . 10:30 A.M.

Worship . . . . . 5:00 P.M.

**Wednesday**

Bible Study . . . 7:00 P.M.

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