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# **Satan Destroys the Fruit**

**525-A**

**Series: Testing**

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# Satan Destroys the Fruit

As we have been studying the parable of the sower and the seed, we learned that the seed is the Word of God. After you have been taught the Word or have heard a sermon or have been ministered to on a one to one basis, Satan comes in. His goal is to see that the seed that was sown does not take root. His goal is to see that you are busy, either thinking about something else or seeking after more feeding or more seed. You forget to stop to appropriate into your life on a permanent basis, the seed of the Word that has been spoken unto you. That is his goal and purpose. He will do anything he can to keep the seed from taking root where it can go down into the soil and bear fruit.

This is one of the benefits of tape-recorded messages. You can hear them again and again. You can stop them and write things down. You can then appropriate the principles before the seed is snatched from your life.

If Satan cannot keep the seed from taking root in your life, the second thing he does is try to kill the roots. In a previous lesson, we learned that one Greek word for “kill” was “*thou*”. It means to render ineffective by using as an offering in a fire. It is the same word that is always used in Scripture when something was sacrificed or slain on an altar as an offering. This is parallel to Mark 4 where we are told that some of the seed fell on soil that was relatively rocky. When affliction or persecution arose because of the Word, the Word was discarded. In the last lesson, we discussed four areas that Satan attacks the Christian once the seed begins to take root.

1– Physical and emotional illness. Satan attacks the believer at his point of weakness physically, emotionally and spiritually. The believer is attacked physically at times of exhaustion or particular times or seasons of life. There are also thorns in the flesh and weaknesses in the physical realm. He is often attacked in the area of his emotions just following a time of a spiritual high, times of idleness, times of loneliness or times when there are problems with his self-image. Satan knows when these times are.

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2- Besetting sins. Satan attacks spiritually in the areas of our besetting sins. He keeps a book or computer program logging these areas. When it is time to attack one of us, he looks into those records and sees that for the last 500 times he has attacked you, 442 times were in one certain area of your life. It is a hang-up for you. Satan keeps records. He has the first evil computer. He simply looks up the records and knows your weaknesses. He gives assignments to the demonic hosts to attack you at the point of greatest weakness.

3- Persecution.

4- Disunity or dissension in the body of Christ.

If the seed goes into their lives and begins to take root and the roots are allowed to go down deep and the tree of life begins to grow, John 10:10 describes the attack that Satan launches on believers. His plan is to destroy the seed, destroy the Word or destroy the fruit. In other words, if the seed has been allowed to take root and the roots have been fed and allowed to grow, the only thing Satan can do at that point is to try to develop disease in the tree so that fruit cannot be born. The ultimate goal of God in the Christian's life is for fruit to be born.

In John 10:10 the word was "*apollumi*". It is one of nine words translated in the English "to destroy". This particular word does not mean to seize upon something to destroy it, but rather to render ineffective through ruin. Vine says that it is not a loss of being, but a loss of well-being. It is to be put on the shelf or rendered unusable or unavailable. In other words, Satan's third attack, his last ditch effort to keep you from being productive in the Christian life, is to find a way to choke the Word as we find in Mark 4 so that there is no fruit born.

There are two kinds of fruit in the Christian's life. There are two kinds of fruit in nature. There are flowers that are beautiful to look at. They remind us of the presence of God. There are apples, oranges, peaches and pears that are good to eat and be nourished by. These reflect the two kinds of fruit in the Christian's life. The fruits of the spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness and self-control), show the world who Jesus Christ is and draws them to Him. These fruits are the flowers of God. This is one kind of fruit.

The second kind of fruit in the Christian's life is productivity. It is edible fruit. It is fruit that feeds other people. It is lives

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changed by a changed life. These two kinds of fruit are the goal of God for the Christian. These are the fruits that Satan desires to destroy and render ineffective. He does this by putting you on the shelf in some way.

If you could plot a graph of the lives of most Christians, you would find plateaus. You would find spiritual growth for a season. Then there would be a time when there is a let up on the spiritual disciplines and priorities. We begin to ease our way along and become apathetic. Some Christians go through life having reached a certain spiritual plateau and never seem to grow after that. We wonder why. They seem to be exposed to the Word. They seem to have reasonably good roots. They seem to handle affliction and persecution but they never seem to really produce spiritual fruit.

I believe the answer is in this lesson. Satan has three tactics with which he destroys the fruit before it can be produced. He produces disease in it so that its productivity is harmless. Paul's concern was found in I Corinthians 9.

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win.

And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable one.

Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air;

but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.

(I Corinthians 9:24-27 NASB)

We could add, "I myself should be rendered unusable; I myself should be developed to be unfruitful." You and I, as believers, have an intense responsibility to see that this does not happen in our lives. It is one thing to hear the Word all the time, but it is another thing to put the Word of God in your life on a consistent basis. That, in itself, does not produce fruit if disease that renders the fruit unusable is allowed in your life. Many Christians are on the shelf continuing to go through the process thinking that they are being used. In essence, they are sitting on the shelf going through the motions. The question is, "Are you in the mainstream of spiritual participation, growing and blooming as a flower? Is

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your life producing fruit that helps change other lives?”

In Mark 4, we see the way that Satan causes us to be unfruitful. This is our parallel verse. It says that he does so by thorns and weeds. This is the seed that falls upon the thorny soil, and the soil that is filled with weeds. Weeds are funny things. They seem so insignificant. My wife is a great weed-puller. I just let them grow. I don't want to be bothered. It is funny how they blend in with the grass, have you noticed that? They fill in certain voids. You can have a dead spot in your yard that a weed will fill in. You may say, "I will just leave the weeds there. At least it is green." The weeds begin so harmlessly. You can cut off the tops with the lawn mower and they look like everything else. Unless you pull the weeds up by the roots, however, they gradually overtake the real thing. They choke the life out of the flowers or the grass. When allowed to run rampant, they are ugly, uncontrollable and lethal. They become home for snakes, rodents and other harmful enemies.

These are weeds. Jesus said that there are some things in our lives that are weeds or thorns. When the Word of God comes into our life and begins to take root, these thorns and weeds look so insignificant and harmless, but they begin to move in a quiet sort of way. They choke out the Word so that it becomes unfruitful.

For sake of clarity, Jesus divided them into three categories. The first is the cares of this world. The second is the deceitfulness of riches. The third is the lust of other things entering in. He said that these things choke the Word so that the Word becomes unfruitful.

I think that it is interesting that the weeds or the thorns in life begin in Genesis 3. They were the product of Satan himself. We see in verses 17 and 18 the first place that weeds and thorns came about. God is speaking to Adam,

Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life.

"Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field;" (Genesis 3:17,18 NASB)

Adam had disobeyed God. This is the first time that weeds were interjected into life. An interesting note is that they are

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Satan's trademarks. They always have been. If you look in your front yard, you may see weeds coming up. You can see a portrait of how Satan works in the world. These are the weeds that he is planting like tares in the church. These are the weeds he is planting in the Christian's life to try to slowly, gradually infiltrate that life until he doesn't realize it. His spiritual power has been choked off.

There are two words in Scripture that are translated choke. The first one is "*buigo*". It means to seize by the throat or forcefully suffocate or drown. If someone grabs you and seizes you by the throat, you at least know that you are being choked. When being choked in that manner, you can defend yourself. You see someone coming after you to choke you, and you try to escape. You know you are being attacked.

There is a second kind of choking. In the Greek this word is "*sunpnigo*". This word literally means to suffocate by blotting out. It means to move in and leave no room to breathe alongside. This is a subtle kind of choking. It is a form of spiritual carbon monoxide poisoning. You are going along your way and all of sudden there is no air left. It has been choked out. This is the word that is used in Mark 4. It is a subtle, slow, deadly destruction. It parallels the word that was used in John 10:10 to destroy and make gradually unusable.

There are three ways that Satan does his job. Remember as we study this that this passage is talking about rooted Christians. If the seed of the Word cannot be snatched by the enemy and the roots can't be stopped from going down into the soil, he is going to try through these three methods to keep fruit from being produced.

There are two words that can be used here. The first word for care that is used in the Scripture is "*melo*". It literally means an object of care through forethought. It means someone that you really care about. You want to take care of that person. You have thought about it and choose to take care of that person. That is not the word that is used here. The word used here is "*merinmao*". It means to be anxious about causing distracting care. You may say, "I can't get through to him because he is filled with cares." It is an anxiety over things. It is that which occupies the forethought of your mind through diversion. It is anxieties that edge their way into the control of your mind.

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The word “world” in this passage is “*aion*” which means the era in history. So Satan’s goal is to create a spirit of anxiety concerning conformity with the fashions or attitudes of this present world. It is the Christian wanting to be accepted in the world. It is subtle preoccupation with things that in and of themselves are not harmful but that preoccupation destroys the seed of the Word. These areas could be fashion, acceptable modes of behavior, standards of religious conduct super-imposed by the world, education, prestige, business, success, achievement and investments. These things, in and of themselves, may be good, but they are all going to burn. When we become preoccupied with them and the anxiety over the cares of these things super-impose themselves at the center of our lives, we are gone. We can keep going to Bible study, Sunday School and church. We can keep memorizing and meditating. But if every time our mind is in neutral we are preoccupied with anxiety concerning the cares of this age, we are gone. We are finished.

Romans 12:1,2 is a familiar passage. It is a good verse to memorize. Paul says,

I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

(Romans 12:1,2 NASB)

In other words, Paul contrasts the life of transformation through the Word to the life of conformity to the age in which we live. We have a choice. Day after day, hour after hour we have to make choices. Will we be conformed to the age in which we live and make choices that accomplish that purpose or will we be transformed by the renewing of our minds? That is the choice we have to make. The same word is used in I Corinthians 1:20 and 3:18.

The whole concept is the problem of double-mindedness. Here is another familiar passage. It is another particularly good passage to memorize.

But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

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But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.

For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord,

being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

(James 1:5-8 NASB)

Double-mindedness means that you are trying to go in two different directions at one time. You are continually compromising the one for the other. Two things are guaranteed for the double-minded Christian. The first is that your prayers won't be answered. It says, "Let not that man think he will receive anything from the Lord." You will not have any answered prayers if you are living a double-minded life. If you are half concerned with the anxieties of the age and half concerned with the things of God, you are double-minded.

The second thing that he promises to the double-minded Christian is that he will be unstable in all his ways. This instability will manifest itself physically, emotionally and spiritually. You blow up. Your end result is that you will be a wreck. You will be much more emotionally and mentally upset than if you were not a Christian at all. This is because you will constantly be in the midst of a battle. You will constantly be in a position of giving up to the enemy. You will then feel guilty for having done so and you will then move on and overcompensate. You will go back and forth between these two. This will happen until you become double-minded. There are degrees of double-mindedness, but there is only one degree of faithfulness that pleases God. As opportunities to be double-minded come into your life, you need to set them aside.

What about you? What is it that occupies your mind when it is in neutral? Are you more driven to succeed at that project, that job, that business or that relationship than you are driven to the Word and to people? I had to do some soul-searching while studying this lesson. Do you understand the full implications of Matthew 6:33? Most Christians do not. We memorize it and we repeat it. It says,

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be given unto you."

(Matthew 6:33)



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The word “seek” is an active, participating activity. It means to go after, to claw for. “Ye” means personally, as an individual, to go after something. “First” means to the exclusion of all else. The kingdom of God is His ministry, His righteousness and His life. These are the two kinds of fruit: the flowers and the fruit. This should be your consuming desire. All these things God will become accountable for. We get it backwards. We buy the extras without the car. We buy the stereo, the steering wheel, the tires and the drive chain, but we don’t have the car. We seek first the things of this world, and we figure the spiritual things will be added unto us. It never happens.

In an effort to accomplish what we believe to be the will of God in our lives, we so often become distracted that we tangle with people and ignore their real needs. This is what convicted me this week as I went through the preparation of this lesson. I realized that this passage is saying that the anxieties of this age are not important to the believer. People are the most important to God. Your job is not as important as people.

God has put you in your job for three reasons. The first is to earn a living. The second is to have a ministry with the people around you. The third is to create the mind of God in you through the difficulties and challenges of the job. His goal is to change you and test you. These are the reasons God gives you a job. But the job is nothing compared to people. If in an attempt to scramble and succeed in the job we run over people, we miss the blessing and we miss the point. The anxieties of this age want to take in and choke the Word. If the Word becomes unfruitful, we don’t reach people.

I can relate to this in my business. The decisions, the problems and the needs of my business can begin to choke the Word in my life. It becomes unfruitful. The business becomes more important than people. So what if we don’t make the sales? So what if something else doesn’t happen? What if one person is wounded or harmed or offended in the process of how I conduct my business? That is more important in the light of eternity than all the sales that can ever be made or all the business that we will ever do or all of the things we will ever have.

When we get to heaven, God isn’t going to look at our sales report. He isn’t going to look at our volume or gross profit. God is going to look at the fruitfulness in our lives. It is the likeness of

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Christ in us and the productivity of changed lives through us that He is after. Matthew 6:33 tells us to take care of the Word of God and people in our lives, and God will take care of our business. We get this backwards. We think that God gave us the business so we have to scramble about in the energy of the flesh to make it work for His glory. This is not true. He will take care of our business if we will take care of His business.

It sounds silly, but your furniture is not as important as people. You may think you never thought it was, but I doubt it. If you are like us, you go to a store and order something. When it comes, it may not be what you wanted. Your first response is anger or hostility over the fact that you have been wronged. Rather than using it as an opportunity to respond in love to people in order to have a testimony to show them Christ, we call the furniture store and say, "This sofa only has three legs!" or, "I've never seen a dining room set with only two and a half chairs!" We begin to get uptight and say, "God can't handle my furniture! I'm going to handle this furniture situation, and I'm going to handle the furniture dealer. When I get through, I will prove I am a good steward of what God has given me."

The whole point is that people are more important than furniture. What if God delivered you the wrong furniture so that you could call in a gracious manner and respond in love to the person who waited on you in the furniture store so that they could, in utter amazement at the response you have, inquire why? You could be ready always to give an answer to everyone who asks of you a reason for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.

The project you are working on is not nearly as important as people. Your public service bill is not even as important as people. Your football team is not as important as people. Yet, it is amazing how we set up our relative value system. Jesus did not die for your business. Jesus did not die for your furniture. Jesus did not die for your football team. Jesus died for people. You and I are supposed to do the same thing. We are supposed to be daily crucified for the sake of people. We need to be able to say, "As the Father has sent me, even so send thou me."

Can you imagine passing through Switzerland on a trip to another country and as you pick up the paper, you read of the economical and social crisis in the country so much so that you forget where you are going? You forget that you are just passing

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through, and you have a crucial appointment in Germany or Holland. You become so engrossed in the anxieties and cares of Switzerland that you forget all about where you are heading. You lose yourself. “This world is not our home, we are just passing through”, as the old spiritual song says. Our citizenship is in heaven, as Paul says in Colossians. In the Living Translation it says,

Let heaven fill your thoughts; don't spend your time worrying  
about things down here. (Colossians 3:2 TLB)

The cares of this world, that is the anxiety over conformity and acceptance of this age, chokes the Word and its significance, and it becomes unfruitful.

If this particular tactic of the enemy has not affected you, the second area might. The second area that Satan attacks God's children is the deceitfulness of riches. The word deceitfulness comes from the word “*apate*”. It means to be deceived or be self-deceived through accepting that which is false as true. Often it is used in Scripture for people who are self-deceived. It is used in Hebrews 3:13 for “those who are drawn away from the truth and deceived by sin”.

We are dealing with the deceitfulness of riches. The word is “*plousios*” in the Greek. It literally means temporal riches that abound. It is having more than you need. What do you need? You need clothes on your back. You need food on the table. I think those are the two things Jesus said are needed. Now, we want a new television. We want a bigger air conditioner. We want a nicer car. We want a twenty-seven room house. But, we need food and clothing. God says that we need that and He will provide that.

The Scripture says that the deceitfulness of riches can choke the Word. Satan sees to it that it eases into our lives and we don't know it is there. There are several verses in Scripture that show us this. The word is used in I Timothy 6:

Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.

Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share,

storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed. (I Timothy 6:17-19 NASB)

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This passage is telling us that people who are rich or are seeking after riches have three basic problems: conceit, false hope and selfishness. Money brings those three things. This passage tells us not to allow Satan to gradually move into our life and choke the fruitfulness of the Word with an unholy desire for things. It is so subtle. You may say, "I don't have that problem." Congratulations. But, you could and most of the rest of us do. We don't realize it, but we have it in varying degrees. It is very subtle and it chokes the Word. This is how Satan works.

You may say, "I don't care how much money I have." Then, why do you spend so many hours struggling for it? Why do I spend so many hours struggling for it? The problem is that we accept the world's standards as God's by succumbing to trust in temporal things. It is a rising level of temporal expectations.

Let's say you buy a new home. It is the home of your dreams. It is all that you've ever wanted. You begin to furnish it, and you know that you will be satisfied for the rest of your life. You didn't need it, but you bought it because you wanted it. The phone rings and the Smiths invite you over for dinner. The Smiths are a great couple, and you enjoy fellowshiping with them. When you get to their new home, you find that it has 1,000 square feet more than yours. Their carpet is two inches thick instead of one. Instead of a bird bath in the back yard they have a swimming pool. Not only that, but their den is big enough to hold a Republican convention. Yours is just big enough for a committee meeting. When you go home, you may say, "I love our house now, but I think in 5 years we will be ready to buy a bigger house like the Smiths."

Your goal has changed. All of a sudden you become blinded to spiritual needs and reality. You begin to grasp and reach out for the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches.

I've always wanted a certain kind of car that is big and heavy and fancy. I finally got one that was 7 years old. I thought that would satisfy my desire. I was really enjoying the car. A man who works for me has one just like it. It is newer and has a few less miles on it. As I was walking to lunch about a week later, I found myself patting it on the fender. I went back and asked him if he would be interested in selling anytime soon. I had just bought the other one. The ink had barely dried on my title to it and I was already thinking of a way that I could update it. It had four wheels and a motor. It was a much nicer car than I had ever had

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before. It had, however, created a desire for something better. As long as I was driving an older, smaller car I was satisfied. As soon as I got into something newer and bigger I began to think, "This is so great, but wouldn't it be better if had something a little better."

The same thing is true of clothes. You may go most of your life without nice clothes, but you are satisfied. Your clothes are relatively neat and clean. Nobody tends to give you hand-outs when you walk by. All of a sudden you may come into a little bit better income bracket and you begin to shop somewhere else. You get some nicer clothes. You then begin to think, "I have a better testimony in these kinds of clothes. People look up to me a lot more. I feel if I had some clothes that were just a little nicer, I would get even more respect." We get greedy. Someone will give us a gift or we have a chance to buy something better. We think, "This will do me just fine." But the deceitfulness of riches is an insatiable hunger that blinds us to spiritual truth and to the needs of those about us. That car, that house and those clothes can distract us. The money spent to satisfy those needs could meet the needs of the body of Christ in some way that you or I will never see met if we meet our own selfish desires. The cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches entering in choke the Word and it becomes unfruitful.

The third thing that Satan tries to do to the Christian, if neither of these work, is the lust of other things entering in. This is Jesus' catch-all. The Greek word is "*epithumia*". It is translated "lust" in the King James. Vine defines it as the natural tendency towards evil. Such lusts are not necessarily base or immoral. They may be refined in character, but are evil if inconsistent with the will of God. The lust of other things is the Greek word "*loipos*". It literally means that which remains or whatever is left. Jesus is saying that it is the lust of anything else that wasn't covered before in the other two categories. It is an unholy appetite. It is any other unhealthy desire or attitude that dominates or controls life, thus choking out and crowding into insignificance the Word of God. It is an unholy desire which attaches itself to an object. This object may or may not in itself be unholy. This is the lust of other things entering in.

In John 8:44 the word lust is used. Satan's desire is released through the flesh. Romans 1:24 uses the word also. Often it is translated desire in the New American Standard.

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Therefore, God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, that their bodies might be dishonored among them. (Romans 1:24 NASB)

Verse 27 goes on to describe the grievousness of the sin of homosexuality. It deals with the fact that this sin is grievous in the eyes of God and should be looked upon as such. In verse 32 it says,

and although they know the ordinance of God, those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but give hardy approval to those who practice them. (Romans 1:27 NASB)

There is a sin attached to even giving approval to this kind of lust. Before you criticize someone who comes out strongly against homosexuality, take note that, obviously in Scripture, there are unholy desires that are to be contrary to the Word and the will of God. They should be looked upon by believers as such.

There are other kinds of lust that are much more subtle. They affect the multitude of most of us.

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. (Galatians 5:16,17 NASB)

The point is that the lust of other things entering in is an unholy appetite for anything that crowds out the perfect will of God in your life. It may be something base and immoral such as was described in Romans 1. It could be something that is refined and acceptable, but it is not the will of God. Some other Scriptures that you might want to look up concerning this are: Ephesians 2:1-9 and II Peter 2:12-22.

I want to give you three unholy desires that I believe more than any other are tools of Satan to set Christians on the shelf. Except for the anxieties of the world and the deceitfulness of riches, these are the other things that enter in and choke the Word.

*1- Impurity.* I believe that more than any other single thing that crowds out the perfect will of God and puts good men and women on the shelf is moral impurity of the mind. I Peter 1:13-19 describes this. Verses 15 and 16 says specifically that,

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He who has called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of behavior

because it is written, "You are to be holy because He is holy."  
(I Peter 1:15,16)

Proverbs tells us not to look to the right or to the left, but keep our eyes and our heart focused on God. Jesus said not to even think impure thoughts because it is, in essence, doom for you. It is a problem that most men and many women have to deal with. It does shelve Christians. We need to be realistic enough to accept the fact that it is one of the lusts of other things that enter in. You may be memorizing, meditating, studying and teaching but the lust of these things entering in choke the Word, and you don't bear any fruit. It may mean that there are certain things you don't look at, talk about or get involved in as a Christian that you think you ought to be. You need to be wise enough to understand your limitations and pay attention.

2- *Self-righteousness*. This is one of the lusts of the flesh that crowds out the Word. It is the gradual entering in of one's spiritual experience of self-importance or self-righteousness. In I Chronicles 21:1 we see how Satan came in and moved David in the energy of the flesh to number the people. II Corinthians 11:14 is another passage to study in this area. Self-righteousness is subtle, but destructive. It is an attitude of self-importance in the kingdom. It says, "Now God needs me." This is not true. If God uses you, it is because God loves you. God doesn't need you, you need Him.

The problem is we have the attitude of self-importance. You think, "I have memorized many verses. I am in a great Bible study. I have done this great thing for God. I am a member of this certain church. I know all of the doctrines." All of a sudden, there enters into our existence a kind of pompousness that says, "There is me and then the rest of these spiritual peons who are just struggling to get it all together." We need to remember he that is greatest among us must maintain a spirit of he which is least. Spiritual self-righteousness is the second greatest enemy of the church of Jesus Christ today. Evangelicals are the guiltiest of all. We carve the body of Christ into little pieces. We set the pieces on the shelf according to our doctrinal understandings. We believe that we, being more righteous than they, have a greater position of importance in the mind of God. In doing so, we are self-deceived and we do not bear the kind of fruit God wants us to bear.

## Satan Destroys the Fruit

3- *Bitter spirit*. Proverbs 18:14 says that a body can bear its infirmity, but a wounded or bitter spirit, who can bear that? Nobody. It is hostility that arouses the emotions and re-channels the Word of God into deadened ruts. If you have hatred or bitterness toward any person or toward God for anything, you can study, go to church, read the Word and memorize Scripture, but until you deal with that bitterness and hostility you will not bear fruit. Bitterness is an enemy of the cross and it chokes the Word so that it becomes unfruitful. Some good verses to look up are: Ephesians 4:27, II Corinthians 2:11 and Colossians 3:19.

These three methods are used by Satan to render the Word unusable in your life. The Word does not bear fruit. The word “unfruitful” is the opposite of “fruit” which is found in Galatians 5:22. The word “fruit” in this passage is the natural result of life. It is something you cannot help. If life is inherent and you are kept healthy, you will bear this fruit. The fruits of the spirit are naturally born in the life of the believer. That which is unfruitful is the word “*kakapos*”. It is the opposite of fruit and means the natural fruit will not grow. The roots will be there. The tree will be there, but nothing will happen. There will be no flowers. There will be no fruit. The reason is that the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches and the lust of other things choke the Word out of the believer’s life.

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