

Same Old Lie | Genesis 3:1-7 Sermon Discussion Participant Guide

Purpose of Discussion: To discuss specific schemes of the devil and practical ways we can begin to be more alert and resistant toward these schemes.

Sermon Refresher: When we read the Scriptures, we learn that we have a spiritual enemy that is at work, trying to destroy our lives. Going all the way back to Genesis, we find this enemy scheming against Adam and Eve through lies and deception. Sometimes we are able to spot the devil's schemes and sometimes we are not. Through the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives and our active watching and sober-mindedness we can stand firm and fight against the schemes of the devil.

Icebreaker: Describe a time when you or someone you know was involved in some kind of accident, either big or small.

Transition: Accidents by nature are unfortunate incidents that happen unexpectedly and unintentionally and thereby always contain some element of surprise. We don't see the accident coming and therefore we can't avoid it. In a similar way, we often don't perceive how our enemy is planning and scheming against us and as a result, we fall into his traps and temptations. But Scripture commands us to be watchful and aware of the enemy's schemes against us so we can avoid these kind of pitfalls. Let's discuss how we can grow in our understanding of the devil's schemes against us and how we can be watchful, alert and able to resist them in our lives.

Discussion:

1. Read Genesis 2:15–17. Here God gives the original command “to not eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” Compare and contrast this command to the exchange between the serpent and Eve found in Genesis 3:1-4. In what ways did the serpent either change or add to God’s word? What does this tell us about how the devil tries to plan or scheme against us?

Genesis 2:15–17

[15] The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. [16] And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, [17] but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” (ESV)

Genesis 3:1–4

[1] Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made.

He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” [2] And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, [3] but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” [4] But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. (ESV)

2. C.S. Lewis, in his book *The Screwtape Letters*, talks about how we can make two opposite errors when it comes to thinking and talking about Satan and demons. Some of us might disbelieve their existence and be uncomfortable discussing dark spiritual forces. On the other hand, some of us may have an unhealthy and excessive interest in them. Which end of the scale do you tend to fall and why do you think that is? What are the pitfalls that come with living one of these two extremes?

3. Read Ephesians 6:10-12. In this passage, Paul is reminding us that there are dark spiritual forces behind the scenes that are engaged in work to destroy us. Keith mentioned that even a friend or family member that gives us bad advice could be the devil working against us. In what areas of your life or in what ways do you think the evil one might be at work behind the scenes trying to tempt or destroy you?

[Ephesians 6:10–12](#)

[10] Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. [11] Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. [12] For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. (ESV)

4. In 1 Peter 5:8, we are commanded to be sober-minded and watchful because the devil is looking for ways to destroy our lives. What does it look like for us to be sober-minded and watchful as Christians? What is the Holy Spirit's role in helping us be sober-minded and watchful? What is our role in being sober-minded and watchful?
5. Read Ephesians 6:11 and 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17 commands that we resist the devil and stand firm in our faith through trials. In 2 Timothy 2:22 and 1 Corinthians 6:18 however, we are told to flee temptation. What does it look like in our everyday lives to stand firm against the devil in some instances while fleeing others?
6. Keith noted that one of the lies the serpent told Adam and Eve was that if they ate the fruit they would be like God and could be independent and autonomous. Adam and Eve fell for the serpent's lie and we fall for it as well. In what areas of your life are you tempted to "De-God" God and put yourself on the throne of your life? In what areas of your life are you possibly seeking disproportionate independence and autonomy?

7. One of the devil's schemes against us is to try and get us to worship and serve other gods. Often we refer to these gods as idols. Idols can often be good gifts from God like relationships, approval, work, sex, and food and drink that are turned into things we ultimately look to for love, comfort and self worth. When we think about trying to be watchful against this scheme of the devil and fight to unseat the idols in our lives Tim Keller has some helpful words...

"What you need to drive out an old passion (or idol), is a new passion, a greater passion. What you need is an over-mastering positive passion. To the degree, that you see Jesus on the cross, loosing absolutely everything for you, He will become a beauty to you, He will become so beautiful in your eyes that you'll be able to change these things that control you now, they'll loose their power. Do you know how to work on your heart like that? It's only by rejoicing in and resting in what Jesus Christ has done for you, then you can replace your idols. And if you really want to change and want to pound the Gospel more deeply into your heart - Jesus Christ must become your over-mastering positive passion."

Timothy Keller, [Gospel in Life Study Guide: Grace Changes Everything](#)

Think for a moment and decide on one practical thing you can do this advent season to focus on who Jesus is and what He has done for you so that you can stand firm and be watchful against the schemes of the devil.

Sharing and Prayer: We've been discussing how we can be watchful and stand firm against the schemes of the devil and we've spent time trying to identify some of the those schemes. Yet, there is reality that we may not even know how the devil is working to destroy our lives because there are areas where we are deceived and need God to open our eyes to the lies we might be believing. Spend time praying as a group that God would open our eyes to see the schemes of the devil of which we aren't aware.