

# Angels and Demons, Part 6

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This is a sad day and a good day. It's a sad day because we're going to finish up our angels and demons series. It's a good day because we're going to get back to Luke [in my next sermon].

Every one of these sermons had multiple other sermons begging to be preached on that subject, and this morning is no different. There are just so many good things related to what we're going to talk about that even at 8:20 this morning I was still struggling, trying to decide what I was going to cut out of my sermon. It's just really loaded.

We've been working our way through Luke and we're getting to [the passage on] the Gerasene demoniac. I thought we'd do a little excursion to talk about angels and demons and then other things have come into that and, finally, we're going to conclude the series [by] talking about temptation, [about] issues related to temptation, and how to get control of our lives as believers so that we are able to walk in holiness before the Lord. [We're also going to] talk about how Satan tempts us, and how he attacks us. [We're going to] talk about the mechanics of that more so that you can understand what you need to do in order to give glory to God by living a holy life.

How many of you here have read *The Holy War* by John Bunyan? Huh! Praise God! About three. Four! (Except maybe people in the balcony, but I can't see up there—there are too many lights.) In the first service, there was nobody on the bottom floor [who had read it]. Shame! Shame! *The Holy*

*War* was written by John Bunyan. It's an allegory, just like *The Pilgrim's Progress* is. The story is about a town called Mansoul, which existed in the country of Universe. Mansoul was created by the ruler of Universe, Shaddai. When Mansoul was first created, it was created perfect, it pleased Shaddai in every way, and Shaddai thought it was very good. Shaddai had as his purpose to dwell in Mansoul and make it his permanent place of residence. The town of Mansoul was a walled city, and it had five gates. It had the Ear Gate, the Eye Gate, the Nose Gate, the Mouth Gate, and the Feel Gate. These gates were designed by Shaddai to be impenetrable, and no one could enter those gates unless the inhabitants of the city purposely opened them up and let people in.

The king, though, had an enemy, who was one of his servants who had rebelled and had been banished from his kingdom. His name was Diabolus. Diabolus was so angry at Shaddai that he came to the city of Mansoul and decided to attack it in order to get revenge on Shaddai. Diabolus had several other friends—Beelzebub, Legion, and Apollyon—who also wanted to seek revenge. Their plan was to attack and take over Mansoul. They planned, and they strategized, and finally they concluded that the only way to enter the city was if they could somehow get the people inside the city to open the gates, because the walls were impenetrable, [and] the gates were impenetrable. They just couldn't get in.

They decided they would go for a plan of deception. Since the people of the city of Mansoul were innocent and they were not used to dealing with evil, [Diabolus and the others] thought, "Maybe we could deceive them into opening a gate." Their plan was simple: they would send Diabolus to the Ear Gate in the form of a serpent in order to speak lies to the people guarding the gate. Then, while [Diabolus] had their attention, one of the other fiends would take a bow and try to shoot Captain Resistance and kill him, since he was the chief guardian of Ear Gate. So, Diabolus came forward and started to tell lies to Captain Resistance in a soft and soothing voice. Lord Innocent, Mayor Understanding, Mr. Conscience, and Lord Willbe-will were also there, listening. Diabolus questioned the goodness of Shad-

dai, very subtly at first, and then more and more as he talked. [He tried] to convince the people of the city that Shaddai really was not that good and didn't have their best interest in mind, because, after all, he wouldn't let them eat of the tree in the midst of the city—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And, everybody knows, even by the name of the tree itself, that the knowledge of good and evil is a good thing. And thus, Diabolus continued trying to wear Captain Resistance down, and it was at that time that one of Diabolus' cohorts shot Captain Resistance in the head with an arrow and he fell down dead.

Now, with Captain Resistance dead, Diabolus increased his lies about Shaddai, and others on the wall started listening. Lord Innocent just fell dead for no apparent reason. Without Captain Resistance and Lord Innocent, soon the people of the city [fell prey to Diabolus], opened the gates, and all the evil fiends rushed into the city. The people then, with one impulse, ran to the tree [of the knowledge of good and evil], and all greedily ate of it. They even asked Diabolus to be their king and to rule over them in their once-pure town of Mansoul.

What Bunyan teaches here is pretty crystal clear. He's talking about the fall of Adam and Eve. If you've ever studied Genesis 3, you immediately realize the whole theme of the book [is] the fall of man and the redemption of man. God put Adam and Eve into a perfect environment. He made them perfect, He put them into a perfect environment, and He gave them only one rule: don't eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Satan then appears in the form of a serpent, and, very subtly, very soothingly, begins to erode Eve's confidence in God, saying, "Listen, if you were to eat of this tree, it would make you like God" [see Genesis 3:5]. Implied: God probably doesn't want that to happen. There's probably a jealousy thing going on there. And you know what? [Satan] wore down her resistance. She lusted inside, she ate of the fruit, and she gave it to her husband. Her innocence died. Her innocence didn't die, though, when she ate the fruit, it's when she lusted after the fruit. When she entertained evil thoughts of God, then that led to the eating of the fruit. But why did Adam and Eve

fall? Why did Mansoul fall? It's simple: They failed to guard the gates—that's why. They failed to guard the gates.

This morning, in this last message [on angels and demons], I want to address a few issues related to Satan and how Satan tempts us, so that you can understand what you need to do in order to resist temptation and be overcomers in an evil day [see Ephesians 6:13]. Now, the first [point] is: Satan will tempt you to sin. [But before we discuss that] I just want to talk about a few items that you need to understand.

First, what is sin? And you think, "Everybody knows what sin is." No, not really. As a matter of fact, you will encounter people more and more today who have no idea what sin is. The world is so shutting out God that people don't really understand. They think that sin is adultery and murder. That's sin—everything else is fine. But John, in 1 John 3:4 tells us—here's a biblical definition [of sin]—"Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness." He goes on to say, in 1 John 5:17 in the beginning of the verse, "All unrighteousness is sin." That's what sin is. Any time you deviate from the Word of God, any time you do any unrighteousness, it's sin. The Greek word for sin is "hamartia," [which] actually means "to miss the mark." It was used, for instance, in archery when somebody would shoot at a target in an attempt to hit the bull's-eye and if they missed the bull's-eye they would "hamartia"—miss the mark. They would sin—deviate from the perfect bull's-eye.

Well, the mark that sin misses is the *infinite perfection* of God's holiness. God is infinitely perfect and any time you, or anyone else, deviate from His perfection, you sin—in any degree, in thought, or action. It's not just murdering, it's not just committing adultery, or robbing banks. Sure those things are sin, but that is just a couple of [examples of sin]. If you deviate in any degree—no matter how small—in thought or action from God's perfectly holy and righteous standard, you sin. This is why Lord Innocent dropped dead for no apparent reason. As soon as he entertained evil thoughts about God—boom—he dropped dead. He didn't even need to be shot with an arrow. The moment that you entertain a fragment of complaint,

a micron of lust, a grain of pride—anything to any small, microscopic degree—you sin and that sin can damn you to hell. So, it's not just the big things [that are sin], contrary to what the world might have you believe.

Second, what is temptation? Temptation is an opportunity to sin. Or, if you look at it from God's perspective, [it is] an opportunity to obey. When you look in the New Testament, for instance, the word "temptation" is also translated "test." When it's speaking of Satan or demons it talks about them "tempting" us because they want us to do evil. When the same exact word is used of God, it's translated "test" because it's talking about God giving us an opportunity to obey. The only difference is motive. God *tests* us in order to give us an opportunity to give Him glory by obeying Him. Satan *tempts* us in an attempt to get us to do evil so we won't glorify God.

Temptation itself is not a sin. You could be bombarded with temptation and not sin. Hebrews 4:15 says, "For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin." [This is] speaking of Christ. He was bombarded with temptation, but temptation is not sin. A man is walking down the sidewalk, he sees some gorgeous, immodestly dressed woman, and there's an opportunity there: an opportunity to either give God glory or not give God glory. He will either lust in his heart or he will not lust in his heart. Satan, of course, would have him sin. God, of course, would have him obey. From God's perspective, it is a test. From Satan's perspective, it is a temptation.

Third, where does temptation come from? Well, [first] you can be tempted from your own wicked heart; this is internal temptation. Your heart is wicked. A lot of people don't understand this, but when the Bible talks about us receiving a new heart and being "new creatures" in Christ [see 2 Corinthians 5:17], it does not mean perfect hearts. We all know this, right? You're a Christian, you have evil thoughts, and bingo, your heart is imperfect. When God talks about [Christians] receiving a new heart, what that means is that you as a believer now have the ability to understand the things of God. It means that you, as a believer, have the ability to reprogram your heart and

to slowly be transformed from the inside out into the image of Christ. *That* is the new heart; [you are] not perfectly holy all at once. I wish it were that, but it's not. So, you could be, for instance, shipwrecked on a desert island all by yourself, Satan and all his demons could be locked in hell, and you would still have evil thoughts. Why? Because you're a sinner. There is still evil in your heart.

Second, we are also tempted by things without. For instance, other people [can tempt us]. Unbelievers, for instance, are of their father the devil [see John 8:44]—Satan uses them as his instruments to tempt us. But even if Satan didn't, unbelievers are still evil, and so they might still try to tempt us, even without Satan's help. Not only that, *Christians* sometimes tempt us—sometimes intentionally, sometimes not.

Do you remember when Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem in Matthew 16:12–13? He's on His way and He's telling His disciples, "I'm going to go to Jerusalem, I'm going to be handed over to the leaders, they are going to crucify Me, on the third day I'll rise again." Do you remember what Peter did? Peter took Him aside and said, "God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You!" [Matthew 16:22]. Do you remember that? Now, Peter has good intentions. I mean, he's an apostle, he's on the right side. And what is he doing? He is lobbying against God's will. *Against God's will!* With all good intentions, he doesn't want Jesus to atone for the sins of the world. And so, Jesus turns to Him and says, "Get behind me, Satan!" Owie! "for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's" [16:23]. He says, "You are a stumbling block to Me." Jesus was speaking to Peter because [Peter] was acting on behalf of Satan against the will of God. So, how are you tempted? From within your own wicked heart, and from without from other people—believers and unbelievers.

Third, and finally, you are tempted by Satan. And that would include all of his demons. Have you ever wondered how Satan does this? How *does* Satan tempt you? Does he crawl into your metaphysical ear and say, "Think an evil thought." You ever wonder about that? You're reading your Bible and having a great [quiet] time, or you're standing up singing some

[Christian] song, and all of a sudden a wicked thought comes to mind. And you go, “Hmm. What is *that*?”

I don’t think Satan can read your mind. The Bible doesn’t say he can read your mind. I don’t know how it works. The Bible just doesn’t tell us. I wish it did. It doesn’t go into any explanation about how spiritual beings tempt us, but we know they do. We know that they promote false doctrine. When false teachers teach, they teach the doctrines of demons. Well, how do those demons communicate with those false teachers? I don’t know. It just is the way it is, OK?

So, I don’t know [how demons communicate], but you know what? It doesn’t matter. It doesn’t matter if you know the answer to that question. It doesn’t matter whether you’re being tested by God or whether you’re being tempted by an unbeliever on their own initiative, an unbeliever because of Satan, a believer with bad intentions, a believer with good intentions, or Satan himself. It doesn’t matter. What matters is that you do what’s right when you are tempted. *That’s* what matters.

What does Satan appeal to when he tempts you? Satan appeals to what Thomas Watson refers to as “the godless man’s trinity.” First John 2:16–17 says this:

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

Here in this verse, is the godless man’s trinity: “lust of the flesh,” “lust of the eyes,” and “the boastful pride of life.” That is his god. We, as believers, are to live for the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The godless man lives for the “lust of the flesh,” “lust of the eyes,” and “the boastful pride of life.” You see, when you are saved, you are born again, you receive this new heart, you become a new creature in Christ, you receive the Holy Spirit, you are regenerated, you are adopted, you are justified, you are sanctified,

you are redeemed. God does all these things for you. Yet all of these things happen in the spiritual realm. Your physical being is not redeemed. It's not redeemed. The physical part of you craves pleasure: "*Please* take care of me." Your physical body wants pleasure so badly that it would have you sin to get it, and it does. "Feed me! Touch me!" whatever. "Let me look"—whatever brings you pleasure. [With] all of these things—good things and bad things—your flesh just always wants to be pampered.

Turn over to Romans 7, where Paul talks about something we're all familiar with. In Romans 7, Paul talks about the battle that every Christian has to fight every single day of their lives. It is a battle against what he calls "the flesh," which is really that evil lusting within the members of your body that is contrary to the will of God. In verses 14–24, he talks about this in great detail, but we're just going to pick it up at verse 21. He's talking about [when] you want to do what is right, and then you end up doing what is wrong. And you're thinking, "Why did I do that?"

Well, look at verse 21 and following: "I find then the principle that evil is present *in me*," [emphasis added] not just outside, he's talking about in him already, "the one who wants to do good. For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man," that's the good part, [the] bad part [is]: "but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?"

Try this sometime this week—here's a homework assignment. Just stand in front of the mirror, look at yourself, and say, "Self, we aren't sinning anymore. Now, you *know* that you're a Christian, and you *know* that 'no temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man' [1 Corinthians 10:13], and 'God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will be able to provide a way of escape' [10:13]. You know that, Self. You also know that God's 'grace is sufficient' [2 Corinthians 12:9], that God has given us 'everything pertaining to life and godliness' [2 Peter 1:3], and that you never have to sin

again. So don't do it anymore, period." You probably won't even get out of the bathroom before you've sinned.

Paul describes it in Galatians 5:17: "For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another," like two poles of a magnet, "so that you may not do the things that you please." In other words, you want to please God and then you've got your flesh craving after all these evil things. You just want to say, "Stop! Stop!" the whole time. James describes it this way in James 4:1: "What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you?" Here's the source: "Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members?"

Peter describes it this way, in 1 Peter 2:11, "Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul." We all know this: your heart is in control of your body. So, in order to receive pleasure to your body, your heart has to give your body permission to open the gates and receive it.

[This is what] Paul is referring to [in Romans 7:24], when he talks about 'the body of this death.' Do you know what he's talking about there? He's talking about this ancient tribe from his hometown of Tarsus that had this very interesting way of dealing with murderers. When somebody had murdered somebody else and they were caught, that person then was strapped to the murder victim—arm to arm, body to body, face to face, nose to nose, mouth to mouth—lashed to them physically. It was called a "body of death." Then what happened was that the body [of the murder victim] would begin to decay and rot. And then, the person lashed to it would slowly be infected by the dying death of that person they killed, and then that person, though dead, would kill them.

And so, when Paul says, "Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?" this is what he's saying. He says, "You see this body that we've got, this physical part of us? It's going to kill us. It's lusting after sin, it's causing us to do evil." And you know what? It's going to kill you. It will kill every one of you. You will go down unless the Rapture happens. You're going to die. He talks about [how] our spirits are

redeemed, and we have the newness of Christ in our spirits and then we're just kind of inseparably fused to this sin-cursed body of death that is going to take us down.

Then what will happen is [that] once you finally die, your sin-cursed body goes into the grave and then you're free. Nothing is added at death. You have blessed subtraction. You get to get rid of the body of death and you become a perfect spirit. And then at the Rapture, your dead, corrupted body then is glorified and reassembled and made perfect and united with your perfect spirit. Then you have a perfect body to go with your perfect spirit. Now we have a perfect spirit to go with an *imperfect* body.

That's what Paul is talking about. But while you are strapped to your body of death, you continually have to deal with it because, man, it is *infected*. It's trying to lead you into the grave as fast as it can. And those whose flesh gets a hold of them the most die the quickest because it just drags them down that path of sin and they destroy themselves with greed, and covetousness, and lust, and murder.

So what have we learned? To sin is to deviate any degree from God's perfectly holy standard. Temptation is an appeal or offer to deviate from God's standard and [to] sin or obey, depending on how you look at it. Temptation comes from several sources. What [are those] sources? It comes from your own wicked heart, from unbelievers and believers, and from Satan and his demons. But the real issue is the heart. The heart is the heart of the issue. And that is our second point: You must guard your heart.

We all know about viruses. I mean, pretty much [everyone] has computers and even if you're old and you've committed yourself to be a dinosaur until death, you still know what computers are. They're everywhere. There are all sorts of malicious hackers and programmers out there [who] do nothing but sit around and type programs to ruin other people's computers. Isn't that strange? "I'm good at programming; I think I'll write some viruses." Isn't that wicked? [Viruses] are wicked things from without.

Here at the church we have this server and all these computers hooked to it with what is called a "network." And we have all sorts of things set up to

try and keep the bad guys out. We have a firewall and antivirus [software], anti-spam, anti-junk mail, anti-whatever. We have all sorts of electronic gadgets with really cool lights that are always blinking and doing stuff—I don't know what they do. They're all designed to keep the junk [that is] outside our system outside our system—to stay out there and not get in.

If we were to drop those firewalls one day, decide to just unhook the firewall, uninstall all the programs, and just trust God for a day, the world would rush into our system with all sorts of viruses and worms and creep through our server and blast—kill—everybody's computer. In one day, no doubt, it would be over.

I remember when John Richard first came here, and he was up in his office, and he was having problems with his computer. He said, "I don't know what's wrong. I get my disk and I try and copy my sermon on there and it's gone. It disappears. I'm losing stuff. Things are working weird and jumping around on my screen." He didn't know what was going on.

I said, "John, have you been updating your virus software?"

And he said, "What's that?"

I said, "John, let me come down there." So I went down there and there was the brand-new box of virus software still in a cellophane covering sitting on the shelf next to his new computer. I said, "John, you didn't install this, huh?"

He said, "Install what? I just thought that came with the computer."

I said, "It did."

He said, "Am I supposed to put that on?"

"Yeah!" So he installed it, ran it the first time and there were "only" seventeen viruses [on his computer]. And his computer was hooked to the server, and that server was hooked to everybody else's computer. So we had to work for a while to get all the corruption out of the system.

Well, in the very same way, your heart is like that. Your heart is the central operating system of your life. But it's worse than a computer because even apart from the stuff outside, it's already corrupted from within. So you not only have to employ God's means to keep the sin within sup-

pressed, you also have to guard the gates to keep sin outside from getting in, from putting more trash in there. You can never shut down the system for a while and just trust God for a day, or an hour, or even a minute, or all this trash will pour into your life.

Turn to Proverbs 4:23. We're going to look at this whole issue of how to protect your operating system. [In] Proverbs 4:23 Solomon gives this great verse, which is just loaded with goodies. [He] says this: "Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life." Now, the word "watch" as the NASB has it, or "keep," as the New King James version [has it], or "guard" in the NIV, is a command. It means "to constantly and diligently be watching over something." It could be translated "to guard, to keep, preserve, protect from danger, to protect with fidelity, to blockade, or be a watchman over." You get the idea. The heart is like an operating system of a computer: it must be protected or your life won't be right to give glory to God.

Notice the degree to which you must watch your heart: "with all diligence." The NIV says, "*above all else, guard your heart*" [emphasis added]. Now that's about as much as you could put into it, right? I mean, of all the priorities in life, that's a pretty high one: "all diligence." "Diligence" by itself is a strong word. "All diligence" is just about everything you could do. God is telling you here [that] you need to make as a [very] high priority of your life to diligently guard—protect with fidelity—your heart. And if you're thinking, "Well, what are you talking about? Are you talking about the pumper, [your physical heart]?" No, I'm talking about everything that is you that's not physical—your thoughts, your emotions, your will, your intellect, your soul. All of that stuff is talking about the heart. "Heart" is the word that is used to describe all of those things in the Bible.

Now, the word translated "diligence" here is an interesting word because sometimes it's translated "prison, jail, guards, or guardhouse," and sometimes it's used to describe the act of putting somebody under custody. So, when you look at those things, you could translate the verse literally [as]: "Guard your heart with all guarding," which is clear. You need to guard

your heart—intellect, emotions, will, the real you. Why? Why do you need to do that? Look at the text: “For from it,” the heart, “flow the springs of life.” You think, “Well, what does that mean?” In biblical context if you had a spring that was a big deal. They didn’t just go into the house and turn on the water or go to the drinking fountain and get a drink, they had to have a spring, or a stream, or rain. That’s it. So, people who had springs had something very valuable. A lot of times, if there was a spring, a whole city would be built around that one spring. That one spring would keep the whole city alive. And so, “springs,” then, are an idiom, or an expression, to describe something that is life giving.

So what Solomon is saying here is: “Guard your heart with all, every, and each bit of diligence, because from it flows all the areas of your life.” All the areas of your life flow from your heart. And notice, it’s not “from it flow the *spring* of life,” but it is “springs” plural—every area of your life flows from the *springs*. There are many that flow from the heart. So God has called you to be the warden, the watchman, the guardian, of your heart because it is the central operating system of your entire being.

That’s pretty easy to understand, I think. The question is: *How* do you do this? You say, “OK, I’m supposed to guard my heart. I’m supposed to *really* guard my heart, I’m supposed to *really, really* guard my heart with all, every, each bit of diligence. I get that. All my life is controlled by my heart. OK, I got that. So how do [I] do it?” Here it is: You can only guard your heart if you guard the conduits, the access points, into your heart. It’s the only way to do it. Corruption enters into the system of your heart through the senses. That’s how it enters: through the five senses. Now you know why Bunyan had the gates named [Mouth Gate,] Ear Gate, Eye Gate, Nose Gate, Feel Gate. You know why he did that now, because there’s only one way to get into Mansoul, and that’s through the senses.

Your heart controls everything and the senses are the conduits from what’s outside of you to what’s inside of you. If you didn’t have any senses, you wouldn’t know what was in the world, right? If you couldn’t feel anything, smell anything, see anything, hear anything, or touch anything, you

would just be in silent darkness. Nothing would affect you. You could hit somebody, poke them, scream in their ear, whatever [and there would be] nothing. They would be gone. And so, in order to obey the command to guard your heart, you have to guard your senses.

So, let's just talk about each of these [senses, or gates], and what [they] mean. First, let's talk about some of the smaller gates. The first small gate is the mouth gate, or the sense of taste. This may not appear to be a major gate and it's not, but it is used by Satan. For instance, in Genesis 3:5, where Satan is tempting Eve, he convinces her that the fruit was good for food. She's looking at it, thinking, "That does look kind of tasty." See? In Proverbs 5:3, it says, "For the lips of an adulteress drip honey." Satan, when he was tempting [Jesus] in the wilderness in Matthew and Luke 4, says, "Why don't you turn this rock into a hot, buttery loaf of bread?" [see Matthew 4:3; Luke 4:3]. That would be tempting—especially if you're starving.

Proverbs 23:20 says, "Do not be with heavy drinkers of wine, Or with gluttonous eaters of meat." A few verses later, in Proverbs 23:31, we read, "Do not look on the wine when it is red, When it sparkles in the cup, When it goes down smoothly." People become alcoholics, people become gluttons and obese when they are unwilling to guard their hearts in that gate—the mouth gate.

Secondly, there's another small gate to the heart, and that is called the Nose Gate, or the sense of smell. In Proverbs 7, it describes the seduction of the naïve young man by the immoral woman who is called the "seductress." And, in verse 17, she tells him, "I have sprinkled my bed With myrrh, aloes and cinnamon"—all fragrant spices. You know, the good-looking woman is tempting, but the good-looking woman who smells good is even *more* tempting.

Have you ever thought of what happens when you go into a department store at the mall? You need to. What's always there, right when you walk in? There's a huge perfume center where you are bombarded with smells. You can find any smell you want in there until you find one that you like. And they're all mingled together. That's the first thing you encounter. Do

you think that's an accident? Why don't they put that down in the tool basement? Do you know that stores even pump fragrance into their stores in an attempt to feed people's sense of smell and make them want to purchase more? Do you know that it's the job [of some people] to find out what smells make people buy more? How would you like that job?

If you were to go into a small, touristy town and there's some little country store with all those little knickknacks and widgets that people buy, what do they have in there? They have a nice, little apple pie spice fragrance wafting around, and it reminds you of home, and you just want to buy some of those home widgets. It's just like being in the country all at once. It smells like you baked a hot apple pie right then.

Have you ever been walking down the street and all of a sudden you [sniff] and [you wonder], "What is that smell? That smells great! Man, that's [making me] hungry!" And pretty soon your nose is communicating with your heart: "You need to get your body in there." And your sense of taste is going, "No cutting! Walk yourself in there, tell your hand to pull out that wallet and buy some of that food and stick it in." We've all been there!

Now, I'm not saying that you need to walk around with a nose pin on. What I'm saying is [that] you need to make sure that you're guarding your senses. Be like the airport: Sure, you can go onto the plane, but you don't just get to go on, you have to go through the rigors of being able to get on. You have to go through the search procedure, the scan procedure, the questioning procedure—all those things are designed to make sure that, "Yeah, we're going to let things in, but we're going to guard them, scan them, check them out before they get in." Whatever you do, you don't just open the gate and say, "Come on in." I mean, would you like to be on a plane like that?

Thirdly, there is the Feel Gate, or the sense of touch. This gate is substantially bigger than the Mouth and Nose gates. A man may be tempted to look at a woman, but if she touches him, the temptation [increases] exponentially. Proverbs 7:13 describes the seductress woman as seizing the

young man and kissing him. This is why 1 Corinthians 7:1 says, “it is good for a man not to touch a woman.” And if you have the NIV, I’m sorry, cross out “marry” and put “touch” in there because that’s what the word means. It means “to touch so as to ignite into passion.”

You hear things advertised on TV as feeling smooth, and silky, and sensuous. You’re in a department store, and you’re walking around, and you see something you like. What’s the first thing you do? You touch it and go, “Ooo! I like that! Honey, come over here! Feel this. I’d like that wrapped all over my body.” Do people buy things made out of burlap? It would be cheaper! Pretty soon, you’ve got out your Visa, and you’ve got [your purchase] in a sack, and you’re walking out with your sensual-feeling whatever.

One of the things that I do just to learn patience and sanctification is I take Leah to the Galleria. She had some gift certificates from her birthday so we’re walking in there, and, of course, she wants to go into all the teeny-bopper shops. There are no tools in there. Most of them don’t even have any guy stuff in there. And so, there I am. When I sat back and looked, they looked like ants, you know, teenaged ants. They were just crawling all over the stuff, grabbing stuff on racks and stacks and piles, and they were rifling through it and just looking at stuff. And I thought, “This is a great place for illustrations!” They were abounding.

Satan can often tempt you and he combines these different areas into a very powerful temptation. And even me—we did go into a place that had some guy stuff and I was looking at shoes and what did I do? I went over there, and I looked at a shoe, and I grabbed it, and I put my thumb right in the heel because I wanted to see how nice it would feel when I stand up and I’m teaching all day long. I wanted it to be squishy. I mean, you can wear uncomfortable shoes, [but] I don’t want to. And that’s just because I want my flesh pleased in that area when I’m teaching. I don’t want to be standing up here grimacing while I’m trying to communicate to you. I want to feel good. So, you need to guard the Feel Gate.

Fourthly, there is the Ear Gate, or sense of hearing. The Ear Gate is the second-largest gate to your heart, so you need to put extra fortifications at this gate because it's larger than the ones previously mentioned. The larger the gate, the harder it is to guard. Mansoul fell because it failed to guard the Ear Gate. The attack was at the Ear Gate, and they sat there and they listened to junk about Shaddai and that was the beginning of the end.

You don't want to be listening to lies and deception and drop your guard. Granted, you have to listen to some garbage out there. You can't leave the world. But don't let your guard down. Don't just drop your guard. Don't listen to false teachers and say, "They might have something good to say," and relax. That's just like pouring doctrinal sewage into your heart.

When you're out in the world, and all of a sudden you start hearing garbage, put up your guard. Tell the person to stop if you can, or get out of Dodge and walk away. Again, in Proverbs 7:21–22, the seductress bombs the young naïve man through the Ear Gate, and Solomon comments, saying, "With her many persuasions she entices him; With her flattering lips she seduces him. Suddenly he follows her As an ox goes to the slaughter." She bombards him with flattery and verbal temptation and enticement. And he follows her like an ox to the slaughter.

Have you ever wondered why department stores just happen to have the kind of music [that appeals to a particular age group] in that particular department that has whatever merchandise they want to sell to that particular age group? Well, I got a big dose of it yesterday. I got a lot of thumping, driving rap music because I was among [the age group that appealed to]. But you know what? When I walked over to the guy department there was this calm, soothing [music]. If you go down to the tool department, you've got tool music, whatever that is. They're pumping WD-40 as the fragrance in there—makes you want to buy.

You need to think about this. This is a million-, if not billion-, dollar industry—[sounds] and smells and all these things combined to get you to purchase. The next time you go into a department store, just go, "OK, let's see what all my senses experience." You walk in there—smells, sights,

[things to] hear, to touch, samples to nibble on, whatever. You go in there and it's like a smorgasbord. You just want to throw yourself in reckless abandon and buy! That's what they're trying to do—wear you down. You [start out] like, “Oh, I'm not buying anything today, honey.” And the next thing you know, “Oh, that looks nice,” and pretty soon you leave with a huge bag full of stuff. And they plunder you like the Israelites plundered the Egyptians. You've let down your guard.

The adulterous woman in Proverbs 5:3 is described as having “speech [which is] smoother than oil.” Speaking, speaking, flattering, wearing down Captain Resistance. This is especially true with entertainment because entertainment often can be good. There is a lot of good entertainment out there—things that are fine. But you know what? Mixed in with that is the bad. And so, if you're going for entertainment, you have to keep your guard up. You can never let your guard down. Why? Because you'll be having something good, good, good, good, and, all of a sudden, bingo! You've got your guard down and you're just shot through with a bunch of trash. It's like letting sewer be poured into your heart.

Think about it. You have a radio industry that spends millions, if not billions, of dollars on radio advertising. Why? Because it works. It's a conduit to your heart. I was the youngest of eight kids, so I had older brothers and sisters, and they listened to every kind of music, along with my parents, that you could think of. I never owned a single one of those albums (for you who are young—CDs or MP3 files). I never owned any of that. [But] I'm telling you, I can just be driving along looking for some radio station to listen to and all of a sudden some classic, hard, grinding rock song comes on, and I think, “Huh.” My head starts moving, and I go, “I know all the words to this song!”

And my wife, grimacing, says, “You do?”

I say, “Yeah!”

She says, “Who is it?”

I say, “I don't know. But I want you to know, I could sing all the words to this song. They're all in there!”

I've been corrupted! My brothers and sisters saturated me with bad trash. If you came to Christ later on in life, then you've got all this music in your head. You came to Christ, and then you're singing one of your favorite songs, and all of a sudden it gets to some phrase and you can't say it. It's blasphemous, it's carnal, it's wicked. You're like, "I can't sing that song anymore!" And pretty soon you're like, "Well, that song's gone. That song's gone." You realize how trashy the music in the world is and before that you didn't even know it. Why? Because your gates, man, they were welded open. And all before you became a Christian you just let it pour in and you were deceived into thinking, "It's not affecting me." I'm telling you, it was corrupting your system and making your life show the results of the corruption. So, you have to be careful of what you listen to.

Finally, the fifth and largest gate is the Eye Gate, or the sense of seeing. Researchers have said that about eighty-five percent of everything we learn—translated "gets into our hearts"—gets in through the Eye Gate. Eighty-five percent. Now, let me just put this in proportion. It would mean that if you were to draw some gates on a scale, the Nose and [Mouth] Gates would be two feet wide. That's a pretty small door. The Touch or Feel Gate would be six feet wide. The Ear Gate would be twenty feet wide—about from [the pulpit] to the organ. The Eye Gate would be 170 feet wide. I'm telling you, it's hard to guard a gate that big.

That's the whole point. That is where you need to put the bulk of the fortifications: at the Eye Gate. You have to stop evil from entering in. You know what? If you look at something, it just gets in. It's in there instantly, right? That image—whatever it is that's bad—is seared onto your brain. It's over. I wish you could memorize Bible verses like that. It's why Proverbs 4:25–27 says, "Let your eyes look directly ahead And let your gaze be fixed straight in front of you. Watch the path of your feet And all your ways will be established. Do not turn to the right nor to the left; Turn your foot from evil." In other words, if you want to have all the ways of your life established, you have to guard the Eye Gate.

Jesus, in Matthew 5:28, said, “I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart,” has failed to guard the Eye Gate. Proverbs 6:25 says, “Do not desire her beauty in your heart, Nor let her capture you with her eyelids.” No tractor-beam stuff going on there. The eyes are the window to the soul, someone said. That’s why Job said, “I have made a covenant with my eyes; How then could I gaze at a virgin?” [Job 31:3]. I’m not going to do it.

Psalm 119:37 says, “Turn away my eyes from looking at vanity, And revive me in Your ways.” You’ve got to be ruthless here. There’s this nasty billboard on the way to seminary that I have to drive by. I hate that billboard. Sometimes I get evil thoughts, “You know, I could put some gas on it and light it on fire!” But it’s made out of metal. And so about six blocks away [from the billboard], I put my visor down. I’m tall, so I never use my visor, and I can [only] see about two feet in front of my truck [with it down], but I just wait until I drive by and then I flip it back up. And if somebody’s in the truck with me, I flip it down for him and say, “Just leave it there.”

And I’ve had guys with me saying, “What are you doing?”

I say, “You’ll thank me for it later.”

And they always wonder, “What are you doing?” I don’t even tell them.

We have this whole pact in our family that the girls especially protect the guys. So, when we’re out at places, Lisa will say, “Honey, look to the left! Honey, look to the right! OK. Look down. Just close your eyes!”

I always ask her, “What? What is it?”

“You don’t need to know. Keep ‘em closed.”

Nate gets *Popular Science* and he can’t open it up until Lisa has gone through there and pillaged it of all its visual trash. *Popular Science*! The newspaper is the same way. There are times when I go, “Oh, I want to go look at something,” and there are all these pages ripped out and it’s like, “Oh, praise God for my wife!” I *want* her to do it. I *beg* her to do it. You have to guard your Eye Gate. You look down, you look away, you don’t look at it because those things get in in a hurry. Instantaneously.

So, now you know. Satan knows [that] your whole life flows from your heart. He knows that the key to get in your heart, to get your body to do what is wrong, is to enter into the gates of your senses. He knows your flesh wants to be pleased. So, he is going to offer your flesh pleasure, and he is going to try and get in through your senses to tell your heart to do evil so that you will sin against God. And that is the mechanics of how temptation works. The concept is simple, but hard to do. You guard the gates of your heart and then you escape corruption. You keep what's evil within suppressed by the Word of God, which is what the Puritans called "mortifying the flesh"; and you keep what's outside that's bad from coming in and corrupting more of your heart.

And if you do that, you will be a godly person. If you don't, you won't. I can tell you that anybody who comes to me and says, "I've got this struggle in my life. I've got this problem. I've got this reoccurring whatever," it's all a gate problem. Always. Always. There's something in his life that he is feeding this lust through one of the gates. That has to stop. When that stops, the problem goes away. All right. Let's pray.

Father, we are grateful to have Your Word, which tells us amazing things—amazing truths—about our hearts, and our souls, and temptation, and Satan. Father, we know we're wicked. We know that there are unbelievers out there who are wicked, and believers out there who, with all good intentions, try to get us to do what is wrong. Father, we know that even You put us to tests so that we might obey You, like You tested Abraham to see if he would obey You. And, Father, wherever the test or temptation comes from, I pray that we would not be absorbed in trying to figure out where it's coming from, but we would remember what to do. That we would be people who would first run to You in prayer, think about what we know from the Scriptures, guard the gates of our hearts, and that all our lives we would be putting in good to drive out the evil, and keeping the evil out so that the good would accumulate. So that we would become more conformed to the image of Christ so that, when we stand before You we will be unashamed. Father, we pray all these things in Christ's name, Amen.