

# *The Identification of Satanic Attacks*

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The specific attacks of Satan are limited to the eleven listed below. While some are attitudes rather than sin acts, these attitudes can lead to various sin acts. All of Satan's attacks seem to be based, at least to some extent in the first attack, pride.

- a) **Pride** (1 Timothy 3:6; see also 1 Timothy 6:4; 2 Timothy 3:4)  
Satanic pride is the attitude of one who thinks that he deserves a higher position than he actually occupies. Romans 12:3 indicates that the believer is “not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly” (NKJV), an undoubted reference to the Satanic attitude of pride. Sometimes called “high-mindedness” Satanic pride is not egocentricity, which is a work of the flesh, but an attitude or belief that the person deserves a position of authority or prominence which he does not occupy. The word “pride” itself comes from the idea of being puffed up with smoke. This problem is specifically identified by Paul to Timothy concerning the elder candidate who is “a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the *same* condemnation as the devil” (1 Timothy 3:6). Satanic pride then relates to the desire of occupying a high position when not actually deserved. This is seen in the nature of Satan's desire to occupy a higher position than that assigned by God (Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28).
- b) **Age conformity or independence from God**
- (1) Satan is the “god of this age” (2 Corinthians 4:4).  
An age is a revelatory period of time that is described as having certain characteristics. The main characteristic of the present age is that it is “evil” (Galatians 1:4). The word evil (Greek, *poneros*) is used of Satan himself who is designated “the evil one” (Matthew 13:8, et. al.). The word carries the idea of a malignancy. Satan's godhood of the age indicates that he is in control of the elements of the age that are detrimental to the believer.
- (2) Age conformity is not worldliness (2 Timothy 4:10).  
Because of incorrect translation, age conformity is often confused with worldliness. In each of the verses mentioned above, the KJV translates the Greek word *αἰών* (*aiōn*) as *world* rather than *age*, a period of time. However, age conformity is not the same as worldliness. Worldliness is a separate enemy of the believer, while age conformity is one of the attacks of the Christian's enemy the devil. An excellent illustration of this can be seen in 2 Timothy 4:10, where Demas forsook Paul, “having loved the now age,” where both the KJV and the NKJV wrongly translate the word as *world* rather than *age*. Demas did not become a worldly Christian. He did not forsake ministering. He simply redirected his ministry in a way so as to be independent from Paul. That is, Demas became age conformed.
- (3) Age conformity relates to misusing one's spiritual gift (Romans 12:1,2, 3-6). The problem of age conformity is specifically presented in these verses. Generally age conformity refers to not ministering in a biblical and Godly way in the are of one's priesthood. Specifically in the context of Romans 12, age conformity deals with one's misuse of his spiritual gift. As a result of pride, the individual believes that his ministry should have priority over others in God's program. The age-conformed individual will abandon a ministry in which he believes he is not receiving deserved recognition. An individual in a position of authority may promote himself so that others who are receiving some recognition will be threatened with removal. Age conformity is the application of the values of the present evil age (Galatians 1:4) to Christian ministry.
- c) **Anxiety** (1 Peter 5:7ff)  
The noun form of the Greek word *merimna* (μεριμνά) occurs 6 times in the NT. The basic meaning of the word is “to care, to be concerned.” However, in some contexts it has the negative connotation of “worry” or “anxiety” as it does in 1 Peter 5:7.  
The verb form *merimnao* (μεριμνάω), which occurs 24 times in the NT, is used in Philippians 4:6-7 in the negative sense of the Satanic attack of anxiety. The opposite of anxiety is internal peace. Anxiety is defined as the attitude of the individual who thinks that he should be in control of circumstances that are outside of his control.
- d) **Discouragement** (Job; 1 Thessalonians 2:17-18; See also Revelation 2:10)  
Discouragement is the negative attitude of the individual who believes his circumstances are out of control. It is related to anxiety in that it seems to be the next logical step in the degradation of the attitude. It is based on an inadequate view of God and an unwillingness to subordinate to His program. Discouragement is often seen in statements such as “Why me?” or “I don't deserve this.”
- e) **Spiritual Fear** (Luke 22:31-34; 22:57; 2 Timothy 1:7,8; Revelation 2:10)  
When the Lord Jesus Christ told Peter that Satan desired to “sift him as wheat” He was referring to the Satanic temptation of spiritual fear. When Peter claimed that he was willing to “go with You, both to prison and to death,” Christ's response was the prediction that Peter would deny Him three times before the crowing of the rooster. This was fulfilled in Luke 22:57-62. Peter's fear had overcome him because Satan had indeed, “sifted him as wheat.” That phrase tells us something

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of Satan's method. He found a spiritual weakness and exploited it. Metaphorically speaking, when Satan sifted Peter, fear fell out. Evidently Timothy was afraid to share the Gospel (2 Timothy 1:8). Paul reminds him in 2 Timothy 1:7 that "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." Finally, John writes, "Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw *some* of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days." Again Satan is seen as prompting a condition that will produce fear.

- f) **Stealing** (Ephesians 4:27b, 28).  
Stealing is an aspect of Satanic pride (high-mindedness) because the one who steals thinks himself above working, and more important than the one from whom he is stealing. He personally feels superior to his victim. Paul tells the Ephesians that they are not to let the son go down on their wrath "nor give place to the devil. Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with *his* hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need." Stealing is actually an act of spiritual arrogance.
- g) **Lying** (Genesis 3:4; John 8:44b; Acts 5:1-10)  
Another temptation based on pride is lying. One lies to cause others to think more highly of him than they ought. The first instance of a lie is found in Genesis 3:4 where the serpent deceived Eve. The Lord Jesus explained the Satanic motivation in John 8:44b "When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it." The phrase "from his own resources," would better be expressed "by his own people." Satan produces lies today through the words of human beings. Perhaps the best example of Satanic influence in lying is found in Acts 5:1-10, where Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, conspired to lie to the Apostles. Peter clearly connects lying with Satanic influence in the words, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back *part* of the price of the land for yourself?" The answer to the question is not given, but contextually we may surmise that they did so in order to "look good" to others when they did not deserve it.
- h) **Spiritual Idleness** (1 Timothy 5:13-15)  
Spiritual idleness is not lack of activity. When the young women of 1 Timothy 5:13-15 were idle, they were busy with the wrong things. The problem was one of priorities. They were idle in that they were not doing God's work as they had agreed to do. Idleness, gossip, and being a busybody are all associated with Satanic influence in the words "give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully. For some have already turned aside after Satan."
- i) **Gossip** (1 Timothy 5:13-15)  
The Greek word for gossip does not appear to be limited to talking about people behind their backs. It also includes the discussion of subjects that are not fit to be discussed. While by no means are Christians limited to talking about spiritual matters, we are to guard our speech so as not to get involved in vain speculations and foolish talking.
- j) **Busy-body** (1 Timothy 5:13-15 [curious arts]).  
This idea seems to be the flip side of spiritual idleness. The Greek word indicates that these women were busy, but engaging in illegitimate activities. The same word is used in Acts 19:19 where it relates to unbelievers practicing magic. In the 1 Timothy passage no such activity is engaged, but these women were spending their time doing things other than spiritual ministry. *Spiritual idleness*, *gossip* and *busybody* are linked by the common theme of the lack of setting correct priorities. Misusing one's time when one should be engaged in spiritual ministry is Satanic in its source. This is consistent with the idea of "age conformity" wherein Satan tempts the believer to misuse the ministry of the believer priest.
- k) **An unforgiving attitude** (2 Corinthians 2:6-11 [grudge holding])  
Evidently someone in Corinth had committed an act that was sufficient to cause the believers there to remove him from the assembly. Paul encourages them not to continue the situation beyond that which is bearable for the individual. The implication of the passage is that the ultimate goal is to restore a believer to fellowship, not to keep him away forever. Paul enjoins the Corinthians to forgive this person, that is, not to hold a grudge against him. At the appropriate time they "ought rather to forgive and comfort *him*, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow. Therefore I urge you to reaffirm *your* love to him." The idea of forgiveness in this passage is not the same as the idea of forgiveness for sins. The Greek word here is *charizomai* (χαρίζομαι), related to *charis* (χάρις, *grace*), rather than *aphiemi*, (ἀφίημι, *to remove*) and indicates having a gracious attitude of restoration. Satanic influence in grudge holding is seen in verses 10 and 11 in the words, "For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sake in the presence of Christ, lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices." Satan's devices are his "mental things," that is, the area of mental attitudes wherein his attacks lie.