
Taking a Stand Against the Wiles of the Devil

The most important battlefield of your life is your mind! Spiritual warfare is primarily a matter of the mind. As long as the mind is held in check and is renewed to right thinking by the Word of God, the majority of spiritual attacks will fail. However, when the mind is left open and unguarded, it becomes the primary battlefield that Satan uses to destroy lives, finances, businesses, marriages, emotions, and so on. It is your responsibility to "stand guard" over these areas of your life!

Taking a Stand Against the Wiles of the Devil

What are the "wiles of the devil?"

The word "wiles" is one of three key words which you must know and understand when discussing the subject of spiritual warfare. These three key words are: (1) "wiles", (2) "devices," and (3) "deception". It is impossible to have a correct and balanced view of spiritual warfare without having an understanding of these three foundational words.

The word "wiles" (the first of these three words) is taken from the Greek word *methodos* (meth-o-dos). It is a compound of the words *meta* (me-ta) and *odos* (pronounced ho-dos). The word *meta* is a preposition which simply means "with." The word *odos* is the Greek word for a "road". By compounding these two words into one, they form the word *methodos*. Literally translated, the Greek word *methodos* means "with a road".

It is from this word *methodos* that we derive the word "method". But the English word "method" is not really strong enough to convey the full meaning of *methodos* ("wiles"). The word *methodos* was carefully selected by the Holy Spirit because it tells us exactly how the devil operates and it tells us exactly how he comes to attack and assault a believer's mind.

The word "wiles" (*methodos*) is often translated to carry the idea of something that is "cunning, crafty, subtle or full of trickery." However, in its most literal sense, the word *methodos* means "with a road". So the most basic translation of the word "wiles" is simply "with a road."

By electing to use this word, Paul tells us how the devil puts his cunning, crafty, subtle, and tricky deception to work! The word "wile" plainly tells us that the devil operates "with a road" or "on a road." What does this mean?

Contrary to the common belief of most people, this means that the devil does not have as many tricks in his bag as he would have you to believe. The word "wiles" (*methodos*) plainly means that the enemy travels on one road; he travels on one lane; or he travels on one avenue. In other words, he primarily has only one trick in his bag - and he obviously has learned to use that one trick very well!

"What is that one trick that the devil uses against people?" Or perhaps we should more correctly ask, "If the devil operates on one single avenue of travel, where is that diabolical road headed toward?" These questions lead us to the second important word to understand when discussing spiritual warfare: the word "devices".

The Devices of the Devil

In Second Corinthians 2:11, Paul gives us a clue as to where this road the devil is traveling on is headed. He says "...we are not ignorant of Satan's devices."

The word "devices" is taken from the word *noemata* (no-e-ma-ta), which is derived from the word *nous* (pronounced noous). The word *nous* is the Greek word for the "mind" or the "intellect." However, the form *noemata*, as used by Paul in Second Corinthians 2:11, carries out the idea of a deceived mind. Specifically, this word

noemata denotes the insidious and malevolent plot of Satan to fill the human mind with "confusion".

The word "devices" (noemata) actually depicts the "insidious plots" and "wicket schemes" of Satan to attack and victimize the human mind. One expositor has even stated that the word "devices" bears the notion of "mind games". With this idea of "mind games" in mind, you could translate the verse, "...we are not ignorant of the mind games that Satan tries to pull on us."

Because Paul used this word "devices" to describe attacks which he, himself, had resisted, we know that even Paul had to deal with the mental assaults of the adversary from time to time. Even Paul knew about the "mind games" which the devil tries to pull on people!

It was for this very reason that Paul said, "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." (2 Cor. 10:5)

The devil loves to make a playground out of people's minds! He delights in filling their emotions and senses with illusions that captivate their minds and ultimately destroy them. He is a master when it comes to "mind games."

Like Paul, we must make a mental decision to take charge of our minds and "take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ." We must stop listening to ourselves, and start speaking to ourselves!

By considering the words "wiles" and "devices" we have now seen two vitally important things which we must know about the devil's strategy to attack and victimize the human mind.

First, the word "wiles" (methodos) explicitly tells us that the devil travels "with a road" or "on a road." This road which the devil is traveling on is obviously headed somewhere! Where is that road headed?

The word "devices" clearly demonstrates that this road of the devil is headed toward the mind. Whoever controls the mind, also controls that person's health and emotions. The enemy knows this! Therefore, he seeks to penetrate our intellect, our mental control center, so that he may flood it with deception and falsehood. Once this is accomplished, then from this position of control, the devil can begin to manipulate that person's body and emotions.

When this penetration into the mind is accomplished, and once the adversary has paved a road into that person's mind and emotions, the process of mental and spiritual captivity is well under way. If this devilish process is not aborted by the power of God, and by the renewing of the mind, it is only a matter of time before a solid stronghold of deception will begin to dominate and manipulate that person's self-image, emotional status and his overall thinking.

This leads us to the third word which we must understand when discussing spiritual warfare: the word "deception".

The Deception of the Devil

Deception occurs when a person believes the lies that the enemy has been telling him. The moment you begin to believe the lie that the devil has been telling you, is the very moment when those wicked thoughts and mind games began to produce reality in your life.

The devil may assault your mind by repeatedly telling you that you are a failure. However, as long as you resist those allegations, they will exert absolutely no power in our life.

If, on the other hand, you begin to give credence to these lies and mentally perceive them as though they are really the truth, those lies will begin to dictate to you and will dominate your emotions and your thinking. In the end, your

faith in that lie will give power to it, and will cause it to become a bona fide reality in your life; and you will become a failure. This is a completed deception.

Perhaps the enemy constantly bombarded your mind about sickness. Perhaps his lying allegations have repeatedly told you that you are going to contract a terrible disease and die an early death. When these lies first assaulted your mind, you resisted them and refused to believe what you were hearing. Now, however, you have begun to wonder if these thought may have some validity.

If this process is not stopped, it will only be a matter of time until you truly begin to feel physically sick in your body. Do not give credence to those lying insinuations! When you embrace those "mind games" and perceive them as truth, you give power to them! Thus, if you do not speak to yourself and take charge of your mind, the complete process of deception will continue working in your life, until finally, the process is complete and your fears become reality. When this occurs, you are deceived.

So these three things—the wiles, devices and deception of the devil—are extremely importantly for us to see and understand, especially when studying the subject of spiritual warfare.

For review the word "wiles" (methodos) tells us that the devil operates "with a road" or primarily with "one avenue" of attack.

Second, the word "devices" (noemata) tells us where that avenue is headed: It is headed toward the mind. Once that road is paved into the mind, the enemy begins to regularly travel in and out of one's mind and emotions to confuse and scramble the mind with wrong thinking, wrong believing and false perceptions.

In the third place, "deception" occurs when you embrace that lie that the devil is telling you. This false perception which you have embraced will empower that lie to become a bona fide reality in your life. This is completed deception.

Rick Renner