



Wisdom Worksheet: Guard Your Heart from Satan's Schemes (Prov. 4:23-27)

When we read David's instruction to his son Solomon in Proverbs 4:1-9, we recognize that the King of Israel is warning his eventual successor that he would be tempted toward foolish behavior. Wisdom would be his weapon to apply his relationship with God to his circumstances. The Hebrew word for *wisdom* is *chokmah* which is the intersection of the vertical (God's heart) with the horizontal (street smarts). Wisdom delivers us from temptation. The key that unlocks this gateway to God's protection is humility. When we humble our hearts to the Spirit of God, His wisdom flows through us (Prov. 1:7; 9:10).

Satan's Scheme - Exposing the Enemy's Plan (2 Cor. 2:11):

Satan is a schemer; however, the Bible exposes his strategy (2 Cor. 2:11). Just remember the fishing analogy: (1) bait, (2) hook, (3) line, and (4) sinker. First, Satan *baits* us with *temptation* (Matt. 4:3). Second, he *hooks* us in the *deceit* of dissatisfied desires (2 Cor. 11:14). Third, he lifts the *line* from the water with the *accusation* of evil before God and others (Rev. 12:10). Fourth, he *sinks* us in *destruction* (1 Peter 5:8; John 10:10). Solomon taught that Satan's prey is our: hearts, mouths, eyes, and feet (Prov. 4:23-27).

Bait: **Tempter (Matt. 4:3)**

Satan is a tempter. Too often, we see temptation as a sin. Temptation is not from God, and it is not a sin (James 1:13-14). Jesus was tempted in every way that we are, and yet He did not sin (Heb. 4:15; Matt. 4:3-11). We must keep in mind that, by definition, we cannot be tempted unless we know what is right.

Hook: Deceiver (Sin) (2 Cor. 11:14)

Satan is a deceiver. He masquerades as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14). This means that he will make the temptation, or bait, look good. However, it is all part of Satan's masquerade which hides the danger inside the temptation. Within every bait, he disguises a hook—sin's hook of dissatisfied desires. Whereas Satan's bait falsely promises to satisfy our desires, the hook holds us captive when we fall prey to the temptation and sin. The deceitful hook of dissatisfied desires sets us up to be even more vulnerable to the original temptation.

Line: Accuser (Rev. 12:10)

Satan is an accuser (Rev. 12:10). Just like a fisherman pulls the line from the water to show everyone what he caught, so Satan lifts up his line to show God and others what he has snagged. He uses the line of accusation to convict us of sin against the Holy One. Have you ever noticed how an accuser typically practices the act which he accuses another of doing? Satan is the origin of the evil that he accuses humanity of committing.

Sinker: Destroyer (1 Peter 5:8; John. 10:10)

Satan is a destroyer (1 Peter 5:8; John 10:10). The sinker that took the bait, hook, and line down is designed to take us down with it. Although the bait of temptation appears to be attractive, the hook of dissatisfied desires is disguised inside to keep us

returning to the bait. The line of accusation presents us before God and others as fallen prey to Satan whose intent is to destroy us.

The work of a defeated being (Heb. 2:14-15; 1 John 3:8)

The Bible makes it clear that the bait, hook, line, and sinker are all the work of a defeated being, one who has already lost and desires to take down anyone he can. Jesus was not only victorious over the temptation of Satan, He also defeated Satan through His life, death, and resurrection (Heb. 2:14-15; 1 John 3:8).

Satan's Prey

Proverbs records Satan's four primary targets; they include one's: (1) heart, (2) mouth, (3) eyes, and (4) feet.

(1) Heart (Prov. 4:23)

Priority number one is that we should guard our heart with wisdom because all of life flows from it. *"Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life"* (Prov. 4:23).

Bait: Pride of life - 4 primary desires (Gen. 1:27-29; Gen. 8:21; 1 John 2:16)

God gave us at least four primary desires (Gen. 1:27-29). They include (1) the desire for *significance* from being created in God's image (Gen. 1:27a); (2) the desire for *contentment* from being blessed by God (Gen. 1:28); (3) the desire for *control* from being empowered by God to rule the earth (Gen. 1:28b); and (4) the desire for *security* from being provided by God all that we need (Gen. 1:29). Since the first sin of pride—desiring the satisfaction of these desires apart from God—the bent of the human heart has been

toward evil (Gen. 8:21). Satan preys upon these desires with his bait of temptation (1 John 2:16).

Hook: Dissatisfied desires (James 1:14-15; Prov. 11:6)

Desiring the tempting bait is sin (James 1:14-15). When we mull over the pursuit of the temptation, we desire satisfaction of our desires apart from God which is the definition of sin. We think that the bait will satisfy; however, outside Christ our desires remain dissatisfied. The deceitful hook of dissatisfied desires holds us captive to the sin. *“The righteousness of the upright delivers them, but the unfaithful are trapped by evil desires”* (Prov. 11:6).

Line: Evil flows from the heart (Matt. 12:35)

Jesus said that the desire for life with or life apart from God flows from the heart (Matt. 12:35). Consequently, Satan accuses the person whose heart is hooked in sin with dissatisfied desires by lifting up his line to show God and others what he has caught—a heart that desired life apart from God.

Sinker: God hates a heart that devises wicked schemes (Prov. 6:18)

The sinker is that God hates a heart that devises wicked schemes (Prov. 6:18). The sinner is destroyed from the pursuit of his own evil desires.

Pause and Let Wisdom Work

Inventory your heart: your will, mind, emotions, and spirit. This includes your choices, your thoughts, your feelings, and prayers—or lack of them. What or who are you desiring with your heart? Is it wise or foolish? The answer lies in whether you are hooked in the pursuit of dissatisfied desires apart from the heart of God. During the next

two weeks, keep a journal of your challenging choices, your predominant thoughts, your prevailing feelings, and your prayers. Examine the results to determine whether your heart is hard or soft toward God.

(2) Mouth (Prov. 4:24)

Solomon recognized the potential danger of the mouth. *“Put away perversity from your mouth; keep corrupt talk far from your lips”* (Prov. 4:24).

Bait: Boasting of what he has and does (1 John 2:16)

John said that one of the three pathways that temptation flows is from our hearts to our mouths. Each of us can fall prey to the bait of boasting of what he has and does. Boasting is an overstatement of the truth. The temptation is to make ourselves sound better than we really are.

Hook: Dissatisfied desires (Prov. 26:22)

Deceitfully hidden in the bait of *boasting of what he has and does* is the hook of dissatisfied desires. *“The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to a man’s inmost parts”* (Prov. 26:22). Although boasting words that lift us up or bring others down originate in our hearts and travel to the ears and hearts of others, they never satisfy. Unfortunately, we often keep trying to discover satisfaction in the misuse of our mouths.

Line: Perverse speech is evil (Prov. 8:13)

The misuse of our tongues gets us in trouble with God. *“To fear the Lord is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech”* (Prov. 8:13). A humble heart fears, or reveres, God who hates a proud heart which leads to evil behavior

including the sin of perverse speech. Satan accuses us before God and others by lifting up his line to show his trophy—those who have misused God’s gift of language.

Sinker: God hates lies, deceit, flattery, boasting (Prov. 6:17, 19)

The sinker is that those who fall prey to the bait, hooked in their dissatisfied desires, standing accused are destroyed because God hates the misuse of the mouth (Prov. 6:17, 19).

Pause and Let Wisdom Work

Ask a close friend to help you take an inventory of your words for two weeks. Are they wise or foolish? Ask the person to let you know when you are misusing your mouth including boasting or bringing others down. Agree that you will share the times of misuse that occur when your friend is absent. Be sure to identify any recurring persons who are frequent targets of your boasting.

(3) Eyes (Prov. 4:25)

We will be tempted to stare at objects which are unwise for our focus. *“Let your eyes look straight ahead, fix your gaze directly before you”* (Prov. 4:25). Often, we see things that we desire apart from Christ, and they look good to us.

Bait: Lust of the eyes (1 John 2:16)

The second of the three pathways that temptation flows in us is through our eyes (1 John 2:16). In our peripheral vision, we see money, jewelry, cars, electronics, houses, clothes, and images of other inanimate objects that we are tempted to desire at the expense of Christ. Often times the objects, including other persons, are not evil; rather,

our desire for them apart from God is. We are tempted to move them from the peripheral to the focal point of our eyes.

Hook: Dissatisfied desires (Prov. 27:20; 1 John 2:17)

Solomon was really clear about the danger of following the eyes without wisdom. *“Death and Destruction are never satisfied, and neither are the eyes of man”* (Prov. 27:20). Outside Christ, we always see and want more. Most likely being aware of this verse and having received the personal instruction of Christ, John said, *“The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever”* (1 John 2:17). Juxtaposed in this verse are the desires of the world against the will of God. The former provides insufficient and temporary satisfaction, the latter abundant and eternal satisfaction. The deceitful hook hidden inside the bait we pursue with our eyes is the eyes are never satisfied apart from Christ. We sin when we desire satisfaction apart from Him.

Line: Evil enters the eyes (Prov. 6:25)

Satan lifts his line from the waters of temptation and sin to accuse us before God and others. He knows that evil can enter through the eyes such as when an immoral woman captivates a man with hers (Prov. 6:25).

The eyes are inextricably linked with the heart (Matt. 5:28)

Jesus said that the eyes are inextricably linked with the heart (Matt. 5:28). When a man fixes his gaze on a woman who is not his wife, he desires her in his heart which is an adulterous act.

Sinker: God hates haughty eyes (Prov. 6:17)

The sinker is our personal destruction because God hates eyes that sin (Prov. 6:17).

Pause and Let Wisdom Work

What is the focal point of your eyes? When you close them at night, replay the day's images with God. Ask Him to guide you in determining which images were wise and which ones were foolish. Then pray that God will empower you by His Spirit to focus your eyes on wise images.

Wisdom Works with the Internet

The internet is based on images that can be either wise or foolish. *MySpace*, the popular social website has grown in users from zero to fifty million teens in two years resulting in its acquisition by media mogul, Rupert Murdoch. *Facebook* was founded by a Harvard student who developed the site to link college students. It grew in membership from zero to six million college students in less than two years. Today, it boasts more than 2.27 billion users and continues to grow by just shy of a million new users each day. Here are four wise applications regarding the use of *MySpace* or *Facebook*. (1) *Pre-approve* all persons who can contact your student. (2) *Provide* absolutely no connection with real world such as an address or telephone number on your site. Omit posting photographs with an address or name of school in the background. (3) *Plan* how to shut down your student's site before you start it. Realize the risk of posted information that can always be retrieved. (4) *Prepare* a prospective employer-approved webpage. Employers are using social websites to investigate and verify the credibility of resumes.

(4) Feet (Prov. 4:26-27)

Wherever our feet carry us, we can sin. Even our hands are subject to where our feet travel. *“Make level paths for our feet and take only ways that are firm. Do not swerve to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil”* (Prov. 4:26-27).

Bait: Lust of the flesh (1 John 2:16)

The third of the three pathways that temptation flows is roundtrip from our hearts to our flesh (1 John 2:16). This bait includes the misuse or abuse of food, drugs, alcohol, sexual acts outside marriage, or other abuses of the body.

Hook: Dissatisfied desires (Prov. 5:5; 7:11)

Deceitfully disguised in the bait is sin’s hook. Solomon warned about the feet of an adulteress, *“Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave”* (Prov. 5:5). He continued saying parenthetically, *“She is loud and defiant, her feet never stay at home”* (Prov. 7:11). The irony of an adulterous relationship with either an inanimate object or a person is that it never truly satisfies our desires because it lies outside God’s design for our lives.

Line: Quick to rush into evil (Prov. 1:16; 6:28-29)

When we sin, Satan accuses us before God and others. He claims that our feet were quick to rush into sin (Prov. 1:16). Referencing adultery, Solomon included in his diatribe, *“Can a man walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched? So is he who sleeps with another man’s wife; no one who touches her will go unpunished”* (Prov. 6:28-29).

Sinker: God hates feet that rush into evil (Prov. 6:18)

The destruction is imbedded in the sinker that God hates feet that are quick to rush into evil (Prov. 6:18).

Pause and Let Wisdom Work

Sin begins with our feet when we walk toward a temptation with the desire to take it. During the next two weeks, think about whether you are walking toward temptation. It might be a cubicle that you should avoid, a location you should pass by, or an object you should run from.

If you are a parent of a teenager, be proactive in his or her dating relationships. Indiana University Med Center research shows that 41 percent of girls ages 14 to 17 who have sex say they do so in order to keep their boyfriend from becoming angry. The temptation for a teenage girl and boy to walk where they should not go is strong. Consequently, we must guide them in straight paths by investing wisdom—God’s heart combined with street smarts—into their lives.

Conclusion:

There is hope, and that hope is Christ. He will guard our hearts. (1) When tempted with the bait, *God always provides a way out in Christ* (1 Cor. 10:13). (2) When deceived with the hook, *Christ is the wisdom and power of God for us to become unhooked* (1 Cor. 1:24). (3) When accused with the line, *Christ intercedes on our behalf* (Rom. 8:34). (4) When destroyed with the sinker, *Christ defeated evil* (Heb. 2:14-15; 1 John 3:8). We experience the hope of Christ through: (1) the Word of God, (2) the people of God, and (3) the Spirit of God.

We connect with the Word of God when we read the Bible. Jesus quoted Scripture when He was tempted by Satan. Memorizing verses from the Bible is one of our most powerful tools to learn wisdom. We connect with the people of God when we enter into mutual-submission with another Christ follower. We connect with the Spirit of God when we pray. We must model Christ's prayer of confidence in the Father Who will lead us away from temptation and deliver us from evil (Matt. 6:13). When we humble our hearts to the Spirit of God, His wisdom will flow through us. *"Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for; through the fear of the Lord a man avoids evil"* (Prov. 16:6).