

IF I WERE THE DEVIL AMONG THIS GROUP OF CHURCH
MEMBERS Text: 1 Peter 5:8-9

INTRO: The devil is the enemy of all righteousness. What is right among us, he would seek to destroy & mar. Whatever flaws & shortcomings may exist, he seeks to emphasize & promote. It is our duty to be aware of the enemy in our camp & do all within our power to resist him & see that his efforts to destroy us end in failure. With God's help we can win.

Perhaps one way we can be more aware of the work of Satan & brace ourselves against its success might be to ask ourselves, "What would I do if I were the devil among this group of church members?". To be forewarned is to be forearmed.

I. IF I WERE THE DEVIL, I WOULD STIR UP TROUBLE &
CAUSE DIVISION IN THE CHURCH.

A. Why?

1. Division is contrary to God's will.
JN 17:20-22; Eph 4:4-6; 1 Cor 1:10
2. The devil knows that strife & trouble will weaken
& finally destroy any congregation MK 3:24-25

B. How would I go about it?

1. Re-open old wounds.
2. Cause jealousy, envy in the material realm:
raise or promotion, new car, trip, money in
bank
3. Cause jealousy, envy in spiritual matters: pulpit
preaching, class teaching, song leading, leading
in prayer...

There should be a sharing of most, if not all these responsibilities--but in the mean time, why do we not reason, "I want to visit the sick, start a class in my home, invite friends & neighbors to services, etc. This is something EACH of us can do at any & all times, & will also help us to use & develop our abilities.

4. I would encourage folks to press their opinions upon everyone: baptize in natural stream, sit up front to make communion more orderly, insist on particular translation, etc.

5. Discourage men from qualifying & serving as elders, deacons, evangelists, etc.

II. IF I WERE THE DEVIL AMONG THIS GROUP OF CHURCH MEMBERS, I WOULD CAUSE CONFUSION & DISTRACTION IN THE WORSHIP.

A. Why?

1. To turn people's minds away from God.
2. To keep the worshipers from worshipping in spirit & in truth, JN 4:24.
3. To keep sinners from paying attention as the gospel is preached.

B. How would I accomplish this?

Get folks to whisper, pass notes, clip their finger nails, play with the babies, etc. Never sing, never look up Scriptures & read along or take notes, etc.

III. IF I WERE THE DEVIL AMONG THIS GROUP OF CHURCH MEMBERS, I WOULD SEEK TO PREVENT OUTSIDERS FROM BECOMING MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH.

A. Why?

1. Because the church is the body of Christ & He is Head over all things to it, Col 1:13; Eph 1:22-23 The devil knows that if you are not a part of the body, you are not submitting to the Head.
2. He knows the church is the called out. The gospel calls everyone who hears it to come out of darkness & into light. If the devil can keep folks from heeding its call, he knows they will stay in darkness.

3. He knows that the church is the house or family of God, 1 Tim 3:15. If he can keep a person out of the family of God, that person will have no inheritance among God's children.
4. He knows that when the Lord saves a person, that person is added to the church, Acts 2:47. To keep them out is to keep them lost.

B. But HOW would I accomplish this, if I were the devil?

1. I'd get folks to forget what the church is--to think it is a building or just a religious organization of some sort. The church is people--God's people.
2. Encourage church members to live in an ungodly manner. Bring reproach on the church, cause unbelievers to blaspheme.
3. Keep church members from teaching & discussing the Bible with their friends & neighbors.
4. Cause them to be lax in attendance ("careless about his appearance"); never study their lesson; look at their watch every few minutes during worship; otherwise show disinterest in the church & its work.
5. Cause preachers to soften their preaching, never be specific about sin--might hurt someone's feelings or make them angry. The devil knows that if preachers do not preach the truth that is needed plainly & forcefully, most folks will never learn the truth.

CONCLUSION: Much more could be said if time permitted. Take time for self examination. Whose cause are YOU helping most? God's or Satan's?

La Porte, TX, October 20, 1983

Exton, PA, May 22, 1988

Shiloh, Mexia, TX, March 20, 1994