



5 DAY DEVOTIONAL

SERIES: THE LURE OF SATAN

Sermon 2: Satan's Lure

SPEAKER: REV. CHRIS SMITH | 7/20/2025 | PAGE 1 OF 5

Day 1: Recognizing the Danger of Offense

Devotional: In our journey of faith, we face many challenges, but perhaps none as subtle and destructive as offense. Jesus specifically warned us about this danger as we approach the end times. Offense isn't just a momentary feeling of hurt—it's a spiritual trap that can lead us down a dangerous path of betrayal, hatred, and coldness of heart. Think about a time when someone close to you hurt you deeply. Perhaps it was a family member, a close friend, or someone in your church family. Those wounds cut the deepest, don't they? When we're hurt, our natural response is to protect ourselves by building walls. But these walls of protection quickly become prisons of isolation. Jesus understood this human tendency, which is why He warned us so clearly about it. He knew that Satan would use offense as a primary tool to divide believers and weaken the church from within. The enemy doesn't need to attack us from outside when he can plant seeds of offense that grow into full-blown division. Today, let's acknowledge any offenses we might be harboring. Recognition is the first step toward healing. Remember that God has given us the power through His Spirit to overcome offense and walk in love, even when it's difficult.

Bible Verse: "Then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another." - Matthew 24:10

Reflection Question: What offenses might you be holding onto right now, and how have they affected your relationship with God and others?

Quote: Notice the progression. Offense leads to betrayal. Betrayal leads to hatred.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to recognize any offenses I've been harboring in my heart. Give me the courage to acknowledge them and the wisdom to understand how they might be affecting my spiritual life. I want to be free from the prison of offense. In Jesus' name, amen.

SATAN'S LURE

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850-260-5335



3349 McFatter Avenue, Vernon, FL 32462



info@gracevernon.org



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Day 2: The Cancer of Bitterness

Devotional: When we allow an offense to take root in our hearts, it rarely stays contained. Like a seed planted in fertile soil, it grows—often into something we call bitterness. This progression is natural but dangerous to our spiritual health. Bitterness doesn't announce its presence with fanfare. It creeps in quietly, justifying itself as righteous indignation or self-protection. But over time, it changes us from the inside out. We become more critical, less trusting, and increasingly self-focused. Our perspective narrows, and we begin to filter everything through the lens of our hurt. The most alarming aspect of bitterness is how it affects our relationship with God. As we hold onto hurts and refuse to forgive, we create distance between ourselves and the One who freely forgave us. Our prayers become less frequent, our worship less authentic, and our love grows cold—exactly as Jesus warned. God calls us to guard our hearts above all else because He knows that everything we do flows from it. A heart infected with bitterness cannot produce the fruit of the Spirit. Today, let's examine our hearts honestly and ask God to reveal any areas where bitterness has taken root.

Bible Verse: "Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life." - Proverbs 4:23

Reflection Question: In what ways might bitterness be affecting your spiritual life, your relationships, and your overall joy?

Quote: Bitterness is like a cancer of the soul. It's not satisfied with staying small. It's not satisfied with staying manageable, so to speak. But whenever we do not deal with it, we do not root that bitterness out of our heart, it will continue to grow and it will drive a wedge between God and us.

Prayer: Lord, I confess that I've allowed bitterness to take root in my heart. Please forgive me. I ask You to heal the places in my heart that have been damaged by offense and help me to release the poison of bitterness. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation. In Jesus' name, amen.

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Day 3: Breaking the Cycle of Hurt

Devotional: One of the most tragic aspects of offense is how it perpetuates itself. When we've been wounded, we often wound others in turn—sometimes intentionally, sometimes without even realizing it. This creates a cycle of hurt that can span generations in families and decades in churches. Jesus calls us to break this cycle. Rather than responding to hurt with more hurt, He invites us to respond with love—even toward those who have harmed us. This isn't natural; it's supernatural. It requires us to draw on God's strength rather than our own. When Jesus commanded us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us, He wasn't giving us an optional spiritual exercise. He was showing us the only path to freedom from the prison of offense. Prayer for those who have hurt us changes us first. It softens our hearts and allows God's perspective to replace our limited view. Today, consider taking the radical step of praying for someone who has hurt you. Not a prayer that they'll realize their wrong (though that might come later), but a genuine prayer for their well-being and blessing. This act of obedience opens the door for God to heal your heart.

Bible Verse: "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you." - Matthew 5:44

Reflection Question: Who is someone who has hurt you that you need to begin praying for, and what specific blessings could you ask God to give them?

Quote: Hurt people become hurt people. Hurt people hurt people in turn.

Prayer: Father, this is hard. I confess that I don't naturally want to pray for those who have hurt me. But I choose obedience over feelings. Help me to see this person through Your eyes. Bless them and work in their life, even as You heal my heart. In Jesus' name, amen.

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Day 4: The Freedom of Forgiveness

Devotional: Forgiveness is perhaps the most challenging yet liberating aspect of dealing with offense. When we've been deeply wounded, forgiveness can seem impossible—and in our own strength, it often is. Yet Jesus not only commands us to forgive; He modeled it perfectly. Even as He hung on the cross, experiencing the ultimate betrayal and injustice, Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." If anyone had the right to withhold forgiveness, it was Jesus. Instead, He showed us that forgiveness is possible even in the face of the most grievous wrongs. Forgiveness doesn't mean what happened was okay. It doesn't erase the need for healthy boundaries or appropriate consequences. What it does is release us from carrying a burden we were never meant to bear. Unforgiveness hurts us far more than it hurts the one who wronged us. Sometimes, the person who hurt us is no longer in our lives or has passed away. In these cases, writing out the offense and marking it "paid in full" can be a powerful symbolic act of release. Whatever your situation, remember that forgiveness is a process, not a one-time event. It's a decision we often need to reaffirm daily until our hearts catch up with our choice.

Bible Verse: "To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps." - 1 Peter 2:21

Reflection Question: What is one step you can take today toward forgiving someone who has hurt you, even if complete forgiveness feels impossible right now?

Quote: I don't know what others have done to you, but I do know what we have records of what was done to Jesus. And yet he was able to say, father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank You for modeling forgiveness even in Your darkest hour. I want to follow Your example, but I need Your help. Please give me the strength to forgive as You have forgiven me. I release this burden to You and choose the path of freedom. In Your name, amen.

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Day 5: Living in Unity and Love

Devotional: As we work through offense and embrace forgiveness, we discover something beautiful: the power of unity and love in the body of Christ. When believers move beyond their hurts to serve one another with sacrificial love, the church becomes an unstoppable force for God's kingdom. Jesus said the world would know we are His disciples by our love for one another. This love isn't based on feelings or convenience—it's the same agape love that led Christ to the cross. It's a love that puts others before self, that seeks to understand before being understood, and that covers a multitude of sins. When we live in this kind of unity, we experience the peace that passes understanding. We can rest in God's presence, knowing we're right with Him and with others. This peace becomes our protection against stumbling back into patterns of offense and bitterness. Today, let's commit to being peacemakers in our families, workplaces, and churches. Let's choose to see others through God's eyes of love rather than through the lens of past hurts. As we do, we'll discover the joy and freedom that come from living in harmony with God's design for His church.

Bible Verse: "Great peace have those who love Your law, And nothing causes them to stumble." - Psalms 119:165

Reflection Question: In what specific ways can you contribute to unity in your church family this week, especially in relationships where there has been tension or hurt?

Quote: The forces of hell cannot stop a church that moves and serves and worships in that sacrificial, that agape love. The forces of hell can't stop it. Nothing can stop him. But when we begin to operate for selfish purposes, we soon become just like the world around us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for the gift of Your church. Help me to be a person who promotes unity rather than division, who builds up rather than tears down. Give me Your heart of love for my brothers and sisters in Christ, especially those with whom I've had difficulties. May Your peace rule in my heart and in our fellowship. In Jesus' name, amen.

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