

## Stacking The Deck

By Herbert Ruff

He uses every tactic possible to hide you from knowledge of God, because he knows that his control over you diminishes with your relationship with God. He knows that with God in your life and with your increased awareness of God you are shielded from his influence. Most of all, he knows that once you accept Christ your sins are forgiven and God's love protects you from his influence-**Roman 8:36 – 39 “ As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that love us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creatures, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our God.”**

In this scripture, Paul tells us that absolutely nothing can separate us from the love of God- providing Satan no way to include the Christian in the circumstance of his eternal destiny. So he works hard at distracting you from knowing God, thus impeding you from making the decision to accept Christ. Therefore, he encourages you to stay away from those **“Christian folks and their churches”**, while he constantly attempts to divert your thoughts to monetary, material, emotional, or power control over others. All the while, convincing you that acquiring these things through any means is perfectly all right. You see he stacks the deck against you, because he knows that it is man's nature to sin. So, he gets you to thinking about the monetary gain, advantage, or pleasure gained from something that's not yours nor have you earned.

He does this by reminding you of the unearned wealth received, of the house and expensive car you worship, of the sexual pleasure from the affair with someone who is not your wife or husband, or of the higher paying job that you lied to get is rightfully and deservedly yours to have. And he quickly informs you that being the Christian will cramp your style and impose too many restrictions on you. After all, you are special, occasionally needing to get your groove on, and deserve everything that you can get in life. He is relentless at stoking your ego because he knows that at some point, with continuous bible study, you may come to accept the teachings of Christ rather than remain under his influence. At this point, he fights the hardest to prevent you from giving your life to Christ. He bombards you with an array of temptations to solicit sinful behavior. He wants you to question why a Christian's life has tragedies in it. It is his way of suggesting that pain, sickness, and hardship should never be in your life; If God truly loved you He would protect you in all ways and provide everything that you wanted. It is the same blueprint used to test Job- a way of distracting and planting a seed of doubt that challenges your faith. If you read the story of Job you will find that although Job's body was covered with boils and racked with pain he never wavered in his faith in God because he knew that God was in control and promised salvation for all who believed in Him. You see! Your adversary doesn't want you to ever consider Jesus' statement in **Matt 16:26** “ **For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?**” When you lack knowledge of God, think only of achieving worldly recognition and gain, or question why the Christian must sometime suffer, then his influence on you is greatly magnified. So much so, that he may succeed in convincing you to do what he wants.

Now, here's a news flash, which bears being re-emphasized! You will not survive this challenge with limited knowledge of the subject matter. If this description represents you then you need to get busy reading, because its clear that your first line of defense is to understand as much of God's word as you can. You can start by reading **Matthew 4:1-11** of the devil's attempts to influence Jesus. Pay special attention to the devil's second attempt to influence Jesus' in **Matt 4:5-6** **"Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto Him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone."** Search for the meaning of Jesus' reply in **Matt 4:7** **"Jesus said unto him, it is written again, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."** Realize that substituting yourself in Jesus' place and jumping off a high place that God will not change the laws of nature to prevent you from being dashed against stones and physically injured or killed. Understand that God will protect you from the storms in your life but it is a bad, bad idea to tempt the Lord to receive His grace, mercy, and protection.

If He were to allow this who would be in control? Know, like Job, that God is the creator, the great "I am", He who holds life's destiny, and permits man certain levels of reality. It should be clear that man's place will never be above God. So do the smart thing, do not limit your knowledge of God and allow your adversary the means of controlling you. And, do not think that your adversary is going to give up and not up the ante with your advances in acceptance of God? No way! Challenges to your faith will continue at a higher level. For example, can your faith withstand the challenge that the universe was not created in 6 twenty-four hour days or that millions of years passed before modern man appeared on earth. What will be your response? Would you have an answer?

Would you let this work as a detriment to your faith rather than a catalyst that inspires you to research for an answer? Just remember **“faith is the substance of thing hoped for and the evidence of things not seen Hebrew11:1”**. Would you hold to your faith that there is a God?

In any case, do not shy away from any question that may advance your understanding of God and truth. At a minimum your response should be to strengthen your faith by your willingness to use God’s word to develop a response. Note that your adversary is counting on you to not advance your knowledge so that he can keep a wedge between you and God. He knows that ignorance and falsehood is not replaced without understanding so he attempts to limit what you know. Do the research, study time with other Christians, add wisdom, and above all get an understanding. Your adversary is counting on controversy, lack of knowledge, understanding, and the ability of some to persuade, miss-lead, and suppress. But as a Christian you must judge soundly and with perception and wit when dealing with facts. In any case, your adversary is hoping to create enough doubt within you that it causes you to cease reading the bible, believing that there is a purpose for your being, and that you have the choice to believe in a creator.

He stacks the deck by taking advantage of the fact that it is your nature to sin. As a result, he knows that a little nudging by him will deprive you of knowledge that may steer you to a life without God. So he encourages you to take advantage of earthly gains or to rival in pleasure received through unrighteous means. He will stroke your ego to convince you that you are special. And when he feels that his efforts are losing ground and you are developing a relationship with God he will attempt to create doubt about God’s reality, protection, and love for you. So do not let him get away with this. Remember, The word of God impacts like a double edge sword **Jeremiah 17:33-34**. It’s all that you need to provide proof and to persuade.