

[Contact Us](#)[Bookstore](#)[Bible Study Tools](#)[Christian Links](#)[Newsletter Articles](#)[Statement of Faith](#)

Recognizing the Footprints of the Enemy

Part I - Extending the Boundaries

"Then God said, "Let us make people in our image, to be like ourselves. They will be masters over all life, the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the livestock, wild animals, and small animals." So God created people in his own image; God patterned them after himself; male and female he created them. God blessed them and told them, "Multiply and fill the earth and subdue it. Be masters over the fish and birds and all the animals." And God said, "Look! I have given you the seed-bearing plants throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food. And I have given all the grasses and other green plants to the animals and birds for their food." And so it was." (Gen 1:26-30 NLT)

"This is the account of the creation of the heavens and the earth. When the LORD God made the heavens and the earth, there were no plants or grain growing on the earth, for the LORD God had not sent any rain. And no one was there to cultivate the soil. But water came up out of the ground and watered all the land. And the LORD God formed a man's body from the dust of the ground and breathed into it the breath of life. And the man became a living person. Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he placed the man he had created. And the LORD God planted all sorts of trees in the garden beautiful trees that produced delicious fruit. At the center of the garden he placed the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. A river flowed from the land of Eden, watering the garden and then dividing into four branches. One of these branches is the Pishon, which flows around the entire land of Havilah, where gold is found. The gold of that land is exceptionally pure; aromatic resin and onyx stone are also found there. The second branch is the Gihon, which flows around the entire land of Cush. The third branch is the Tigris, which flows to the east of Asshur. The fourth branch is the Euphrates. The LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and care for it. But the LORD God gave him this warning: "You may freely eat any fruit in the garden except fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat of its fruit, you will surely die." (Genesis 2:4-17 NLT)

We're all familiar with the story of the creation of man with God placing him in the garden of Eden. However, one thing that is often overlooked is the significance of one of the first statements God made, "you may freely eat any fruit in the garden except, ...". We know what happens next, so this warning was obvious. However, there was more behind the clear and simple warning Adam

received.

AN ANALOGY FOR DOG LOVERS

If you own a pet, especially a dog, you'll understand the point being made here. I have two black Labs that love to sniff and investigate everything in my neighborhood, especially those things OUTSIDE the fence around my yard. I installed the fence for two-fold protection. One to keep things out of my yard, but most importantly, to keep my dogs in! I did this because I love them and don't want anything to happen to them. They are ignorant of the dangers in the street, the fast cars, large trucks, people who might hurt them or steal them from me. They have no idea of the things that could happen to them. Every adventure outside of the yard and the protection of the fence has a potential for danger. Of course they don't see it this way, as they stand near the gate watching me going to work every day and wondering when I'm going to come back home. They want to escape from the limitations and boundaries imposed upon them by the cruel, unyielding fence. They don't want to get away from me and the safety of their home, but are drawn by curiosity of the things they don't yet know and understand. They have to trust my reasons for leaving them within the walls of protection and more importantly trust in me.

WHY WAS THE "TREE" THERE?

If you're the curious type like me, this is at the top of the list of questions when I see God, along with the reason for mosquitoes. Why was that tree there at all? Couldn't God have left that one out? Well, God had His reasons why he put the tree there and why He told Adam not to eat of it. It could have been to test him, to see the level of trust. For whatever the reason, it was there and God, by giving Adam the command "not to eat of it" set up the fence, the boundary that Adam was not to cross. Just as I set the boundary through the physical presence of a fence for my dogs, God set up a "spiritual boundary" for Adam by His command not to eat. The Bible is full of these types of boundaries and they are there for our good, our protection, set up by a loving Father who wants to protect His children. The enemy, our adversary, the Devil, seeks to extend or eliminate these boundaries knowing there is harm or danger just around the corner. Oh, it may not come immediately, just as the "death" God spoke of to Adam did not come immediately, in the sense it could be seen or touched, but nevertheless it will come eventually. God is not a man that He should lie.

THE FIRST BOUNDARY CROSSED

The first boundary crossed recorded in scripture is contained in the following passage:

"How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! For you have said in

your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' " (Isa. 14:12-14 NKJV)

Lucifer, now known as the Devil or Satan, was one of the highest ranking angels created by God and maintained an exalted position in heaven until he decided to be like God by saying in his heart, " I will be like the Most High". He crossed the boundary no created being can cross, comparing oneself to God. His high position in heaven was not enough for he desired to be equal to God and thus committed the first sin that we know of. Pride brought about his destruction. He found out, along with the angels who followed him, that every created being has limitations and boundaries, set by God in His wisdom.

A BLESSING AND A CURSE

"Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known." (Deut. 11:26-28 KJV)

The establishment of the "commandments of the Lord" set boundaries on the behavior of God's people, specifying "a blessing" for those that obeyed the commandments and "a curse" for those that did not. Again, this is a picture of a loving Father telling His children what their limitations were. It is a cruel and uncaring father that does not teach his children right and wrong nor explain those things that are harmful to the soul.

THE LESSON OF BALAAM

The Book of Numbers, chapters 22-24, records King Balak of Moab attempts to get Balaam to curse the nation of Israel because he feared their numbers and what they had done to the Amorites:

"Then the people of Israel traveled to the plains of Moab and camped east of the Jordan River, across from Jericho. Balak son of Zippor, the Moabite king, knew what the Israelites had done to the Amorites. And when they saw how many Israelites there were, he and his people were terrified. The king of Moab said to the leaders of Midian, "This mob will devour everything in sight, like an ox devours grass!" So Balak, king of Moab, sent messengers to Balaam son of Beor, who was living in his native land of Pethor near the Euphrates River. He sent this message to request that Balaam come to help him: "A vast horde of people has arrived from Egypt. They cover the face of the earth and are threatening me. Please come and curse them for me because they are so numerous. Then perhaps I will be able to conquer them and drive them from the land. I know that

blessings fall on the people you bless. I also know that the people you curse are doomed."

After multiple inquiries of God, it was clear to Balaam that he could not curse Israel because the Lord had purposed to bless them. However, Balaam apparently gave King Balak insights on how to get Israel to stumble and bring a curse upon themselves. Matthew Henry's Bible Commentary makes the following observation:

"While the Israelites were camped at Acacia, some of the men defiled themselves by sleeping with the local Moabite women. These women invited them to attend sacrifices to their gods, and soon the Israelites were feasting with them and worshipping the gods of Moab. Before long Israel was joining in the worship of Baal of Peor, causing the LORD's anger to blaze against his people."

This is further validated by the following scripture from Revelation, Chapter 2:

"Write this letter to the angel of the church in Pergamum. This is the message from the one who has a sharp two-edged sword: "I know that you live in the city where that great throne of Satan is located, and yet you have remained loyal to me. And you refused to deny me even when Antipas, my faithful witness, was martyred among you by Satan's followers. And yet I have a few complaints against you. You tolerate some among you who are like Balaam, who showed Balak how to trip up the people of Israel. He taught them to worship idols by eating food offered to idols and by committing sexual sin. In the same way, you have some Nicolaitans among you people who follow the same teaching and commit the same sins. Repent, or I will come to you suddenly and fight against them with the sword of my mouth. "Anyone who is willing to hear should listen to the Spirit and understand what the Spirit is saying to the churches. Everyone who is victorious will eat of the manna that has been hidden away in heaven. And I will give to each one a white stone, and on the stone will be engraved a new name that no one knows except the one who receives it." (Rev. 2:12-17 NLT)

Balaam was able to bring a curse upon Israel, not by speaking one, but by giving insight into how to tempt Israel to go beyond the boundaries set up by the Lord for their behavior. Satan works in similar ways in his attack upon the people of God.

EXTENDING THE BOUNDARIES

The adversary seeks to destroy our lives, not such much through a denial of the existence of God, but rather through the tactics explained above. He cares not for our faith, proclamations, bible studies, preaching, witnessing or any other activities of the everyday Christian. He seeks to destroy us by getting us to choose to go beyond the limitations God has set for us in his word. It's

interesting to note that Satan never questioned the existence of God in his conversation with Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. Instead, he appealed to their own wisdom and understanding in interpreting the boundary God had set up:

"Now the serpent was the shrewdest of all the creatures the LORD God had made. "Really?" he asked the woman. "Did God really say you must not eat any of the fruit in the garden?" "Of course we may eat it," the woman told him. "It's only the fruit from the tree at the center of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God says we must not eat it or even touch it, or we will die." "You won't die!" the serpent hissed. "God knows that your eyes will be opened when you eat it. You will become just like God, knowing everything, both good and evil." The woman was convinced. The fruit looked so fresh and delicious, and it would make her so wise! So she ate some of the fruit. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her. Then he ate it, too." (Gen. 3:1-6 NLT)

As children of God, we must be constantly aware of our activities, motives and thoughts in light of the revealed word of God, to guard against extending the boundaries set for us. We must trust the character and intent of our heavenly Father, using that as a basis for interpreting any restriction on behavior. The Word is given for our instruction and must be the guiding authority in all that we say and do or we run the risk of stepping beyond the areas of safety God has provided.

The enemy's footprints are clearly seen in this area, causing us to stumble, bringing harm and disaster into our lives when we exceed and extend beyond the boundaries set by the Lord. Each of us should examine our lives to look for areas not in conformity with the word of God. The scriptures are not simply a list of do's and don't's, but rather specific parameters whereby we can rule and govern our lives in godliness. We have a freedom in the Spirit of God and a faith and assurance that if we fall, we can be restored, but that freedom should not be taken for granted or lightly.

Look for the footprints of the enemy in your life and purpose to close any door of opportunity he has by the grace and strength of God.

In Part 2 of this series, will examine specific methods of deception and patterns of evil influence we can recognize and conquer.

Willie Jefferson
10/26/00

P.O. Box 480655, Charlotte, NC, USA 28269

© 1996-2001, All Rights Reserved