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## **The Snare Is Broken**

***By David Wilkerson***

December 11, 1995 Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped. Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth" (Psalm 124:6-8).

In Psalm 124 we read of fowlers and their snares. You've heard of fowlers. They were professional bird-catchers in the days before firearms. They captured birds by spreading a net on the ground and attaching it to a sprung trap or snare.

The fowler would sprinkle some corn on the ground near the trap he set. Then, when the bird ate the corn, the trap would spring and a net would fly over the bird and capture it.

Often in biblical days, a fowler would sew a captured bird's eyelids together and keep it caged. That way its cries would attract large numbers of birds. The sound of the bird's despair would pique other birds' curiosity, and when they came to investigate, they also would be snared.

Fowlers made their income from the captured birds in various ways. Some sold birds to people who wanted them as pets. Others sold them for use as sacrifices, especially doves and pigeons. Still other fowlers sold smaller birds to the poorer classes, who used them for food. In this case, the birds were devoured.

Various passages throughout the Bible liken our soul to a bird: "Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped" (Psalm 124:7). "Mine heritage is unto me as a speckled bird..." (Jeremiah 12:9).

According to the Bible, the Fowler Is the Devil Himself! Satan is absolutely determined to overthrow every believer who walks in holiness and complete devotion to Jesus Christ. Indeed, the devil knows where you live and work - every path you take, every footstep. And he follows all your goings and your comings.

Please understand - Satan is not omnipresent. He cannot be everywhere at once. Nor does he know all things; otherwise he would be God. But he does have at his command multitudes of demonic beings, principalities and powers of darkness. And these evil workers trail you. They go about like fowlers, laying traps to ensnare you - hidden, crafty, diabolical traps!

The psalmist writes:

- "Keep me, O Lord, from the hands of the wicked; preserve me from the violent man; who have purposed to overthrow my goings. The proud have hid a snare for me, and cords; they have spread a net by the wayside..." (Psalm 140:4-5).

- "...In the way wherein I walked have they privily [secretly] laid a snare for me" (142:3).

- "The wicked have laid a snare for me: yet I erred not from thy precepts" (119:110).

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The Bible makes it clear: Demonic powers are at work laying traps for Christians!

Yet Satan doesn't limit his fowler's work to evil principalities. He also uses wicked people to lay demonic traps: "The wicked have laid a snare for me..." (Psalm 119:110).

It's true - Satan has an army of some of the most crafty, skilled fowlers on earth. He uses adulterous men to go about seducing innocent women. And he uses pushers of pornography to entice and ensnare generations of men with filth beyond description.

Satan also uses fowlers on the streets pushing drugs. Drug cartels make fortunes - multiplied millions of dollars - preying upon young people and addicting entire societies. His hellish armies trap people into a life of addiction and poverty.

Entire state governments today act as fowlers of the enemy. They trap millions of people into gambling! State agencies and municipalities use gambling games designed to wring money out of people hooked on striking it rich. As a result, America is quickly becoming one huge lottery. The day may be coming when a national lottery is instituted.

These all are fowlers of the enemy who have come to destroy our society! They scheme and plot to separate people from their very last dollar. And the ones who suffer most are the poor and the children. Often those last dollars should have been set aside for food and milk money.

Yet most tragic of all is this sad truth: Satan enlists spiritually blinded Christians to lay his snares for people of God! That's right - the devil actually uses believers as fowlers, bird-catchers. There are many hardhearted, envious Christians who eagerly scheme to ruin and destroy godly, righteous men and women of God. They delight in revenge - in trying to trap those they despise!

Scripture tells us that certain of God's people schemed against Jeremiah: "...they have digged a pit to take me, and hid snares for my feet" (Jeremiah 18:22).

It's clear in the context of this passage that Jeremiah was speaking of God's people: "...the men of Judah, and...the inhabitants of Jerusalem..." (verse 11).

He was saying, "Some who call themselves children of God are out to ensnare me. They want to destroy the testimony God has given to me!"

I ask you - why would anyone who calls himself a follower of Jesus allow himself to be used by the devil to trap and ensnare his brother or sister? Why would he spend precious time plotting to ruin or overthrow another Christian?

God's Word lists two reasons for this. Let me share them with you:

1. Envy of Other Christians' Respect and Honor Among Men! Some believers are jealous of the acceptance and high esteem another Christian receives - someone who is honored above them. Unfortunately, this kind of attitude is widespread in the church. It also constantly occurs in the ministry. Pastors who have no heart for Jesus are always gossiping and scheming against people whom Christ has raised up in their stead. They wouldn't pay the price - and now someone has come along who is highly honored of God!

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The book of Esther tells us that Haman basked in the honor bestowed upon him by King Ahasuerus. Haman was an advisor to the king - but he wasn't satisfied with the wealth and honor he gained from his position. You see, there was one person in the kingdom who got under Haman's skin - a Jew named Mordecai.

Haman usually received humble obeisance from all the people. But Mordecai would neither bow to Haman nor stand up for him. Mordecai feared no one but God - and he wouldn't bow to anyone but Him.

As a result, Mordecai had the respect and honor of the people. He was known as being honest and forthright, a man you couldn't buy. And that ate at Haman's pride. A rage welled up in Haman - because he saw God honoring someone above him!

Scripture says Haman "...was full of indignation against Mordecai" (Esther 5:9). And he allowed his jealousy to eat him up. Here was a wealthy man, honored by the king, invited into the palace by Queen Esther. He was riding high. But none of that mattered to him. Instead, his thoughts were consumed with jealousy: "...all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate" (verse 13).

Soon Haman began scheming to catch Mordecai in a snare. It was an incredible plot devised to destroy all the Jews, and in the process Mordecai. Haman was so eaten up with envy, he undertook to destroy an entire people just to get to one man!

But in the end, Haman's jealousy cost him his life. When his scheme was exposed, he was hung on the gallows he had built for Mordecai. What a price he paid!

The Bible's warning here is very clear: Any Christian who is eaten up with jealousy because of God's blessing and approval of another person will end up as Haman did - trapped in his own snare!

"...they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen themselves" (Psalm 57:6).

"...his horn shall be exalted with honour. The wicked shall see it, and be grieved; he shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away: the desire of the wicked shall perish" (Psalm 112:9-10).

2. Hatred Over Another's Holiness! Some Christians can't stand being "outstripped" by someone who appears to be more holy or righteous than they. They see a brother or sister being honored of God - and it enrages them!

There is great power in godliness and great authority in holiness. Yet both are despised by Christians who will not pay the price - people who once had the touch of God, but now, because of compromise, no longer enjoy His blessing. When someone comes along who is esteemed more holy and more devoted, they become envious of what they've lost. They give place to a jealous hatred - and they will not rest until they see that godly person ruined or destroyed!

Face it, beloved: Nothing is more hated than the power and spiritual authority that accompany a holy life. And no one will be more hated, slandered, envied and maligned than the Christian who radiates holiness.

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Yet, if our hearts are right with God, and we see great devotion in a fellow believer, we will rejoice in the power and authority God has bestowed on him. And we will allow that brother's consecrated life to challenge and provoke us to attain a deeper walk with the Lord.

Yet many believers refuse to let go of an evil jealousy in their hearts. Consider these examples:

- I rode along in a car once with a brother who was going through incredible financial hardships. Another brother came up in our conversation, someone whose finances had been greatly blessed by God. The man in the car with me suddenly grew red with rage. He sputtered, "Every time I think of him driving that new car, owning that big home, enjoying all those blessings - I can't stand it. It burns me up! I've suffered so much. When I see all the things he's getting, it really gets to me."

Huge veins popped out of this man's neck. His jealousy and rage had boiled over!

- When Cain saw his brother, Abel, blessed and approved by God, a jealousy rose up in him to the point that he committed murder. He was envious of his brother's close walk with God!

David is an example of a believing man who schemed against another. He laid a snare for Uriah, an officer in his army, after he'd gotten Uriah's wife pregnant. He called Uriah home from the front lines and ordered him to spend time with his wife. He was hoping Uriah would be intimate with her, and in that way cover up David's sin of adultery.

But Uriah didn't go home to his wife. Instead he said, "How can I enjoy my wife when the army of the Lord is out there suffering? I'll stay here and suffer as they do."

That must have been an awful rebuke to David. He then laid another snare for Uriah. David ordered him to come to a big feast at the palace, where he filled Uriah full of wine. David thought, "If I can just get him drunk, then he can be led home in a drunken stupor and be put to bed. That way, he'll think he got his wife pregnant."

But that night Uriah slept outside his house, still refusing the comforts of his wife.

Having failed again in his scheme, David plotted to place Uriah on the front lines in a hopeless battle, knowing he would be killed. And that's just what happened.

David's sin in scheming against Uriah was laid to his charge as his most grievous sin in the eyes of God. "Why?" you may ask. "Didn't David also sin in committing adultery with Bathsheba? And doesn't the Bible say he sinned, showing a lack of faith, when he fled to the Philistines for protection from Saul?"

Yes! Scripture also tells us David sinned in his rash decision to kill Nabal, until Abigail came and changed his mind. David sinned as well in numbering the people, a sin of pride and covetousness.

David also sinned in not exercising control over his children. He never spoke a word against Absalom - and the young man rose up and usurped his father's throne. That sin of a father's negligence

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eventually cost David's son his life.

There were many sins in David's life. Yet when we look at what God's Word says on the subject, the only sin mentioned is the snare David set for Uriah: "...David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite" (1 Kings 15:5).

This verse doesn't name Bathsheba. It doesn't name any other of David's sins of disobedience. Rather, it says the one thing in which David turned aside from God was when he laid a trap - when he plotted against an innocent man!

What an awful price David paid for his scheme against a fellow believer. What great troubles it brought down upon him and his family: His daughter was raped. His son Amnon was killed in a drunken stupor at the hands of Absalom. All Israel forsook David and flocked to Absalom. And his wives and concubines were defiled by his son, who now ruled over the kingdom.

David was forced to walk up and down and go into hiding to save his own life. Worst of all, the Bible says, he lost the joy of his salvation: "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation..." (Psalm 51:12).

The joy of the Lord was gone from David's life.

Beloved, God is showing us His contempt for this sin of setting snares for a fellow Christian. You pay a terrible price - and your family pays an awful price - when you lay a trap for another believer!

God help the Christian who clings to his jealousy of a brother or sister. If that kind of spirit is in your heart, Satan will surely lure you into some kind of demonic plot. He'll deceive you into joining a vengeful scheme against that person - but you'll only heap troubles upon yourself and your household!

If you are slandering your boss or putting down a coworker...if you are involved in vicious gossip...if you take part in a conspiracy of any kind...if you blacken someone's name in any way, then you are laying a snare. And God abhors it! He will remember your scheme. And He will cause you to fall into the pit you helped to dig for another!

No Matter Who Tries to Ensnare a Devoted Child of God - the Devil, Wicked People or Other Christians - It Will Not Succeed! Often Satan will attack you in order to stop a great work for God. He will put sworn enemies in league together just to hinder your labors. They'll come against you in unison - trying to discount the minister, so they can stop the ministry!

Yet you can be sure of this: If you are on a divine mission - if you are called to do a work for the Lord and are busy doing that work, trusting in Jesus - none of their plots will work against you.

Nehemiah was called by God to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. The work was progressing wonderfully, with the walls going up steadily. Then, suddenly, Satan stirred up a hornets' nest to hinder it all. Four VIP leaders joined in a plot against Nehemiah - Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arabian and a prophetess named Noadiah. Nehemiah says, "...they thought to do me mischief" (Nehemiah 6:2).

Four times these leaders set a trap. They called out to Nehemiah, "Come down off your wall. We

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want to have a conference with you. We insist you talk to us!"

But four times Nehemiah said, "I'm not coming down off these walls! I've got work to do here - because God has ordained me to do it!"

Beloved, you can't get involved in arguing with people just because they want to argue. It's all meant to be a distraction. You've got to go on with God's work!

You have to understand - the reason Satan comes against your prayer life, your consecration to God, your walk with Him, isn't just to bring you down. He also wants to ruin the ministry God has given you. He wants to destroy anything you're doing that brings glory to God!

These four VIPs started a rash of rumors against Nehemiah. They claimed, "You're doing this for yourself, not for God!" One of them, Tobiah, sent slanderous letters to other leaders in Israel. As a result, "...there were many...sworn unto him..." (verse 18).

All the slander, plotting and snares were designed to put fear into Nehemiah's heart, in hopes he would get discouraged and run. Nehemiah sums up the scheme in verse 13: "...that they might have matter for an evil report, that they might reproach me."

But none of those snares could stop the work of God! Scripture states: "So the wall was finished... And it came to pass, that when all our enemies heard thereof, and all the heathen that were about us saw these things, they were much cast down in their own eyes: for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God" (verses 15-16).

No Matter Who Lays the Snare - the Devil, Wicked People or Envious Christians - We Cannot See the Trap When We Come Upon It! David writes: "The proud have *hid* a snare for me..." (Psalm 140:5, emphasis mine).

The trap that the devil or the wicked are setting for you is something you can't see. It is laid in secret: "...they privily [secretly] laid a snare for me" (142:3). "...they commune of laying snares privily..." (64:5).

Indeed, Scripture tells us, "Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird" (Proverbs 1:17).

If a bird sees the fowler setting a trap, it will fly away. Likewise, the devil won't set a trap you can see. He's not going to tell you where or when it is laid. No - he does it all in secret, away from your eyesight!

The prophet Micah informs us these snares are premeditated and well thought-out in secret. A fowler will stay up all night scheming how to ensnare the innocent: "Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand" (Micah 2:1).

Unfortunately, many believers fall into their traps!

Perhaps you are caught in a snare right now - trapped by the enemy. At one time, you were like a bird, flying about, singing a sweet song. You spread your wings of faith and soared into the heavens. You knew what it meant to be free in Christ.

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But the enemy set a trap for you - he laid out his net and placed the corn nearby - and you went for it. You flew down, caught your foot in the fowler's net, and the trap sprang. You were caught!

Dear saint, what was the devil's trap for you? Was it an old habit - drugs, sex, alcohol, pornography, adultery, fornication? Was it lying, stealing, covetousness, credit-card debt, cheating in some fashion, disobedience? No matter what kind of trap he laid for you, you must realize your fall was most likely not premeditated. On the contrary, you flew into it suddenly. The devil knew of a weakness in you, and he snared you in it.

Today you sit in bondage, feeling trapped by your sin. You continually blame yourself, thinking, "How could I have done such a thing? I'm unholy, unclean. I can't make it. I never will!" But beating yourself that way is an absolute waste of time! It will never get you out of the net. You'll never be able to figure out how you could have been so foolish, blind and reckless as to fall back into the devil's trap.

Yet, I have incredible news for you. If you've been trapped by the enemy - if you have fallen into his snare, yet you know you love God with all your heart - the Lord will not allow you to be the enemy's victim. He will not let you remain in the devil's teeth. You are about to be set free!

"Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth" (Psalm 124:6).

God promises that you will not stay trapped! Let me paint the picture for you.

Imagine a little bird trapped in the fowler's net. It lies there helpless - its little heart throbbing with fear and terror, its wings beating wildly against the net, but to no avail. The more it struggles, the more battered and bruised it becomes. Frightened, it begins to cry and screech. But escape is impossible. It is completely at the mercy of the fowler.

Beloved, that little bird is you - snared by the net of sin! And the fowler is the devil, the wicked one. He laid his trap and caught you in it.

Now, consider that trapped little bird and tell me how he could possibly get out by his own strength and power. If he fights to try to break through the net, he'll become even more entangled. He may even break a wing or bleed to death. He can't deliver himself. It is not in his power or ability!

Isn't this a picture of us when we're trapped in sin? We make all kinds of promises to God. We struggle and cry, trying to break free from our bondage. But we remain trapped. We've lost our freedom!

Think of the little bird again, trapped in the net. That night, the fowler goes to bed dreaming of this special little bird he's been after. He can hardly sleep, he's so anxious to go out the next day and see if he's caught it.

Sure enough, as the fowler comes near the trap, he sees it has been sprung. Suddenly, he gets excited: He expects to see a worn-out, bleeding, frightened, half-dead little bird in the net. But, lo and behold, when he examines the trap, he sees the net is torn - broken. The bird has once again soared!

We find the little bird perched on a limb in a tree high on God's mountain. He's free, and his wounds are healing. And it's all because the Lord came and ripped open the net!

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That little bird is saying to itself, "If it had not been for the Lord - if He hadn't rushed to my side - I would have been swallowed up and devoured. The angry hunter would have torn off my wings. His raging hatred would have destroyed me. But God broke the snare. He plucked me out of the teeth of the trap!"

"Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped" (Psalm 124:7).

The snare is broken - and we have escaped!

How Did the Bird Escape The Snare? By Trusting in The Lord's Help! How do you get out of the trap of besetting sin? To whom do you cry out from the net, "I want my freedom back!"

First, picture yourself as a bird in the fowler's trap. Stand still. Don't flap your wings; don't struggle. There is a secret of deliverance for you, and it is not complicated:

"Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth" (verse 8).

Your escape to freedom is in the name of Jesus - in His incredible, glorious, all-powerful name!

All you have to know is that He's on your side. He's not mad at you for falling into the trap. He is not against you. No - He hears your cry! Not even a sparrow falls to the ground without His knowing about it!

Here is what the bird of freedom sings to himself: "I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.... Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him" (Psalm 91:2-3, 14-15).

Rest assured, beloved - God will deliver you! No matter what your failure, your hardship, your trap, He is on your side. Just stand still and see His salvation. Even if you're weak, you can cry out to Him. He promises to come and tear the net away!

He has come to bring you out of your despair - to break the snare that binds you, and set you free.

Hallelujah!