



# THE EXHORTER

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*“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40*

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. ([prchurchofchrist.org](http://prchurchofchrist.org))

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**Genesis 3:4 "And the serpent said to the woman, 'You surely shall not die!'"**

There are three recorded times that Satan speaks in the Bible. Each time, he is in a conversation with someone. Here, the first time, with Eve. He lied. Then in Job, he is in a conversation with God about Job (**Job 1,2**). There, he is wrong. In Matthew, he speaks to Jesus (**Matt. 4**). He deceives. Jesus tells us in John that Satan is the father of lies (**John 8:44**). Nothing good is ever attributed to Satan. His origin is unclear and his future is certain.

Satan hasn't stopped lying. He probably never will. He fills our head with all kinds of ideas, confuses us as to what is really true and tries to get us to stop following Jesus.

Consider three lies that often trip us:

First, when our prayers are not answered the way we feel they ought to be, we begin to question God. We start to think that God no longer loves us or cares for us. We feel abandoned by God. If God really loved us, we say to ourselves, then He would have given us what we asked for. He didn't. That means something. It means something bad. God may not be as good as we thought He was. Dark clouds begin forming in our hearts and from that we begin throwing overboard the very things that we once believed in. Satan has lied.

Understand first of all, that God is God and He is not a magically Jeanie in a lamp that comes to our every beckoning. In the cartoons, the Jeanie would say, "Your wish is my command." The Jeanie served the master, the one who rubbed the magically lamp. That's not the Biblical picture of our relationship with God. He's not working for us. He doesn't come running to fulfill our every whim. He is the Lord of Heaven and Earth. It is His will that rules the universe. So, in our Bibles we find God saying "No" to David's prayer about his sick baby (**2 Sam. 12**). The baby died. God said "No" to Moses' request to go into the promise land (**Deut. 3:23-27**). God said "No" to Paul's prayer to remove the thorn in his flesh (**2 Cor. 12:7**). And, God even said "no" to Jesus when He asked if the cup could pass (**Matt. 26:39**). God says "no." But saying, "no," doesn't mean something is bad. He knows better than we do what we need. It is His will, not our will that must be fulfilled.

(OVER)

It may be just a good thing that some of our prayers are answered "no." Too many "yes" can go to our heads and makes us think that God is wrapped around our fingers. Such is never the case. Saying "no," makes us see that the world is much larger than just ourselves. It makes us trust God. It makes us walk by faith.

Second, Satan uses guilt to make us believe that we are too far gone for God to save. He makes us think that we are worthless. He wants us to feel that God has given up on us. Why try, you'll never be good enough. You can never please Him. You can never be like one of those Christians. Worthless. Loser. Just quit. That's what Satan wants. And, many do. They turn to the bottle and they find a way to hide from their mistakes among others who are doing the same. Throughout our lives this message has been repeated. It may have come from the lips of our parents who screamed, "You can't do anything right." It may have come from a boss who fired us or let us go because we were no longer needed. And, throughout our lives this lie has hung around. Not good enough for varsity. Not good enough for the honor roll. Not the beauty queen. Not first picked. It surfaced every time we broke up with someone we were dating. Failure. Reject. Loser. Satan had us believing that religion was for good people and we certainly weren't good.

However, this is a lie. We are not good enough, yet, God hasn't given up on us. That's the Gospel message. Jesus came. He came to find people just like us. He was looking for the broken. He wasn't here to point fingers, cast away or ridicule. He came to mend what was broken. He came to redeem and save us. Broken people fill the pages of the Bible. Jesus didn't shun them. He didn't walk away from them. He invited them. He loved them. He died for them.

There is hope in Jesus. We can be changed. God will give us another chance. Forgiveness is possible. The prodigal story tells us this (**Luke 15**). Ruined and hopeless, that pitiful prodigal crawled home to a father who was running towards him. A celebration followed. Love, acceptance and forgiveness were the songs that filled the air. My son was dead and he has begun to live! Don't let guilt consume you nor destroy you. Forgiveness is found in Christ.

Third, Satan tries to convince us that sin doesn't matter and that we can get away with things. Our minds tell us that we haven't done anything really bad. No one is in jail because of us. No one died because of us. It was all done in fun. As they say in a pick up game of basketball, "No blood, no foul." Sweet as that may sound, it's a lie. Sin does matter. Eve took a bite of fruit (**Gen. 3**). Lot's wife turned around and looked (**Gen. 19**). They only did it one time. A bite of fruit. One quick glance. What's the harm with that? The harm? It disobeyed God. It was sinful. It was wrong and it came with loads of consequences. They had been warned. They knew.

And, is it any different today? One quick glance at porn. One look at the test paper in front of me. One snort. One lie. One time. What's the big deal? The big deal isn't the number of times. The big deal isn't how many were injured because of what you did. The big deal isn't getting caught. The big deal is that God said "don't," and you did. You acted as if you knew as much as God does. You acted as if God's rules don't apply to you, at least not in that setting. You listened to Satan and not to God.

Lying Satan. He's always trying to get you to listen to him. He thinks he knows better. He believes he can find you a short cut to happiness. He knows where he is headed and we don't want to be with him.

Roger Shouse (used by permission)

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