

The Patterns Never Changed

The enemy is not creative.

He has one playbook. He has been running the same plays since the garden. And the reason it keeps working is not because the strategies are brilliant — it is because each generation fails to recognize what the previous one should have already taught them. The names change. The empires change. The technology changes. But the pattern underneath all of it has never changed once.

Babylon. Egypt. Rome. And today.

Centralized power in the hands of a few. Control of information. Suppression of truth. Persecution — sometimes violent, sometimes subtle — of those who refused to bow. The same structure, the same spirit, the same goal in every age: capture the allegiance of humanity and redirect it away from God.

Look at the world today. In some countries the pattern is more visible than others. In some places it is overt — open persecution, outright suppression. In others it is quieter, more sophisticated, dressed in acceptable language. But in every country, in every culture, the same pattern is operating. The same spirit that drove Pharaoh to enslave Israel, that drove Nebuchadnezzar to demand worship, that drove Rome to feed believers to lions — is the same spirit at work today. Different costume. Same agenda.

“For we are not ignorant of his devices.” — 2 Corinthians 2:11 NKJV

Not ignorant. That is the standard. Not surprised, not caught off guard, not confused about what is happening. We are supposed to recognize the devices because we know the one behind them — and he has never changed his methods.



THE SYSTEM NOBODY QUESTIONS

There is a pattern that most people in the western world follow without ever stopping to ask whether they chose it.

Be born. Go to school. Go to college. Get a job. Buy a car. Buy a house. Have kids. Work until retirement. Then — finally — live.

That is the template. And if someone doesn't follow it, people treat them as strange. Family members worry. Friends question. Society applies pressure, subtle and constant, to conform. The template is so embedded in the culture that most people never realize they are following it. It just feels like life.

But there is a problem. God might have a completely different direction for a person's life. A calling that doesn't fit the template. A purpose that requires a different path. And

when the world's system is the lens through which everything is evaluated — when the question is always “how does this fit into the template?” rather than “what is God saying?” — that calling gets buried. Not dramatically. Just quietly, year by year, under the weight of doing what everyone else does.

God is not supposed to fit into your life. God is supposed to be your life. Not a category. Not a scheduled appointment. Not the thing you turn to when the template isn't working. The purpose. The center. The guide.

The world's system is not evil in every detail. Working hard, building a family, being responsible — these are not wrong. But when the system becomes the goal and God becomes the afterthought — when you are living the pattern of the world and trying to fit God into the margins — you have handed your life over to the wrong authority. And the enemy is very content to let you live a perfectly respectable, entirely distracted life that never threatens his territory at all.

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” — Romans 12:2 ESV



THE GATES OF HELL DON'T MOVE

Jesus said that the gates of hell would not prevail against His Church. Most people read that as a defensive promise — as if hell is on the attack and the Church is holding on. But gates don't attack. Gates are stationary. They guard something.

The Church is not supposed to be on defense. The Church is supposed to be marching.

The gates of hell don't move. We march to them. Which means the posture of the Church is not to wait until something happens before responding. It is not to pray only when crisis arrives. It is not to mobilize when the situation becomes undeniable. It is to move first — to take ground, to advance the Kingdom, to push against the darkness before the darkness pushes against us.

Practically, this means we don't wait until everything is right before we start doing what God tells us to do. We don't wait until we feel ready. We don't wait until the path is fully clear. We don't wait until someone else goes first. We pray now. We move now. We start now.

An offensive church prays before the battle, not only during it. An offensive church advances into the culture rather than retreating from it. An offensive church is not surprised by spiritual attack — it expects it, prepares for it, and recognizes it as confirmation that it is moving in the right direction.

Because the enemy does not attack people who are not a threat. If you are under assault — spiritually, mentally, relationally, in your purpose — take it as a sign. You are close to

something that matters. The attack is not evidence that you are failing. It is evidence that you are advancing.

“And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” — Matthew 16:18 ESV

◆ ◆ ◆ THE DEVICES

Paul says we are not ignorant of the enemy’s devices. So what are they?

The honest answer is that there is no complete list. The devices are as varied as the people they target and the situations they exploit. But they all share the same character. And once you understand the character, you can recognize the device — even when it arrives in a form you have never seen before.

The enemy is subtle. He is patient. He does not rush. He does not announce himself. He works with what is already in you — your desires, your fears, your wounds, your blind spots — and he uses those things against you so skillfully that by the time you recognize what is happening, you are already somewhere you never intended to be.

He gives you what you want so that you think it is fine. He makes evil look appealing and good look suspicious. He takes something true and leaves out the part that changes everything. He does not lead with his worst — he leads with something small, something reasonable, something that barely registers as a decision at all. And then he builds from there.

Deception. Accusation. Fear. Discouragement. Division. Pride. Distraction. Laziness. Spiritual dullness. These are not the whole list — they are examples of a pattern. The pattern is always the same: move the person away from God, away from truth, away from their identity, away from their calling. The method changes. The goal never does.

And he is not random about who he targets or how. He is a student of your pain. He knows where you have been hurt, where you have been rejected, where you have felt forgotten or overlooked or not enough. He knows the fear you carry from that season you don’t talk about anymore. He knows the insecurity that has followed you since childhood. He knows the wound that never fully healed, the relationship that broke something in you, the failure that still comes back to your mind at quiet moments. He does not try to knock down a solid wall. He finds the crack. And the crack is almost always something you are already hurting from.

Fear. Depression. Loneliness. Heartbreak. Brokenness. Insecurity. Grief. These are not weaknesses that disqualify you from the Kingdom — they are the very places the enemy tries to set up camp. Not because you are weak, but because those are the places where the lies feel most true. When you are in pain, the accusation that God has abandoned you lands differently than when everything is fine. When you are lonely, the lie that nobody cares feels like a fact. When you are broken, the whisper that you are too far gone sounds reasonable.

This is why the enemy pursues the hurting so aggressively. Not because they are easy targets, but because the pain makes the lies believable. And a lie believed is a door opened.

This is also why the church must never look away from the broken. The places of greatest pain in a person's life are the places most urgently in need of truth. Not judgment. Not performance. Not a list of things to fix. Truth — spoken with love, spoken with patience, spoken into the specific wound rather than in the general direction of the person.

The enemy exploits vulnerability. The church is called to meet it.

This is why awareness matters more than memorizing a list. A renewed mind, walking in the Spirit, paying attention — that mind can sense the pattern even when the method is new. A dull, distracted, flesh-led mind cannot recognize the device until the damage is already done.



THE PATTERN IS BROKEN BY THE CHURCH

Here is what the enemy does not want the Church to understand.

He has been running the same plays for thousands of years because they keep working. Not because they are unstoppable — but because the Church has largely stopped pushing back. People not taking God's Word seriously. Wanting to do everything alone. Assuming someone else will handle it.

But the pattern breaks when the Church wakes up. When believers stop waiting for someone else to go first. When the body starts functioning as a body — every part doing what it was designed to do, nobody burying their gift, nobody sitting on the sidelines assuming their contribution is too small to matter.

Babylon fell. Egypt fell. Rome fell. Every empire the enemy has ever built has eventually crumbled. Because God's Kingdom is the only one that does not end. And His Church — when it is walking in the Spirit, praying without ceasing, advancing rather than retreating, unified rather than divided — is the most powerful force on earth.

The patterns never changed. But neither did the promise.

The gates of hell shall not prevail. Not against a Church that knows what it is and walks in what it has been given.