

Do You Unintentionally Agree With Satan?

We all know the devil is a liar. But did you know that when you agree with the devil's opinions about you, he can hold you in bondage?

I still have vivid recollections of my fear of the "spanking machine." I began my education eagerly in the first grade, believing that the teachers were nice people who were going to help us learn and grow. After all, wasn't learning supposed to be fun?

Mrs. L. didn't think so. She was like a drill sergeant barking commands at all of us, commands that were followed by threats. Her threats were underscored with a graphic description of the "spanking machine." This instrument of torture was supposedly kept in the dark basement of the school—where only bad children went.

Even though there never was a spanking machine, I assure you, I believed in it long after I stopped believing in Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny. My friends and parents tried to convince me that no such thing existed, but I refused to believe them. I had made a choice—an agreement with my fear—and there was no changing my mind.

Forming an Agreement

Wrong beliefs about your ability to learn, to grow and to change can be as difficult to release as my fear of the spanking machine was. If you agree with a lie that says you cannot learn, it will be difficult for you to learn. If you form an agreement with a lie that says you cannot change, it will be tough to recognize when you actually do change.

Until you believe you can influence your future, you probably

won't attempt to move any mountains. You will learn to camp around your fears and set the limits of your existence and your capabilities based on what stands in your way and blocks your vision.

From the time we are young children we tend to unconsciously create our own model of the world in which we live. We calibrate all our experiences, store them in our memories and then make our decisions on the basis of those memories. In this way, we shape our futures based upon our past.

Let's look at how this works. A man I knew named Henry had a difficult time with math when he was a child. People he respected who were assigned to help him in this subject—his teacher and his brother—both made comments about his being stupid when they grew frustrated in trying to teach him how to work with fractions.

The experience of failure in math created in Henry a belief called "something is wrong with me." This is a very powerful and damaging belief. If you believe there is something wrong with you as it relates to your learning capabilities, then no matter how hard you try, you will never succeed. You are in a battle you cannot win, for you are fighting against yourself.

When you form an agreement with a cruel accusation, as Henry did, it creates self-talk. You say to yourself, "Something is wrong with me." In doing so, you label the whole of your being from the inside out as fatally flawed.

You make an internal agreement and form a belief that is no longer a specific response to a math challenge. It is a challenge to your entire existence.

If you happen to have a challenge in algebra or geometry, it does not mean you are a stupid person. It does not mean you don't have what it takes to go to college. It does not mean you will be only average or less than average your entire life. But the meaning you attach to your agreements affects

much more than the actual event that generated the faulty belief.

Agreements and Imagination

Ask yourself: Are you living with feelings of being less than worthwhile, powerless and maybe even hopeless, even though you put up a tough and strong exterior and appear to be spiritually active in the pursuit of God?

If so, these feelings will affect your imagination. You will see yourself as weak and powerless, and your heart will cooperate and provide a picture to you of just how weak you believe you are. Your imagination is subservient to your beliefs.

Even if you choose to see the possibility of what you could become, if you have formed an agreement with a negative belief about who you could become, your negative belief will win. Your positive image of your future will be undermined by your agreement.

Also you will find some reason to invalidate a picture of yourself succeeding. You will say something such as, "Oh, I can see what I would look like, but that will never really happen for me!"

Remember the crowd that died in the wilderness and never made it to the promised land? They saw themselves as "grasshoppers" in their own eyes, and they saw the inhabitants of the land as giants by comparison. They saw themselves getting stomped on, and as a result, they died never having to face that possibility.

They did not believe they had what it took to get where they were promised they could go. Even God could not convince them otherwise. That is how powerful our beliefs, agreements and internal contracts are.

Break the Power of Agreements

But it is not enough simply to recognize how controlling or how deeply embedded your beliefs and agreements are. You need to have a way to get to the next level. If someone does not give you a way, you will find it harder and harder to believe you can get there.

Changing your beliefs is not that easy. You can pump yourself up only so long until you are no longer able to motivate yourself because you don't see results.

It is like the old adage: "Give a man a fish and feed him for a day. Teach him how to fish, and he'll feed himself for a lifetime." It is not enough to believe you can go fishing; someone has to show you how to do it.

If you make agreements with limiting beliefs based on someone else's opinion about you, you are reduced to behaving according to those beliefs. Inside you may hate the fact that you have accepted the "I can't do it" label. Yet you have no one to show you that you can.

The place you are living affects not only what you believe about yourself, but also what you believe about others and about God. Your environment will either support your beliefs or invalidate them.

All of us tend to live between the imposed limitations of someone else's false assessment of our lives and our own internal agreements. The only way to break these agreements is to walk back through each phase of them and cancel them out by remembrance, renunciation and release.

Remembrance. Remember God and the events that have challenged you.

Remembering God is the act of engaging God in conversation, which is what prayer is all about. It also involves putting

God in remembrance and unconditionally surrendering to His healing presence and healing voice. Choose to trust the Holy Spirit to bring you into the process of facing painful memories and erasing the limitations that have held you in bondage.

What has held you in chains has not included God at all. Bring Him into the process of remembering. In that dialogue of remembering prayer, you need to be real, honest and open—not holding anything back.

You will learn how to open up and let God touch the areas where there has been discomfort and pain. You may need help in order to do this. You may need to seek out a competent and caring individual who walks at a high level of integrity and compassion and is skilled in areas of spiritual direction.

You need someone who can mirror your emotions and your self-talk to help you see how you are dealing with what is going on inside. Such an individual does not necessarily tell you what to do. He or she actually mirrors what you are doing so that you can discover for yourself where you keep tripping over the same pitfalls.

Renunciation. Next renounce, verbally and aloud, the agreement you have made within yourself with the limiting beliefs, refusing to allow them to have a place in your life any longer.

Renunciation has to be verbal for two reasons. First, you are dealing with something deeply embedded in your soul. Part of the challenge you face is creating a new pathway for the circuits in your brain to follow.

You have told yourself for so long that things are one way. Now you are actually tearing down the former roadway in your soul on which the negative cargo traveled.

Speaking out that you are no longer in agreement with the

negative, false beliefs will put all your senses, both external and internal, on alert. You are taking charge and taking rule over your spirit, your mind and your body.

Second, you are in a battle with unseen forces—spiritually evil and destructive forces that are bent on your demise. Those entities have devised plots and strategies to undermine your progress and your success.

As a child of God, you already have all the resources and power you need inside you to overcome those forces. The God who is in you is greater than all those forces combined.

When you speak out the canceling of those agreements, you let the forces of darkness know you are no longer aligning yourself with their schemes to destroy you. You are no longer walking in the nonaffirming and destructive beliefs that have sabotaged you before. You are saying that you are ready for a fight, and this time you are going to win.

The only good fight is the one you win, and you are letting them know that you have taken a faith posture because the faith fight is a good fight. It is the one you always win, no matter how hard the enemies of your soul contend against you.

Release. Finally, release your association with the old feelings, memories, hurts, unforgiveness, beliefs, attachments, self-talk and agreements that held you captive.

Release all of it to God, who will totally eliminate it. Realize that whenever you recall the old belief system—with all the feelings and vain imaginations associated with it—that it is part of the old you. Today you have stepped into the new you, a person who is totally disassociated from that stronghold.

Release it all, acknowledging that you no longer see yourself the old way, hear yourself talking the old talk or feel yourself responding or acting the old way any longer. Old

things are passing away, and new things have begun.

Walking Out the Process of Change

One of the challenges you may face as you begin to break agreements is that at first you may experience what seems like a burst of progress followed by a prolonged season of failure. In that season of failure you may confront the behaviors, emotions and feelings that you are seeking to overcome. It is all part of the process of becoming whole, and it is necessary for the learning experience.

When you walk by faith, you may fall a few times—or maybe even more than a few times. Nevertheless, God will keep picking you up, ensuring that your mistakes start becoming feedback for your next level of success.

You learn things from the walk of faith. The pitfalls along the way are necessary for your growth.

In place of the old stronghold, learn how to rebuild your frame of reference from something that is of good report, beautiful, pleasant, virtuous and attractive. When you feel you are struggling, try this:

* In the moments when you are tempted to go back to those feelings and memories, let your mind go there.

**This time, release your anxious thoughts to God in prayer and wrestle them out of your experience (or continue praying until the feelings and negative thoughts are gone).

* Then watch as the very peace of God becomes the military garrison that surrounds that area of your heart and your mind, keeping out that destructive tendency.

Give God room to work, and you will see a difference, feel a difference and hear things from a different perspective. You will even hear a different voice.

Instead of hearing the voice of a nonaffirming teacher (or parent, sibling or so forth), you will cultivate your ear to access the presence and peace of God. You will hear the affirming voice of your heavenly Father, and it will settle like the balm of Gilead on your war-torn heart.

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