

36. “Hardness of heart” defines the seventh stage of reversionism which is called “scar tissue of the soul”:

The buildup of false doctrines in the soul which shuts down any recall of doctrine. The rate of forgetting exceeds the rate of recall. Vocabulary is diminished, norms and standards degenerate, momentum halts; and wisdom is lost; all spiritual functions shut down.

37. Demonic forces, ever on the alert in the Invisible War, seek to entrap an unbeliever or a believer in reversionism as observed by Peter in:

1 Peter 5:8 - Be sober [advance to the sophisticated spiritual life], be on the alert [Code Red]. Your enemy, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion,[†] seeking someone to devour [a hungry lion culls the weakest or slowest of the herd].

38. The power to resist such attacks is noted in the next verse:

1 Peter 5:9 - Resist him steadfast in doctrine, knowing that the same kinds of undeserved suffering are endured by your fellow believers that are in the devil’s world. (EXT)

39. Paul alerts us in several passages to identify Lucifer’s devices by means of doctrine resident in the soul.

40. A key word in these verses is **νόημα (nóēma)** and it is used in three ways:

1. To satanic systems of thought and function e.g., compartmentalization, rhetorical veil, hidden agenda, propaganda, disinformation, or false doctrine. **Nóēma** can be translated: plot, design, scheme, strategy, conspiracy, deception, technique, trick, or device. I will use “device” since, according to its dictionary definition, it implies the multiplicity of things which Lucifer may use in his deception.

[†] “A full-grown male is about 6–7 feet long, excluding the 3-foot long tail; stands about 4 feet high at the shoulder; and weighs 370–500 pounds” (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Micropaedia* (2010), 7:382.

2. It is used to refer to the mind which has become influenced by satanic devices resulting in cosmic rationales.
3. To describe the thinking which through doctrine is equipped to resist satanic devices when challenged. We will also translate this use as “thought process” related to one’s spiritual inventory or lack of it.

1. **Category #1: Satan’s Devices**

2 Corinthians 2:10 - To whom you forgive anything, I [Paul] forgive also. For if [1st class condition] I forgive anything—and I already have—to whom I forgave it, I did for your sakes in the person of Christ,

Paul indicates that the man in Corinth committed a sin, which he confessed, and was restored to fellowship with God. Paul, in turn, has forgiven him and in doing so also has reestablished fellowship with this person. On the other hand, what is the spiritual relationship between others in Corinth toward this fellow believer?

v. 11 - so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes [νόημα (*nóēma*): devices].

PRINCIPLES:

1. People are no damn good!
2. If you doubt this, then join a church.
3. There you will find people outside your normal gaggle of friends, relatives, and acquaintances.
4. In every walk of life and in every interaction with others, there is always the chance for friction, misunderstandings, and uncut sin.
5. Generally, in families, people find a way to tolerate each other, ease frayed nerves, and the fact they are blood.
6. In churches, those who gather usually are joined by some relatives and friends, but the rest are rank strangers at least in the beginning of entering into the church’s fellowship.

7. In Corinth, there was a collection of parishioners that was involved in multifaceted categories of sin and only a few had been extracted from “Satan’s devices.”
8. So Corinth becomes a test-case example of how a church is able to recover from the bad decisions of some. The individual Paul references in this context is a man who did something that negatively affected many in the congregation.
9. But instead of allowing the sin to lie in a pile and bake in the sun, he chose to confess it to the Father and apparently asked forgiveness of those in the congregation.
10. Having done this, Paul then asserts that by that person’s grace orientation and the doctrinal orientation, he forgave him as well.
11. To assure those who still felt it necessary to kick this man’s former patty, he puts the onus on them to follow his example.
12. This example demonstrates a process that believers are to follow in order to resolve interpersonal conflicts.
13. First of all, the perpetrator begins the process by confessing his sin with resultant restoration of fellowship.
14. The name of the perpetrator is not mentioned, but his sin is found in 1 Corinthians 5:1 where it is discovered that he has sexual relations with his mother.
15. This came to the knowledge of the congregation which reacted through arrogance rather than grace.
16. As an apostle, Paul had the authority to take severe action on this man which in 1 Corinthians 5:5 he “decided to deliver such a one to Satan for destruction of his flesh,” i.e., the sin unto death.

17. It becomes apparent in 2 Corinthians 2 that the congregation ostracized the man from the church, however, the man came to grips with his sin, refrained from the behavior, and sought forgiveness from the Lord, i.e., he confessed the sin.
18. In so doing, the sin unto death was terminated which indicates that the man's mental-attitude adjustment was discerned by the Lord to be authentic.
19. Paul, however, had made plans to return to Corinth in order to resume his face-to-face teaching with the congregation. This is indicated in 1 Corinthians 16:3-7 which Paul reiterates in 2 Corinthians 1:15-16.
20. But subsequently to these plans, noted 1 Corinthians 16, Paul learns that there is dissension in the church which is still in an uproar over the man's incestuous behavior.
21. If the entire congregation is out of fellowship, then Paul would waste his time teaching them doctrine, consequently, he makes the decision through discernment that it would be fruitless to go to Corinth.
22. Instead, he chooses to write a letter and rake them over the doctrinal coals instead of going to the city to teach objectively to an out-of-fellowship congregation.

1 Corinthians 2:1 - But I determined this for my own sake, that I would not come to you in sorrow [λύπη (lúpē) "heaviness" in the KJV]. (NASB)