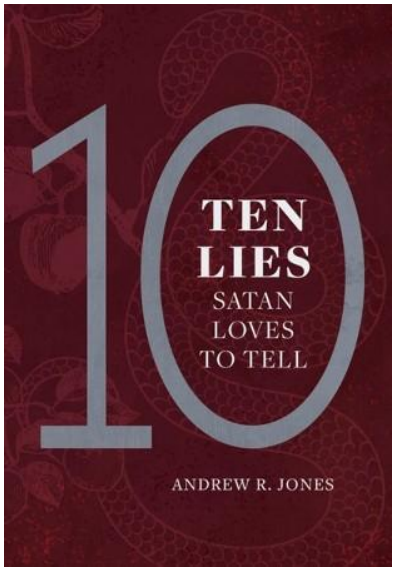
TEN LIES SATAN LOVES TO TELL
ANDREW R. JONES



LIE 4: LIFE WILL BE BETTER IF YOU SEIZE MORE CONTROL (PP. 71-89)

When we believe the previous chapter's lie that we need and deserve more, Satan pushes us to take the next logical step: go get it. If we need and deserve more, then we should take action and seize what we need and deserve. (72)

SATAN IN THE GARDEN

As we covered in previous lies, one of the things Satan says to Eve is, "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:5). It is such a nefarious sentence because it is entirely true.

The lie is in the implication that God is not just withholding a perfectly tasty fruit but also withholding power from them, that God does not want them to be like Him. (72)

SATAN IN THE WILDERNESS

Satan is playing chess with these temptations. In the first, Satan does not want Jesus to suffer the inconveniences of being human... I cannot be sure, but it seems to me that Satan is attempting to soften Jesus' resolve, to prepare Him to not endure other inconveniences that are surely coming His way. If Jesus can be persuaded to use His power to overcome the inconvenience of hunger, perhaps Jesus can be persuaded to use His power to overcome the inconvenience of the cross. (75)

SATAN'S DESIRED OUTCOME

Satan loves this lie in part because he believes it is the truth. Satan lives out this lie in everything he does. Satan seeks to seize control away from God. And Satan wants us to follow him, to emulate him in the unquenchable quest for power and glory and control. Satan's desired outcome is for us to be less and less like God and more and more like Satan, to be made in his demonic image: an insatiably power-hungry tyrant. (75)

As God's creatures, we receive responsibilities and vocations from Him. When we reject this lie, when we refuse to seize power, Satan tempts us toward the other extreme. Satan tries to get us to abdicate all our responsibilities... Like with previous lies, Satan wants us at the extremes. (75)

THE FEAR BEHIND THE LIE

A combination of fears are at play with this lie. Sometimes we seize control because we fear being controlled by others. We fear being manipulated or used by others. (76)

THE LIE REPEATED IN THE BIBLE

- The Tower of Babel: Such temptation to power and glory can come only from Satan. Satan is always encouraging us toward more fame, to finding more of our identity in actions and accomplishments, to bigger and better. Satan is always trying to get us to attach our identity and unity to anything other than God...

  God comes down and confuses the language of the people and causes the very thing they fear—their scattering to the ends of the earth, their division, their weakening and loss of control. There is no name made for them, for they are given myriad names and are not even able to understand what the others are called. Their legacy is one of arrogant foolishness.

  In seeking to seize a better life, the people of Babel experience one of the fruits of Satan's lies: division. (77)
- Abram, Sarai, and Hagar: Eventually the tables will turn, as Isaac's grandson Joseph will be sold to Ishmael's descendants as a slave and brought down to Egypt, Hagar's homeland. And God will find a way to bring about good in the midst of so much evil. Despite His people constantly seeking to seize control away from Him, God will guide things for eventual good. (78)
- Herod's Slaughter of the Innocents: Satan's lie to Herod that he must seize control to keep his throne and eliminate any possible challengers leads to death—the death of infants. These unknown martyrs from unknown families haunt the pages of the Scriptures with a warning to us all; the lust for power leads to a soul so disfigured it cannot recognize right from wrong, good from evil. (79)

THE LIE REPEATED IN OUR WORLD

The problem of control comes when we lose sight of the reality that God is the Creator of all things and we are His stewards. As stewards, we are given responsibility over God's good gifts, but we do not own them. God does...

We are not able to usurp the authority of God. When Satan lies to us and tells us that life will be better if we seize more control, he is trying to persuade us to usurp God's authority for our own, to abdicate our role as stewards and go for the top job: being God...

Yet this lie is not told merely to those who hold power on a grand scale. This lie is lived out in small ways in our homes every day...

Yet the place where Christians find themselves most obviously struggling with this lie, especially in the United States, is in the realm of culture wars... It is as if people believe the future of the church hinges upon having ample power and control to pass on to the next generation. Dear reader, the future of the church depends on the power and control of only one person: Jesus. Jesus is the past, present, and future of the church. (80-82)

THE TRUTH

The truth is that all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Jesus, not to us. (84)

GOD'S DESIRED OUTCOME

God's desired outcome is that we become more and more like Jesus. God's desire is that we become more humble, gentle, and meek. We are called to be imitators of God....

The word translated as "meek" in Matthew 5:5 is the same word that is translated as "gentle" in Matthew 11:29. A yoke is a farming implement used for a pair of animals, often oxen, horses, or donkeys. The pair of animals works together, harnessed together by the yoke, pulling a plow or a cart. Jesus calls

us to be yoked to Him, to be teamed with Him. In so doing, He calls on us to learn from Him. Learn His rhythms and pace, His character and way of acting in the world. (84)

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (Philippians 2:5–8)

Ultimately, we must reckon with the reality that Jesus, with all authority in heaven and on earth, chose to empty Himself of all His power not once but twice. He chose to empty Himself when He became a human being... Then Jesus emptied Himself of all His power even further by dying. And not just dying, but dying a criminal's death, suffering through the agony of an execution He did not deserve. (85)

God's desired outcome is that we become more like Jesus. This means being more sacrificial and less controlling, more of a servant and less of a narcissist, more trusting of Jesus as the one who is in control. (86)

THE LOVE THAT CASTS OUT FEAR

As we have seen, often we seize power and control because we are afraid of being taken advantage of. We are afraid of being vulnerable. We are afraid that there is no one on earth we can trust. The love that casts out this fear is Jesus, the man from heaven who came down to earth out of love for His fallen creation. (86)