

INTERVIEW WITH THE DEVIL

The Devil's Résumé

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In order to overcome an adversary, you must understand how that adversary works and operates. It takes skill and understanding to defeat your enemy, because that enemy is working to defeat you as well.

In the first message of this controversial series, Pastor Ed Young looks at the reality of our biggest enemy and unveils his motus operandi in our lives. And as we discover how the devil works, we also discover how God has equipped us to overcome!

Transcript

<video intro>

I want to welcome everybody to our Keller/Southlake campus. Wow, it's incredible. Thank you guys. I want to address everyone in the lobby and also everybody in the overflow. Please be seated. Everybody is just packed like sardines. You know, already we have to go to two services. Someone told me in the lobby, they go, "Ed, we need a bigger boat." So, that's the beauty of doing two services. So starting next weekend we've been talking already (before I stood up here), we're gonna have two services at 10:00 and 11:30. And I'm sure as it continues to progress we'll be adding more and more.

But I do want to welcome all of you. Thank you so very much for being here. We're thrilled to be in this brand new campus in a place where we have so many people from Fellowship Church. And one of the great things about our multi-site strategy is that we want to take the church where people are, and obviously masses of people are here. And it's so, so thrilling to have all of you here. So I want to welcome you, once again. I want to welcome all of our other environments. We have many different locations, everywhere from Miami to Columbia, South Carolina. This will be seen very soon in London, England where we're starting a brand new campus. And believe it or not, next week we have another announcement for yet another place that I think you can tell your friends about here in this vicinity of Dallas/Fort Worth. So anyway, we're one church in many, many different locations. So once again, thanks for being here.

Well I want to begin with just a word of prayer as we open up God's Word, we know of as the Bible. You might not know it's called God's Word. You've probably heard of the Bible but this is the Word of God and this is our authority. And I want to talk to you a little bit about what it says regarding a very, very popular yet sinister personality.

Let's pray together. God, thank you for every single person here. I thank you for those who are in the lobby, those who are up tight in the overflow areas, everyone who is hearing this maybe out in the parking lot on speakers, those who are seeing this at all of our different locations, those who will watch this, who are watching this right now online around the world, television, etc. God, use my vocal cords right now to communicate your truth and your message, and may we leave here changed people for you. We ask all these things in Christ's name. Amen.

When was the last time you said something that was not true? When was the last time you took something that was not yours? Why, just to board an airplane, do you need to go through all of these devices and scans and things just to fly somewhere? Why do adults molest children? Why do millions and millions of people go to bed hungry each and every night, when we have enough resources to feed the world? Why do nations declare war against other nations? Why? Why? Why do most marriages now end in divorce? Why?

Well, the short answer, and this is me talking: The devil. Some of you are like, oh yeah, Ed. I'm with you. I believe that. Yes, it's the devil. The short answer is the devil, yet if you really explain how his personality plays out it's highly complex. But I've gotta say as I've looked around the world I believe in a dark, sinister, evil force that is wreaking havoc in our world. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to say, yeah, I believe in the devil.

Now some of you are skeptical. You might be going, well, I don't know, Ed. I mean I'm open to listening about the devil but spiritual warfare and this figure, this personality, the devil? Come on. You seem like an educated guy. Yeah, I'm pretty educated. I went to school and college and Bible school. I went to seminary for four years, I did some doctrinal study, I've written 14 books, and I've had the opportunity to meet a lot of great theologians, a lot of brilliant thinkers and ask them a lot of questions. And I've come to the conclusion, studying God's word and just observing, that there is a devil. But I know when I talk about the devil, a series on the devil, I know I'm like walking a tightrope. Because some people maybe are like, "Man, I believe in the devil! I believe so much in the devil. I believe the demons are flying around and the other day I was driving down the freeway and there was a demon of reckless driving. And the other day I had my hair cut and my stylist messed up and it's the demon haircut in the devil's barbershop." And some people are just demon-dusters. They think the demons jump in and out of people like we jump in and out of cars. That's extreme.

The other extreme would be people who are like, "Are you kidding me? Evil? It's just because of a damaged chromosome or my diapers were put on too tight. It's because of financial problems or poverty or hunger or my nursery was painted the wrong color. It comes from my family of origin. My father was this way. My aunt was that way. That's why you have evil in the world. It's this biological, genetic, weird thing." Those are the extremes.

God's word give us (you won't believe this) the 4-1-1 on Satan. It doesn't tell us everything about him. And I think it's interesting that God does not tell us everything about angels

and demons and the devil because if we knew it all our little pea-brains couldn't take it. We would blow a fuse. Over the last several years, I think I was looking over the last eight years, I think two years straight Fellowship Church was named one of the top non-profits in America to work for. That's pretty good. Yeah. So because of that and because of other things we receive a lot of résumés. And maybe at your work you receive a lot of résumés. Or maybe you're working on a résumé right now because people change jobs a lot. When we have a résumé we look at it. You know, I've never met a résumé I didn't like. And usually résumés are pretty positive. It tells us the best about ourselves. I was shocked as I began to really study this subject of the devil. Because the Bible gives sort of a résumé of our enemy. Is that crazy? The résumé. And I want you to learn and know and see this thumbnail sketch of the devil. Because if we are gonna understand what the devil is gonna do, we need to understand what the devil has done. And the Bible says in 2 Corinthians 2:11, "We are not unaware of his schemes."

It's about football season, right? Football season! Who likes football here? Yeah! Everybody likes football. Every single person likes football. Have you ever heard of coach Lou Holtz? Let me imitate Lou Holtz. Here's what Lou Holtz says whenever teams are playing against each other: "Well, I tell you one thing. They're gonna run that ball that way every single time. And they better block that guy because if not that running back is gonna just run all day long. Now their defensive scheme is this way. If you stay away from the nose guard..." He's a motivator. He has a unique voice. Lou Holtz fires me up. He's always talking about the tendencies and the weaknesses and the strengths of the different teams. You play football, you gotta study your opponent. You've got to know their strengths, their weaknesses. You'll know where to attack. It doesn't mean you obsess over your opponents.

Sometimes we can obsess so much over our opponent that we don't play the game. We have to know our opponent and know who we are and whose we are, and then it'll help us. Because as a follower of Christ, remember this, we're not fighting for victory, we're fighting from victory. That's very important. If you are a follower of Christ this should be a very inspirational, positive study. We're fighting from victory. The enemy does not want us to know who we are nor whose we are. That's why we need to understand his résumé.

A résumé is going to have several elements. #1, a résumé is going to have contact information. The devil's contact information is very simple. 666@hotmail.com. The devil, as we know if you think about his background and history, and employment history, used to be the lead worshipper in Heaven. This is the devil. His name was Lucifer. The name Lucifer means star of the morning. Bright and morning star. Picture Lucifer in Heaven giving glory and worshipping God. He was, many scholars believe, one of the archangels along with Michael, along with Gabriel. So he was like the man! One of the main players in Heaven. Obviously he got tired of giving glory to God.

Now let me stop here. He chose to do this cosmic Kingdom coup to kick God off of his throne. So, the devil has throne issues. Say it with me. Throne issues. In all of our overflow

environments, throne issues. All of our campuses, throne issues. He's got throne issues. Now you might be thinking, "OK, Ed, wait a minute. Here is Lucifer, in Heaven. Heaven's perfect and you're telling me that he tried to kick God off the throne? I don't understand that, man." Well, I don't understand it totally either.

The Bible calls it, the apostle Paul calls it, the mystery of iniquity. When we're created, and the angels are created beings, right? Lucifer, a created being. When we're created we have a freedom of choice, of free will. He chose to rebel. He chose to elevate himself and to usurp God, and he took a third of the angels with him that tried to overthrow God.

The Bible says in Isaiah 14, "How you've fallen from Heaven. You've been cast down to earth. You said in your heart, 'I will raise my throne above the stars of Heaven.'" He said, "I'm gonna raise my throne above the stars of Heaven." Above the stars of God. "I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds. I will make myself like the most high." Sounds like some interview with a self-possessed professional athlete or A-lister, doesn't it? Or music celebrity. I-I-I. Me-me-me. My-my-my. I-I-I. Me-me-me. My-my-my. It sounds like me sometimes. Does it sound like you?

Do you ever – I just want to ask this question – do you ever have throne issues? I do. Do you ever come to a point where you say, yeah God, you're in my life, you're running the shoe, but you kinda move aside a little bit. I want to sovereignly rule over this universe called Me. I want to do what I want to do. Pride. Envy. Greed. Lust.

The first book I ever wrote years ago was called Fatal Distractions – Overcoming obstacles that will mess up your life. It's on the 7 deadly sins. The number 1 sin, the forerunner of all sin, is this sin of pride. Throne issue. Before I can involve myself in any sin, first of all I've got to have this sin of pride. That's what the devil did. Lucifer said, "I'm gonna elevate myself. I'm gonna dethrone you, God." He was kicked out of Heaven through the uprights (football metaphor continuing), fell to earth, took a third of the angels with him. Some of the angels were put in Hell.

Question: true or false. Is Hell made for human beings? False. Hell is not made for humans. Hell is made for the devil and the demons. God doesn't anybody to go to Hell. We make that choice. Throne issues.

So throne issues began in Heaven. Satan lost the battle, they segued down into the garden. Throne issues. Adam and Eve, the whole deal. They had freedom of choice. The enemy comes in, tempts them. Read about the temptation. Throne issues. "You can become like God, Adam and Eve. You can sit on the throne of your life. You can sovereignly rule over this universe. You can do it. You're the man. You're the woman. Throne issues.

And now the devil tries to accomplish in your life and mine what he couldn't accomplish in Heaven. He's trying to work out on earth what he missed out on in Heaven, which is to win a little

micro-victory in your life and mine by shoving Jesus off the throne and putting our self on the throne. It's called the sinfulness of sin.

We know what sin is. The word sin, hamartia in the original language, means to miss the mark. We all sin. I sin every day, you do too. Everybody sins. Yeah, sin is sin but we don't realize the depth of sin. I don't realize like when I sin not only am I falling short, but also I'm trafficking with the devil. You're going, "Say what?!?" Not only do I fall short, I traffic with the devil. Say what?!? What I'm talking about is I am taking Jesus off the throne, putting myself on the throne, which the devil tried to do in Heaven, and now he accomplishes that in my life and your life every time we sin. The sinfulness of sin. Satan's objectives: to steal, kill, and destroy. John 10, Jesus talked about it. So it's like the devil says, "OK, here's my game plan. Here's my offense. Steal, kill, and destroy. It is what it is."

So he's a created being, the devil. He has a freedom of choice. He knows the Bible backwards and forwards. Don't think he doesn't know Scripture. And then he knows history better than any history major on the planet. When I study history... recently I read a book about Ernest Hemingway's boat, called the Pilar. I wasn't alive when he had that boat and fished out of that boat and took all these trips on the boat. I had to study that as I read the book. I had to study history. The devil does not study history. He's not like, "Oh, let me pick that book out or go online." No, he has experienced history. So he's very coy, very sly, very smart. So we see his résumé.

Now let's get to the stuff we can really, really apply and understand. Let's talk about how he really works, his goals and objectives, specifically. Last time I sinned I studied the sin and I thought man, every time I mess up it's pretty much a three-step sequential, predictable process. And then I thought, whoa! That's how Satan works in everybody's life! I began to study it in the Scriptures. So Satan works through TLC. Say it with me. TLC. I'm not talking about The Learning Channel. I'm not talking about the band. I'm not talking about tender, loving care. No, I'm talking about TLC. This is how he works.

T stands for temptation. He's the tempter. Think about Jesus. The devil tempted Jesus, the great temptation. Whenever the devil tempts you and me he's trying to get us to settle for something less. He's trying to get us off of our game. He's trying to get us off of our purpose. That is what he does, and we'll talk more and more about that. The temptation.

One of our twins loves art and she probably got that from me because I majored in the Fine Arts at Florida State University. When it comes to temptation it's a painting contest. You've got one artist painting a picture, the tempter. You've got another artist, the Holy Spirit of God if you're a follower of Christ, painting another picture. The devil might be painting a picture of anger. Some anger is good but some anger is not good, maybe toxic anger. Maybe he's painting a picture of insecurity. Maybe he's painting a picture of just exaggeration and then some gray areas of life. Maybe he's painting a picture of lust or whatever. And while he's doing that the Holy Spirit is painting pictures of integrity and holiness and potential and godliness. Which one do you supply

with the paintbrushes, the paints, and the canvases? It costs a lot of money, to me, to buy art supplies. Time and time again our daughter would run out of art supplies. She has a job and all that but, “Dad, can you go to the store? Can I have some money? Would you buy me some more paint or brushes or whatever?” So I had a decision to make. If I stopped buying her supplies, feeding her supplies, she wouldn’t paint any more. But, if I supplied her she would keep painting.

Question: Who are you supplying your art supplies to? The enemy or the Holy Spirit of God? That’s a question. They’re always painting. The Holy Spirit of God wants you to look and concentrate and turn away from those paintings that the devil is trying to paint.

But the devil is gonna say, “Man, just look at them. Don’t you feel it?” so he moves from the temptation hat to the lying hat.

Gimme an L. He’s a liar. John 8:44, “The father of lies.” His native language, Jesus said, Lie-ese. He just lies and lies and lies and lies. White lies, overt lies, lies where he takes the truth and just adds a little bit of falsehood in it. “Just look at the picture! That ain’t gonna hurt you just to look at it. Can I have another paintbrush? Thank you. A little bit more acrylic paint, oh yeah. That’s just a little bit.”

“What would it really be like to do that? You could really be successful then. I mean, I know it’s kind of a gray area, you’re breaking the law, but come on...”

“Whoa! Look at her! God wants you to be satisfied. I mean, do you realize what you’re missing? Yeah, you’re married and all that but don’t look at that, just come on... come on... look at it! Look at it.”

So we listen to those lies. Think about the Garden of Eden. We listen to those lies. Think about the last time you sinned. We listened to those lies and then he really cranks up the volume. He goes, “Come on, do it. I painted the picture for you! It’s a Picasso, it’s a Renoir. Come on and do it, man. No one will know. Are you kidding me? Your boss won’t know. Your wife won’t know. Your dad won’t know. Coach won’t know. Come on man, just go ahead and do it!” Then when we do it, you would think he would be like, “OK, loser.” You’d think he would be off somewhere else but that when he knows to C. TLC...

Gimme a C. He moves to a condemner. He puts the hat on of condemnation. How many people in here like UFC? UFC? That’s it? We’re doing a series called The Family Octagon starting after Labor Day. It’s gonna be cool. We’re gonna have some serious fighters in here. It’s gonna be really, really off the chain. Well, sometimes those guys can do things that just make your stomach turn. I mean, these guys are tough. Well, the enemy after we do it – whatever doing it means – you would think he would bolt but he takes his foot and he plants it... boom! Right in our throat and he begins to condemn us. I mean, it’s coldblooded. Talk trash about us. In the book of Revelation 12:10, “For the accuser of our brothers and sisters...” the accuser, another name for Satan, “... accuses them before our God day and night.” Day and night he’s all up in our grill. Day

and night he's hating on us. You think you've got some haters? You're going to this high school or middle school or college or whatever. Oh that, listen, these haters we're experiencing in our lives are nothing compared to the devil.

And after we sin he says, "Look, you messed up again. God can never use you again. You can never be a real father again. You can never be a real mother again. After what you've done??? You can't serve at Fellowship Church. You can't greet at Fellowship Church. You can't lead a small group at Fellowship Church. You can't preach at Fellowship Church. Who are you? Do you realize what you have done???" And it sounds sinister. Bad. Ugly. Because sin is fun. If sin wasn't fun we wouldn't do it. Sin has its kicks but its kickbacks are like Chuck Norris. They're rugged. So that's how he works. It's important to know that. That's how the enemy operates.

I've always loved reptiles, snakes. When I was eight years old something happened with a snake that I've never forgotten. It seems like it was yesterday that it happened. I grew up in the south and my mother had cooked this incredible meal, I mean some real soul food. Greens, cornbread, black-eyed peas, fried chicken. We were eating on a picnic table outside. The sun was setting. Now our neighbors, who lived very, very close by were named the Arrowoods. Nice people but the father, Arnold Arrowood, was a little peculiar. He was just obsessed over his yard. And I'm all about having a good yard and all that but Arnold Arrowood, I mean, he was just... and he was one of these guys who had the thinning hair and he combed it down into these bangs right here. And he was just a little out there. I loved his daughter, though. Tina. She was my girlfriend, Tina Arrowood. But our relationship ended when I threw, inadvertently, some dog doo-doo in her hair. That's another story.

So, we were eating and in the middle of the meal we hear screaming. It's Arnold Arrowood, "Ahh! There's a snake in our house! Oh my gosh!" so I run over, jump the hedges. I'm eight years old. I look and sure enough in their family room was a snake behind the La-Z-Boy. Dad comes in.

"Whoa! Son, I think that's poisonous."

"Dad, it's not poisonous."

"I really believe it."

"Dad, I just read a snake book. The snake is harmless. Don't kill him, please."

"Ed, OK, OK. We'll just put him in this jar," and he gets this big honkin' jar, "and you can look at him for a while. Then after I finished eating we're gonna take the snake out and kill it 'cause I think it's poisonous." So we used a hoe or a shovel or something and eased the snake into this jar, carefully screwed the cap on and here's this snake at the bottom <hissing>. By this time Tina Arrowood is with me, walking with me. I'm taking the jar back very carefully to my garage. Some of the neighborhood kids heard the commotion, they're all standing around. I put the jar down, again very gingerly, in the garage. Dad looks at me and he goes,

“Son, do not touch the jar. Do not open the jar.” When he lowers his eye, watch out. “Because I think that snake is poisonous. Do not touch the jar. You understand me? I know what’s best for you, Ed.”

“Yes, sir. Yes, sir. I understand. I understand.” So he goes around the picnic table, I can’t see him. I’m standing there looking at the snake with beautiful Tina Arrowood at my side. This is before Lisa. I was eight. So, some neighborhood kids had kinda walked up...

“Wow... snake!” I said,

“Guys, this snake is nonpoisonous.”

“I don’t know.”

“I’m gonna pick him up.” And in my head I’m thinking, Ed, what are you doing? Your father just said don’t do it! I’m thinking to myself, I’m gonna do it. I looked at my little brother, Ben.

“Ben, bring me the work gloves.”

“Ed, I’m gonna tell Dad.”

“You tell Dad...”

“OK, OK...” He brings me the yard gloves. I put them on and all the neighborhood kids were like, oh! I unscrew the top of the jar, there’s the snake. I just picked him up. Back in the day I watched Mutual of Omaha’s Wild Kingdom. Remember that show? Some of you guys are so young you’re like, “What?” That was long before the Discovery Channel or Animal Planet. That’s classic television. Just YouTube that. Marlin Perkins, that’s all you gotta do. No one can come close to him.

So I’d seen Marlin, Jim Fowler handle snakes and I’m like, I can do this. I picked him up, no problem. He’s going in and out of the yard gloves, wrapped around my hand. All the neighborhood kids are like,

“Oh, Ed’s a snake handler! Incredible!” Yeah.

“Told you! It’s nonpoisonous. This thing’s harmless. It won’t bite. Dad didn’t know what he was talking about.” Then, I uncoiled the snake.

“Take this yard glove off. I’m gonna handle him without gloves.”

“No, Ed! Don’t do it!” I said,

“It’s fine, Ben. I know. Just take the glove off!” He took it off. And when I moved my hand back very slowly, just to hold the snake, fffffmp! He bit me, latched onto my hand, blood spewing! I’m crying. I couldn’t shake him off of my hand! I’m thinking, “Oh-oh-oh-oh! DAD! DAD!” Finally the snake fell off and I just started stomping it. And he went to be with the Lord.

Then, that’s for all the animal activists. Then, I love animals, though. Anyway... that was funny. Then, Dad comes around the corner. And I’m like, uh-oh. I’m thinking the thing’s poisonous. I’m thinking, OK, I’m gonna die in two minutes, whatever. Dad comes up,

“What happened? What happened?”

“Aaaaahhh-bit... ahhhhh...” There’s blood and he looked and he got a stick and opened the snake’s mouth. No fangs. Thank you, Jesus. Nonpoisonous. And I thought Dad was gonna tick off Black Beauty.

And you know what? That's the problem in many families. Spare the rod and spoil the child. Kids, hey kids, all of us. We want discipline. We want it. And it's time for parents, it's not easy, to discipline, to step up and discipline. Where was I? Oh yeah!

He did not take off Black Beauty. You know what he did? He looked at me and he said, "Ed, I know what's best for you. You learned a lesson. When I tell you something I have your best interests at heart."

That's temptation. We make a pet out of sin: Oh no problem! Nobody knows! Harmless! Everything's cool. Everything's fine! When you least expect it... POP! Listen to your father's voice. So instead of temptation you've got to be tethered to the truth. The truth, the Word of God. Instead of lying, be led by the Holy Spirit of God. Led by him. Instead of condemnation we need to understand the compassion and the forgiveness and the grace of God. No matter what you've done, no matter what you're involved in, no matter how many times you've been snake-bit, God will forgive you, he will cleanse you, he will pick you up. Because he wants you to know who you are and whose you are. Because Fellowship Church when we get up in the morning I want Satan and all of his demons to say, "Oh, crap! They're up. Oh crap! They're praying. Oh crap! They started another campus. Oh crap! Someone else got baptized! Oh crap, someone else gave their heart to Christ!"

Because the devil hates the throne. Whenever someone gives their life to Jesus, whenever someone says, "OK, I give you, God, the throne of my life," the devil hates it. The devil hates it when we worship, individually and corporately. Because when you have worship you have the bridegroom and the bride, having intimacy. And with intimacy you have reproduction. Throne issues. Who is sitting on the throne of your life.

"Ed, I'm a Christian." Great. Jesus is in your life. But is he Lord of your life? Because the moment we put self on the throne, even though we're going to Heaven, what happens? Our soul is affected. What's our soul? Our mind, our emotions, and our will, and that affects our body. But when I keep Jesus on the throne, "You're God, I'm not," – I'm talking to believers – everything is affected. My soul, my mind (what I think), my emotions (what I feel), and my will (the decisions that I make), and it bleeds out into my body and I can be a difference-maker in this one and only life. Throne issues.

So church, I'm looking forward to this series. I'm looking forward to putting a period where the devil wants to put a comma. I'm looking forward to watching God end things that the devil thinks he can continue in our lives. I want us to know our opponent, but more importantly to know "greater is he who is in you than he who is of the world."

Let's bow for prayer together...

[Ed leads in closing prayer.]