

The Devil You Don't Know: Recognizing and Resisting Evil in Everyday Life (Ave Maria Press) (Louis J. Cameli)

Selected Excerpts:

Created good by God and loved by God, the devil opted against God. Destined by his own decision to remain apart from and alienated from God irrevocably, he cannot remain at peace with his decision but wants to drag all creation, particularly humanity, with him away from God.

A second marker for the experience of being a sinner is a sense of inner division, a feeling of being divided within ourselves, perhaps, at times even a feeling of a war within.

Feeling wounded differs from feeling interiorly divided. The wounded person feels pain and perhaps weakness.

A fifth and final marker of the experience of being a sinner is longing for a love that is complete but seemingly out of reach. We want to love and to be loved.

They are a felt distance from home, an inner division, an interior woundedness, a sense of burden that leaves us unfree, and a longing for the fullness of love not yet attained.

The complicated tangles that are related to deception have to do with a free choice to make things complicated so that they can be obscured and, ultimately, be part of the deception.

The devil can readily use this confusion between information about people and the truth of people to great advantage in sowing seeds of disharmony and even deep antagonism.

The fear of the truth has to do fundamentally with a fear of consequences. If I face up to the truth, what will happen to me?

The avoidance of pain grabs our attention and makes us quite vulnerable to the evil one's suggestions. The more effective attacks against the truth do not always involve a full frontal assault. A style that is oblique and evasive seems far more effective. The absence of love and its correlative, truth, is a sign of the presence of the evil one.

Without love, truth is either diminished or absent. Without genuine love, it is easy to land in the realm of deception.

Remaining both in the word of Jesus, which is truth, and in the love of Jesus, which is the very love of God, enables the followers of Jesus to integrate or bring together truth and love. This living synthesis assures them a victory over the deceptive ploys of the devil, who wants to separate the truth from love so that, because of the detachment from love, "the truth" is no longer true.

... the evil one's energies are directed to division and disunity, as he tries at all costs to divide people from God, from each other, and from their very selves.

Fear can easily make us withdraw. The devil can suggest to us that we compare ourselves to others, usually with the subplot of overestimating the progress of others and underestimating ours, so that we look very bad in comparison.

The evil one's interest is to maintain our internal divisions and confusions, which disable us from giving back to God what God has given to us, namely, our very selves.

Nevertheless, one of the principal works of the evil one is division, setting people against each other. He can directly push or tempt us to split off from others, or he can exploit the divisions we have created on our own.

Recall that the devil's work aims to derail our journey to God. That is the sum and substance of his purpose.

Still another feeling can lead straight to separation. It is the powerful feeling of fear.

The Greek word for devil is diabolos, the one who is engaged in the activity of diaballein, literally "to throw through," in other words, to split or to divide.

Two of the devil's characteristics, noted in the Scriptures, are envy and contempt.

If in Satan there is this unholy combination of envy, cynicism, and contempt, surely he can act out of it and plant seeds of it in others, so that they, too, share in the disdain and scorn of the evil one.

Comparison-making constitutes a dangerous distraction on our journey to God because we focus less on ourselves and more on others.

Discouragement imperils the entire journey.

Acedia comes from the Greek word akedeo, which translates as "I do not care." It signifies a kind of indifference or wistful weariness or even a kind of sad resignation.

So, acedia causes a complete subversion of the journey. The stakes are very high. Acedia can rightly be called the most oppressive and the most dangerous temptation.

The temptation of acedia stirs a common sense of discouragement but takes on a distinctive threefold form: regression (go back), diversion (do something else), and paralysis (collapse in your own sadness).

The evil one fosters the move toward disengagement by using the discouragement arising from a sense of powerlessness and the feeling of being

overwhelmed. Disengagement marks a triumph of sin, because sin always entails a separation from others, self, and God.

The evil one is at work both in those who intimidate and persecute God's holy ones and in the souls of those who experience being intimidated and persecuted. The devil encourages persecutors and discourages those who are persecuted.

Every day, we acknowledge our struggle. It is not just a struggle with ourselves, but with the powers and principalities. It is a struggle with the evil one who wants us on a path of deception, division, diversion, and discouragement. It is the path away from God. Every time we raise this prayer, we do so with Jesus, who has known our struggle with the evil one, who has conquered all evil, and who enables us to share in his victory: