

# Slaying Dragons – Daniel Kolenda

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## Chapter 2 – Where the Dragon Gets His Power

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*The number shown in brackets is the page where the passage shown may be found.*

### Free Will

[p23] A world where people are free not to choose God and free to disobey Him is the best of all possible worlds. In such a world evil will exist, yes. But so will love, freedom, and true choice.

[p24] One thing is clear from Scripture—this issue of free will is important to God. He created us with the ability to choose in general and the ability to choose Him specifically. This is important because God created us for Himself, to have a love relationship with Him.

[p24] If there are no consequences to wrong choices, then there is no free will. And if there is no free will, there is no genuine love.

[p25] God allows us to remain in a fallen world where every condition has been stacked against Him. Yet He asks us to choose Him. That means a person who chooses God in this world has made a real and meaningful choice.

When we choose God, our choice is meaningful for three important reasons.

**1. He is not the most naturally visible choice.**

On the one hand, God has revealed Himself for those who are humble and seeking. But on the other hand, He has hidden Himself from the proud and hard-hearted.

**2. He is not the most comfortable choice.**

If choosing God were the easiest, most comfortable, and most enjoyable option all the time, everyone would choose it. Yet that choice would be a selfish choice—indistinguishable from the self-serving desires through which sin comes.

**3. He is not the most immediate choice.**

God knows that in our world the right choice will not always be the obvious choice.

[p27] Almost every meaningful choice in life must be made between what makes us feel good now and what will bring fulfillment and reward in the future.

[p27] If God is going to give us the ability to choose, then not only must the choice be meaningful, but the consequences and rewards must also be meaningful.

[p28] Because hell is a delayed consequence, many people will gladly risk it for an immediate reward—especially if they're not sure hell exists.

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## The Nature of Evil

- [p29] The Bible does not teach that God created everything with no exceptions.
- [p29] God did not create Himself. He is eternal and uncreated. If God is uncreated, so too are the various aspects of His essence.
- [p29] God extended His own living essence into humankind and continues to do so.
- [p29] In the same way that love and life are uncreated, so evil and death must be uncreated. They are simply conditions opposed to God's nature.
- [p29] They are the results of subtraction or deficiency. You do not create darkness. You simply turn out light and darkness is automatic.
- [p29] Evil is the consequence of free will that chooses against God and is therefore devoid of His righteousness.
- [p29] If you remove yourself from God's dominion, you will find that everything outside of it is contrary to His nature.
- [p30] Hell is a place of separation from God. Hell is the absence of all that God is. That means there is no love, no joy, no light, no life, no peace, and no righteousness.

## Temptation

- [p31] Satan's three-step technique:
1. Satan gets Eve to question God's words
  2. Satan gets Eve to question God's truthfulness
  3. Satan gets Eve to question God's motives
- [p34] Disobedience to God's Word is essentially the elevation of our own will and desires over God's will and desires. We make ourselves god. No wonder such terrible consequences inevitably follow.

## Defending Against Temptation

- [p35] Satan had the nerve to use God's Word against Jesus Himself! But Jesus could not be fooled because He knew God's Word, and He used it to combat Satan's temptations.
- [p35] God's Word is called the sword of the Spirit for good reason. It is a powerful weapon against the enemy.
- [p35] Without the Word we have been disarmed in our spiritual battle.
1. **First, we must know God's Word.**
  2. **Second, we must not only know God's Word but also believe it.**
  3. **Third, we must trust God's motives.**

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## The Naked Snake

[p38] The snake does not wield any amazing superpower. He offers no magic tricks or illuminating displays. He merely distorts God's word and calls into question His motives.

[p39] Sin separated man from God. The intimacy and fellowship they shared were gone. Death entered, and paradise was lost. God sent them all out of the garden, each with his or her own curse. Finally, God positioned cherubim and a flaming sword in the way of the tree of life to guard it.

[p39] God knew that if Adam and Eve were to sneak back into the garden and eat of the fruit from the tree of life, they would make their separation from God permanent. The fruit of the tree of life could give them physical immortality, but it could not redeem them from their fallen state. Living forever in a permanent state of separation from God is not eternal life.

[p40] Satan's only pathway to power is by deceiving us out of it.

## Questions

1. What modern-day pictures come to mind when you think of Satan, or the devil?
2. How is the serpent described in Genesis? In Revelation? How do these images compare to modern images/characterizations characterizations of Satan, Lucifer, the devil, and evil?
3. How is banishment from the Garden of Eden a demonstration of God's mercy?
4. What are Satan's tools for holding power over humans? What do you imagine are God's tools given to humans for defeating the power of Satan?
5. What is the satanic way of thinking? How do you see that played out in the world today? What about in your life?
6. Why is God's gift of free will a good thing if there are truly evil options? How are Christians still challenged by such choices?