

Reclaim the Foothold Removing Satan's "Single Nail"

The Danger of the "Single Nail" (Ephesians 4:26-27)

- Satan's foothold starts small, like a single nail in your house. Will he stay confined?
- If an enemy had free rein to "decorate" one area, what would your house become?
- **Scripture Warning:** "Neither yield your members" to sin (Romans 6:13).
- **Reflection:** What is the "single area" in your life where Satan has influence?

Consider the Stakes: God's Sovereignty and Human Responsibility

- **God's Control:** All things are under God's authority (Proverbs 16:1-7).
 - "All things work together for good" for those who love God (Romans 8:28).
 - God directs even the heart of a king like rivers of water (Proverbs 21:1).
 - Examples: God sets up rulers (Daniel 4:17), hardened Pharaoh's heart for His glory (Exodus 9:12; Romans 9:17-18).
- **Does God Cause Sin?** No, but He may choose not to restrain it (2 Thessalonians 2:7).
 - God's goodness leads to repentance, but He can allow man's "badness" to run its course (Romans 2:4; Ecclesiastes 8:11).
 - God cannot be tempted nor tempts man, but He may allow evil for His purposes (James 1:13-14).
- **God's Interaction with Man:**
 - Direct intervention (e.g., warnings to Abimelech, Pharaoh in Genesis).
 - Allowing courage to persist in sin (e.g., hardening Pharaoh's heart in Exodus).
 - Stirring enemies or allowing trouble (e.g., Solomon's adversaries, 1 Kings 11:14, 23).
 - Working through sin for good (e.g., Joseph's story, Genesis 50:20; Job's trials).

Take Stock: Remove the Nail

- **Identify the Foothold:** Don't let Satan have any ground (Ephesians 4:27; James 4:7).
- **Don't Blame God:** He uses sin but doesn't cause it (James 1:13). Rejecting God may allow the "nail" to spread.
- **Take Action:**
 - Remove the nail decisively (Matthew 5:29-30).
 - Practice church discipline to restore fellowship (Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:5-11).
 - Start small (one-on-one), escalate only when necessary, and act with love (Proverbs 27:5-7).

Take Heart: Stories of Redemption

- **Zacchaeus:** Tax collector and likely thief, restored through repentance (Luke 19:8).
- **Paul:** Murderer turned apostle (1 Timothy 1:13).
- **Unnamed Man:** Incestuous adulterer. Repented after discipline, rejected and eventually welcomed back (because Paul intervened) (2 Corinthians 2:4-11).
- **Mark:** Disheartened evangelist who abandoned the company, accidentally caused division in the ranks, and was eventually restored to service. (2 Timothy 4:11).
- **Encouragement:** Christ redeems those who remove the “nail” through Him. “Such were some of you.”

Key Takeaway

Satan’s foothold may start small, but it can spread if unchecked. Trust God’s sovereignty, take responsibility for your sin, and act decisively to remove the “nail” through repentance, fellowship, and, if necessary, church discipline (“open rebuke is better than secret love”). Let Christ redeem and restore.

Scripture to Reflect On

- “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7).
- “The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance” (Romans 2:4).
- “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil” (Matthew 6:13)