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## How Satan Gains Access to Work in our Lives

### Part 16: Fantasy or the Mind's Eye

Another way that Satan is able to access man is through the realm of fantasy, or the “mind’s eye.” While fantasy is a God-given, mental capacity enabling us to enhance our lives through unlimited creativity and invention, it was quickly contaminated by darkness at the Fall. When Adam and Eve disobeyed God and ate the forbidden fruit, their “eyes” were opened to a whole new source of insight and knowledge. While this source is not precisely identified, it gave them an awakened perception of evil that was similar to what other spiritual beings had. It also conveyed onto them a sense of shame about their naked bodies, which did not come from God (Gen. 3:5, 7-11, 22). It thus seems that this new source of insight and knowledge was the evil spiritual realm.

As man’s mind was opened to input from this realm, Satan was able to affect not only his thoughts but also his imagination and fantasies. Moses wrote of how quickly the imaginations of man’s heart became corrupted to devise wickedness (Gen. 6:5; 8:21). Paul described the role that these Satan-inspired speculations play in man’s downward road to destruction (Rom. 1:21ff; cf. Eph. 4:17), eventually becoming mental strongholds that will only yield to the spiritual weapons of warfare supplied by God to the believer (2 Cor. 10:4-5; Eph. 6:17-18).

While man’s imaginative capacity does not always involve visualization, God did give us the ability to picture things on an internal, mental screen of sorts. On this screen we can consciously choose to visualize memories that actually happened or to imagine scenes of our own design. Our unconscious minds also use this screen as they unfold our nocturnal dreams. If we choose to, we can even allow other people to direct us in what we project on this screen through guided imagery or hypnosis.

Most important to our concerns here is the fact that supernatural beings can project onto this screen as well. Sometimes God speaks through supernatural dreams or visions, which are seen with the mind’s eye (Num. 12:6; Dan. 2:28; Joel 2:28). Unfortunately, Satan’s access to the mind gives him the opportunity to affect what is displayed on this screen as well. While his ability to intrude on what truly comes from God is doubtful, He could certainly direct, manipulate, distort, or add to what comes from our own minds and potentially give a complete vision, dream, or false memory of his own. Unlike God’s use of this screen, however, Satan would seemingly prefer to deceive us about the source of what comes from him so we think it is coming from either God or ourselves rather than from him.

For this reason we need discernment in evaluating anything that we view through the mind’s eye, including memories, dreams, and visions. The memories most susceptible to contamination are those that are not consciously remembered but seemingly surface from a dissociated or subconscious place in the brain. In my book *Multiple Identities: Understanding and Supporting the Severely Abused*, I describe distinctive characteristics that authenticate true, dissociated memories and can be used to differentiate them from deceptive images coming from Satan or one’s own imagination.

False visions are mentioned much more specifically in Scripture, sometimes being linked with divination, indicating a possible occult source (Jer. 14:14; Ezek. 13:6-7, 9), and sometimes being clearly attributed to the person's imagination (Jer. 23:16; Ezek. 13:2, 17). While dreams are normally the result of the unconscious mind processing unresolved issues or irrelevant material from one's life, Satan can apparently infiltrate these or produce night visions of his own (Job 4:12ff) just as God chooses to do from time to time (Gen. 20:3-7; 28:12-15; 31:11-13, 24; 1 Kings 3:5-15; Matt. 1:20-21; 2:13, 19-20).

We are perhaps most vulnerable to deception when we deliberately seek a hidden memory, a visual manifestation from God, or maybe even a God-given dream. In these cases our own anticipation may subconsciously influence our imaginations to come up with what is expected, or our passivity in waiting for a response may allow Satan to intrude. Those facilitating inner healing do well to recognize these possibilities. While Satan's deceptions are generally counterproductive to healing, this is not true for imagination, which is a powerful agent often deliberately used in secular circles for the healing of trauma.