

ENEMIES OF THE SOUL

1 Peter 2:11 KJV 1900

11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

“Fleshly lusts” is a reference to our *carnal desires*; that is, those *sinful* lusts that remain from our old life (i.e. unforgiveness, pride, anger, sexual immorality, greed). And according to this verse, these fleshly desires WAR (or fight) against our soul!

If you asked the average Christian, “Who’s your greatest enemy?” Most people would probably say, “That’s easy—the devil!” However, the devil is not our greatest enemy. Our greatest enemy are the sinful desires of our flesh. We said this to you last week—if we deal with the devil without dealing with what gave access to the devil (i.e. our sinful desires), the devil will eventually return!

Matthew 12:43–45 KJV 1900

43 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. 44 Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. 45 Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

The word “garnish” in this verse means *to put in order*. Apparently, instead of REMOVING their sin, the person in this parable simply REARRANGED their sin! We’re guilty of the same thing. We try to manage and cope with our sinful lusts rather than try to get rid of them. The problem with this is, it’s impossible to live with the flesh. If you don’t get rid of it, it will eventually get rid of (destroy) you!

Romans 8:13 KJV 1900

13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

Now, someone might be wondering, “Does the presence of sinful desires mean that I’m not saved?” No, the presence of sinful lusts in your soul doesn’t mean you’re not SAVED. It simply means you’re not yet SANCTIFIED.

When we talk about being *saved* we’re talking about being forgiven of our sins. However, when we talk about being *sanctified* we’re talking about being cleansed of our sinful lusts. Moreover, failure to cleanse ourselves of our sinful lusts will eventually cause us to sin against God. (What’s causes us to continue to commit sin is NOT the devil, but rather it’s our sinful lusts.)

Exodus 23:32, 33 KJV 1900

³² Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. ³³ They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me: for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee.

Israel's enemies were the original inhabitants of the land of Canaan. Moreover, removing these inhabitants from the land is actually a picture of sanctification!

Unfortunately, instead of removing the inhabitants from the land, Israel would make “covenants” with them. These covenants allowed the Canaanites to remain in the land. The problem with this is, they eventually caused Israel to serve their gods! (The ‘gods’ of the Canaanite people represent demon spirits.)

1 Corinthians 10:20 KJV 1900

²⁰ But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.

(Never forget, no man can serve two masters or gods—**Matthew 6:24!**)

If Israel's conquests in the land of Canaan is truly a picture of sanctification, there must be some *principles* we can extract from this story that will help us to defeat our enemies. Fortunately, there is. The first principle we learn from this story that will help us to defeat our enemies (i.e. be sanctified) is this...

YOU CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT GOD

Sanctification, like salvation, cannot be achieved without God's help.

Exodus 23:27 KJV 1900

²⁷ I will send my fear before thee, and will destroy all the people to whom thou shalt come, and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee.

Notice, God promises to HELP Israel against their enemies. However, Israel would have to listen and obey His voice!

Exodus 23:20–21 KJV 1900

²⁰ Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. ²¹ Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him.

James 4:7 KJV 1900

⁷ Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

So, we can't expect to have success against our enemies if we don't submit to God. This means, we can't go up against our enemies when we get ready. We have to do it when God says so. (Israel refused to go up against their enemy when God told them. Afterwards, they changed their mind and decided to go up. However, God wasn't with them and they lost!)

Number two, if you want to defeat the enemies of your soul, then...

YOU CAN'T DO IT OVERNIGHT

Exodus 23:29–30 KJV 1900

29 I will not drive them out from before thee in one year; lest the land become desolate, and the beast of the field multiply against thee. 30 By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land.

Although God promises to give us success against our enemies, He will only do it ONE ENEMY AT A TIME! This means, you're not going to obtain deliverance by simply attending a deliverance service.

Number three, if you want to defeat the enemies of your soul, then...

YOU CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT WAR

Judges 3:1–2 KJV 1900

1 Now these are the nations which the Lord left, to prove Israel by them, even as many of Israel as had not known all the wars of Canaan; 2 Only that the generations of the children of Israel might know, to teach them war, at the least such as before knew nothing thereof;

Most people don't like war. But, war is the only place you can defeat the enemy! The Bible says here that God 'proved' Israel through war. The word 'prove' means *to put to the test in order to reveal what is hidden (i.e. imperfections)*. This means, God uses wars (trials) reveal what's hidden deep within a person's soul.

We talked to you last week from the topic, "DISCERNING THE VOICE OF GOD." In that sermon we shared with you that God speaks to His people in various ways. We said to you that sometimes God speaks to us through dreams or visions, and other times through sickness and even trouble. God uses these things to show us our imperfections (fleshly lusts). Once He shows us our sin, our job is to crucify or remove them.

1 Peter 4:12–13 KJV 1900

¹² Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: ¹³ But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

Apparently, imperfections aren't the only thing revealed in trials. God's perfection is also revealed in trials!