

Questions and Answers Regarding the Believer and Our Enemies

1. QUESTION: What or who are the enemies the believer must confront every day?

ANSWER: There are at least three enemies that oppose a believer's progress.

- a. The effects of the Fall upon us -- usually called our "sinful nature" or our "old self" (Gal 5:16,17; Eph 4:22).
- b. The world system about us -- readily seen in the values and pleasures of non-Christians (Eph 2:2,3; James 4:4; I John 2:15-17).
- c. The fallen angel Satan (also called the Devil) -- who hates believers because we belong to the Lord Jesus (Matt 4:1-11; Luke 4:34; John 14:30; I Peter 5:8).

2. QUESTION: In what way is the believer hindered by these three enemies?

ANSWER: The most noticeable way is seen in our lack of spiritual growth.

- a. The old nature is the avenue through which sin, the world, and the enemy are able to reach us because it causes us to be selfish and to long for many things related to personal gratification that are not God's will for us (Rom 6:11-18; Gal 5:17, 19-21; Eph 4:22; I Peter 1:14).
- b. The world hinders us because it is characterized by many subtle errors that appeal to our selfish desires. These errors are readily seen in the way of life presented on television, popular songs, and most advertising (Eph 2:2,3; I John 2:16).
- c. Satan hinders us by his wicked spirits who produce subtle insinuations and accusations that we usually believe to be simply our own thoughts and feelings. As a result we believe error, become discouraged, harbor grudges, yield to temptation, express anger, and often stop growing (Acts 5:1-11; Matt 16:21-23; Eph 4:26,27; I Thess 2:18; Rev 12:10). (Summary: our enemy wants to dry up our power sources.)

3. QUESTION: Can the enemy "possess" me as a believer?

ANSWER: No, because "possession" implies ownership (and the believer is owned by the Lord Jesus), or it implies "total control" (and the believer is under the final control of the Holy Spirit (John 6:37-40; II Cor. 6:18; Eph 1:13,14).

4. QUESTION: Can the enemy have any control over me whatsoever?

ANSWER: Yes, the enemy can develop a limited control in our life, primarily through the avenues of error and sin (Eph 4:27; II Cor 2:11). If one believes error, even ignorantly, the enemy may take advantage of that and produce some control (Matt 16:21-23). All of us have some areas where we are yet imperfect (I John 1:8,10). The areas in our life that we must watch carefully are those where we are out of control (I Peter 5:8), and those where we are hindered from doing what we know we should do and want to do (I Thess 2:18).

5. QUESTION: What is my protection and defense against these three enemies?

ANSWER: In regard to the "old nature" it is important to know that the Lord Jesus took our sin nature to the Cross with Him (Rom 6:6). We died in Him (Gal 2:20). The power of sin has been broken for us and the victory has been given to us (Rom 6:11-13). What we must do is to choose, every day (really every minute) to refuse to live under the control of sin and to appropriate by faith our Savior's Crucifixion (for cleansing from sin) and the power of His Resurrection (for the enablement to live above sin) (Eph 4:22-24).

In regard to the world system the solution is similar. The Lord Jesus dealt with the power of the world over us when He died and was Resurrected (Gal 6:14). When we were born again we were taken out of the world (which is closely related to the Kingdom of Darkness) (John 15:18,19; Col. 1:13,14). Our daily responsibility is to make hard choices not to live according to the pleasures, methods, values, priorities, and goals of the world (which are all self-centered) (I John 2:16-17). When we do so, for the glory of God and in dependence on Him -- we receive the discernment and strength to live separate from the world.

In regard to Satan it must be kept in mind that the Lord Jesus came into the world to defeat Him and all his wicked spirits. This He did in His Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Ascension (Col 2:15; Heb 2:14,15; I John 3:8). Because that victory has been given to all believers (Eph 1:19-21; 2:5,6) we can resist Satan and wicked spirits (I Peter 5:8,9). The best way to do this is to spend time in quality worship, in making sure we study, internalize and practice the Word of God by faith, and in believing prayer. We have been given an armor to protect us (Eph 6:10-18) as well as the weapons of the name of the Lord Jesus (Luke 10:17-20), the Word of God (Eph 6:17), and prayer that is led by the Holy Spirit (Eph 6:18). Our best protection is to be preoccupied with loving, worshipping and obeying the Lord Jesus.

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