

## Enemies of the Cross

- **If you are a Christian, a follower of Christ, you will inevitably have 3 enemies in your life.**
  - These enemies will harass us, create conflict & generate trouble & heartache in each of our lives.
  - We will not be able to escape any of them completely as long as we are here on this earth, but we do have victory over each of them already through Jesus Christ.
  - He is our source of strength, wisdom, protection & our ability to endure over these enemies.

### 1. The World

- Don't make this too trivial when we talk about the world being our enemy. All this means is anything of a physical nature that hinders our relationship with Christ.
  - I John 2:15-16 – “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.”
- John was writing to those in the church who had remained true to their faith.
  - They had withstood false teaching and had remained unified together with other believers.
  - But John warned against a secret spiritual danger that could still threaten them—*loving this evil world*. The term "world" here refers to the realm of Satan's influence in this world. He is speaking of the world system organized by Satan himself which leaves God out & is in opposition to Him.
  - Believers should love the people of the world enough to share God's message with them, but they should not love the morally corrupt system in place in the world.
    - This is a world that is filled with greed, with selfish ambition, with fleshly pleasures, with deceit, and lying & danger. Like it or not, that is the world we are living in & John commands us not to love this kind of world.
      - Our world today is rebelling against the very things of God, our government has become anti-God, our business has become morally corrupt, our school system has abandoned the very principles of God's Word & as a child of God, we are to have no part in this type of lifestyle.
    - There is a lot of opposition against the things of God going on today, and though we may be in this world, we are commanded not to love the things of this world.
- What does the scriptures mean by loving the world?
  - The lust of the flesh – This is the sin that pertains directly to our senses, the things we feel, see, hear, smell & touch.
    - The lust that John talks about here is an “unchained” lust where there is no boundaries. It seeks to gain gratification at any costs.
    - By the way, Jesus was tempted in these same 3 areas that John mentions after He had fasted & prayed for 40 days & Satan approached him on the mountain in Matthew 4.
      - Matthew 4:3 – “And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.”

- In today's world we are surrounded by all kinds of allurements that appeal to our sinful nature—and "the flesh is weak" ([Matt. 26:41](#)). If a Christian yields to it, he will get involved in the "works of the flesh".
- The lust of the eyes – Back in the days of the Apostle John, the Greeks and Romans lived for entertainments and activities that excited the eyes. Times have not changed very much! We live for some of the same things today, but it has consequences.
  - Look back at Matthew 4:8 – “Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.”
  - To illustrate this sin, Jesus spoke of how adultery begins not with the act, but with the desire—with looking at another person with lust in one's heart. But this doesn't just involve sex, but any area of our life that distracts us from God.
  - Achan (Joshua 7:1-11), a soldier, brought defeat to Joshua's army because of the lust of his eyes. God had warned Israel not to take any spoils from the condemned city of Jericho, but Achan did not obey. He explained: "When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and 200 shekels of silver, then I coveted them, and took them" ([Josh. 7:21](#)). The lust of the eyes led him into sin, and his sin led the army into defeat.
- The pride of life – This includes
  1. A person who is focused only on himself & desires the attention of others.
  2. A person who feel he is self-sufficient in himself & has no need of God.
  - Look one more time at Matthew 4:5 – “Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.”
  - Once again Satan here tempts our Lord with His own promises, even questioning His authority over Heaven & earth.
- The world appeals to a Christian through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. And once the world takes over in one of these areas, a Christian will soon realize it.
  - He will lose his enjoyment of the Father's love and his desire to do the Father's will.
  - The Bible will become boring and prayer a difficult chore.
  - Even Christian fellowship may seem empty and disappointing. It is not that there is something wrong with others, however—what's wrong is our worldly heart.
- Christians don't become worldly all of a sudden. Worldliness creeps up on a believer; it is a gradual process.
  1. First is the *friendship of the world*.
    - a. James 4:4 – “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”
    - b. By nature, the world and the Christian are enemies ("Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you," [1 John 3:13](#)).
    - c. A Christian who is a friend of the world is an enemy of God.

2. Next, the Christian becomes "*spotted by the world*".
  - a. James 1:27 – “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”
  - b. Friend, if you get too close to the world, it will leave its dirty marks on one or two areas of your life. And after a few spots, the believer begins to accept and adopt the ways of the world.
3. When this begins to happen, the world ceases to hate the Christian and starts to love him! So John warns us, "Love not the world!"
  - a. For if we begin to love the world, the believer becomes *conformed to the world* ([Rom. 12:2](#)) and you can hardly tell the two apart.
- John wanted to show his readers that to attempt to love both God and the world would be as impossible as trying to combine light and darkness.
  - I John 1:5-6 – “This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:”
  - God and the sinful world are such opposites that it is impossible to love both at once
- The world is an evil & wicked place & it is getting worse every day.
  - More accessibility to sin.
  - Increased opportunities to sin.
  - The boldness of sin & sinful lifestyles.
  - The publicity & endorsement of sin.