
Words of Truth

Don't Give The Carnal Man The Advantage

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There is a spiritual battle going on in each of our heads. In the first century, Christians were literally given the Holy Spirit through the laying on of the hands of the Apostles (Acts 8:12-24 and Acts 19:1-7). Therefore, the battle then was literally the carnal mind against the work of the Holy Spirit. Now, it is more about our carnal thinking against the spiritual things we are taught through the word of God (John 6:63). With that all in mind, consider how the word of God describes the battle within over spiritual and carnal things: *“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would”* (Galatians 5:16-17).

Spiritual thinking (whether through the Holy Spirit then or the written word now) is the opposite of carnal thinking. Carnal thinking prevents true spiritual thinking (I Corinthians 1:18-3:3). If you took the time to read the afore referenced Scriptures, you see how the erring Christians in Corinth were provided proper teaching. However, their carnal minds prevented proper understanding and implementation of that teaching in their lives. You cannot carnally reason through spiritual things.

We are at war and often within ourselves. If we choose the things of the world we cannot be followers of Christ (Matthew 16:21-23). However, we live in this world. Unless you are deceived, you know that this world can influence you (I Corinthians 15:33). We cannot escape living amongst this evil generation. God does not want us to escape this world (John 17:1-17 and I Corinthians 5:9-10). Yet, while living in this world our Lord does expect us not to conform to the ways of the world (Romans 12:1-2 and James 4:4). So, how do we do that? How do we live in a very carnal world and yet assure the spiritual man wins the eternal battle? There are a lot of answers to those questions. Our study is going to focus on not giving our carnal desires an advantage.

Not Giving The Carnal Man The Advantage By Abstaining From Danger

Consider these Scriptures and we will then discuss some applications: *“Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof... But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy*

nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation” (Romans 13:13-14 and I Peter 2:9-12).

Jesus taught Peter, James, and John not to enter into temptation (Matthew 26:41 and Mark 14:38). For temptation to exist, there has to be something sinful that you are drawn to (James 1:13-16). That varies for each child of God. We have to examine ourselves to know our strengths and weaknesses (II Corinthians 13:5). We have to be honest enough with ourselves to know what we have to avoid and why. To help us, let's discuss a couple of things people may be tempted by.

Some may be tempted by sexual desires. We live in a world that certainly advertises fornication nearly everywhere. The Lord taught to remove the opportunity to have those desires (Matthew 5:27-30). He gave lawful ways to deal with those sexual desires (Matthew 19:12, I Corinthians 6:15-7:5, and Hebrews 13:4). So, a person who is tempted with thoughts of fornication needs to stop looking at things that encourage those desires. Maybe the television needs to go. Maybe filters on the internet need to occur or access altogether cut off. Is it better to watch your favorite shows and enjoy browsing those stupid social media sites than to have Heaven as your eternal home?

Some may be tempted by covetousness. The Lord says to combat that with contentment (Hebrews 13:5-6). To be content, I may have to stop “window shopping” in places that cause me to covet. That may mean I need to stop comparing my things with my neighbor's things (Exodus 20:17). Maybe Amazon isn't a good website for me to have. Maybe car ads need avoided. Maybe the shopping mall is too dangerous. The key is, you cannot remove temptation unless you find its source and cut it off either temporarily or permanently.

All temptations can be avoided by simply changing our focus. If your affections are on things above, the things below will not be so appealing (Colossians 3:1-17). The fact is, the more spiritually minded you become the more you will hate sinful things (Psalms 119:97-104). Cleaving to what is good is powered in part by abhorring what is evil (Romans 12:9).

Conclusion

In this internal war don't allow the carnal man to gain the advantage. Whatever can “get to you”, cut it off. You cannot properly love the things of the world and our Lord at the same time (Matthew 6:24-34 and I John 2:15-17). Have your thinking straight (Romans 8:5-8).