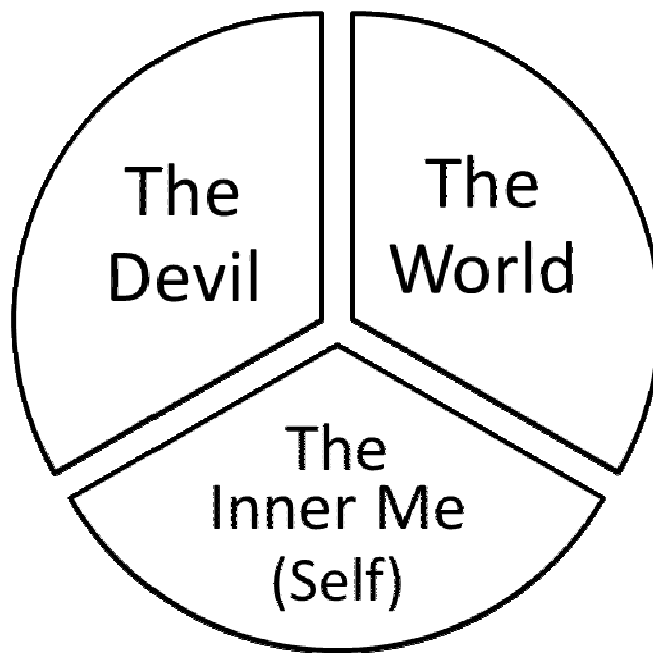


The Pastor's Corner Vol. 34

October, 2011

The Three Enemies Every Christian Faces



*.... I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith
that was once for all entrusted to the saints. Jude 1:3 NIV*

The Three Enemies Every Christian Faces

Job 1:6-7 (NKJV) “⁶Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. ⁷**And the Lord said to Satan, ‘From where do you come?’ So Satan answered the Lord and said, ‘From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it.’**”

Ephesians 6:12 (NKJV) “**For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.**”

James 1:13-15 (NKJV) “¹³Let one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. ¹⁴**But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.** ¹⁵Then, when desire is conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-given, brings forth death.”

Romans 12:2 (NIV) “**Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.**”

Once upon a time, there was a young man addicted to drugs so severely that he could not function on a day-to-day basis without drugs. This man's life was a living hell because of his drug addiction that caused him to be alienated by his family, lose his job and all his worldly possessions. One day, this young man was walking past a church and heard a lot of noise coming from inside the church. Out of curiosity, he decided to go in, after all, he believed there was a God so what harm could there be in going in. As he walked in, an usher directed him to an available seat.

Although he missed most of the pastor's sermon, he paid close attention to the tail end of the sermon entitled, “God Allows U-Turns.” The sermon was based on the life of the lost or prodigal son in Luke Chapter 15 who went to a foreign land and squandered his wealth. The pastor, at the tail end of his sermon, put emphasis on how the father of this lost/prodigal son didn't ask his son any questions about how he squandered his wealth nor did he give his son the ole “I told you so” speech. Instead, the father, who represents God, ran to receive his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him to welcome him home. Immediately after the sermon, the pastor gave a gospel invitation for anyone that was headed in the wrong direction and wanted to make a u-turn. The pastor reminded his audience that God, with out-stretched arms, was willing to accept anyone, no matter what they had done. Without hesitation, this young man went weeping to the altar where he publically accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of his life. From that day forward, much to this young man's surprise, he lost all

desire for drugs, alcohol, cigarettes and fornication. Finally, after many years of rejection, this young man was accepted by his family, able to hold a job and keep money in his pocket and not spend it on drugs. However, unbeknownst to this young man, the real war just started. As a Christian man and devout church member, he now faced the three enemies that every Christian faces as he/she walks with the Lord.

Unfortunately, we all, myself included, lose sight of the fact that these three (3) enemies exist and that they can and will do us harm if we are not prayerful and continuously in the word.

The three enemies that every Christian faces are the following:

1. The Devil – Sadly, in the minds of some Christians the devil is not real, they actually believe that this enemy the devil is not out to destroy their family, marriage, faith and walk with the Lord. However, Paul told Timothy and us to ***“Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devils schemes”*** (Ephesians 6:11, NIV). This enemy, the devil, does not play fair, he will stop at nothing to hurt or destroy every Christian he can. He never rests or takes a vacation, he’s always on his job to tear down the Christians individually and the Church collectively; make no mistake!!

Time after time I hear saints complaining about how their spouse, loved ones, friends or co-workers are attacking them verbally or otherwise. However, they miss Paul’s words to Timothy and us in Ephesians 6:12 (NIV), where he said, ***“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”*** Simply put, all attacks against us are not necessarily from the people doing the actual attack, unbeknownst to those attacking us; they are sometimes being used by the devil to bring us harm, discourage us or cause us to sin.

2. The World – At the time of this writing, “Thanksgiving” is a couple of days away. Almost every Christian I talked with refers to “Thanksgiving Day” as “Turkey Day,” just like the world. However, the true purpose of “Thanksgiving Day” is to set aside a day to give thanks to God for his many blessings. How many people did you tell that “Thanksgiving Day” was meant to be a day of thanks to God? Not only that, think about Christmas and Easter, how many times do you remind folks that Jesus is the reason for both? Sadly, in this area, the Church/Christians have, for the most part, conformed to the thinking and ways of one of their enemies, the world, when it comes to honoring God on the days set apart to honor him. In addition, Christians have conformed to the world by watching tv programs every day that glorify things like fornication (sex before marriage), adultery (sex outside of marriage), and same sex marriage (homosexuality) with no regard

for the fact that these shows violate the clear teaching of scripture. As a result, most Christians surveyed today have no problem with sex before marriage, adultery or same sex marriages. Why? Because they have fallen victim and conformed to the thinking of their enemy, the world. The solution for this problem is clearly spelled out in Romans 12:2 (NIV), ***“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*** The Christian mind must be constantly renewed by the word God. In addition, James reminds us that friendship with the world is enmity with God (James 4:4).

3. The “Inner” Me (Self) – I once heard a joke that had God walking through the earth observing all of the devil’s handiwork. He observed lots of fighting and killing going on throughout the earth all because of the devil. So God stops by a church to see how things were going there. Much to God’s surprise, the devil was there. God, expecting the devil to be happy and rejoicing because of all the evil he caused on earth, saw the devil in the back of the church crying. So God said to the devil, “What’s wrong with you, why are you crying? Things seem to be going so well for you since there is so much evil taking place on the earth.” The devil responded, “Yeah, I’m responsible for the fighting and killing as charged and yes, things are going well with the evil I desire, but I’m just tired of these Christians blaming everything on me when I did nothing to create their situation.”

Although this is a joke, there is some truth to it. Time after time I see Christians listen to their worst and most unrecognized enemy called the “inner” me or “self” instead of heeding God’s word or godly counsel. In my opinion, this enemy (the “inner” me or “self”) has done more harm to Christians than any other enemy. This enemy (the “inner” me or “self”) has caused Christians to leave the church God placed them in to grow and join another church only to make shipwreck of their faith. They then blame the devil for their own bad choice. This enemy causes Christians to refuse correction, constructive criticism, warnings and much needed help and/or direction from God-ordained leaders, only to later blame the devil when things go wrong in their lives. This enemy causes Christians to ignore clear biblical teachings and principles in favor of “doing it their way” or what seems to be at the time the path of least resistance. What makes this enemy so effective is the fact that very few Christians suspect this enemy to be the very source of their trouble. They search and search trying to find the source of their troubles but overlook the “inner” me or “self” that is the very source of their troubles.

To deal with these three enemies, Christians must do the following:

The Devil – Remember, the Bible says, “*Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light*” (2 Corinthians 11:14). Therefore we must always be on guard for his schemes. We must never lose sight of the fact that the devil can and does use people to attack, discourage and if possible destroy us. Prayer for the ability to discern between the devil’s schemes and the move of God is an absolute must in our lives!!!

The World – Since the world’s influence on the Christian is usually so subtle, we need to re-evaluate the tv program we watch, the company we keep and our acceptance of various practices in our homes and outside our homes in light of biblical teachings. I believe the average Christian would be shocked to see how many movies, tv shows they watch and music they listen to that are in some way contrary to the word and will of God. The fact that most Christians can digest these movies, tv shows and music without getting sick (so to speak) is a clear sign that they have been completely conformed to the things of this world.

The “Inner” Me – There is a simple solution to this one, apply the following to our lives and the “inner” me or “self” enemy dies:”

- Always examine yourself/actions in light of clear biblical teaching and principles.
- Get a “Nathan” in your life, a person that is walking upright before God, knows God’s word and attends a healthy well-balanced church regularly. Unfortunately, many Christians have surrounded themselves by people that are “good to them” but not “good for them.” People that are good to you tell you what you want to hear in order to keep the friendship going. People that are good for you tell you what you need to hear, even if it means destroying the friendship. Sadly, I’ve seen many people destroy their own marriage, family and other relationships because they surround themselves with people that tell them what they want to hear instead of the truth that they’re the problem, not the person(s) their blaming.

So remember these enemies and do your part to keep them from doing you harm or shipwrecking your faith!!!

God Bless,
Pastor D. M. Duncan

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