

I AM MY OWN WORST ENEMY

Aaron Beard
Trussville
Dec 10, 2006

INTRODUCTION:

- A. This evening I want you to consider a question: When it comes to your walk of faith and striving to please God, who or what is your worst enemy?
1. **Illustration:** Football team getting ready for the big game... they study the films of the other team and learn their offense and defense and their strengths and weaknesses
 2. The same is true in the spiritual realm as we consider counting the cost (**Luke 14:31-33**)
- B. We need to find out who the enemies are to our faith, learn how they work, and prepare ourselves to stand against them so that our faith does not suffer shipwreck!

I. IDENTIFYING THE CHRISTIAN'S WORST ENEMY:

A. Certainly the first enemy that comes to our minds is Satan!

1. Sometimes we minimize in our minds the power and desire of Satan (**I Pet 5:8**)
 - a. Peter calls Satan our "adversary" – This word was used to describe the person bringing a case against you in a lawsuit... Means opponent or enemy
 - b. Paul often pictures the struggle between Christians & the devil as war, as a battle!
 - c. Too often we go out unprepared to face the devil because we fail to see ourselves engaged in a war! We fail to visualize a roaring lion prowling behind us seeking an opportune time to devour us! We'd be more sober & pray harder!
 - d. The devil is not some red pitchfork carrying cartoon character as we imagine! He is real and powerful! His forces can be at work anywhere we are... even here!
2. He's our enemy because he seeks to destroy the faith of any who is trying to please God!
 - a. Many have asked, "Why does Satan want to get people to sin?" – He knows what punishment he faces and misery loves company! (**Rev 12:12; Mat 25:41**)
 - b. He knows what your struggles & weaknesses are! He knows how to turn trials into temptations! He has devices & schemes that work! (**Eph 6:11; 2 Cor 2:11**)
 - c. **Illustration:** You get word someone is going to rob your house tonight! What do you do? Prepare yourself, inform the authorities, stand guard!

B. Another enemy that we might think about is those who despise the cause of Christ

1. The scriptures are very clear that there are individuals who are our enemies (**Luke 6:35**)
 - a. We should not have enemies because we wronged others or hurt them in some way... These are enemies because we were trying to do right & preach the truth!
 - b. Paul knew that by preaching the truth it would make some enemies! (**Gal 4:16**)
2. There are individuals in this world who, like the devil, would like to see God's people sin and even abandon their faith! We must be on guard & stand!
 - a. Maybe this comes in the form of those who would try to attack the foundations of what we believe through books, movies, and other forms of publicized agenda
 - b. I think about books and movies like "The Divinci Code" and about the things taught in our public schools & colleges that are at best myths & some are blatant lies!
 - c. This may be some who know where we stand yet try their best through words and actions to get us to sin! If we give in they feel justified in the way they're living!
 - d. This could even be those who persecute us for the stands which we take!

C. The world can also be considered an enemy of the Christian's faith:

1. By the world I am not referring to any particular person or group of people... But the pursuits, values, desires, and attitudes that make up this world: (**I John 2:15-17**)
 - a. John is not concerned with how much we love this earth, as in the natural realm, nor is he telling us not to love those who live on this earth, even the sinful!
 - b.
 - c.
2. The world is our enemy because it's powerful negative influence in our lives (**Rom 12:1-2**)
 - a. Since we are not called to leave the world but to live in and shine as lights, we

- cannot help but to be subjected to its influences, pressures, and temptations!
- b.
- c.

D. However, I don't believe that any of these are our worst enemy... I believe that our worst enemy is ourselves! When it comes to my faith, I can be my own worst enemy!

1. All of these people and forces that we have mentioned have no power in and of themselves to draw us away from the Lord! (**Romans 8:33-39**)
 - a. Some read this & say, "The one thing Paul does not mention is ourselves!" – That misses the point! God loved us even when we were His enemies due to sin!
 - b. Paul is encouraging these Christians not to get discouraged or despair in facing these trials. None of these forces could separate them from the love of Christ!
 - c. Their power to destroy our faith is limit to the control we give them in our lives!
2. While we do not "earn" our salvation, in the grand scheme of things we are responsible for whether we are saved or lost! (**Phil 2:12-13**)
 - a. Even in the passages that we have referred to thus far in studying our enemies, where does God place the responsibility? On our own shoulders!
 - b. This doesn't mean that we conquer sin based on our own power or greatness... The victory belongs to God through His aid, His word, and His love!
 - c. There are two things at work here – God has done His part and continues to work in us; however it is our responsibility to let Him work by following His will!
3. It is often true that the struggles we face, the lack of growth we may experience, and the distance we feel from God is the result of our own doing! (**Isaiah 59:1-2; ???**)
 - a.
 - b.

II. WAYS IN WHICH WE CAN BE OUR OWN WORST ENEMY:

A. We can be our worst enemy when it comes to how we handle sin and temptation:

1. James 1
2. God does not seek to trap us in sin but works to provide us victory! (**I Cor 10:13; Mt 6:13**)
3. Romans 12

Prov 29:6

B. We can be our worst enemy when we elevate the physical over the spiritual

1. The parable of the sower...
2. Moses serves as a great example (Hebrews 11)
3. Problem of focus (2 Cor 4:16-18)
4. Practical ways in which this is manifest...

C. We can be our worst enemy when we remove ourselves from those we love

1. Too often Christians are the enemies of their own faith because they distance themselves from their brethren who are there to help them! (**Hebrews 10:23-25**)
 - a. **Illustration:** Preacher visited man who quit attending – Walks over to fire & pulls out a hot coal. It quickly turns from red hot to black and gets cold. The preacher walks out saying nothing to the man. Next service the man returns!
 - b. Our coming and being together is with a purpose – To consider one another to stir up love & good works! We encourage, admonish, teach, & help one another!
 - c. By distancing yourself from your brethren by not being around you rob yourself of this great tool for spiritual growth & are being inconsiderate of others! It's sin!
2. Some distance themselves from others while still attending: (**Heb 3:12-14**)
 - a. These will likely be at every service because that's what they are supposed to do... But they don't stick around, say very little, they're cold & hard to get to know!
 - b. You won't see these Christians at any social gatherings or extra studies or singings
 - c. If you don't allow others to get to know you, they can't know when something is

- wrong! They won't know when & how to encourage or correct you if needed!
- d. Is this your goal? Then you've become your own worst enemy! Remember the devil as a lion? His prey is often those straggling behind the pack! But chances are he already has you where he wants you... In lukewarm service!
3. We must really be careful about distancing ourselves when others seek to correct us!
- a. Being told, "You are wrong!" or "Thou art the man!" is never a fun experience, but remember, it is often just as painful for the one doing the correcting! It hurts!
 - b. Yet there are some who, when admonished to change their life, attitude, or teaching, will get upset and they will pull way back or just disappear!
 - c. This isn't the time to run away, but the time to seek help! Really, this is what we are doing for one another any time we're together on any basis! **(Col 3:12-17)**

D. We can be our worst enemy when we fail to spend private time with God & His word

1. When it comes to our relationship with God, the core of our spiritual life, there seems to be three disciplines that must be developed to draw us close to Him **(1 Cor 9:24-27)**
 - a. These three things are found all over the Bible and characterize the lives of men who were men of faith & were close to God: Study, Prayer, and Meditation
 - b. I refer to these as "disciplines" for a reason – In order to do them correctly they take time & effort... They are focused on & mastered in our private moments!
 - c. But we live the overly busy and noisy 21st Century! There's always things to do and always noise in the background! If we want it we will seek it and find it!
2. Time reading and studying God's word
3. Time meditating upon God, His word, and spiritual things
4. Time spent in personal and private prayer with God
5. When we fail to focus on these areas, we fail to grow... Our faith will suffer shipwreck and when we look at who was behind the wheel we see ourselves!! **(1 Peter 5:8-11)**