

The World, the Flesh, and the Devil

The winds of temptation are blowing over your life. Unless you build walls to resist, you will have devastating spiritual impact. Be prepared to withstand these winds of challenge and build a successful life for God.

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions-- it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Ephesians 2:1-10 NIV)

KNOW YOUR THREE ENEMIES:

The **world**, the **flesh**, and the **devil** – from a message by Billy Graham

However, the Bible teaches that every Christian has three enemies. The first enemy that we have to contend with is the **world**. Now “the world” means this present evil world, the great system of evil round about us. It is everything around us that has a tendency to lead us into sin. It may mean the evil people of the world, or it may mean the things of the world.

Certain elements of daily life are not sinful in themselves, but they can lead to sin if they are abused. Abuse literally means “extreme use,” and in many instances, overuse of lawful things becomes sin. Thinking about the necessities of life and taking care of one’s family is essential. But this can degenerate into anxiety, and then, as Christ reminded us, the cares of this life choke the spiritual seed in the heart (Mark 4:19). Making money is necessary for daily living. But money-making is apt to degenerate into money-loving, and then the deceitfulness of riches enters and spoils our spiritual life. The Bible admonishes, “Do not love the world or the things in the world” (1 John 2:15).

The second enemy of the Christian is the **flesh**. Paul said, "I know that in me [that is, in my flesh] nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find" (Romans 7:18). The Bible teaches that the flesh is fallen human nature. It is the corrupt principle of sin, the carnal nature that natural men and women have inherited from their fallen parents. It is the birthplace of all those ugly sins that so easily mar the Christian's joy and hinder his or her testimony. The sins of temper, irritability, moodiness, jealousy, pride, selfishness, an unforgiving spirit, anxiety and fretfulness, harshness, complaining, criticism, lust—all of these things characterize the flesh.

The third enemy of the Christian is the **devil**, referred to by Paul as "the prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2). The Bible teaches that the devil is a real person. His objective is to defeat the will of God in the world, the church and the Christian. He is the unceasing enemy of the soul. He must be met and overcome. Thank God, through the victory of Jesus Christ on the cross, this mighty enemy has been fully and finally vanquished. One day the whole world will see the full consummation of Christ's triumph. Meanwhile, Satan is busy in the world, sometimes appearing as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14), and other times as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8).

The World, the Flesh, and the Devil by Henry Morris, Ph.D.

"This wisdom descends not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish." (James 3:15)

True wisdom is "from above" and is "pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (v. 17). False wisdom, on the other hand, may come from the world outside us ("earthly"), the flesh within us ("sensual"), or the powers of darkness tempting us ("devilish"). All such wisdom leads to "envying and strife . . . confusion and every evil work" (v. 16). Believers, therefore, should be able to recognize the influences of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

The good news is that each divine Person of the Triune Godhead is on our side. The Father is opposed to the world, the Spirit to the flesh, and the Son to the devil, and they are well able to give victory.

"If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. . . . And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof" (1 John 2:15, 17). Thus, to overcome the love of the world, we must cultivate the love of the Father in our hearts and lives.

Similarly, to overcome the desires of the flesh, we should follow the leadings and convictions of the Holy Spirit, "for the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other" (Galatians 5:17). Therefore, "walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (v. 16).

The devil and his evil hosts use their own dark powers to tempt and destroy the people of God, but "for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8). Christ assured Satan's defeat when He paid for our redemption on the cross. "And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it." (Colossians 2:15).

There is hope for you. You can overcome temptations. You can withstand spiritual challenges. Build walls to resist the winds of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. Press into God and His resources for you. Use your weapons of warfare. Trust God for victory in your life. Do not be conformed to this world, walk in the Spirit, resist the devil.

No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it. (1 Corinthians 10:13 NIV)

Money, Sex, and Power

The three special temptations of a ministry leader

When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you and have taken possession of it and settled in it, and you say, "Let us set a king over us like all the nations around us," be sure to appoint over you a king the LORD your God chooses. He must be from among your fellow Israelites. Do not place a foreigner over you, one who is not an Israelite. The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the LORD has told you, "You are not to go back that way again." He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold. (Deuteronomy 17:14-17 NIV)

Money, Sex, and Power

A Case Study

The weight of the gold that Solomon received yearly was 666 talents, not including the revenues from merchants and traders and from all the Arabian kings and the governors of the territories. King Solomon made two hundred large shields of hammered gold; six hundred shekels of gold went into each shield. He also made three hundred small shields of hammered gold, with three minas of gold in each shield. The king put them in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon. Then the king made a great throne covered with ivory and overlaid with fine gold. The throne had six steps, and its back had a rounded top. On both sides of the seat were armrests, with a lion standing beside each of them. Twelve lions stood on the six steps, one at either end of each step. Nothing like it had ever been made for any other kingdom. All King Solomon's goblets were gold, and all the household articles in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon were pure gold. Nothing was made of silver, because silver was considered of little value in Solomon's days. The king had a fleet of trading ships at sea along with the ships of Hiram. Once every three years it returned, carrying gold, silver and ivory, and apes and

baboons. King Solomon was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth.

The whole world sought audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart. Year after year, everyone who came brought a gift -- articles of silver and gold, robes, weapons and spices, and horses and mules. Solomon accumulated chariots and horses; he had fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand horses, which he kept in the chariot cities and also with him in Jerusalem. The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar as plentiful as sycamore-fig trees in the foothills. Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt and from Kue-- the royal merchants purchased them from Kue at the current price. They imported a chariot from Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse for a hundred and fifty. They also exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and of the Arameans.

King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter-- Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. They were from nations about which the LORD had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods." Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been. He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molek the detestable god of the Ammonites. So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD; he did not follow the LORD completely, as David his father had done. On a hill east of Jerusalem, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable god of Moab, and for Molek the detestable god of the Ammonites. He did the same for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and offered sacrifices to their gods. (1 Kings 10:14-11:8 NIV)

Note how Solomon violated all three of the warnings to leaders in Deuteronomy 17. As a result, his leadership failed and the kingdom was fractured.

Money, Sex, and Power

God's provision for the special temptations of a ministry leader

When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the Levitical priests. It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees and not consider himself better than his fellow Israelites and turn from the law to the right or to the left. Then he and his descendants will reign a long time over his kingdom in Israel. (Deuteronomy 17:14-20 NIV)

Read your Bible consistently. Take in, personally, the Truth and Wisdom of the Bible. Obey what the Bible is teaching you and follow it every day.

Read, feed, and heed