

## "Enemies Of The Cross"

### Philippians 3:17-20

None reading this would want to be an "enemy of the cross of Christ."

Yet, as in the day of the apostle Paul, there are some in the church of the Lord today who are actually enemies of the cross of Christ.

One does not have to be a murderer, a thief, an adulterer, a liar, or otherwise immoral to be an enemy of the cross of Christ.

What characterizes some of these enemies of the cross?

### "Love Not The World" - 1John 2:15-17

The "world" of which this apostle writes is the world of sin -- note: "*the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions*"

There is both good & bad in the world, John is discussing the bad.

The apostle Paul wrote of Demas, a formerly faithful companion and co-worker for the Lord,  
**2Timothy 4:10; Galatians 5:19-21**

Those practices belong to the "world" & must be avoided in our lives."

"*Love not the world*" means we turn from those things that are wrong.

### Minds Set On Earthly Things

One does not have to commit murder, steal, or lie to "mind earthly things."

When preachers talk about "worldliness," and minding earthly things, the lesson is often lost because people think that one must be guilty of terrible immorality before such lessons apply to them.

Jesus spoke of "*a certain rich man*" (**Luke 16**) who "*fared sumptuously*" while ignoring the sad plight of those around him.

Another rich man "*pulled down his barns to build greater barns*" (**Luke 12**).

As far as we know, neither of these rich men were immoral.

But the Lord was clear about the fact these men were "minding earthly things" instead of seeking the things of God.

God is the Creator "*the heaven and the earth, and all that in them is*" **Exodus 20:11**

So, the earth and what is in it is not evil in itself.

So, the good things of this earth -- mountains, rivers, oceans, blue sky, etc. -- are part of God's creation.

And the things He has given us for our use in this life --such as food, clothing, shelter, etc. -- can lead us away from the Lord.

Sometimes a man can allow a perfectly honorable business to take up all his time, so that he has no time for God and the church.

To do so is to "mind earthly things." - forsaking the Lord and His Will.

### How Do We "Mind Earthly Things"?

First, to admire, to look longingly on, the earthly things is to take the first step away from God.

Eve, mother of the race, looked upon the forbidden fruit (**Genesis 3**).

When she saw that it was good for food, she partook of it.

Her first step was to look upon it, to admire it. Then she wanted it.

Achan, started in the wrong direction when he looked upon the devoted goods (Joshua 7).

He looked, then he coveted, then he took. Had he kept his mind where it belonged, he would never have "minded earthly things."

The next step is to think much about, devote a lot of time thinking of, earthly things. **Psalm 1:1-2**

What we use to fill our hearts will determine the kind of persons we are: *For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.* **Proverbs 23:7**

To constantly meditate upon immorality, will easily become immoral.

**Psalm 19:14**

The next step is to desire earthly things, which are wrong in themselves.

**Colossians 3:1-3**

Achan looked, lusted, entertained desire in his heart until it mastered him. **Galatians 5:24**

The only way to master wrong desires is to crucify them.

If you entertain them, they become your master and lead you into sin.

### **Why Not Mind Earthly Things?**

**Matthew 6:24**

You just cannot "mind earthly things" and keep your focus on Jesus Christ.

To "mind earthly things" is to let them become your master, to love them, to desire them and labor for them.

Asked about "the great commandment," Jesus said, *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.* **Matthew 22:37**

If we get wrapped up in the things of this world, we lose our focus on the things of God. Jesus explained that God cares for us, and that He provides the necessities of life -- food, clothing, etc. (**Matthew 6:19-32**).

But then the Lord adds, *"Seek ye first His kingdom, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you"* **Matthew 6:33**

That must be our first priority.

We become partakers of the nature of the things we love.

The man whose heart is to get and enjoy all of this world he possibly can, is influenced by these things in the building of his character.

He becomes hard, unsympathetic and selfish in his attitude toward others.

To "mind earthly things" is to lead one directly away from God.

We should not "mind earthly things," because they are, at best, uncertain and unsatisfying. **Proverbs 23:5; 1Timothy 6:17**

The rich fool thought he had riches enough laid up for all his needs and desires (**Luke 12**). But he was wrong. **Ecclesiastes 1:8**

As our text points out, when we "mind earthly things" we become enemies of the cross of Christ.

No one can afford to become an enemy of the cross of Christ, for to be such is to be a helper of Satan. There is no middle ground. You are either on the Lord's side or you are with the devil and his crowd. There is no third choice.

**Romans 8:13; Galatians 6:8**

### **Doing It The Lord's Way:**

If we are going to refuse to be "enemies of the cross," we must first renounce the world and its claims upon us.

We must turn our backs upon earthly things and face resolutely toward God and things spiritual. Self-denial and determination are indispensable to such a course.

Second, we must put material things in their proper place.

"Minding earthly things" is most often just allowing the material things to take first place in our lives.

Actually, these "earthly things" are the gifts from God that make life here on earth possible. **James 1:17**

But we must use these "earthly things" to make them contribute to our good, and to the good of others, rather than allowing them to become our masters. We must use the material things of life for the glory of God, rather than let them become our god.

Third, to keep from minding earthly things, we must cultivate an appreciation of our relationship with Christ and the blessings to be gained by that.

Such appreciation does not come just because one has been baptized into Christ. It is gained through conscious cultivation of our focus on the spiritual things, to which Christ gives emphasis in our lives.

### **Focus On The Cross Of Christ:**

We are, by nature, inclined to love the world and worldly things.

Satan sees to that. So, even without any effort on our part, we fall into the trap the devil has set for us. He makes the things of the world so attractive, just to attract our attention and desire.

But if we love God, our attention and desire is directed toward Him.

As we focus on the cross we are brought closer to Him Who was nailed there. We put our trust in Christ, and are baptized into Him: (**Colossians 2:12; 3:1-3**).

You see, it is all centered in the cross of Christ.

He died there in order that we might live forever with Him.

Being baptized "into Christ" is a commitment to live for Him, as we read in the Scriptures: (**Romans 6:3-4**).

And because we are now in Christ we begin a new life, with new affections and new direction, (**2Corinthians 5:17**).

When we are baptized into Christ, we become new creatures.

As such, we must always seek Him and His Will for our lives.

May God help us do that.

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