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Go and make disciples!

E-votional 35

Hostile or Friendly

Romans 8:7 (ESV),

For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot

What can make one hostile to God?

The scripture passage chosen alludes to the fact by saying it is the one who sets their minds on the things of the flesh. And according to Galatians 5:19-21,

the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these.

So it is clear that the one who is hostile to God is one who continues to set their minds on the above-mentioned things. Of course, I am not sharing anything that you don't already know.

However, there is also another theme that we also find in scripture in Matthew 16:23 (ESV),

But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."

Wow, this is really strong language that is used by the Lord to his disciple Peter. Could you imagine Jesus Himself turning to you and saying get behind me satan? I mean, ouch!

The purpose here in context was that Jesus was giving revelation about His upcoming death and Peter was basically telling the Lord, "nah, this won't happen to You". Peter was essentially rebuked for setting his mind on the things of man or in other words the things of the flesh.

Very briefly I would like to add some clarity about the word that Jesus used as hindrance. It is the Greek word for offense *skandalon*. According to Strong's Concordance, it means

skándalon – properly, the trigger of a trap (the mechanism closing a trap down on the unsuspecting victim); (figuratively) an offense, putting a negative cause-and-effect relationship into motion. stresses the method (means) of entrapment, i.e. how someone is caught by their own devices (like their personal bias, carnal thinking).

Ok, so, three things stick out to me. First, Peter became hostile to the Lord because he preferred an earthly reasoning as opposed to the revelation that came from God. Second, this earthly reasoning could come from personal preference or bias. In other words, this type of behavior is carnal and not of God. Third, I would also like to add that Jesus turned to Peter and said, “*Get behind me satan,*” referring to the idea that it was satan who sowed this carnal thought and Peter who latched on.

Just a side note with this is that Jesus was restrained from doing many miracles in His own hometown because people constantly looked at Him from an earthly sense instead of the one given by revelation. In the language used in Matthew's Gospel, it was said that the people of His hometown took offense at Him. For reference this passage is located in Matthew 13:53-58, and notice also in this passage that Jesus linked this type of behavior with unbelief which essentially hindered the very works or miracles that He wanted to do there. In essence, a mind that is set on the flesh is actually opposed to or in other words, hostile to God and indeed something that can hinder the very works of God in many situations.

Along with this, and in contrast, a life lived by true inspiration from God by the Holy Spirit through the Word is a life that has died to itself and its own preferences and is sold out for the whole cause of Christ, not just what it prefers. Such a one would be classified with Abraham as a friend of God as found in James 2:22-23, (ESV),

You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”—and he was called a friend of God.

I wonder if we could all take a lesson to heart here. I know Peter did. Check out what he wrote in 1 Peter 4:1-2 (ESV)

Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of

thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God

Hallelujah!

As Christians bought by the precious blood of Christ we are no longer to live by our own desires but by His who redeemed us. Praise the Lord because I've personally realized that if I were to live by my own desires I would be one ugly person. And furthermore, would not be able to experience the mighty works of God that He Himself desires to do.

Heavenly Father, we are broken cisterns that can hold no water without You. We are humbled by You and Your Word. Give us the ability to keep our minds focused on You through Your Spirit each and every day so that we would not think the way our sinful flesh wants but the way Your perfect heart wants to. We love you and thank You for this precious gift of salvation. In Jesus name. Amen.

In Christ's Love,
Chris and Jeanne
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