

A Contagious Sickness Among Christians. **1/26/20**

Recently we've heard news reports of a virus in China called the corona virus. This is not a craft beer.

*The **Coronaviruses** are a large family of viruses whose effects range from causing the common cold to triggering much more serious diseases, such as severe acute respiratory syndrome, or SARS, which can affect humans and animals.*

China has now quarantined two large cities and banned all large gatherings of people.

Often these viruses are ignored until they have reached a tipping point where they cannot be ignored.

This is nothing new. This is how we act as humans. We think this is nothing, we can handle it, it will go away, or it's not really a problem. Then we wake up one day and say how did things get to be this way all the while we have been ignoring it, and it took over our lives.

If we had just taken steps to protect ourselves, we would not be in this position!

So often there are things that start out small in our lives that are not beneficial, and we just ignore them until it's too late.

Like the old example of the frog in a pot of water on the stove. If you slowly heat the water the frog will never notice until it's too late.

There is a sickness that Christians get, and they rarely know they are infected until something terrible happens.

This sickness is mentioned all throughout scripture in many different ways and if not addressed it can have disastrous results.

Paul calls it worldliness.

Pray

The dictionary definition of "worldly" is "relating to, or devoted to, this present and visible world."

Worldliness, then, is the condition of being concerned with worldly affairs, especially to the neglect of spiritual things.

A worldly person is more concerned about their feelings, finances, relationships, pleasures, etc., than they are about their spiritual condition.

Any excuse not to go to church, a bible study, read your bible or pray is a tell-tale sign that you are infected.

The Bible has a great deal to say about worldliness, none of it good.

For the believer worldliness is the blending of the world's thinking and practices with our Christian faith, practices, and belief.

How is it possible for a person who has experienced the love of God and realized a salvation through faith in Jesus Christ to turn away and begin to embrace "worldliness"?

Well, it's a slow process and each step takes you further away from a deeper relationship with God.

1. Paul states it starts with **spiritual immaturity**. This is where a believer does not progress beyond the basics of our faith in Jesus Christ.
 - a. Even though those who have experienced Christ are commanded to “*grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*” **2 Peter 3:18** They don't do it.
 - b. Often this person is content with what they know. It's too much work and effort to progress any further. This believer knows just enough to be dangerous to themselves and others. When in fact they should know just enough to know they don't know enough.
 - c. They often will embrace a charismatic leader and his version of the Gospel while slowly following him to destruction.
 - d. Paul condemns the Corinthian church for their immaturity because there was jealousy and quarreling in their midst among other things.
 - e. Our growth beyond feeding on spiritual milk is our decision. God will not do it for you but what he will do is bring challenges into your life to spur you on to greater maturity in your faith and love for Him.
2. Secondly, scripture portrays **worldliness as opposite of godliness**. Paul tells us that the world's wisdom is not wisdom at all.

1 Corinthians 3:18-20. *Do not deceive yourselves. If any of you think you are wise by the standards of this age, you should become “fools” so that you may become wise. 19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is written: “He catches the wise in their craftiness”; 20 and again, “The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile.”*

- a. The reason worldly wisdom is not wisdom is twofold.
 - i. Worldly wisdom is focused on you.
 - ii. Worldly wisdom leads to death and eternal separation from God.
 - iii. Both of these are opposite of godliness.
 - iv. Paul tells us in **1 Cor. 1** That: “*the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written: “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.”*

3. Thirdly scripture draws a **clear line between friendship with God and friendship with the world**.

- a. **James 4:4** tells us that: “*friendship with the world is hatred toward God.*”

Now this is all black and white and it should be to help understand just how serious God takes our being in the enemy's camp.

But as Paul talks to the Corinthian church, we get an understanding that it is not unusual for believers to begin to embrace worldly wisdom and compromise their witness.

The Corinthian church was proud of what they were doing, and Paul had to call them to reason by attempting to correct their thinking.

He uses the analogy of a building built on a solid foundation. He never denies that they are believers but he tries to get them to understand that they have been fooled into embracing worldly wisdom.

He lets them know that God will judge all believers works and your building that is built with worldly wisdom will not survive the fire of judgment only you will.

He is calling the Corinthians and us to examine our lives against scripture. The areas that have been compromised must be changed in order to claim friendship with God.

Paul even goes on to tell them that their worldly thinking and actions are why many of them are sick and some have died.

- That should get our attention. God will go to extreme methods to bring a believer back to where they should be.
- So, let us consider carefully what we are doing and how we are treating others.

It comes down to this: You have a choice to mature in your faith. If you stay content in your immaturity you will not be able to distinguish between subtleties of good and evil. You will put yourself in a position that is in opposition to God and God will eventually react to correct you.

For the Christian, the choice is clear. To avoid worldliness, we must mature in the faith, growing up in all things in Christ so that we are no longer spiritual infants, tossed about by the lies of the world (**Eph. 4:14-15**). We must come to know the difference between the wisdom of God and the foolish wisdom of the world, and that is only achieved by careful and diligent study of the Word of God. We are to seek God's wisdom in prayer (James 1:5) and enjoy the fellowship of other mature believers who can encourage us to reject worldliness and embrace godliness.

Lastly you have to choose to do this. God will encourage you through many different means but ultimately He loves you enough to let you make the choice.

No one will ever be able to stand before God and accuse Him of controlling them. God lets you make the choice to obey or not to obey.

Worldliness is a crafty sickness that you have to train yourself to recognize with the help of others and the Holy Spirit.

Brothers and Sisters don't be a fool and be content with your spiritual immaturity. Satan will use it to make your life miserable.

Let's be a church that lives out God's wisdom. Love the Lord with all your heart, mind, and soul. And love your neighbor as Christ loved you – with a sacrificial love.

When we do this, we say to God you are the most important thing in my life, and we show other just how much we love them because God loves us so very much.

Let's let our Godly wisdom be contagious infecting each other and all those around us.

Amen.