

**Week Forty-one: "The Enemies of Our Sanctification"**

**Day One: Small Group Guide**

Read: Jeremiah 17:1-18 (p. 848)

Read: Commentary (p. 849)

Reflect: Do you think the Christian life gets easier as we move along the pathway of becoming more holy, or does it get more difficult? Why or why not?

Dig: Of our three sworn enemies (the world, the flesh, and the devil) which one does this text emphasize?

See vs. 9

What is the big contrast between the person pictured in verse 5 and the one pictured in verse 7?

What is our main command so that we can become like the tree pictured in vss. 7-8?

Why is it significant that Jeremiah uses the metaphor of a "spring of living water" in verse 13?

Look up John 7:37-39 (p. 1210). What does this scripture add to your understanding of God as "living water"?

Apply: Our commentary states: "...the battle is likely to intensify as we grow in Christ." Since that is the case, ask God to teach you less reliance upon human (self) strength and more reliance and trust in Him.

Conclude with this prayer from p. 1527:

Dear Lord God, I know how easy it is to allow other things and other people to become more important to me than You. I also know that this is offensive to Your holy eyes as You have commanded that I "shall have no other gods before You." I confess to You that I have not loved You with all my heart and soul and mind. As a result, I have sinned against You, violating the first and greatest commandment. I repent of and turn away from this idolatry and now choose to return to You, Lord Jesus, as my first love. Please reveal to my mind any and all idols in my life. I choose to renounce every idol that would give Satan any right in my life. In the name of Jesus, the true God, Amen.

**Day Two: "Defining 'The Flesh'"**

Read: 2 John (p. 1474)

Read: Commentary (p. 1474)

Reflect: Was Jesus just as human as we are? If he indeed was tempted "in every way as we are, yet without sin," how does that affect the way we understand Jesus?

Dig: How were people being deceived, according to verse 7?

What does verse 10 tell you about the importance of maintaining the set of teachings exactly as they are handed down to us?

What does this tell you about tradition?

Turn to Galatians 5:17-21 (p. 1352). Each time you read the phrase "sinful nature" replace it with the

word "flesh," since that is the accurate translation of the Greek word. How does the word "flesh" in this context differ from the meaning of the word "flesh" in 2 John 7?

Apply: Turn to Hebrews 4:15-16 (p. 1424) and read this passage out loud so that you can have confidence to admit to anything before God and can ask for his forgiveness. Enter this day knowing that Jesus has been tempted in every way that you are going to be tempted on this day. Then ask God for the strength to say "no" to temptation just as Jesus did.

### **Day Three: "Overcoming the Flesh"**

Read: Haggai (p. 1049)

Read: Commentary (p. 1050)

Reflect: When have the people you have spent time with drawn you into the wrong way of thinking and acting? Why did you spend time with them?

Dig: What is the principle you can glean from Haggai 2:10-14 regarding defilement?

What does 1 Corinthians 15:33 (p. 1323) add to your understanding of this principle?

What does the "Freedom Point" on page 1049 add to your understanding of Haggai and how we can attain freedom from indwelling sin?

How can we be set free from defilement?

See Romans 7:21-8:3 (p. 1288)

See 1 John 1:9-2:2 (p. 1466)

Apply: In prayer, ask God to help you get rid of relationships (bad company) which ruin your character and to spend time with those who build you up so that you can overcome the flesh (sinful nature).

### **Day Four: "Defining 'the World'"**

Read: Zephaniah 3:8 (p. 1046)

Read: Commentary (p. 1045)

Reflect: There is an old saying that we have "three sworn enemies; the world, the flesh and the devil." How is "the world" your enemy? Where do you see this force for evil in your life?

Dig: Read the context of chapter 3:8, that is, read verses 1-7 of chapter 3 and answer these questions: Who is God speaking to in these verses?

What does that tell you about where we can find worldliness?

Does God become angry with worldliness? (see verse 8)

Does God still become angry with worldliness? (see Hebrews 12:25-29 p. 1436)

What are the three meanings of the word "world" (Greek: kosmos) that you find in the first paragraph of the commentary on page 1045?

Apply: Worldliness usually includes lust for things that do not properly belong to us, and boasting. What

do you desire that is not good for you and what do you boast in that is only your pride? Confess these to God, asking him to cleanse you of your worldliness.

### **Day Five: "Overcoming the World"**

Read: Nahum 1 (p. 1031)

Read: Commentary (p. 1032)

Reflect: What physical skill do you possess that has taken lots of repetition to perfect? What spiritual skill do you possess that has taken a long time to perfect?

Dig: Make a list of the characteristics of God revealed in this chapter.

What do you notice about this list?

How does verse 7 capture the two "sides" of God's character? What do these two sides have in common? In other words, what is the underlying commitment that God has which produces both these characteristics in God?

What does the "Freedom Point" on page 1031 contribute to your understanding of Nahum 1?

How do we overcome the world and its temptations?

See 1 John 5:1-5 (p. 1472) for a biblical answer.

Apply: Compose a prayer based on what you read in 1 John 5:1-5 and let that be your prayer for today. Now go out and overcome the world in your corner of the world.