

## Whose Side Are You On?

Excerpt from Sparkling Gems of the Greek: Rick Renner

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"A friend of the world is the enemy of God." [James 4:4]

### Introduction:

When a Christian who has walked with God and knows the things of the Spirit decides willfully, to step back into the world - intentionally or unintentionally - this is a very Serious matter to God.

Most have no idea that this action has consequences. It doesn't matter how long you have served God in the past, or how dedicated you may have been, when someone steps back into the world and begins to act, and talk as the world does, the result is extremely serious.

### A Serious Matter:

When I say serious, I'm talking about a situation so grave that it eventually causes God to take an aggressive and antagonistic stance toward that believer! This is why James 4:4 says: "...A friend of the world is the enemy of God."

Notice that James refers to believers who have become a 'friend' of the world. The word 'friend' is from the Greek word 'phileo', a word that has many different facets, including the ideas of 'fondness, friendship, or love'.

This is the Greek word someone would use if he wanted to express 'affection' or even 'romance'. And when used to depict friends, this word is the picture of very 'close friends' who are 'fond of' and 'familiar with each other'.

### The Kiss of Death:

From the word 'phileo' we get the word 'philema', which means to 'kiss'. In the ancient world, a kiss was a form of greeting that was reserved for family members, friends, fellow church members, or any other esteemed and cherished people in one's life. A kiss like this would never be given to a stranger, but to someone for whom a person felt deep affection or with whom he had some kind of 'relationship'.

### Obligations and Affections

This leads us to the next usage of the word 'phileo'. In some places, it portrayed a person who was under some type of 'commitment' or 'obligation' due to a relationship. This relationship could be family-related, business-related, socially-related, or friendship-related.

Regardless of the 'basis' for the relationship, it is one that includes obligations, such as the obligations that exist in a marriage, between business partners, or even between friends. These relationships carry responsibilities. The word 'phileo' could be used to describe these types of relationships and the obligations that result from entering into them.

So when James talks about believers who have become 'a friend of the world' (the Greek word 'phileo'), he is talking about Christians who have drifted so far back into the world that they now feel close to the world; they have 'affection and fondness' for it. The connection and sense of familiarity they have with the world is so intense that they feel an obligation to the world or to their worldly friends.

These believers have exchanged their once-deep affection for the Lord for a renewed allegiance to the world from which they were rescued. Because they now have a strong affection for the world, it lets us know that these believers have been drifting for a long time.

### Backsliding like this doesn't happen overnight:

It is clear that a slow, methodical, seducing process has lured them away from Christ and back into a relationship with the world. Now their sense of obligation to the world is greater than their sense of obligation to the Lord.

James solemnly declares that any believer who has slipped back into this type of serious relationship with the world becomes the 'enemy' of God.

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It is true that most people who fall into this category do it 'ignorantly'. They are not aware that Satan has blinded them - and that they have actually fallen back into the old life of sin, unbelief, doubt, waywardness and rebellion. The Bible calls this type of person a "child of disobedience".

There are very few (if any) of these people who are willing to admit and accept this - and most would vehemently defend themselves and offer some type of reasoning to explain their actions! Yet the Bible clearly states that anyone who has a deeper relationship with the world than one with God - is the enemy of God.

### **A Friend of the World is an Enemy of God:**

You may as well face the truth now – before it's too late. The Word of God states clearly and concisely that: **"A friend of the world is the enemy of God."** [James 4:4]

This is not just a hypothetical remark – nor is it just a passing comment designed to frighten small children and dumb animals. This is a fact that as a Christian we must realize and accept as TRUTH.

The word 'enemy' is from the Greek word 'echthros'. It is a word that appears more than 450 times in the Old Testament Septuagint to describe 'hate, hatred, hostility, an enemy, or an opponent'.

One example of its usage in the New Testament is Luke 23:12, where it portrays the animosity, antagonism, enmity rivalry, and competition that existed between Herod Antipas and Pilate. These two men were definitely not on the same side!

### **What Does This Mean to You and Me**

It tells us that God is jealous when a believer transfers his devotion back to the world. In fact, this creates strong jealousy in the heart of God for that believer. God sees that believer's relationship with the world as a violation of His own relationship with him.

Just as a spouse would feel violated if he discovered that his mate had secretly carried on an intimate relationship with someone else, God feels betrayed when a believer transfers his affection away from Him and back to the world. In these cases, God takes an antagonistic view toward the improper relationship and begins to set things in motion to see that relationship end!

Because God wants that believer to re-focus his/her affection where it ought to be, His grace moves in to intervene. It may not feel like 'help' at the time, but God, who is intensely jealous for His people, sees Himself as a Contender for that believer's affection and devotion! He will therefore do what He must to get the attention of His wayward child so He can turn him around and bring him back to where he ought to be!

### **A Loving Father Acts:**

As a loving Father, whether we like it or not, God will 'allow' things to occur in our life that will bring us to point where we cry out to Him again, and focus ourselves on Him - as we should. And, very often those things that he allows are NOT pleasant - and can be quite painful - often heartbreaking and sometimes life-threatening - depending on how much the child of God refuses to repent.

This does not mean that GOD 'brings' these things on the unrepentant child - but rather, He 'allows' them. After all - there are consequences for sin - and if the person refuses to confess and repent - then the Bible states over and over again that there are consequences to the unrepentant.

If need be, then our Heavenly Father will allow us to be afflicted until we recognize the error of our actions and bring ourselves back into the proper relationship that we are supposed to be in.

**" Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted. ...They draw near unto the gates of death. Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saves them out of their distresses."** [Psalm 107: 17-19]

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## **Whose Side Are You On?** *Continued...*

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### **Backsliding is Serious Business!**

When you try to split your heart between the Lord and the world, it simply will not work!

There is too much animosity between a holy God and the world from which you were rescued. So don't let yourself head back in the direction of the world, because God will not just sit back and watch it happen. He will come after you like the most serious Competitor in the whole universe!

### **PRAYER FOR TODAY**

Lord, I pray that my passion for you will grow stronger and stronger and that I will remain untainted from the world. Please show me if there are any places in me that are drawn to things that displease you. It may be hard for me to hear, but if there is anything in me that seeks to slip back into the life from which you delivered me, please reveal it to me. If my affection for anything else in this world is greater than my affection for you, please show me!

I pray this in Jesus' Name - Amen!