



January 3, 2010

### *The Insidious Nature Of Weakness*

Insidious is a word that describes something that happens without our knowledge, until it becomes a larger problem that can no longer be ignored. Medically it refers to a number of conditions that may produce random symptoms but there are no overt signs of disease. When applied to certain diseases, such as cancer, one may have a sudden appearance of symptoms when another procedure, such as a biopsy, or imaging, is performed. At that time the effects can be catastrophic. It is hard to determine the nature of some things and this is why physical ailments go undetected for long periods of time. Once identified, it is then a matter of putting the pieces of the puzzle together until a pattern emerges, pointing in the direction of a longstanding process. When we deal with spiritual things the same is true. There may be indications in one's life that something is amiss but it is difficult to say exactly what that is. James talks about this to some degree in his writing about the process by which one is drawn into things that are to be avoided. ***"But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed."*** (Jas 1.14). Once one has become a Christian there may be lingering predispositions for some things or ideas that are not in harmony with the will and word of God. Such things become problematic over time and if not resolved successfully will continue to wear at us until we reach a point that we weaken in our service to God. James goes on to say, ***"Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."*** (Jas 1.15). The process of being drawn away may take the form of making excuses for doing some things and not doing others. One may get into a habit of minimizing their involvement in activities or their absence from others. Guilt results from this and leads to more problems as compromise becomes a way of thinking and living. To this end, James exhorts, ***"Do not err, my beloved brethren."*** (Jas 1.16). As the process continues, one may not be as faithful in their attendance as they need to be. Other matters become a higher priority and eventually leads to unfaithfulness. Error in one's personal life begins many times with a failure to grow and mature as we ought. As Christians we are to seek to change those things that are not pleasing to the Lord. Paul states, ***"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."*** (Rom 12.1-2). The renewal of the mind, the process that brings about the change that is needed, starts with cultivating a desire to not only know what they will of God is, but to put it into practice. There are many influences in the world, stress, economic problems, family and social difficulties, health and other things that may erode our resolve if we allow that to happen. As we work to draw closer to God, the enemy seeks to undermine our efforts through the above means and others, weakening and causing us to stumble. Once we have fallen into one of these traps it becomes harder over time to counteract the influences that continually work to weaken and enslave us, robbing us of the reward that God has promised to the faithful. Peter describes Satan as a "roaring lion" who seeks to devour us (1 Pet 5.8) and has an influence in the world that attempts to cloud our reasoning in spiritual matters. Religious doctrines that have become popular downplay such realities as eternal damnation and God's rejection of certain ideas and practices. Peter describes this when he describes that state of those who turn away from God. ***"But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."*** (2 Pet 2.22). God has given us his word to enlighten and strengthen us. He has provided us with fellowship through our association with other Christians to encourage, exhort and correct us when needed. Weakness and indifference are things that will slowly take over in our lives if we allow them to until we may find ourselves at a loss to correct our path.

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