

Are We Strengthening the Hands of the Wicked?

Lesson One

INTRODUCTION.

- A. In Ephesians 6:10-13, Paul told the Christians in Ephesus to be strong in the Lord and to put on the whole armor of God.
- B. While Paul states that we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, the wicked of the world are tools in Satan's battle against us. One such example is found in 2 Peter 2:12-20.
- C. While some of our warring involves defensive decisions when facing temptations, there are some offensive choices that we must make. That is to say that there are times when we have to openly challenge error and those involved in it. This involves using the "sword of the Spirit which is the word of God." (Ephesians 6:17)
- D. Tragically, many Christians have failed in their endeavors to fight against the world. We here at the Gore Boulevard church of Christ must constantly consider ourselves to make certain that we have not failed in this endeavor.
- E. When we fail in our fight against the world, we help the enemy. We strengthen the hands of the wicked! Consider the guilt of the nation of Israel.
 - 1. *"Because with lies you have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and you have strengthened the hands of the wicked, so that he does not turn from his wicked way to save his life."* (Ezekiel 13:22, NKJV)
 - 2. *"Also I have seen a horrible thing in the prophets of Jerusalem: They commit adultery and walk in lies; They also strengthen the hands of evildoers, So that no one turns back from his wickedness. All of them are like Sodom to Me, And her inhabitants like Gomorrah."* (Jeremiah 23:14, NKJV)
- F. It is the purpose of this lesson to show some ways in which we strengthen the hands of the wicked.

I. WE STRENGTHEN THE HANDS OF THE WICKED WHEN WE COMMIT SIN WITH THEM.

- A. Consider the example of Ananias and Sapphira. (Acts 5:1-11)
 - 1. Either Ananias or Sapphira thought up the idea to lie about their earnings.
 - 2. The one who went along with the other, strengthened the hand of the other.

- B. The solution is to say no. (Proverbs 1:10-15)
1. If either Ananias or Sapphira had said no, then maybe neither of them would have died.
 2. If your family wants you to do something that sacrifices your service to God or violates God's law, SAY NO!
 3. If your friends wants you to do something that sacrifices your service to God or violates God's law, SAY NO!
 4. If your boss or the people you work with wants you to do something that sacrifices your service to God or violates God's law, SAY NO!
 5. You must take the time to stop and think. Do not act without considering your actions.
- C. Sometimes we allow ourselves to be blinded by our relationships with other people.
1. Jesus declares that there will be times when we must choose Him over our loved ones. (Matthew 10:34-38)
 2. We must be consistent in applying God's word.
 - a. Some people may say or do one thing when around certain people, but when they are influenced by others, they may say or do the complete opposite differently. (Cf. James 3:8-12)
 - b. In one breathe a person may condemn others for a particular act, while excusing himself and those close to him of the same actions. (Cf. Matthew 7:1-5)
- D. Sometimes we may choose to follow the majority into sin.
1. Consider the case of Aaron. (Exodus 32:1-5, 21-26)
 2. Jesus warns His disciples against following the majority. (Matthew 7:13-14)
 3. The majority may not believe in the word of God. However, the belief of the majority does not make God's word false. His word remains true. (Romans 3:3,4)
 4. Man may say that something is a certain way, but if God's word says that it is not that way, then do not follow the words of man. Remember the words of Jeremiah when he wrote, "*O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.*" (Jeremiah 10:23, NKJV)
- E. Results: When we commit sin with the sinner, we loose our opportunity to be a godly influence. Our light no longer shines and the Lord is robbed of His glory. (Cf.

Matthew 5:14-16)

II. WE STRENGTHEN THE HANDS OF THE WICKED WHEN WE SUPPORT THEIR SIN, UPHOLDING THE SINNER.

- A. Consider the case of Saul.
 - 1. It is possible that Saul did not throw a stone at Stephen. (Acts 7:55-58)
 - 2. However, Paul considered himself as having consented to the stoning of Stephen. (Acts 22:19-20)
 - 3. Although Paul did not engage in the stoning of Stephen, he did, nevertheless, uphold the hands of those who did.
- B. Consider the case of the Edomites. (Obadiah 1:10-15)
 - 1. The Edomites did not actually attack Jerusalem.
 - 2. The Edomites stood back and watched, then took some of the Israelites' possessions.
 - 3. The Edomites stood at the crossroads and would not let the Israelites escape, but they did not attack.
 - 4. The Edomites were still found guilty by God because they supported those who attacked Jerusalem.
- C. Are we doing the same thing today?
 - 1. We may not forsake the assemblies of the saints, but are we excusing those and supporting those who do?
 - 2. We may not drink alcoholic beverages, but are we excusing those and supporting those who do?
 - 3. We support those who tell dirty and off color jokes by laughing at them, although we may not be the one telling the joke.
 - 4. We may not buy pornographic material, but we support the makers of it by looking at it, whether it be in print, in movies, or on the internet.
 - 5. We may not officially gamble, but we support those who do by participating in the office pools.
- D. Results: When we support the sin and uphold the sinner, we loose our opportunity to be a godly influence.

CONCLUSION.

- A. We are living in a world where sin is found in abundance. As Christians, we have

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a hard enough task of trying to convert the lost and standing up to temptations without having to worry about Christians strengthening the hands of the wicked.

- B. When we strengthen the hands of the wicked, we become sinners ourselves. At this point, we have fallen from our fellowship with Jesus Christ.
- D. Remember: Let us not strengthen the hands of the wicked!

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