

ENEMIES OF THE SOUL

Today we begin a new series called "Enemies of the Soul." This series, alongside God's Word, is guided by the book "Live No Lies" by John Mark Comer. Throughout his book, Comer writes with biblical preciseness about the world, the flesh, and the devil. Comer's working theory on these enemies of the soul is: As followers of Jesus, we are at war with the world, the flesh, and the devil, and the three enemies' stratagem is as follows:

Deceptive Ideas (DEVIL) → that play to disordered desires (FLESH) → that are normalized in a sinful society (WORLD)

In this series, we'll talk about these enemies of the soul and how to remain diligent in pursuing Christ.

SCRIPTURE: 1 John 2:15-17

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How has the first week of 21 Days of Prayer been for you? What has been easy or challenging for you? Have you found the resources on the Cross Church app (Statio, Bible reading plan) helpful?
2. What's your immediate family's most significant prayer need? It could be any number of things (aging parents, health concerns, parenting toddlers or teenagers, job-related, relationship-related, etc.). What are some practical ways to be intentional in bringing this specific need to God each day?

No matter what you may be dealing with, God already knows, God cares, and we should be intentional in bringing our specific needs to our good and loving Father daily. Think about how you can specifically invite God into your most prominent family need this week through prayer, and then be intentional to pray daily. Anne Graham Lotz once said, "God answers specific prayers specifically."

Personal Awareness:

- When you start to think about it, that is your signal to pray about it.
- When you start to worry about it, that is your signal to pray about it.
- When you start to talk to others about it, that is your signal to talk to God about it.
- When you can't asleep or wake up early, that is your signal to pray about it.
- Be quick to shut down fear, stress, or worry by immediately making the request known to God as soon as you recognize it or think about it.

Specific Gameplan:

- Have a specific time, place, and plan to meet with God in prayer. Have your Bible open and a notepad and pen available to write your requests.
- Silence your phone for a set time and use your notes app for prayer requests and to record when God answers.

STATIO 
DAILY DEVOTIONALS

A new daily devotional resource from Cross Church designed to help you grow deeper in your relationship with God. Available on the Cross Church App.

- Create a daily rhythm to walk through the Cross Church Statio devotional and Bible reading plan.
- Use your commute time as prayer time.

3. What stood out to you the most from the sermon? What were the three enemies of the soul? Give examples of how we see the enemies' stratagem at work in our lives (see today's introduction).

In his book, *No More Lies*, John Mark Comer describes the three enemies of the soul: the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Deceptive Ideas → that play to disordered desires → that are normalized in a sinful society
(DEVIL) (FLESH) (WORLD)

4. Read 1 John 2:15-17. What do these verses tell us about the world? What does it mean to hold 1 John 2:15-17 in one hand and John 3:16 in the other? How can "the world" be an enemy of the soul if Jesus came for "the world"?

"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever." 1 John 2:15-17

"Our cultural and social practices, that are under the control of Satan, and thus, opposed to God."
Dallas Willard

"The world is Satan's domain, where his authority and values reign – though his deception makes that hard to realize. If you are of the world, then it all sounds right." Gerry Breshears

"The world is what happens when a bunch of people give in to their flesh and base, animalistic desires are normalized. It is a system of ideas, values, morals, practices, and social norms that are integrated into the mainstream and eventually institutionalized in a culture corrupted by the twin sins of rebellion against God and the redefinition of good and evil." John Mark Comer

5. Read the following verses and note what each one teaches us about "the world": James 4:4, Mark 8:34-37, and John 17:14-16. What does it mean to be "worldly"? What does it mean to be a Christian in the world but not of the world? In what ways are you most tempted to be "of the world"?

James 4:4 – "You adulterous people!^[a] Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."

Mark 8:34-37 – "And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ³⁵ For whoever would save his life^[a] will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. ³⁶ For what does

it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? ³⁷ For what can a man give in return for his soul?"

John17:14-16 – "I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁵ I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world."

6. The world is not neutral in its attempt to influence us. Theo Hobson writes, "What was universally condemned is now celebrated. What was universally celebrated is now condemned. Those who refuse to celebrate are condemned." How can we best resist the influence of the world as Christians?
7. What about this lesson challenged you the most? What was your biggest takeaway?