

*“they recognized that they had
been with Jesus.”*

Acts 4:13

Introduction

The Unifying Effects of the Spirit vs The Fragmenting Efforts of the Enemy

The most effective tool of the Enemy of your soul? *Distraction*

Top Ten most effective means Satan uses to divert your attention away from God:

1. Health concerns – yours
2. Health concerns – loved ones
3. Marital or family conflict
4. Bad news from others – sin or suffering
5. Political/social issues – e.g., Impeachment proceedings
6. A divided nation – growing anger, contempt, hatred, and violence
7. Tragic events – school and workplace shootings
8. Job concerns – stability, difficult relationships, etc.
9. Poor mental discipline – failure to acknowledge our call to listen carefully to God
10. Environmental noise

Beware of becoming a ‘*Third Soil*’ Christian

“but the cares of the world...enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful” Mark 4:18-19

“the cares of the world” Literally, ‘*the distractions of the age.*’

Satan’s most effective tool in rendering Christians inattentive and ineffective.

Allowing yourself to become preoccupied with *the cares of the world* will blind you to the things of God.

“But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap.” Luke 21:34

“dissipation” = ‘the squandering of money, energy, or resources.’

‘Distraction of the mental faculties from concentration on serious subjects.’

The apostles had been with Christ—both in body and now in spirit—now they look like Him!

But can this be said of us?

Being with Christ...

1. delivers you from sin and death.
2. delivers you from the fear of man.
3. makes you a bold witness for Truth.
4. makes you wise, more than your teachers.
5. makes you meek and humble like Jesus.
6. makes you confident in Christ, not yourself.
7. delivers you from fear of suffering, persecution, and death.

More than to know of Him, do you *know* Him?

More than to confess Him, do you *possess* Him?

More than to claim Him, do you *proclaim* Him?

The heart that is full must speak out.

The Anxiety of a *Divided Mind*

"The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light" Matthew 6:22

"healthy/clear/good/single" KJV Gk *haplous*; not double vision; singular focus; seeing things as they are.

Matthew 6:24-25

"do not be anxious" (lit. anxiously careful) or, "take no thought"

Meaning: 'to divide; separate into parts; to distribute; to be divided; disunited.'

"set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth" Colossians 3:2

Anxiety/worry is protracted mental distraction.

In the Bible anxiety/worry literally means, having 'a divided mind.'

The Fear of the Apostle Paul

"I feel a divine jealousy for you, for I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:2-3).

"sincere/simplicity NAS/single-hearted loyalty (Wuest)"

Meaning: 'singleness of heart'

The anxiety of a duplicitous mind lacks faith – trust in God.

James 1:5-8

“double-minded” Gk *dipsuchos*; ‘two-spirited’

A Tale of Two Sisters

Luke 10:38-42

“distracted” Gk *perispao*; “To draw different ways at the same time, hence to distract with cares and responsibilities...to be drawn around in mind...preoccupied with cares or business” (Zodhiates).

“anxious” “To divide, separate into parts, disunited”; ‘anxiety, care that brings disruption to the personality and the mind.’

“troubled” Gk *thorubazo*; ‘the noise of a tumult; a disturbance, noise, clamor, uproar; loud lamentation.’

Matthew 6:25-34

Psalm 131

Anxiety is a tempest – *a storm* – that forms in the mind when loyalties divide and wills collide.

I calm my anxious heart when I...

- 1) take control of my thought life and bring every thought captive to Christ.
- 2) remain singularly focused on my Savior at all times.
- 3) when I am loyal to Christ alone devotionally – in His Word, and in prayer.
- 4) train my ear to listen intently to the voice of God.
- 5) shut out the cacophony of competing voices.
- 6) learn to trust God more, especially in trying times.
- 7) guard my heart with all diligence.

“You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.” Isaiah 26:3

Isaiah 26:8-9

Psalm 112:6-8

“He is not afraid of bad news, trusting in the Lord.”

“Be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10).