

The Leaven of Wanting Your Own Way

by Phil Beach Jr.

The leaven of wanting our own way is a subtle influence that makes it easy for us to have it our way, leading to spiritual ruin and broken relationships.

Duration: 44:47

Scripture: Psalm 101:3, Proverbs 14:12, Proverbs 23:7, Matthew 24:12, 2 Timothy 4:3

Topics: "Christian Life", "Spiritual Vigilance", "The Dangers of Self-Centeredness"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the dangers of pursuing our own way instead of God's, warning that this mindset leads to destruction and spiritual coldness. He references Proverbs 14:12 to illustrate that what seems right to us can ultimately lead to ruin. The sermon highlights a 'leaven' that has infiltrated the church, making it easier for believers to adopt a self-centered attitude, which can numb their love for God. Beach urges the congregation to be vigilant about their influences and surroundings, as they can either challenge or weaken their spiritual fervor. He calls for a return to sound doctrine and a commitment to living in a way that reflects true devotion to Christ.

Transcript

Now, what the Lord has given me. So I want you to please be very, very attentive this morning. Try and follow me as we walk together in the things that God is speaking to us.

You remember a number of weeks ago we shared on Proverbs 14, 12, Proverbs 14, 12. How many remembers what Proverbs 14, 12 is? Anybody remember what that scripture is? Proverbs 14, 12. Daniel, um, Alan is correct.

There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the way the end thereof is destruction. Okay. And so we were alerted to the fact that there is a way that seems right to a man, but the end is destruction.

There is a way that seems right to you and I, but if we take that way, it leads to destruction. And we concluded in our study several weeks ago that the way that leads to destruction is simply any way other than his way. Any way other than God's way leads to destruction.

And so we must become by the grace of God and by the mercy of God and by the spirit of God and by the truth of God's word, we must become alerted to any tendencies that we have that would, that would drive us to seek our own way. Brothers and sisters, the thing that ought to frighten you the most is the thought of

going your own way, choosing your own path, doing it your way. You remember the song from Burger King many years ago, hold the pickles, hold the lettuce, special orders don't upset us.

All we ask is that you have it your way. I commend the person who created that slogan because it is appealing, isn't it? It's catchy. And of course they sang it as a song, which I'm not going to do.

And then of course, McDonald's came up with a song to all beef patty, special sauce, lettuce, cheese, pickles, onions, and a sesame seed bun in order to advertise their Big Mac. But I've heard the Lord in the song of Burger King a number of times, and I've heard the Lord say the same spirit that that song promotes is the same spirit that's getting in among my people. Have it your way.

We don't come to God, we don't come to the things of God, and as Christians, we don't approach our life with the mindset of I want it my way. I want to do it my way. Because it is my way that seems right to me, it is my way that the scripture speaking of that seems right, but the end.

The results of that way are destruction and spiritual ruin and broken marriages and broken relationships. And wounded children. And ultimately shame at the coming of the Lord.

Now, what I want to bring this morning from the Lord to each and every one of us. Is one of the subtle, almost unnoticed leavens that are creeping into the church, that is creeping into the church, a leaven that is creeping in to the church. This leaven, listen carefully, this leaven is making it easy for us to have it our way.

It is a leaven that we need to be alerted about and to take strong spirit empowered action against, because listen, if it is the testimony of your heart to stand against the way that seems right in your own eyes, that leads to destruction. If that reflects the cry of your heart, then you are going to want to know this leaven that has come into the church because this leaven, if permitted in your life, will help you have your own way. And if you don't want your own way, then you don't want any part of this leaven.

OK, first of all, I bring your attention to Matthew chapter 24. It is a scripture that we read before, but I can't seem to shake my heart from it. I'm hearing the Lord speak this scripture over and over and over again, and I believe it reflects a concern of His heart that each one of us need to take heed to.

Matthew chapter 24. Now we know that this is a discourse in which the disciples asked Jesus about when the end would come. And Jesus begins in verse number four.

Let's start there. Matthew, Matthew chapter 24, verses one through and I'll put the scripture on there when we're done reading. So you don't go ahead and read it before we get there.

Take heed, brothers and sisters. We need to take heed in the day that we're living in. Be alerted, take heed.

Be careful. Watch yourself. We're living in a society and in a culture that can put you to sleep.

And God is alerting us this morning to taking heed, be alert, Peter said, be vigilant, be sober. It is a call that those who are in a war would hear. That no man deceive you.

For many shall come in my name saying, I am Christ and shall deceive many and you shall hear of wars and rumors of wars, see that you be not troubled for all these things must come to pass. But the end is not yet for nation shall rise up against nation and kingdom against kingdom. And there shall be famines and

pestilence and earthquakes in diverse places.

All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted and shall kill you and you shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended and shall betray one another and shall hate one another and many false prophets shall rise and shall deceive many.

Now, these are simply statements that Jesus is making, revealing the many different things that will be occurring in the world. But I want to bring your attention in particular to verse number 12, because this has to do with the substance of what I feel the Lord is wanting to warn us about this morning. And because iniquity shall abound.

The love of many shall wax cold, shall wax cold. That literally means to turn to concrete through coldness, turn to solid ice. The love of many shall turn to concrete through coldness.

The love of many will turn to concrete. Because of iniquity and abounding iniquity. Now, the word iniquity simply means lawlessness.

And so therefore, what Jesus is saying, because lawlessness, because of the attitude, I can do it my way when I want and how I want without regard to how God wants it. Because of that attitude, the love of many shall concrete into coldness. We live in a society today, we live in a culture today that is literally permeating with that attitude, isn't it? My way, get out of my face.

I want to do it my way. Get out of my life. Don't cramp my style.

Don't tell me how to do it. Don't correct me. I'm not going to humble myself.

I'm going to exalt myself. I'm not going to start at the bottom and work my way up. I'm going to find those that I can stab in the back and tear them down so I can step on them and make my way up to the top.

Be alerted this morning that such an attitude has an effect on our love for God that is negative. It is detrimental. It is dangerous.

That my way and my way alone, if it is brought into our lives, will slowly but surely cause the fervent, red, hot love for Jesus Christ to turn into cold, concrete, calloused heart. In such a state, you can engage in outward religion. You can sing songs.

You can worship outwardly. You can be faithful to church. You can go to Bible studies.

But essentially, your heart has become cold. And the Lord is grieved. Ninety-nine percent of what comes out of the television will feed your mind with, my way.

Now, you remember last week what we spoke on? Who remembers? As a man thinketh, so is he. The media is telling us, have it your way. The books we read are telling us, have it your way.

Ninety-nine percent of the programs on TV are telling us, have it your way. The workplace permeates with the spirit, have it your way. And here in the midst of this corruptible influence lies the pearl of great price, God's chosen elect, those that Jesus loves and died for.

And they are in the midst of such a culture, and unless there is a measure of grace and a diligence born from God to fight this attitude, the fervent, red-hot love for God is going to begin to wax cold in our lives.

And we're going to find the very attitude that characterizes the children of this world walking in our life. And when that happens, we lose the distinctiveness of being a peculiar treasure.

We lose the distinctiveness of demonstrating to a world that we are love slaves to Jesus and that we are loving and obeying Him, and we don't have to have it our way. And when the church loses that distinction, then she becomes religious outwardly, but inwardly corrupt. And when that happens, God has to take severe measures to correct this.

As a man thinks, so is he in his heart. Now, at the beginning of this message, I indicated that there is a leaven that has crept into the church, making it easier to fall into the trap of this whole scenario of starting to think in that way, I want it my way. Here's the leaven.

First of all, before we read that, Proverbs 23, 7, and Matthew 24, I believe it was 11, the love of many shall wax cold, 12. Okay, Proverbs 23, 7 is, As he thinketh, so is he. And also Proverbs 23, 23.

That was another one we mentioned last week. Remember what that scripture was? Buy the truth and sell it not. And you remember the statement that was made last week? We sell the truth when we exchange the truth for a lie.

Buy the truth and sell it not. Well, how do you sell truth? You sell truth when you exchange it for a lie. And you know where the exchange goes on? Right in your head and right in your heart.

When you start believing something that is not true, you are exchanging the truth for that lie. And if that lie gets into your heart, it's going to affect your actions and your decisions. And your actions and your decisions affect your destiny.

Okay, beloved, listen carefully. God, give us courage. To hear your still small voice.

2 Timothy. 2 Timothy chapter 4. The leaven that enables us. The leaven, listen.

The leaven, if you let it into your life, it will make it easier for you to go your own way. Now, I'm going to make a bold statement right now. And it's inclusive.

Which means no one in this auditorium is excluded from the statement. Here it is. I believe that the leaven, which we are about to discover, has crept in different measures into every one of our lives.

Different measures, but every one of our lives. 2 Timothy. How do you spell leaven? L-E-A-V-E-N Now, everybody knows what leaven does, right? You put a little bit in dough and what happens? The whole dough rises.

So you don't need a lot of this stuff. You just need a little bit. And over time, it's going to affect everything.

2 Timothy. Beginning in verse 1. I charge thee therefore. That word charge, guess what it is? A military term.

It's a military term. It's a term that a superior uses or a high-ranking officer uses when he's speaking to a lower-ranking officer. Like, when I was a police officer, my sergeant could come to me and say, Phil, I want you to go to Gulfport High School today and try and find Tom Jones because I got a phone call this morning that it's possible he's got drugs in school.

And when you find him, I want you to detain him and search him. And if you find anything, arrest him and bring him back to the department. And we'll call his parents and we'll set a court date and we'll get him before the judge and the judge will then give him some kind of a punishment.

Well, Tom, or sergeant, I don't think I want to do that today. I had other plans. I'll tell you what.

Here's my calendar. Next week, on Tuesday, I'll have a space available. Sarge, if you want me to do that, I'll look for him next Tuesday.

Daniel's laughing back there because he was in the military. He knows what would happen if you did that. Now, I'm sure being in the Marines, you would get much more of a severe punishment than I. But you understand the purpose.

He's my superior officer. I don't have the prerogative to tell him no. And this is what Paul is saying here.

I charge you. This isn't an option. I charge you, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and at his kingdom.

Preach the word. Be instant, in season, and out of season. That means be ready to do what God says when you feel like it and when you don't feel like it.

Very simple. Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. Okay, here it is.

The leaven. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine. Now, listen.

But after their own lusts. Own lusts. This word own has a possessive connotation.

In other words, this word own identifies these lusts as belonging to the person. That is, my desires. Listen.

The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall heap to themselves teachers having itching ears. Heap to themselves. All that simply means is this.

The time will come when we will not stay under sound teaching. Now, before we even go on, I want to stop your minds from going in a direction that I think maybe most of us might be going in. This is not exclusively talking about a pulpit ministry teaching.

Because most of us would say, well, praise God, I know that's not me because I sit and hear sound teaching every week. Praise God. Can't mean me.

Yes, it can mean you. Yes, it can mean you. I'm going to show you how.

I'll show you how in a second. Remember, this is the leaven that makes it easy for us to do our own thing. They shall gather to themselves, heap to themselves teachers having itching ears.

Listen. And shall turn away their ears from the truth and shall be turned to fables. Brothers and sisters, I'm going to ask a question.

Listen carefully. What and who have you surrounded your life with? What and who have you surrounded your life with? Listen. Someone who is in a weight training program, if they're smart, is going to find a stronger, more experienced person to train with.

Because if they want their condition to improve, they've got to be with someone who's stronger than them, who can push them to the limits, who can show them, though they might think they're strong, in comparison to this guy, I am weak. A young runner who is aspiring to train for a marathon, if he's got any sense, will hunt a marathon runner and ask him, would you please work out with me and train me? You see, a young runner aspiring to win a marathon has to surround himself with those who've already run, so that they can be pushed to the limit and they can see their lack. A young writer will read books that were written by veteran writers in order that they might be stretched and they might be enabled to see their lack and improve.

I think Norman would agree with me that if Norman wanted to sharpen his skills in math, it wouldn't be a good idea to hang around with me and talk to me about calculus. I can't spell. I could spell it.

That's about it. Or trigonometry. Who's the man, Norman, if you want to sharpen your skills? Our dear brother, Mass.

He's a math whiz and it's a gift from God. I know Mass enough to know that this isn't puffing him up. It's something God's given him.

But common sense, Norman. You decide you want to sharpen your skills. You're going to hang out with Mass because he's going to show you how much you've forgotten and he's also going to show you how much you don't know.

Who are you surrounding your life with? Who's in your life? Are the things and the people and the influences in your life building you up spiritually, challenging you to go on? Or are they earthly, carnal, keeping you weak and unchallenged? I'll say that again. I'm reading it. Right as I feel the Lord gave it to me.

Are the things and people and influences in your life building you up spiritually, challenging you to go on? Or are they earthly, carnal, keeping you weak and unchallenged spiritually? You see, the leaven that corrupts us and makes it easier for us to go our way is the leaven of surrounding ourselves with things that don't build us up spiritually, but rather have a slow effect of numbing our love for Jesus, numbing our aspiring after Him and causing in its place a cold, calloused heart where we get this nonchalant, complacent attitude about the things of God and we almost feel comfortable not being on fire for God as if it's the norm, as if it's okay not to love the Lord with all of our heart, mind, strength, and soul, as if it's okay to have fallen from our first love. I mean, everybody else has fallen from their first love. Nobody else seems to be really devoted to Jesus.

Maybe God doesn't expect that from us. Well, are the things that you're surrounding your life with moving you toward that goal? Or are they drawing you back? Listen, they shall not endure sound doctrine. The word endure there means to stay under, to stay under something.

There is the Spirit that has come to the church and it is causing the church to fail from staying under, from enduring sound doctrine. Now, sound doctrine actually means healthy. That which is healthy.

Healthy teaching. Yes, you're getting healthy teaching from the pulpit every Sunday. But what are you doing Monday, and Tuesday, and Wednesday, and Thursday, and Friday, and Saturday, and Sunday? Who are you hanging out with? What are you watching on TV? What kind of entertainment are you involved in? What kind of books are you reading? Because all of those things are teaching you.

And they are either contributing to your spiritual advancement or they are contributing to your spiritual decline. One or the other. Maybe we don't want to be like Jesus as much as we say.

Is that why this leaven has come into our life? After I had my heart attack, I changed my diet, and I started running. People told me I was obsessed, but I didn't believe it. I was.

I was running over 40 miles a week. And in Mississippi, for a few months, I got up to 50 miles a week. Imagine that, Alan.

50 miles a week. That's 8, 9 miles a day. 6 days a week.

Why? Because I wanted to do everything I could to ensure that I wouldn't have another heart attack. Now, you know, I could have said after my heart attack, well, I'm going to do everything I can to try and prevent another heart attack. And then just sat around and ate the way I used to eat and deceived myself.

Oh, it would have been a fair speech, huh? Sounds good, doesn't it? I want to do everything I can. My, what a commendable thing. But you know, when I was a senior in a Christian school my last year, we had paces, little paces, which were little workbooks.

And I remember every pace, every page had a saying on it. And here's one of the sayings I remember that has been with me for all my life. An ounce of action is better than a ton of talk.

I'll say that again. An ounce of action is better than a ton of talk. We're big talkers, aren't we? Oh, we like to talk.

We like to talk. We like to tell it like it is. I put action to my words.

And I don't run that much now. But the point has been made. I don't want to run that much now.

That's why I'm not. But the idea is I wanted to, and I did it. Do you want, has God opened your heart to see the greatest goal you can have in life is not to own your home and to own your own house and to have lots of money in the bank.

Is God opposed to those things? Of course He's not. But if that's your life goal, you're missing God's heart. The greatest goal to have is that I might be transformed by the power of God's holy word and God's holy spirit in order to reflect and express the divine likeness and image of Jesus Christ in this world.

And if that's what you really want, then you are going to get on your knees and you are going to ask God to order your life in such a way where you're not going to surround yourself with anything that is contributing to the inability to secure that goal in your life. Listen, beware of the culture that we live in. If you are feeding off the things of this culture, you will not be surrounding yourself with those things that are instrumental in challenging you to grow in a walk with Jesus Christ.

Now I did not say that you have to leave the world. I did not say that you have to go to a monastic lifestyle. If you are feeding off, it's necessary to live in and among the world.

It's necessary to be engaged with relationships with all kinds of people. But the key is this, what are you feeding off of? What are you allowing to get into your heart and into your mind? That is what is going to affect you spiritually. I see a yellow light flashing regarding many harmless things.

Yes, they may be harmless, but nevertheless, many things which Christians are preoccupied with are slowly destroying the passion within their hearts to know Jesus and grow closer to Him. The way you need to measure what you are surrounding your life with, what you are feeding yourself with, what you are allowing to get into your heart and get into your mind and to preoccupy your thoughts is the standard, how is it affecting my love and passion for Jesus? For the time will come when they will not endure healthy teaching. The thing that you sit under, the thing that you surround yourself with is either going to be healthy or unhealthy.

But after their own lusts. Own lusts. My way.

When you find that you are surrounding yourself with that which contributes to your spiritual decline, rather than putting into your life and praying God puts into your life the things that are challenging you spiritually, it becomes easier to fulfill Proverbs 14.12 because the things in your life are helping you do your own thing, aren't they? Yes. When we are not being challenged, then what are we doing? What's a backslider? Someone who stops going to church? Nope. Someone who stops singing songs about Jesus? Nope.

Someone who stops reading their Bible? Nope. A backslider in heart is filled with his own ways. So you could be filled with your own ways and be as religious outwardly as anyone.

And it's easy to be filled with your own lusts and ways when you're surrounding yourself in an atmosphere that doesn't convict you, that doesn't challenge you, that doesn't show you your lack, that doesn't show you how much further you need to go in your journey in grace and mercy in becoming like Christ. And when you are surrounding yourself with things that feed your carnal, lower base nature, your heart then begins to grow cold. What is the Lord after this morning? I was telling Daniel at the diner that I believe the coming move of God is not going to be, but will include, contained within a building.

The coming move of the Spirit of God is not going to be something that just happens on Sunday mornings. It's going to be a revolutionary movement of God affecting the church in their everyday life. Cleaning out the home.

Cleaning out the mind. Cleaning out the heart. Cleaning out the hobbies.

Cleaning out the activities that are contributing to the spiritual decline of the church and filling in their places things that contribute to the spiritual advancement of the church. I know this is a hard word because it comes against the culture we're living in. But brothers and sisters, we can't get our information from the culture.

We can't be followers. We've got to be leaders. Brothers and sisters, we've got to be leaders in this day that we live in.

If you follow the world, they'll lead you right to destruction. If you follow the Spirit in this world, it'll lead you into a condition of being calloused before God. But if you are a leader and you let the crucified Christ lead you, He'll show you the way.

The way of fullness in Him. The way of living by His power and by His grace. This is a clarion call from the heart of God.

I'm about to close. I thank you for your patience. I know it's difficult sitting in wooden seats.

But God's grace is sufficient. Psalm 101. This entire psalm.

Soon, we are going to walk through and discover something of the heart of God. But I want to just read this one scripture. Psalm 101.

Here's a question. Have you seen your life surrounded in certain areas by things that are not contributing to your spiritual growth, but to your spiritual decline? And if you have, what are you going to do about it? Now, when we can, by God's grace, surround our life with those things that are pushing us on and not pulling us back, here's what happens. Psalm 101, verse number 3. I will set no wicked thing before my eyes.

I hate the work of them that turn aside. It shall not cleave to me. I will not set any wicked thing.

The Hebrew word for wicked there is anything that belongs to Beelzebub. You see the kind of passion that God wants to birth into our heart? You see the kind of passion that we see here? I will set no wicked thing before my eye.

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