"Fighting the Common Cold"

(Selected Scriptures)
9/3/06



Introduction:

*** How can I overcome the ever-increasing coldness and apathy that seems to exist in so many who profess to know Jesus Christ?**

I. Don't let <u>Iniquity</u> cool off your love for others
(Fighting a Cold <u>Love</u>)
Matthew 24:12
"And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold."

II. Don't let <u>Laziness</u> cool off your fervent ministry
(Fighting a Cold <u>Service</u>)
Romans 12:11
"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord"

III. Don't let <u>Self-sufficiency</u> cool off your Fellowship with Christ
(Fighting a Cold Distant <u>Spiritual Walk</u>)
Revelation 3:16-17
"So then because thou art lukewarm . . .I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing . . ."

IV. Don't Let <u>Worldliness</u> cool off your Love for Your Heavenly Father
(Fighting a Cold <u>Devotional Life</u>)
1 John 2:15
"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

"Fighting the Common Cold"

(Selected Scriptures)

9/3/06



Introduction:

*** How can I overcome the ever-increasing coldness and apathy that seems to exist in so many who profess to know Jesus Christ?**

I. Don't let _____ cool off your love for others

(Fighting a Cold Love)

Matthew 24:12

"And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold."

II. Don't let _____ cool off your fervent ministry

(Fighting a Cold Service)

Romans 12:11

"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord"

III. Don't let _____ cool off your Fellowship with Christ

(Fighting a Cold Distant Spiritual Walk)

Revelation 3:16-17

"So then because thou art lukewarm . . .I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing . . ."

IV. Don't Let _____ cool off your Love for Your Heavenly Father

(Fighting a Cold Devotional Life)

1 John 2:15

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

"Fighting the Common Cold"

(Selected Scriptures)

9/3/06

Introduction:

Do you see it? Or am I imagining this? A certain coldness is felt between us.

An apathy seems to have infected most everyone these days.

The love for others; the love for church; the love for God's Word; the love for the ministry just doesn't seem to be like it used to be.

There seem to be chilling spiritual winds blowing all around us.

Plastic smiles; Cold hand shakes; Distant hugs; Infrequent tokens of affection; How often do we meet someone who really seems to care about God's Truth, God's Cause, God's People?

*** How can I overcome the ever-increasing coldness and apathy that seems to exist in so many who profess to know Jesus Christ?**

I. Don't let <u>Iniquity</u> cool off your love for others

(Fighting a Cold <u>Love</u>)

Matthew 24:12

"And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold."

In an eschatological context our Lord Jesus Christ forewarns us of an epidemic that will blanket the world in the Last Days prior to His return.

"Iniquity shall abound"

Iniquity - ανομια (anomia) – without law;
transgression of the law; contempt and violation of law, wickedness

Abound - πληθυνω (plethuno) - multiply; to be increased

"Iniquity shall abound" - Lawlessness will flowing through the streets. Moral absolutes will be thrown out the window. "Down with Christian ethics," the world will chant. "Away with the 10 commandments!"

"The man of sin" will convince the world to throw off moral restraints. Such an anti-law, anti-moral absolute mentality will affect people's love.

"The love of many shall wax cold" –

"Wax cold" - ψυχω (psucho) -
1) to breathe, blow, cool by blowing
2) to be made or grow cool or cold

Note: True love resides where truth abides.

When people reject God's laws, they in turn become totally self-centered and inconsiderate of others.

"Love" which is "others'oriented" will beocme cold.

Where sin reigns, love wanes.

"Men will be lovers of self, lovers of money. . . lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God." (II Tim. 3:1-5).

1 Peter 4:8 - And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

"Above all"- shows priority; importance.

"have" (pres.tense)- continual; uninterrupted.

"charity" ( ) When we think of "charity" we think of giving. This love gives even when the recipient is unworthy.
(It is sacrificial in attitude & actions; it centers on meeting the needs of others. It is unconditional.

"fervent" ( ) lit. stretched out. (used of the muscles of a race horse being stretched to the limits as it crosses the finish line) (It is a love that is strained, strenuous, earnest, intense.)
"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves...lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God"(II Tim.3:1,4)

A love that reaches out (despite difficulty - note: context of suffering) It goes the extra mile, it goes out of its way.

"among yourselves" - impartial, unprejudiced.

"for" = results

"cover" - hides, or veils. (ill. of Noah's 2 sons (Shem & Japheth Gen. 9:23) Love creates an environment that prevents sin. (It covers your sins & their sins)
Love seeks RESTORATION.
(Your sin is dealt with - Mt.5:23 "...gift to the altar & rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee..."
(His sin is dealt with - Mt. 18 "If thy brother shall trespass against thee...go..."

"Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins."
(Prov.10:12)
(love doesn't gossip, or keep a record of wrongs; It does not rejoice in iniquity. I Cor.13)

Love is like a balm (medicine) that **heals** hurts, wounds.
"Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." (Ja.5:19,20)

Can you imagine the revival that would break out if Christians were stumbling over each other to ask forgiveness?
Love is the distinguishing mark of believers.
"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples..."(Jn. 13:35)

II. Don't let Laziness cool off your fervent ministry

(Fighting a Cold Service)
Romans 12:11
"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord"

"Not slothful in business"

"Slothful" = lazy, idle, to be slow and "poky" (Robertson, p. 404).

[SEE: Prov. 6:6-11, 26:13-16]

"In business" = lit. in zeal [same word is translated "diligence" in v. 8]

Laziness may be a characteristic of the world (as they seek to earn the most money with the least amount of effort), but should not be for the Christian.

Sad to say, sometimes the world is more industrious and hard working at their cause than Christians are in theirs.

As Jesus described, it is often the case that: "The children of this world are in their generation wiser than children of light" (Lk. 16:8)

"Fervent in spirit" = burning, boiling, red hot on fire for God in our human spirit, as we serve Christ in spiritual matters. The word "fervent" is ζεω – to boil with heat; It is used of Apollos in Acts 18:25.

As is typically the case for new converts, the Bible describes a man named Apollos, who was "fervent in the spirit (as) he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord. . ." (Acts 18:25).

Our fervency is what should distinguish us from the main line denominations. Our spiritual heat should be many degrees higher than the most zealous of cults.

Solomon said, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy mighty" (Eccl. 9:10).

Time is so short,
the need is so great
and our "business" is so urgent
that we can't afford to be
asleep on our Lord!

It's time to awake! (SEE Rom. 13:11-12)

"Awake thou that sleepest" (Eph. 5:14).

It's time to get "fired up"

It's time to break out of our ice closets; it's time to scrape off the frost; it's time to escalate our spiritual temperatures out of lukewarmness (Rev. 3:16) and serve the Lord with fervency.

Some things can't wait until tomorrow!

"Serving the Lord" = the "service" (douleuo) described is that of a slave (doulos).

We need the attitude of a humble slave who views all that he does for his master as "the least he is responsible to do."

It's our duty! (SEE: Luke 17:7-10).

You can never serve Christ too much!

Everything we do in life (secular or "sacred") is to be service as unto the Lord

(I Cor. 10:31 - "...all to the glory of God").

(Eph. 6:5-7 - "...doing service as to the Lord, and not unto men")

If we view everything we do as "serving the Lord," perhaps such motivation will inspire us to do it with a new fervency.

III. Don't let Self-sufficiency cool off your Fellowship with Christ

(Fighting a Cold Distant Spiritual Walk)

Revelation 3:16-17

"So then because thou art lukewarm . . .I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing . . ."

V. 15

Why would Jesus prefer a people to be "cold" rather than lukewarm?

ANSWER: Because a "cold" people may awake to their coldness (deadness) and repent; whereas a lukewarm (middle-of-the-road) person will remain content!

If he was cold, at least he would feel it, become chilled, and seek clothing (v. 18).

V. 16

"Lukewarm" = To be indifferent, to be neither one thing or another; non-committed

The lukewarm Christian is comfortable, complacent, and content.

Cold water is refreshing to drink. Hot water is invigorating to drink. (EX: warm coffee; warm tea; warm milk).

"Spue thee" = to vomit or reject with disgust.

As the Lord tastes the temperature of your spirituality, what would His reaction be?

What are the causes of a decrease in temperature?

What cools off a believer (church)?

1. The <u>CAUSE</u> of Lukewarmness

A. Christians cool off when they become:
No longer <u>dependent</u> upon Christ (v. 17a)
(Deceived by self-sufficiency)

The Laodiceans actually told others "We have it all." What more could we possibly need?

In A.D. 60, after the city suffered heavy damage from an earthquake, it declined the offer of aid by the imperial government with the reply, "I have grown rich and have need of nothing" (Smith, p. 93).

NOTE: The contrast between this church and the Smyrna church:

--The Smyrna church was in poverty (materially) but rich (spiritually);

--Whereas the Laodicean church was wealthy (materially) but poor (spiritually).

The church of Laodicea, like the city of Laodicea under Roman rule, was very wealthy. The city itself was a center of banking and finance.

No doubt it was a prestigious church -- like churches today with padded pews, wall-to-wall carpet, pipe organs, multi-million dollar budgets, white collar membership, etc. . . . yet devoid of the power of God!

Dead churches with dead preachers, preaching dead messages, to dead or dying people.

Beware: We can become so wrapped up in the blessings that we forget the <u>Blesser</u> (gifts --- Giver; provision --- Provider).

Self-sufficiency is a dangerous position to be in. Why?

1. You think you stand (I Cor. 10:12).

2. You become blind to your true needs.

--EX: Rich man entering heaven is like a camel going through the eye of a needed (Mt. 19:23, 24)
Cp. Mt. 11:25 - "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes."

If the Holy Spirit was taken out of your life, how different would things become? For many "Christians" life would not be altered at all.

2. Christians cool off when they:
No longer <u>see</u> what really matters (v. 17b-18)
(Ignorant of true values)

"Knowest not" - points to ignorance.

To have a problem and know it is sad; to have a problem and be blind to it is even sadder.

"Wretched" = someone who is living in <u>misery</u> or someone who is <u>afflicted</u> (but doesn't realize it).

"Miserable" - someone who is pitied; an object of sorrow; not someone who would be admired, but someone who would cause others to feel sorry toward.

In the eyes of men, no doubt the Laodicean church was a church to be envied. But in the eyes of God, it was a church to be pitied.

The characteristics of being "poor, and blind, and naked" (without the article) indicate the source or reason for their wretchedness and misery (the reference to these 3 characteristics supports this point) (Smith, p. 93).

"Poor" - extremely poor; one who has reached the level of a beggar.

"Blind" = NOTE: Laodicea was widely known for its medical school and particularly famous for an eye salve made from "phrygian powder" mixed with oil" (Reinecker, p. 821). She who had modern technology to assist those with failing sight, was blind herself.

"Naked" - "The city was famous for its garments of glossy back wool" (Reinecker, p. 821).

"All the while, their spiritual power had been decaying, their material wealth and glowing statistics were but shrouds hiding a rotting corpse" (Wiersbe, p. 580).

"Counsel" - to advise

1. "Pure gold"

"Gold tried in the fire" - gold that has been tested and refined. Jesus is offering them "real gold" (spiritual gold).

He offered them the real stuff as opposed to the cheap imitations that they boasted over (and thought were real).

NOTE: How references to refined gold are often linked with faith.

"When He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10).

"The trial of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perisheth" (I Pet. 1:7).

According to James 2:5, God's value of what a person has is measured not by his material wealth, but by his being "rich in faith."

2. "White raiment"

A reference to moral purity (cp. Rev. 19:8).

God offers garments of salvation (Is. 61:10). Man needs to be clothed with God's righteousness (Job. 29:14).

That which is important is not that you wear the latest fashions (which often do not cover one's shameful nakedness).

"Nakedness" - would refer to the lack of spiritual covering.

In the biblical world, "nakedness" was a symbol of shame and humiliation.

Today, many are spiritually naked. When the facades are removed, the inner barrenness and shamefulness is revealed.

Many do not even blush when the corrupt behavior is unveiled.

3. "Eyesalve"

A reference to spiritual insight.

We need the Holy Spirit to open our spiritual eyes, to the end that the eyes of our understanding might be enlightened (Eph. 1:17, 18).

3. Christians cool off when they:
No longer have a close fellowship with Christ (v. 20)
(Separated from intimacy with Christ)

NOTE: This verse specifically applies to believers in context (those who are objects of Christ's love - v. 19).

The phrase "If any man" would open up the applicability of this truth to unbelievers, since Christ wants all men to accept Him personally and intimately (Jn. 1:12; Eph. 3:17).

"I stand" - lit. I have been standing and still am (perfect tense) (This reveals the patience of Christ).

"And knock" - lit. I am continually knocking" (This reveals the politeness of Christ).

A Christian cools off when Christ is no longer the core of his life.

When our fellowship is intimate, however, and Jesus is able to closely minister to our heats, we can experience what the Emmaus disciples said, "Did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?" (Lk. 24:32).

Paul prayed for the Ephesian believers that Christ would "dwell in [their] hearts by faith" - That Christ would be at home; settle down in them.

Too often we treat Christ like a passing visitor or like an occasional guest.

SEE John 15:1-8.

NOTE v. 4 - "Abide in me, and I in you"

NOTE v. 5 - "Without me ye can do nothing"

"Sup" - to eat a meal (English = to have supper).

To a Jew, when someone had you over for a meal, it meant that they accepted your company, they desired your fellowship. (EX: Jesus ate with tax collectors and sinners; the Jews would never eat with Gentiles, because such would be an indication of fellowship)

Cp. Acts 10:28; Acts 11:3 - "Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them"

--With a disobedient brother, we are not to eat (fellowship) - I Cor. 5:11 - "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat."

--EX: How eating the Lord's Supper denotes fellowship (I Cor. 11:23ff).

The <u>CURE</u> for Lukewarmness

Jesus counsels the lukewarm Christian to:

A. "<u>Buy</u> of Me" (v. 18)

The Counselor (Is. 9:6) advises such a church to acquire the answer to her spiritual poverty.

"Poor, blind, naked" - Jesus has the <u>remedy</u> to each (v. 18) and He is the <u>source</u> of each remedy!

(NOTE: You can purchase from Him with no money - Is. 55:1ff)

B. "Be zealous and <u>repent</u>" (v. 19)

"As many as" - implies that there was at least a remnant in this assembly that were objects of Christ's love.

"Love" = "phileo" - to have an affection for; or to be fond of.

God loves His own enough to discipline. He does not led his children go their own way.

NOTE: He only spanks His own. He does not spank the devil's kids (Jn. 8:44; Acts 13:10).

Such love we should be grateful for.

NOTE: The Lord's discipline of His children has 2 aspects:

1) "Rebuke" - verbal reproof - "My sheep hear my voice"

2) "Chasten" - physical discipline (SEE Heb. 12:5-11)

"Be zealous" - is an encouragement to make a decision to change. You must want to change!

"Repent" - reveals the way such change comes about (the means to change)

"Repent" = have a change of mind (attitude) about yourself.

Be honest with yourself.

Honesty is the first step to true blessing.

C. "Hear My voice and open the door" (v. 20)

"If any man hear my voice" -

Are you listening? Has He been speaking to you?

"My sheep hear my voice" - What would Jesus be saying to such a people" -- "May I come in?" "Do you see that life cannot go ont he way it has?" "I desire to have a closer fellowship with you than I ever had. I want you to know me more intimately than you ever had."

Hence the last phrase: "I will come in to him (intimacy) and will sup with him and he with me (fellowship)."

The One who is the Amen, the faithful and true witness "will come in."

It's a promise! But it's conditioned on whether or not you will open the door!

It's rude to keep someone knocking on your door (especially Christ!).

IV. Don't Let Worldliness cool off your Love for Your Heavenly Father

(Fighting a Cold Devotional Life)

1 John 2:15

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

"Love not" - (*me agapate)* - Make a decision to stop your allegiance to and dedication to this old *cosmos*.

The New Testament uses two primary words translated "world."

1. *Aion* - this world's present *time*. The present age (with its degenerate moral characteristics) as opposed to God's future kingdom.

2. *Kosmos* - This world's present program. The Satanic inspired, humanistic system that is alienated from and in opposition to God.

Kosmos - used 79 times in John and 23 times in I John.

What *"Love not the world"* does not mean:

1. John is not saying that we should despise the planet (globe) upon which we live (that which God created was called good; we should not worship the creation, however.).

2. John is not saying that we shouldn't love people (mankind) (God loves the world in this sense and so should we - John 3:16).

"World" - *Cosmos* (cp. Cosmetics) - speaks of an adornment or an arrangement of things.

The "world" of which he speaks is not of the world order as God originally established, but of the world order which has been twisted and perverted by sin and Satan.

The word "world" refers tot he world's organized system (in its lust for material possessions and personal status) as headed by Satan ("the god of this world". . . "the prince of the power of the air"); a system which ignores God, glorifies the temporal, and opposes God's righteous ways.

The "world" is simply that system of man which has God left out (the worst thing about TV and movies is that they depict life without God as normal).

When John speaks of not loving the world, he is referring to a world order and mindset that is at enmity with god, lost in sin, wholly at odds with anything divine.

--This world has a wisdom that is not God's wisdom (I Cor. 3:19)

--This world has a ruler called "the prince of this world" (Jn. 12:31, 16:11)

--This world has a defilement to be avoided (Ja. 1:27; II Pet. 2:20)

--This world hates God and God's people (I John 3:13)

--This world is lulled to sleep in the arms of Satan (I John 5:19)

--This world has a way of thinking and doing things that is antithetical to God (Eph. 2:2)

Worldliness is a "radical individualism" that displays a kindly attitude toward Satan's evil world system and manifests itself in self-centeredness, self-advancement, and autonomy (Jon Trainer citing Chuck Colson).

"Neither the things that are in the world" - speaks of a materialistic mindset.

All believers must use the things in this world, but when we love them in place of God (when they become the center of our attention), we abuse their use (I Cor. 7:31 - "And they that use this world, as not abusing it, for the fashion of this world passeth away").

God promises to meet our needs for certain "things" when we seek first the kingdom of God (Mt. 6:33).

We ought to seek the "things" which are above (Col. 3:1-2 - "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth").

America has approximately 40,000 missionaries on the foreign field (over half are over 60 years old!).

America has approximately 40,000 students in "Bible colleges" and less than 400 will go to the foreign mission field. The greatest major in Bible colleges and universities today (sad to say) is Business not Bible! (Rom Brooks, Baptist World Mission).

What is the reason for such worldly priorities? They learned it at home.

Many times we are worldly and don't even realize it.

--We adopt worldly standards
--We adopt worldly views of husband and wife roles
--we adopt worldly views on child discipline
--We adopt worldly views on dating and marriage
--We adopt worldly views on church growth
--We adopt worldly views on handling problems
--We adopt worldly views on planning our future

"The World" - The values of a Godless system

Worldliness is DANGEROUS to your closeness to God (v.15)

(Love for the world's system & things forfeits your capacity to love God as you should)

"If any man love the world" - No one is excluded; worldliness affects everyone's fellowship with God.

"The love of the Father is not in him" - Not speaking of God's love for the person, but the person's love for God.

You cannot love the world and God at the same time.

You can't give your heart to materialism and vanity and give it to God at the same time. You can't love two masters. God calls love for this world spiritual "adultery." (James 4:4 - "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.")

v. 15b

What you spend your thoughts, time, and money on reveals what you love.

"Christians should view their relationship with the world as a trip to camp. They are only going to be there a short while. They need only pack a few belongings." (Jon Trainer).

"You can't take it with you!" (I Tim. 6:7, 17).

Don't fill your pockets - they will be empty when you leave!

A.W. Tozer said that this world for too many fundamental Christians had become "a playground instead of a battle ground."

"In this world ye shall have tribulation" -

Are you going with the flow or against the tide of this world?

Expect friction and opposition!

Make an impact! Leave your mark behind! Don't be afraid to be different! (unique) Be transformed, not conformed (Rom. 12:1-2)

Make a <u>difference</u> in this world for God's glory! (Mt. 5:13-16)

--Be <u>salt</u> (5:13)

--Be <u>light</u> (5:14-16)

We are in the world but not of it. It is not the ship in the water, but the water in the ship that sinks it. it is not the Christian in the world, but the world in the Christian that ruins him.

When the church was least like the world, it made its greatest impact on the world (J.W. Chapman).

"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" (Mk. 8:37).