

THE DANGER OF WORLDLINESS I

I John 2: 15 - 17

By Donald Townsley

INTRODUCTION

1. One of the great problems that faces the church today is WORLDLINESS.
2. This problem has faced the church in every generation.
3. This was a problem in the church in the First Century -- James 4:4.
4. Many in the church seem little concerned about this problem.
5. Worldliness can destroy the church just as any other error can -- I Cor. 5:6.
6. By observation one can see that every sin found in the world can also be found in the lives of SOME MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH!
 - (1) Drinking
 - (2) Drugs
 - (3) Pornography
 - (4) Dancing
 - (5) Filthy speech
 - (6) Immodesty
 - (7) Fornication
 - (8) Adultery
 - (9) Lying
7. One can observe preachers, Bible teachers, and members on the streets and in public places in shorts and in the briefest attire.

I. WHAT DOES "WORLDLINESS" MEAN?

1. Worldliness is a state of mind (or a mindset) that is expressed in various activities of life that are out of harmony with the will of God.
2. The deed committed, or the word spoken, is simply the expression of the worldliness already present in the heart.
 - (1) Rom. 8: 5 - 8
 - (2) Col. 2:18
 - (3) I Pet. 1:14
 - (4) Rom. 12:1 - 2
 - (5) Mark 7: 21 - 23
 - (6) Matt. 15:19
3. A person is actually what he THINKS -- Prov. 4:23; 27:7; Phil. 4:8; Matt. 12: 34,35.
4. What we are is the result of what we see, hear, read, meditate on, feel, and do -- Psa. 19:14.
5. If a man is led by the lust of the flesh, his conduct will be worldly -- Rom. 8:5; Gal. 5: 16 - 21.
6. If a man is led by the Spirit of God (by the Word), his conduct will be in harmony with the will of Christ - - Gal. 5:16; Psa. 119:11.
7. When one's thinking and conduct is in harmony with the will of God, he is right; he is MORAL; if it is not, he is IMMORAL.
8. Worldliness begins with the love of the world -- I John 2: 15 - 17; 2 Tim. 3:4; Heb. 11:25.

- (1) "Lust of the flesh" -- carnal desires resulting in the work of the flesh -- Gal. 5: 19 - 21.
 - (2) "Lust of the eyes" -- evil desires awakened through sight -- Matt. 5:28; 2 Sam. 11:2.
 - (3) "Pride of life" -- that which appeals to a man's vanity or pride.
9. The tragic mistake many members are making today is in trying to serve the God of this world (2Cor. 4:4) AND the God of heaven AT THE SAME TIME! --Matt. 6:24.
- (1) There can be no divided allegiance-- Matt. 12:30; Josh. 24:15.
 - (2) One cannot be a friend of the world and a friend of God at the same time -- James 4:4.
 - (3) Worldliness weakens and destroys our love for God and sets us in opposition to His will -- I John 2: 15 - 17.
10. The New Testament draws a sharp contrast between the world (the reign of Satan) and the Kingdom of Christ -- Col. 1:13; Acts 26:18.
- (1) John 15: 18 - 19
 - (2) John 17: 14 - 17
11. Several Bible terms which describe the consuming sin that we call "WORLDLINESS":
- (1) The Bible speaks of those who are "sensual" -- James 3:15; Jude 19.
 - 1. "The corrupt desires and affections"; to be full of lust.
 - 2. The "sensual" are given to the gratification of the senses; fleshly; the pursuit of sensual pleasures.
 - (2) The Bible speaks of such persons as being "carnal" -- I Cor. 3:1 - 3.
 - 1. The word "carnal" means "flesh".
 - 2. A carnal person is one who permits his body to CONTROL HIS SPIRIT; Paul was not this kind of man -- I Cor. 9: 27.
 - (3) Worldly persons are also called "fleshly".
 - 1. Col. 2:18
 - 2. I Pet. 2:11
 - 3. This means that they are sensuous and lascivious.
 - (4) The Bible speaks of "*worldly lusts*" -- Tit. 2:12.
 - 1. Worldly lusts are desires for those things which are a part of the world system of evil of which Satan is the head -- John 8:44.
12. Paul exhorts us NOT TO BE CONFORMED (or fashioned) according to this world -- Rom. 12:2.
- (1) Christians must NOT be fashioned to the world in their:
 - 1. Speech -- Eph. 4:29.
 - 2. Dress -- I Tim. 2: 9 - 10.
 - 3. Recreation.
13. Ephesians 5:11 states a positive and negative responsibility:
- (1) We are to be NONPARTICIPANTS in evil practices.
 - (2) We must expose them.

II. THE WORD OF GOD TEACHES THAT CHRISTIANS MUST TAKE POSITIVE ACTION TO BE FREE FROM THE WORLD.

- 1. The condition upon which the Lord will receive us is set forth by Paul in 2 Cor. 6:17:
 - (1) "*Come out from among them*".
 - (2) "*be separate*"
 - (3) "*touch not the unclean thing*"
 - (4) This does not allow any communion with that which is of the world.

2. A Christian must DENY "*worldly lusts*"-- Tit. 2: 11, 12.
 - (1) He must deny himself the right to participate in such wicked acts.
3. Christians must "*flee fornication*"-- I Cor. 6:18; I Thess. 4:3.
4. Christians must "*flee idolatry*"-- I Cor. 10:14; Col. 3:5.
5. Christians must keep themselves "*unspotted from the world*"-- James 1:27.
6. Christians must not "*love the world*"-- I John 2:15.

THE DANGER OF WORLDLINESS II

I John 2: 15 - 17

I PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE CHRISTIANS IN DISCERNING GOOD AND EVIL -- Heb. 5:14.

1. Does it classify you with the WORLD instead of with CHRIST and the CHURCH? -- Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 6: 14 - 17; 2 Cor. 7:1.
 - (1) Does it destroy your identity as a Christian?
 1. DANCING:
 - (1) When you see men and women dancing, what do you think?
 - (2) Do you think people who dance are fine Christians?
 - (3) If you saw the preacher dancing with one of the Bible class teachers, would you want to hear him preach?
 - (4) Dancing is of the world and identifies one with the world, NOT with Christ and His church.
 - (5) Dancing is LASCIVIOUSNESS -- Gal. 5:19.
 2. IMMODEST CLOTHING:
 - (1) When you see a nearly-nude woman or man in the grocery store or some other place, what do you think?
 - (2) Some seem to think we are supposed to behold near-nudity and not be moved to think anything.
 - (3) When you see a scantily attired woman do you think that she is bound to be a "fine Christian woman"?
 - (4) When you see a woman with a scanty top on that doesn't meet her pants, and she is naked in the middle; also looking as if she was "poured into her pants", what do you think?
 - (5) Do you say in your mind that she is bound to be discreet and chaste? -- Tit. 2:5.
 - (6) If you saw some elders and preachers and their wives in swimming together in scanty bathing suits, what would you think about them?
 - (7) Immodest dress identifies one with the world, not with Christ and His church!
 - (8) Immodest dress is FORBIDDEN in the word of God:
 1. I Tim. 2: 9, 10
 2. Titus 2: 4,5

3. Nakedness has always been a symbol of SHAME:

(1) Gen. 3: 7,21

(2) Rev. 3:18

4. Jesus said -- Matt. 5:28.

5. Bathsheba's displaying herself immodestly within the view of David excited lust in his heart and led to adultery -- 2 Sam. 11: 2 - 4.
6. The daughter of Herodias danced before those at Herod's birthday party, and Herod was so stirred that he promised her with an oath that he would give her whatsoever she would ask -- Matt. 14: 6 - 7.
- (9) It is a shame that women no longer "wince" at revealing their bodies, and deliberately adapt their clothes for the purpose of attracting the male.

3. DRINKING

- (1) When you see a man or woman drinking alcoholic beverages, what do you think?
- (2) Do you think they are fine Christians?
- (3) Do you think these people are serving Christ?
- (4) No -- you think these people are of the world!
- (5) If you know they are members of the Lord's church, you think they are NOT sincere in their allegiance to Christ.
- (6) One of the great moral problems of the United States is the drinking of alcohol.
- (7) Drinking is specifically forbidden in the word of God -- Gal. 5: 19 -21; I Pet. 4:3.

THE DANGER OF WORLDLINESS III

I John 2: 15 - 17

I. DOES WORLDLINESS WEAKEN MY INFLUENCE ON OTHERS?

1. The Christian's influence is one of the most potent means for good.
 - (1) The wife who is a Christian, by her influence and example, often leads her husband to obey the gospel -- I Pet. 3:1 - 2.
 - (2) The good example of Christians has a powerful influence on the world -- I Tim. 4:12; Phil. 1:27; Matt. 5:13, 16; Col. 4:5.
 - (3) The Christian influences the world by his or hers:
 1. Speech -- Col. 4:6; Eph. 5:4; Eph. 4: 29.
 2. Places they go:
 - (1) Questionable places should be avoided:
 1. Public poolrooms
 2. Race tracks
 3. Public swimming pools
 4. Dance halls
 5. Liquor stores
 6. Public beaches
 3. People they associate with -- I Cor. 15:33
 4. The way they dress or undress -- I Tim. 2:9 - 10; Prov. 7:10; 2 Sam. 11:2 - 4.
 5. The work they do.
 6. Faithfulness in worship to God.

II. ANYTHING THAT CORRUPTS THE HEART (MIND) IS SINFUL

1. "*For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he*"-- Prov. 23:7.
2. "*Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life*"--Prov. 4:23.
3. Matt. 15: 19 - 20
4. Phil. 4:8
5. Our hearts are affected by what we:
 - (1) SEE -- Matt. 5:28
 - (2) READ
 - (3) MEDITATE ON
 - (4) FEEL
 - (5) DO

III. WHATEVER HINDERS ME FROM PERFORMING MY DUTY AS A CHRISTIAN IS WRONG

1. There are many activities that are not wrong of themselves, but if they take us away from the Lord and His church then we are wrong for putting them before the Lord.
2. Some love pleasure more than they love God -- they put pleasure first -- 2 Tim. 3:4.
3. We are to seek God and His kingdom first in our lives -- Matt. 6:33.

IV. THAT WHICH IS HARMFUL TO THE BODY IS SINFUL

1. Our body is the "temple" of the Holy Spirit -- we are to glorify God in our body -- I Cor. 6: 19 - 20; Rom. 12:1; I Cor. 10:31.
2. We must not use anything that defiles the body:
 - (1) Drugs -- Gal. 5:20
 - (2) Alcohol -- I Pet. 4:3 "*drinking parties*"
 - (3) Tobacco

V. IS THE PRACTICE QUESTIONABLE IN YOUR OWN MIND, AND THEREFORE AN OFFENSE TO YOUR OWN CONSCIENCE?

1. Romans 14:23

VI. DOES THE THING I AM DOING CULTIVATE LUSTFUL DESIRES?

1. Tit. 2: 11- 12; Rom. 13:14 -- "*Don't think of ways to indulge your evil desires*"

VII. WHATEVER PLACES AN UNEQUAL YOKE UPON THE CHRISTIAN IS WRONG.

1. 2 Cor. 6:14
2. An unequal yoke places one at a disadvantage in serving the Lord.
3. This could be a business partnership, etc.

VIII. IS IT PLAINLY FORBIDDEN BY THE SCRIPTURES?

1. Some examples of things plainly spelled out and forbidden -- Gal. 5: 19 - 21; I Cor. 6: 9 - 10; Eph. 4: 25 - 32; Mk. 7: 20 - 23; I Tim. 2: 9 - 10; I Pet. 3:4

IX. ASK YOURSELF, "WOULD JESUS ENGAGE IN THIS ACTIVITY?"

1. Jesus is our example -- I Pet. 2:21; I Cor. 11:1

X. WOULD I WANT TO BE TAKING PART IN THIS ACTIVITY WHEN CHRIST COME THE SECOND TIME?

1. Heb. 9:28; Rev. 1:7

XI. DO I HAVE A MATERIALISTIC APPROACH TO LIFE?

1. Do I think a man's life consists in the abundance of things he possesses? -- Lk. 12:15
2. Do I trust in uncertain riches instead of trusting in the living God? -- I Tim. 6:17
3. Do I find myself serving money instead of God? -- Matt. 6:24.
4. Do I find myself loving money and coveting after money? -- I Tim. 6:10.
5. Do I find myself letting the deceitfulness of riches choke the Word out of my life? -- Matt. 13:22.
6. Do I find myself laying up "treasures" for myself and not being rich toward God? -- Lk. 12:21; Matt. 6: 19 - 21.
7. Why men pursue materialism:
 - (1) Because of jealousy toward one's neighbor -- Eccl. 4:4 "*Then I observed that most people are motivated to success by their envy of their neighbors. But this, too, is meaningless, like chasing the wind.*"
 - (2) Because of the love of wealth -- I Tim. 6:10.
 1. The rich young ruler loved material things more than eternal life -- Mk. 10:17 - 22.
 - (3) Because in our society, the value of a man is most often measured by what he has, instead of what he IS.

THE DANGER OF WORLDLINESS IV

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I. FOUR THINGS THAT CAUSES WORLDLINESS TO DEVELOP AMONG THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

1. COMMERCIAL PREACHING

- (1) When a man preaches for wealth, praise, and power, he will preach what people *want* to hear -- Gal. 1:10.
- (2) Many today want to hear what will not condemn what they are doing.
- (3) Paul said this would happen -- 2 Tim. 4:3- 4.
- (4) Jesus warned -- Luke 6:26.

- (5) Peter warned -- 2 Pet. 2:3.
- (6) Paul warned -- Tit. 1: 9 - 11.
- (7) A failure to have the word of God preached completely and without compromise leads to worldliness.

2. UNQUALIFIED ELDERSHIPS

- 1. Men who are not qualified to lead and tend the flock of God.
- 2. Men who are unwilling to "stand up" against sin -- Tit. 1:9.
- 3. Men who will not discipline the ungodly -- 2 Thess. 3:6.
- 4. Loose and liberal attitudes toward sin on the part of elders produces worldliness in the church -- I Cor. 5: 1 - 7.

3. UNCONVERTED "CHURCH MEMBERS"

- 1. There are many who are numbered with the saints who have never really been converted -- they only got "wet" in water.
- 2. Many have become members because they "liked the preacher", "the building", "the people", or "to please a companion" -- some for "business reasons".
- 3. Many have never repented of their sins -- Acts 2:38
 - (1) They never stopped doing anything after baptism that they were doing before -- they never put off the "old man" -- Col. 3:9.
 - (2) These people influence others in the church to become worldly -- I Cor. 15:33.

4. THE LACK OF DISCIPLINE IN THE CHURCH

- (1) 2 Thess. 3:6
- (2) I Cor. 5: 1 - 7
- (3) Where sin is tolerated, men lose respect for the authority of Christ -- Acts 5:11.

THE DANGER OF WORLDLINESS V

I John 2: 15 - 17

I. FIVE AREAS OF THE CHRISTIAN'S LIFE THAT WILL REFLECT WORLDLINESS IN HIS HEART -- IF HE OR SHE IS WORLDLY.

1. ONE'S SPEECH REFLECTS WORLDLINESS IN THE HEART:

- (1) Jesus said our speech reflects WHAT is in our heart -- Matt. 12: 34 -35.
- (2) Paul , on the speech of Christians: Eph. 4: 29; Col. 3:8; Eph. 5:4.
- (3) LANGUAGE that indicates the heart is of the world:

1. Profanity -- Ex. 20:7; James 3:10
2. Vulgarity -- Eph. 5:4
3. Lying -- Eph. 4:25
4. Backbiting -- Rom. 1:30
5. Boaster -- Rom. 1:30
6. Whisperer -- Rom. 1:29
7. Tattlers and busybodies -- I Tim. 5:13; I Pet. 4:15.

2. ONE'S APPEARANCE REFLECTS WORLDLINESS

- (1) Our state of mind is reflected in our general appearance -- I Tim. 2:9-10
- (2) "Modest apparel" (orderly; well arranged; decent)-- women's clothing should not be such as would expose her body in a way to suggest evil thoughts to men -- Tit. 2:3-5.
 1. When a woman can't STAND, WALK, or SIT in all modesty, she is not "well-arranged".
 2. Modest apparel is NOT:
 - (1) Too short
 - (2) Too tight
 - (3) Too thin
 - (4) Too low at the neckline
- (3) A woman who has the characteristics of "*shamefacedness and sobriety*" cannot expose her body to the gaze of men to excite in them lustful passions -- 2 Pet. 2:14.
- (4) "SHAMEFACEDNESS" -- A sense of shame, modesty, reverence; the ability to blush".
 1. Jer. 6:15 -- "*they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush*".
 2. Many sisters in the Lord's church have no shame; they wear open-back sun-dresses with straps over the shoulders, and low necklines in the assemblies of God's people to worship.
 3. Many wear shorts, skin-tight pants, and go mixed swimming almost nude.
- (4) "SOBRIETY" -- Soundness of mind; self-control.
 1. A godly woman with self-control will NOT wear "enticing clothing" or display her body semi-nude to entice and tempt men.
 2. A woman who wears clothing that tends to excite lustful desires in men is lascivious -- Gal. 5:19.
- (5) A woman partially disrobed excites lust in men -- Matt. 5:28.
 1. Bathsheba excited lust in David's heart -- 2 Sam. 11:2-4.
 2. Herod was stirred by the dance of Herodias' daughter -- Mk. 6:22
- (6) Men must dress in Modest clothing and not look like women in hair style -- I Cor. 6:9.

3. HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS REFLECT WORLDLINESS -- 2 Tim. 3:1-5

- (1) The Bible teaches that the love of disciples one for another is one of the ways by which the World may know that they are disciples of the Lord -- John 13:34-35.
 1. When brethren cannot get along, and no effort is made to get along this is evidence of Worldliness -- I Cor. 3:1-3; Gal. 5:15.
- (2) The family relationships reflect worldliness:
 1. HUSBAND AND WIFE -- their attitudes toward each other -- Eph. 5:22-33; Tit. 2:4-5; Col. 3:18-19; I Pet. 3:1-7.
 2. CHILDREN'S attitude toward parents -- Eph. 6:1-4; 2 Tim. 3:2.

- 3. PARENT'S attitude toward the children -- 2 Tim. 3:3; Luke 1:17.
- 4. Attitudes toward IN-LAWS.
- (3) The way one treats his NEIGHBORS -- Matt. 22: 39; Matt. 7:12.
- (4) The way one treats a STRANGER -- I Pet. 4:9; Heb. 13:1 - 2
- (5) The way one treats BUSINESS ASSOCIATES -- Col. 4:1; Rom. 12:11.
- (6) The way one treats an ENEMY -- Matt. 5: 44 - 48; Rom. 12: 17 - 21.

4. RECREATION

- (1) The way one may spend his leisure time in recreational activities reflects his state of mind toward worldly things.
- (2) The man who becomes so absorbed in pleasures that are right within themselves, and indulges himself excessively in fulfilling his appetites, preferring these to the things of God, is worldly -- 2 Tim. 3:4; Matt. 6:33.

5. RELIGION

- (1) Few people consider religion as an expression of worldliness.
- (2) The Bible teaches all false teachers and false religion is of the world:
 - 1. I John 4: 1, 5; I John 2:19
 - 2. The world is the origin and source of what false teachers teach -- Matt. 15: 7 - 9.
 - 3. False teachers and false religion are loved by worldly people -- John 15:19.
- (3) The majority of people want a worldly religion.
 - 1. Situation ethics -- "the end justifies the means" is used.
 - (1) EXAMPLE: Sex outside of marriage is okay if people "love" each other.
 - 2. It does not matter what you practice in religion if you are "sincere".
 - 3. "One church is as good as another".
- (4) Brethren want a worldly religion -- No pattern, Social gospel, Loose morals, False teaching on salvation.

Preached at River Bend 2000