

## WORLDLINESS IN THE CHURCH

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John said, "*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.*" (I John 2:15). James said, "*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.*" (James 4:4). Paul said, "*Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.*" (2 Cor. 6:17). When the purity of the church is corrupted, its identity is destroyed. The line of distinction must be kept clear between the church and the world.

It is a sad and sorrowful fact that the world has entered into many congregations of God's people. In too many places the church has accepted the common standard of those about them. One cannot tell the people of God from the people of the world from their manner of dress and the activities in which they engage! Young women, and older alike, in the church seem to think they must keep up with and wear the latest styles. Dresses are worn, even in the assemblies of God's people, that are a disgrace to the cause of Christ! They are cut too low, made to fit too tight, and are definitely too short! When these women sit down, there is nothing modest or decent about them (I Tim. 2:9)! A man who is sober in mind and striving to be pure in life feels great shame at what he sometimes is forced to behold out of those he would like to think of as godly and pure women! Many young men who claim to be Christians dress no better -- they wear their clothing too tight to be decent, and hair so long it is a shame! Paul said, "*Doth not even nature itself teach you that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?*" (I Cor. 11:14).

In many places the church has become filled with people who have been divorced and remarried for every cause but the one given by Christ in Matthew 19:9 -- Fornication. Thus many people are living in adultery in many congregations without any preaching being done or disciplinary action being taken against them. These fornicators, many times, are taking a big part in the activities of the congregation -- they lead singing, prayer, and wait on the Lord's table!

The social drink is also the acceptable thing in some places these days. Even some men who call themselves gospel preachers have been known to defend it, and there are a host of others who don't have enough courage of their convictions to cry out against it because they love their jobs more than they do God and the souls of men! It seems to matter little that Paul said by inspiration that drunkenness is a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:21), that Christians are not to be "*drunk with wine*" (Eph. 5:18), and elders are to be men "*not given to wine*" (I Tim. 3:3).

Dancing is not condemned anymore in many places. Many members of the church are heard to say that they see no harm in it. Dancing by nature, dear reader, encourages immorality! No boy or girl, man or woman, can embrace in the modern dance (having close abdominal contact and intertwining of the limbs, frequently with cheeks together) without having impure thoughts and passion being aroused! Dancing is a lascivious act (Gal. 5: 19), because it arouses desires that cannot be lawfully fulfilled. *Thayer's Greek Lexicon* gives this as one meaning of lasciviousness -- "*indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females*" (Page 80). Dancing is of the world, the flesh and the devil, and no true Christian will be found on the dance floor anywhere!

Immodest dress is found on every hand among the people of God. I marvel at the lack of shame that so-called 'Christian' women do have! In the word of God nakedness has always been connected with shame (Gen. 3: 6 - 7; Isa. 47:3; Rev. 3:18). Paul said that Christian women are to "*adorn themselves in*

*modest apparel, with shamefacedness*" (I Tim. 2:9). I have never been able to see how any person who had any understanding of righteousness and knew anything about human nature, could think shorts and halter, mini-skirts, dresses and skirts which are skin-tight and way above the knees, could be considered modest! The sad fact about this is that it is getting worse, and more and more women are dressing this way -- even elders' and deacons' families! And many preachers are too cowardly to cry out against this sin because it is found in "high places" and might mean his job!

Gambling is also the accepted thing with many who claim to be Christians. Lotteries, such as chain letters; the horses; cake walks; chances of all kinds; cards for prizes, etc., you name it and some members of the church are doing it!!

The pulpits are numerous that are supported by elderships that demand the avoidance of any direct condemnation of these specific sins! They are building up crowds by "popular preaching", but are building up a worldly church!!

Friends, we are striving to overcome worldliness and are not afraid to give the specific names of the popular sins of our day and preach against them. What is the attitude toward these things where you worship??

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