

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

The Folly of Worldliness

By Jere Frost

God calls upon us to be spiritually minded, to abhor what is evil and to cleave to what is good (Rom. 12:1, 2). Yet temptations, both brazen and subtle, seek to steal away our hearts from the beauty and simplicity of divine truth and holy living. It was love for this present world that caused Demas to forsake the right way (2 Tim. 4:10).

Many professing Christ have been similarly enticed and enthralled by worldly desires. John gives us five reasons why it is sheer folly.

“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. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever” (1 John 2:15-17).

1. He alienates himself from God. *“If any man love the world, the love of the father is not in him.”*

It is impossible to love God and the world at the same time for they are utterly incompatible. Though we have the capacity to love either, seeing we have the power of choice, there is no way we can love both. The love of one precludes love of the other. The language can be even stronger.

When we walk in sin we not only demonstrate a lack of love for God, but we make ourselves an enemy. Note in the following passage that God is not set forth as the enemy of the sinner, but rather the sinner in his own mind is set forth as the enemy of God.

“And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled” (Col. 1:21). ***“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other”*** (Matt. 6:24).

2. He is wrong. *“For all that is in the world is not of the Father, but is of the world.”*

Everything that is ***“of the world”*** in the passage is that which appeals to the baser nature of man. It is therefore that which is low, selfish, unworthy and vain. All that it offers can be summarized in the three divinely made points: (1) lust of the flesh, (2) lust of the eyes, and (3) the pride of life.

By ***“lust of the flesh”*** we see the craving desire to indulge in sensuality and pleasure. It is low, disgraceful living. ***“Lust of the eyes”*** depicts essentially greed and covetousness, the eager desire to possess for the sake of possessing. The ***“pride of life”*** is the love of status and glory in the eyes of others. It is concerned with image, not character or usefulness. These three pictures show not only the vileness of our conduct, but the corruption of our hearts, when we let sin seize our souls.

3. It is temporary. *“The world passeth away, and the lust thereof.”*

This plainly declares that there is no lasting gain or advantage in sin. The pleasures of sin, as Moses wisely discerned, are ***“for a season”*** (Heb. 11:25). But the consequences are eternal, and they must be forever suffered in hell's agonies. An eternity lost! And for what? – a moment's pleasure, a bauble that glitters, or a

puffed-up pride.

4. There is a better way. “But he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

This is the way of nobility and character. It is attended in life by a peace of mind and renders one useful to God and man in the highest sense. And seeing that it is God who made man, and who best knows man, and whose will is set forth as a guide for man, it naturally and necessarily follows that this is the only way man can attain a full measure of happiness and hope. Is it not the height of folly for a man to disdain and reject the privilege and pleasure of *“walking in the light”* with his God? Righteousness is infinitely better than a life of sin.

5. Eternal life. “He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

What a glorious triumph! This old earth, and all that pertains to it, is destroyed. The pleasures and lust of sinful society, *“the world,”* and now without attraction or appeal. The glitter is gone. But he that did the will of God abides, and his treasures survive the world, and he himself is clothed with a new body, like His, *“for we shall see him as he is”* and *“so shall we ever be with the Lord”* (1 John 3:2; 1 Thess. 4:15-18).

Wherefore, brethren, love not the world, but rather love God with all your heart, soul and mind. You will be glad—both here and hereafter. ■

Gossip’s Corrupt Fruit

By Tom Moody

“GOSSIP” is idle talk or rumors about others. The word can also be applied to the person who initiates or repeats such idle talk.

Many jokes are made about gossip. Some seem to view gossip as a harmless exercise – an annoyance or nuisance at worst.

Christians should realize that gossip (slander, tale bearing, being a busy body) is sinful and carries with it the potential of much heartache and devastation. The sinfulness and seriousness of gossip is clearly illustrated by its effects which are listed in a number of scriptures.

- 1. Gossip makes a fool of the one who practices it. “...he that uttereth a slander is a fool”** (Prov. 10:18).
- 2. Gossip causes deep wounds. “The words of a tale bearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly”** (Prov. 26:22).
- 3. Gossip will separate close friends. “A forward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends”** (Prov. 16:28).
- 4. Gossip brings shame upon the tale bearer. “Debate thy cause with thy neighbor himself; and disclose not a secret to another: lest he that heareth it put thee to shame and thine infamy turn not away”** (Prov. 25:9-10).

If you are tempted to gossip, work on purifying your heart (because evil speech proceeds from the heart (Matt. 15:18-20), increase your love for others, and learn to use your speech *“to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers”* (Eph. 4:29). ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Tommy Glendol McClure, Editor and Evangelist - 925-759-4357

Web Site: www.lodicachurchofchrist.com - Email: lodicachurchofchrist@gmail.com - Phone: 209-365-9250