

BEWARE OF THE SNARE OF WORLDLINESS

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It is my plea that everybody should pay attention since we cannot do anything against the truth but for the truth – **2 Corinthians 13:8** “For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth”. More to this, there is a question, shall I become your enemy because I tell you the truth? **Galatians 4:16** “Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?” These repetitions are very necessary because worldliness involves so many things like the works of the flesh – **Galatians 5:19-21** “¹⁹Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: ^[a]adultery, ^[b]fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, ²¹envy, ^[c]murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God”. In **Galatians 5:19**, Paul listed seventeen actions and attitudes that he described as works of the flesh. These seventeen items can be categorised in several different ways but consider the following overview. The works of the flesh consist of:

- Sins of lust – Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness
- Sin of authority - idolatry, sorcery
- Sin of attitude – hatred, contentions, jealousies, outburst of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy and murders
- Sins of appetite – Drunkenness and revelries.
- **Sin of Lust**
 - **Adultery** is having an unlawful intercourse with another's wife/husband.

- **Fornication** is a broader term denoting every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse.
- **Lewdness** – licentiousness, sensuality. The common component in these sins of lust is the failure to bring the body under subjection to the spirit. We live in a culture that has all but surrendered to fleshly lusts. Nevertheless, we are reminded by Paul's words to the Corinthians that we are to be ruled by the Spirit, and not the flesh – **1 Corinthians 6:13-20**.

Pornography is indeed a sexual sin – **Matthew 5:28** “*But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart*”, and pornography is extremely harmful to a marriage, it would be more appropriately classified under the terms uncleanness or lewdness, and not fornication, which by definition, involve sexual intercourse.

- **Idolatry** – the worship of false gods.
- **Sorcery** – the use of medicine or drugs for magical purposes. These sins of authority attempts to supplant the authority and sovereignty of God – **Exodus 34:14** “¹⁴*(for you shall worship no other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God)*”. False gods and false religions cannot deliver on their promises – **Jude 12** “*These are [a](#)spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried [b](#)about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots*”. Take note also of the word “sorcery” or “witchcraft”. These words are translated from the Greek word, “*pharmakeia*” from which we get the English word Pharmacy. This may help us to understand how, through the use hallucinogenic or mind-altering drugs, these peddlers of false religion were able to confuse and convince people that they possessed great powers.

In more revealed details, we need to understand where we were before and where we should be now. Satan had long ruled Corinth. It was his playground, his showcase, his funhouse of horrors. To be called a “*Corinthian woman*” was to be insulted as a prostitute. The devil was at work – **1 Corinthians 6:9-10** “⁹*Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither*

*fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor [a]homosexuals, nor [b]sodomites, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God". Take note of **verse 11** particularly, specifically, and specially; - And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were [c]sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.*

How to overcome the works of the flesh should be our desire as Christians in our generation though we are to learn from the past – **Genesis 39:12** – “¹² that she caught him by his garment, saying, “Lie with me.” But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside”. The avoidance of sin requires drastic measures. Jesus instructed His disciples to pluck out their eye and cut off their hand rather than to sin with either – **Matthew 5:29-30** “²⁹ If your right eye causes you to [a]sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. ³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to [b]sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell”. Jesus expected His disciples to go to drastic lengths in order to avoid sin. We should not measure our conduct by worldly standards. Our culture and its morals standards fall miserably short of God’s standard of right and wrong.

However, the measure of right and wrong is the word of God, not culture and by it we will be judged – **John 12:48**. This teaching is timely as the writer of Hebrews said, “Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord” – **Hebrews 12:14, Genesis 6:7**. Do you remember the flood, in spite of the fact that Noah was a preacher of righteousness – **2 Peter 2:5** warned men and women of the judgment to come, the people gave no heed to his words and perished. Likewise, Paul made it abundantly clear that those who practice the works of the flesh will not inherit the kingdom of God – **Galatians 5:21** and yet, many live today as though the warning is an empty threat.

The bible is inspired by God for both old and new even for us at present and others who will still be here later. **Eph. 3:21** ²¹ to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

There are certain things we are to know as Christians **Rom. 7:14** ¹⁴ *For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. Rom. 8:7* ⁷ *Because the [a]carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. 1 Cor. 3:3* ³ *for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and [a]behaving like mere men? 2 Cor. 10:46* ⁴ *For the weapons of our warfare are not [a]carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵ casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, ⁶ and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.*

My dear brethren, it is proper to learn from today's teaching and preaching according to Paul's pleading **Rom. 12:1-2** *I beseech[a] you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your [b]reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

Before I conclude, take note of the church and hypocrisy as this is also worldliness. **Rom. 12:9-13** ⁹ *Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; ¹¹ not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; ¹² rejoicing in hope, patient[a] in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; ¹³ distributing to the needs of the saints, given[b] to hospitality.*

Those who were hypocrites were rebuked **Gal. 2:11-13** ¹¹ *Now when [a]Peter had come to Antioch, I [b]withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; ¹² for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing [c]those who were of the circumcision. ¹³ And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.*

There is always a choice either for good or bad. **James 3:13-17** ¹³ *Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you*

have bitter envy and [a]self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. ¹⁵ This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. ¹⁶ For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. ¹⁷ But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

At least we have learnt so much about the world and worldliness and the worst of it now in our generation is the quick money. My co-elder spoke about joblessness and the way forward.

In the world today, there are those who are not after job opportunities but after secret cults where to handle quick money in the field of ritualism or yahoo. Some have intentions for armed robbery, kidnapping, prostitution etc. They have all forgotten the word of God. **1 Tim 6:6-10** *⁶ Now godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷ For we brought nothing into this world, [a] and it is certain we can carry nothing out. ⁸ And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. ⁹ But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

Conclusion

I will not leave my co-bishops uninformed of the snare of worldliness as Paul paid the elders attention. *Acts 20:17-32* ¹⁷ *From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. ¹⁸ And when they had come to him, he said to them: "You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, ¹⁹ serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews; ²⁰ how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, ²¹ testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. ²² And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, ²³ except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. ²⁴ [a] But none of these things move me;*

nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my [b]race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

²⁵ “And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. ²⁶ Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent [c] of the blood of all men. ²⁷ For I have not [d]shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. ²⁸ Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church [e] of God which He purchased with His own blood. ²⁹ For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. ³⁰ Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking [f]perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. ³¹ Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears. ³² “So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

May God bless us all to enable us work worthy for eternal life in Jesus name. Amen

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