

The Pleasures Of This World: Finding A Balance Between Hedonism And Asceticism

December 30, 2007

Hedonism will rise up among the churches

2 Timothy 3:1-2, 4 This know also [church], that in the last days perilous [spiritually dangerous] times shall come. 2 For **men** [in the church] **shall be** ?4 ?**lovers of pleasures** more than lovers of God.

HEDONISM is the creed or philosophy that makes pleasure to be or should be the sole end and aim of human action or conduct

the life of faith rejects hedonism

Hebrews 11:24-26 By faith **Moses**, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; 25 **Choosing rather to suffer affliction** with the people of God, than to enjoy **the pleasures of sin** for a season; 26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

Pleasure lovers will be empty

Proverbs 21:17 He who **loves pleasure** will be a **poor man**; He who loves wine and oil will not be rich.

Solomon made pleasure his pursuit in life

Ecclesiastes 2:1-2 I said to myself, "Come now, **I will make a test of pleasure**; enjoy yourself." But behold, **this also was vanity**. 2 I said of laughter, "It is madness," and of pleasure, "**What does it accomplish?**"

It was all vanity ? empty and useless

Ecclesiastes 2:8-11,17 Also, I collected for myself silver and gold, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I provided for myself male and female singers and **the pleasures of men**?many concubines.⁹ Then I became great and increased more than all who preceded me in Jerusalem. My wisdom also stood by me.¹⁰ And all that my eyes desired I did not refuse them. **I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure**, for my heart was pleased because of all my labor and this was my reward for all my labor.¹¹ Thus I considered all my activities which my hands had done and the labor which I had exerted, and behold **all was vanity** and **striving after wind** and there was **no profit under the sun**. 17 So **I hated life**, for the work which had been done under the sun was grievous to me; because **everything is futility** and **striving after wind**.

His final conclusion about life

Ecclesiastes 12:13 Let us hear **the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments** : for this *is* the whole *duty* of man. 14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil.

Pleasures of this life can kill our faith

Luke 8:14 And that which [the seed ? the word of God v.11] fell among **thorns** are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are **choked with** cares and riches and **pleasures of this life**, and bring **no fruit** to perfection.

A spiritual death

1 Timothy 5:6 But **she that liveth in pleasure is dead** while she liveth

Pleasure seekers become enemies of the cross of christ

Philippians 3:18-19 For **many walk** (in the churches), of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are **the enemies of the cross of Christ**: 19 Whose end is destruction, **whose God is their belly** [pleasures of this life], and whose glory is in their shame, **who mind earthly things**.

God's will is for us to enjoy life

1 Timothy 6:17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, **who giveth us richly all things to enjoy**

Acts 14:17 "Nevertheless **He** (God) did not leave Himself without witness, in that **He did good, gave us** rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, **filling our hearts with food and gladness.**"

man should enjoy the good in his labour

Ecclesiastes 2:24 Nothing *is* better for a man *than* that he should eat and drink, and *that* **his soul should enjoy good in his labor.** This also, I saw, was **from the hand of God**

Jesus was not ascetic

Luke 5:29 And **Levi made him** (Jesus) **a great feast** in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them.

nor was he a hedonist

John 4:34 Jesus said to them, "**My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me,** and to finish His work.

John 6:27 "**Do not labor for the food which perishes,** but [labor] **for the food which endures to everlasting age-lasting life,** which the Son of Man will give you..?"

Warnings against asceticism

1 Timothy 4:1,3 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and **doctrines of devils;** 3 **Forbidding to marry,** and **commanding to abstain from foods** which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

Forbidden pleasures

Galatians 5:19 Now **the works of the flesh** are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, **lasciviousness** [?eagerness for lustful pleasure? NLT] 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that **they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.**

Abstain from them

1 Peter 2:11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, **abstain from fleshly lusts,** which war against the soul;

1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. 22 **Abstain from all appearance of evil.**

Overindulgence in pleasure is A trap

Luke 21:33-36 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. 34 And **take heed to yourselves,** lest at any time your **hearts be overcharged with surfeiting** [?over-full of the pleasures,? BBE], and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. 35 For **as a snare** [a trap] shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. 36 **Watch ye** therefore, and pray always, that ye maybe accounted worthy [?that ye may prevail,? ASV; ?be strong enough to come through,? BBE; ?that you may have strength,? NAS; ?that you might be strong enough,? NLT] to escape all these things that shall come to pass [in verse 34], and **to stand before** the Son of man (Rom.14:10; Rev.20:12).

Let the church learn from Sodom & Gomorrha

2 Peter 2:6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, **making them an example** unto those that after should live ungodly;

The pleasures of this world are temporal

Luke 17:28-30 Likewise also as it was in **the days of Lot;** they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded [the pursuit of pleasures]; 29 But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained **fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.** 30 **Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed**

