

The Lakeview Lamp

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." - Psalm 119:105

March 4, 2007

Respectable Worldliness

Robert Harkrider

The most common use of "worldliness" conveys the idea of *overt* sin - lying, drunkenness, adultery, etc. The Bible explicitly condemns such a life. *"Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God"* (**James 4:4**).

Another kind of worldliness, however, is just as prevalent but is not as easily recognized as the enemy of God. It is the kind of worldliness which is "respectable," for only good things are done (i.e., things that are not considered overt sin). This kind of worldliness involves the *material* - our jobs, family, recreation, education, etc. All of these material blessings have a proper place in our lives, but each one of them can become sinful if we attach more importance to them than to the service of God (**Matt 6:33**).

In a world as "busy" as ours and as "prosperous" as ours, Christians must *constantly* guard against crowding the Lord out of our lives. We may not be drunkards, liars, adulterers, etc. and wouldn't be found in company with such; but when our lives become so involved with wholesome activities that Christ is pushed aside from the center of our heart, then we are engaged in "respectable worldliness." How often do we say, "I do not have time..."? We are too busy earning wages, enjoying ball games, or visiting friends. Consequently, we no longer have time to study and teach the Bible, attend all the services, visit the sick, or restore the fallen. We mean no harm. In fact, we *say* we love the Lord, but our lives demonstrate a misplaced affection.

The *blessings* of this great nation have become a *curse* to the spirituality of the church. Take a look at ourselves. We have no time for in-depth study of the Bible, and many audiences prefer a "sermonette" during the time that is set aside for teaching. We drive several miles to attend a ball game but cannot go across town to attend a gospel meeting. We hardly blink an eye at the debt we assume in order to buy a new car or color TV, but we would suggest a psychiatrist for the man who would make the same debt to support gospel preaching in a needy area.

Respectable worldliness has given us a "ho-hum" attitude to its own evil because it *seems* good. We all know the drunkard, adulterer, liar, etc. is going to hell, and we will "amen" the preacher who steps on their toes! But who believes a person will be lost because he worked too many hours making an "honest living," or will be condemned for attending ball games, or relaxing with family or friends, or for buying a new TV or car?

The answer to these questions is found in the parable Jesus taught in **Luke 14:16-24**. The people who were forbidden to taste of the great supper did not commit any overt act of sin. They were lost over a piece of ground, five yoke of oxen, and a new wife. The lesson is simple: PUT GOD FIRST! *"For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"* (**Matt 16:26**).

The Unchanging Church

Kevin Beard, titled

Knowing that the church is built (**Matt. 16:18**) upon the foundation of Jesus Christ, and thus that it will stand forever (**Dan. 2:44**), will cause Christians to appreciate the fact that time and culture cannot alter the makeup of the church.

Many man-made churches of today are in the midst of crisis of identity because they are trying to make their churches fit into the cultural context. Should “the church” ordain women as pastors, priests, etc.? Should “the church” accept homosexuals into full fellowship? How should “the church” handle the issue of abortion? These are questions that most prominent denominations struggle with today, because they see the church as a changing body that must keep pace with man's ever-changing ideas.

Jesus is the foundation of the church, and Jesus does not change. The book of Hebrews proclaims, “*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever*” (**Heb. 13:8**). The point of that statement can be seen in the next verse: “*Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines...*” (**Heb. 13:9**). Since Jesus is unchanging, and since He is the foundation of the church, then it must follow that the church also is unchanging. Various sorts of doctrines that are foreign to the teaching of Christ must be rejected, not adopted, for Jesus does not change. God’s eternal purpose (**Eph. 3:11**) was sufficient for all ages. Therefore, whenever human society becomes inconsistent with the church, it is society that needs to change, not the church.

“Declare His glory among the nations, His wonders among all peoples.” – Psalm 96:3

Family News

Katie Greene knows the **Burch** family. This family was in a car accident last Sunday. The mother, **Cindy**, remains in the hospital. She was on a ventilator. Her heel and shoulder are crushed. While she also has other problems, she is improving some. **Angela**, her daughter, has stomach problems. She is not in the hospital. The rest of the family is all right.

Mary Burnett is about the same.

Quinton Coppage continues to recover from his fall.

Metty Fain is in Room B2, 215 Highland Circle Dr, Portland TN 37148.

Elmo Ferrell continues to have some skin problems. No solution so far.

Barry Fultz began physical therapy this past week. He starts working part time this week. Visit caringbridge.org/visit/nathanandsandlyn for details.

Sandra Hunt has much pain in her right shoulder and arm.

Fred Newman, whom we currently support in Bratislava, will soon end his work there after 7.5 years. He and his family are moving back to NC

Fran Pickens is about the same.

Lyda Plank has a new granddaughter.

Cotton and **Nancy Read** are about the same.

Laura Reed is about the same.

Georgia Taylor passed away Thursday night. She was 84 years old. Her body is at Cole & Garrett in Hendersonville. Visitation is from 3 to 8 today. The funeral is at 2 tomorrow afternoon.

Ame White had an MRI this past week. No results yet.

Robert Wray is about the same.

New Reports: **Gary Hunt** (NYNY); **Chad Lynn** (Huntington, WV); **Allen Malone** (Vietnam).

Out of town, traveling, or visiting: **Allen Malone** (Vietnam).

Lakeview church of Christ

132 New Shackle Island Road

P.O. Box 514

Hendersonville TN 37077

Building: 615-824-1376

www.BibleSaints.com

Bible Call: 615-824-1310

Troy Nicholson

troyjenn@bellsouth.net

"Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks" (1 Thes 5:16-18).