

Week 3 - Dealing with the World

Friday

Scripture Reading: Acts 9:15

“And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.” (*Romans 12:2*)

Anything Can be the World (2)

B: Music

Many young people, because they are not concerned about God's things, have been usurped by worldly music to the point that they cannot sleep without listening to it. They walk, eat lunch, study and sleep with earphones on. They know all the words, all the musical groups and all the singers. But when they sing in the church meetings, they are like mummies: indifferent, with no feeling or reaction to the words of the hymns. They can spend hours and hours listening to and singing songs that they don't know the meaning of, but they cannot appreciate the hymns that speak about God's love. This happens because their lips and hearts are filled with worldly music. If we are not occupied with the things of God, the things of the world will come in to occupy our mind.

Actually, most of the young people like music and it is true that God can use music to speak to us. Why don't they use the musical potential they have to make music and hymns for God? Why don't they use their time to appreciate and enjoy music that can help them in their spiritual experiences?

C. Fashion

Another thing that has usurped the young people from God's presence is fashion. I read a report about businesses that are successful in the midst of the present economic crisis. Among those mentioned, the businesses that stand out are the ones that produce fashion for young people. Why is this? Some of the young people that were interviewed said that they spend a whole month's pay on clothes. Others spend their money to buy a pair of shoes or a pair of running shoes. This is happening because of the meaningless life the young people are living, fully apart from God's purpose. They spend their entire paycheck so that they will not be different from the other young people who, like them, are living insipid, materialistic, consumer lives. There is nothing wrong with buying clothes or shoes, but everything that exceeds one's daily needs becomes his world. For them to give everything they have to get these things shows how empty they are.

The Example of the Orange

Just like an orange, you can be depleted by the world. The world sucks out your "juice," everything that is precious in you: your youth, your vitality and your intelligence. Eventually, when your vitality is gone and the world throws you away, like the orange peel, it says to you, "Now you can serve God..." If you live a wasteful life, spending money on things that are not essential and eating the wrong kind of food, you may become sick and have to depend on medicine and tranquilizers. How can you serve God like that? Of course, even in a situation like that, you can still receive God's salvation, but Satan has gained his objective, which is to make you useless as far as serving God is concerned.

If you realize that your life is that way, or that you are going in that direction, don't wait to become "an orange peel" and then serve the Lord. The Potter wants you now, in the fullness of your life. This does not mean that you should not study or work; quite the opposite. You should study and work in order to be a useful vessel

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in the hands of your Owner. Study and give the best of yourself; not to be somebody important in the world, but to be useful to God. God needs young people to be His vessels unto honor, young people who are different wherever they are, whether in the universities or in companies. He needs young people that know clearly that God put them there as chosen vessels to bring the name of the Lord to people.

The Example of Paul

Paul studied at the feet of Gamaliel. This can be compared to studying at the University of Oxford today. Thus, Paul's education was the best anyone could have received. At that time this was only possible for the most respectable and wealthy families. The apostle Peter himself acknowledged Paul's wisdom saying, "Our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him...things...hard to understand" (2 Pet. 3:15-16). Furthermore, Paul spoke several languages. On one occasion he spoke in a Hebrew dialect used in Palestine (Acts 21:40; 22:2), after having spoken in Greek (21:37). He probably spoke Latin because he possessed Roman citizenship (22:27-28). Paul mentioned excerpts from the poets Aratus and Cleanthes in his discourse in the Areopagus, where the cultured people of Athens used to gather, showing that he knew Greek literature (Acts 17:28). All of this was possible because Paul was a vessel prepared by the Lord to be useful in His hands (9:15).

Key Point:

Chosen vessel

Your Key Point:

Question:

When do things that we need become the world to us?