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Sermon Notes

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## **Contentment Expels Corruption**

### **Ephesians 5:3-7**

A Perilous Journey:

The night before Jesus was crucified, he had some holy time with his disciples... he washed their feet, shared a sacred meal with them—the Last Supper; he taught them many things, and he prayed for them.

There was an overwhelmingly solemn sense of that time... during that evening, he revealed that he would be betrayed and that Peter would deny him three times before the rooster crowed. In the meal, he associated the Passover bread with his body and the Passover wine with his blood... he spoke of a New Covenant in his blood.

Then, he poured out the most powerful and solemn instructions on them preparing them for the life they would live on earth after he died, rose again, and ascended into heaven. It would be a life empowered by the Holy Spirit, the Counselor whom he would send in his place. He said most powerfully,

***John 14:16-18 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever-- <sup>17</sup> the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. <sup>18</sup> ¶ I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.***

Wow... I will not leave you as orphans!!! He likened his leaving them in the world to face the world, the flesh, and the devil without his direct, physical presence as if they would be left as orphans... alone in the world, to fend for themselves. The coming of the Holy Spirit was the way by which he would come to them.

This solemn sense of our great danger in the world was only heightened by the prayer he prayed at the end of that evening...

***John 17:11-12 I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name-- the name you gave me-- so that they may be one as we are one. <sup>12</sup> While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.***

Jesus was deeply concerned about the TERRIFYING SPIRITUAL DANGER his beloved flock would experience in the world... “I will remain no longer in the world, but they are STILL IN THE WORLD...!!”

The powerful prayer: “Holy Father, PROTECT THEM that none of them might be lost!!”

The more I meditate on these words, the more I have the sense of greatly underestimating the danger we are in while we are in this world

We are in the fiercest of war zones! Satan’s overwhelming power is greater than we can face. He is a vicious liar and murderer of souls. He has crafted a darkly brilliant world system that assaults our souls at every moment. He studies and understands our weaknesses better than we do. John Bunyan likened our war with Satan to our souls being liked a walled fortress (he called it “Mansoul”) and Satan assaulting it constantly with overwhelming power. And Satan knows he has a devious ally within the walls of our souls in our INDWELLING SIN, that will arise stealthily in the middle of the night and unlock the door of our souls to the enemy... allowing wickedness to flow in. We are in GRAVE DANGER in this fight.

In 2004, you may remember, that there was a terrifying tsunami in the Indian Ocean, an earthquake of magnitude 9.3 on the Richter scale that caused tidal waves of over 100 feet high. These waves struck the day after Christmas, killing almost a quarter of a million people in 14 countries. In the year that followed, YouTube showed some shocking videos of children playing on the beach moments before the waves struck and swept them away. As a father who loves and cherishes his children, it’s hard to watch those videos without crying... looking at the happy children splashing in the waves, unsuspecting of the overwhelming wall of water bearing down on them, that will sweep them all away.

Jesus seemed to have a similar sense of the overwhelming danger of his beloved children staying in this world while he left us to return to heaven. He pleaded with his Father:

***“Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name that none of them may be lost!”  
John 17:11***

The more I go on in my Christian life, the greater is my sense of the danger to my soul of living in this wicked world.

Ephesians 5:3-7 gives a plain sense of the spiritual danger we are all in, surrounded by temptations at every instant that threatens to sweep us away to spiritual destruction.

As a pastor of over twenty years, I feel that one of the hardest and most vital aspects of the Christian life is to learn how to live in this world properly without being corrupted by its evils and sharing in its judgment. To learn how to be IN THE WORLD BUT NOT OF IT. To learn how to obey this passage:

***HCSB 1 John 2:15-17 Do not love the world or the things that belong to the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him. Because everything that belongs to the world--<sup>16</sup> the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the***

*pride in one's lifestyle-- is not from the Father, but is from the world. <sup>17</sup> And the world with its lust is passing away, but the one who does God's will remains forever.*

And this one:

*James 4:4-5 You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. <sup>5</sup> Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely?*

How can we live in this world and not be corrupted by it? To be pure and holy, and to present a compelling witness to those drowning in the present flood of immorality? HOW??

That is before us in Ephesians 5:3-7.

Here the Apostle Paul speaks in the strongest possible terms about things that must never be named among us... NIV says "not even a hint" of these things:

*Ephesians 5:3-7 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. <sup>4</sup> Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. <sup>5</sup> For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person-- such a man is an idolater-- has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. <sup>6</sup> Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. <sup>7</sup> Therefore do not be partners with them.*

## I. Evils Never to be Named Among Us (vs. 3-5)

### A. Context: A Life of Holiness Suitable for Our Calling

#### 1. Ephesians 4:1

*Ephesians 4:1 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.*

#### 2. Called to be holy

*Ephesians 1:4 he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.*

#### 3. Predestined to be conformed to Christ

***Ephesians 1:4-5 In love <sup>5</sup> he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ***

***Romans 8:29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.***

4. Sins fully atoned-for by the blood of Christ

***Ephesians 1:7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace***

5. Justification by faith

***Ephesians 2:8-9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- <sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast.***

As I preach on HOLINESS, it is VITAL to keep remembering that we can never be forgiven for our impurities and transgressions and sins by our works... good works can never pay for bad works...

We are forgiven and made righteous in God's sight by faith in Christ... our sins are atoned for by His bloody sacrifice on the cross.

6. Yet... a life of holiness that MUST follow justification

***Ephesians 2:10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.***

***Romans 8:13-14 For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, <sup>14</sup> because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.***

7. The life of holiness is the only life that leads to heaven

***Ephesians 4:1 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.***

B. "Not Even a Hint"

***Ephesians 5:3-4 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. <sup>4</sup> Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.***

1. These things must not be NAMED among us...

a. We should not even speak of them in vivid detail

***Ephesians 5:12 For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret.***

- b. To talk about some of these things in great detail would be to lure our minds into dark places where we ourselves would sin
- c. So Paul gives the names of the sins... but he doesn't go into lurid detail about what kinds of things evil people do

2. NIV "there must not be even a hint" of sexual immorality

- a. Think of someone with a drinking problem
- b. They try to mask it with breath mints, but the alcohol is seeping through their pores
- c. The scent of alcohol is on their breath... it permeates their clothes... the slight trace of the sin

TSA dogs that sniff the passengers as they wait in line... the sensitive noses of these trained dogs can sniff out even the minutest traces of banned substances...

- d. The idea here is that these corrupting things must be entirely removed from our lives...

C. The Evils Listed

1. Sexual immorality

- a. Literally Porneia... in the past translated "fornication"
  - i) Sex between two unmarried persons
  - ii) Generally accepted, even celebrated in our culture today
  - iii) Evangelical Christians seem to participate in this sin in similar proportions to non-Christians
  - iv) This is why the warnings in this passage are so vital for us to heed... God hasn't changed his standards at all

- b. Extended more generally to include all forms of sexual immorality

Christians should be CLEARLY PURE SEXUALLY... "not even a hint" of sexual immorality... Billy Graham for years always had a man travel with him as a visible symbol of his commitment to be faithful to his wife... there was no opportunity. He was committed to never being seen alone with a member of the opposite sex.

“Our State” magazine article: His grandson, Will...

“One of the guys that traveled with him would literally go into his hotel room, and my granddaddy would stay outside until this man had checked the room to make sure there was no one in there,” Will says. “He’d check under the beds and in the closets to make sure no one could surprise my granddaddy by having some girl run out naked or in skimpy clothes, and they’d take a quick picture and run out the door screaming, ‘Look who we found Billy Graham with!’ ”

NOT EVEN A HINT...

- i) The lust behind the immorality is particularly in view
  - ii) Internet pornography is a HUGE PROBLEM for us today
  - iii) In the past, Christians would have had to make a special effort to view pornography... go to certain shops, make certain choices that showed a particularly stubborn heart and a determination to sin sexually
  - iv) Now, it is right there with a click of the mouse or more recently, a touch of the finger on a screen of a Smartphone or iPad
  - v) This makes living in the world without being corrupted by it harder than ever before
- c. Anything that causes lust, sinful desire for sexual engagement with someone who is not your spouse is shown as EVIL here... something that MUST NOT BE NAMED among God’s holy people; something of which there must not be even a hint

## 2. Any kind of IMPURITY

- a. Paul expands it to include ANY KIND of uncleanness... anything that may defile your soul
- b. The soul of a Christian is to be CLEAN, pure. Holy, free from all corruption
- c. So Paul speaks broadly of all things that may defile our souls
- d. Things that get into your mind, and filter their way to your heart... pulling you to lust and evil desire
- e. It could be sinful movies on Netflix, or corrupting worldly novels (like Romance novels that allure the hearts of women toward illicit relationships)

### 3. Greed

- a. The general term for covetousness... desire for something that is not yours, not given to you
- b. It could be longing for another man's wife or another woman's husband
- c. It could be material in nature... living for MONEY... greedy for more and more...restlessly discontent with what God has given you, addicted to GAIN, material possessions, houses, cars, clothes, trips, luxuries, a certain kind of LIFESTYLE of material prosperity
- d. A continual LUST FOR MORE

### 4. Obscenity (shamefulness, indecency, filthiness)

- a. Focus here is especially on the SPEECH patterns... speaking obscene things
- b. Talking about what is vile and disgusting
- c. Telling off-color stories and ribald things that stimulate lust
- d. Speaking of shameful things in an alluring way
- e. OBSCENITY

### 5. Foolish talk (chatter, silly speech)

- a. Also Paul focuses on speech patterns...
- b. The idea is of foolish speech... words that add nothing of substance to the hearers
- c. Frothy, silly jokes or stories that add nothing... like being a frothy, foolish BUBBLE of emptiness...
- d. Worthless chatter, empty speech, vapid, frivolous

### 6. Coarse jesting (buffoonery)

### 7. Impure person (whoremonger)

### 8. 2<sup>nd</sup> mention: Unclean person

### 9. 2<sup>nd</sup> mention: Covetous person... an IDOLATER

## D. Reasons: Improper for the Saints

***Ephesians 5:3 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.***

***Ephesians 5:4 Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.***

1. A life that is fitting, seemly, suitable, appropriate

Evil is OUT OF PLACE... to put it mildly... in heaven!!

Heaven understands how powerfully corrupting even a hint of sin is... heaven HATES all evil like a contagion... it is infinitely out of place

At a lower level, for us Christians to be lightweight, frothy, bubble-headed people, frivolous, or worldly... talking much more about sports or current events than the eternal things of God... it is INAPPROPRIATE for us as saints

Picture a 75 -year-old woman shopping in a mall at the cutting-edge boutiques designed for teens and college students... some colorful styles sold at Forever 21, Charlotte Russe ("roose") buying some trendy outfit, not for her granddaughter, but for herself. Picture her putting the outfit on and going to her bingo night. OUT OF PLACE.

2. Mentioned twice: vs. 3 and vs. 4

3. "Saints": Set apart for God's sacred possession

***Exodus 30:22-25 Then the LORD said to Moses, <sup>23</sup> "Take the following fine spices: 500 shekels of liquid myrrh, half as much (that is, 250 shekels) of fragrant cinnamon, 250 shekels of fragrant cane, <sup>24</sup> 500 shekels of cassia-- all according to the sanctuary shekel-- and a hin of olive oil. <sup>25</sup> Make these into a sacred anointing oil, a fragrant blend, the work of a perfumer. It will be the sacred anointing oil.***

***Exodus 30:29-33 You shall consecrate them so they will be most holy, and whatever touches them will be holy. <sup>30</sup> "Anoint Aaron and his sons and consecrate them so they may serve me as priests. <sup>31</sup> Say to the Israelites, 'This is to be my sacred anointing oil for the generations to come. <sup>32</sup> Do not pour it on men's bodies and do not make any oil with the same formula. It is sacred, and you are to consider it sacred. <sup>33</sup> Whoever makes perfume like it and whoever puts it on anyone other than a priest must be cut off from his people.'"***

This is a picture of US... we are SET APART



We are to be pure from all this corruption, set apart as purely unto God, his own possession, not to be shared with the gods of this age.

## II. Contentment Expels Corruption (vs. 4)

***Ephesians 5:4*** *Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.*

### A. Amazing! Thanksgiving the “weapon of choice”

1. All these powerful, soul-destroying sins are listed... how to FIGHT?
2. Paul gives us the weapon of “thanksgiving”??
3. The only way to combat wicked desires is by driving them out with far greater and more perfect desires
4. Living out the delight we have in Christ is the BEST WAY not to indulge in these patterns of wickedness

### B. Speech That Gives Grace

1. Instead of these putrid practices, Paul wants our speech to be full of grace

***Ephesians 4:29*** *“Let no unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up, that it may GIVE GRACE to those who listen.”*

***Colossians 4:6*** *“Let your conversation be always FULL OF GRACE, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.”*

2. Corrupting speech destroys those who listen
  - a. Immoral, dirty speech
  - b. Off-color jokes
  - c. Buffoonery
  - d. Flippant, lightweight, worthless conversation
  - e. These things harm everyone
  - f. BUT...
3. Thanksgiving gives TREMENDOUS GRACE to everyone

- a. Speaking the praise of God... words that flow from a deep-seated sense of the grace of God in Christ
- b. At every moment, such a saint is overwhelmed with the sense of God's lavish grace to him in Christ
- c. He knows he deserves hell... instead, God has loved him and forgiven him in Christ
- d. Every time this Spirit-filled Christian speaks deep thankfulness, he or she gives grace to everyone who listens... they see every circumstance as infinitely better than they deserve... and even the bitterest trials are working salvation in their souls

### C. Thanksgiving Linked to Contentment

- 1. A thankful heart is deeply content with the grace of God
- 2. Contentment is peace and joy wrapped up into one
- 3. Contentment is a rare jewel, a treasure of grace in the midst of a discontent and wicked world

### D. Contentment is the Weapon to Destroy Each of the Sins Paul Listed

- 1. Each of the sins is rooted in a deeply selfish state of discontent
  - a. Sexual immorality... fornication... viewing pornography... these are deeply selfish expressions of discontent
  - b. Not content with what God has provided... not content with the grace of salvation in Christ
  - c. The unsatisfied soul goes WANDERING after something God has forbidden
  - d. Like David wandering on the roof of his palace, looking for something, discontent with what God has provided
    - i) His eyes light upon another man's wife bathing
    - ii) He is moved with lust for her
    - iii) He is not content with what God has given him... a kingdom, riches, power, military success, the removal of all his enemies, an intimate relationship with God, the gift of the Holy Spirit, the role of writing Psalms, many sons and daughters... etc.

***Psalm 16:5-6 “Lord, you alone are my portion and cup... the boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance.”***

But he wasn't feeling content that night!

He wasn't satisfied with what God had provided for him... it just wasn't enough.

He needed something that had been given to another man... his beloved wife.

2. So also all the sins are rooted in a WANDERING DISCONTENT

- a. The filthy mouth and filthy mind is wandering from the path of purity
  - b. The covetous man or woman is constantly searching for some happiness that money can give... and never finding it
  - c. The jokester, the lightweight flippant person is not rooted seriously in what God has done in Christ
3. All of this is IDOLATRY... a yearning after a created thing which takes the place of God... God is the JOY-GIVER... but idols rob us of joy and take God's place

E. Thanksgiving is the Expression of the Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment

1. The thankful Christian understands how much grace God has shown
2. Deeply thankful that God loved him when he was still a sinner... how God saw all his rebellion and wickedness and sent His Son to die for him

***Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this, that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.***

***Titus 3:3-5 “At one time, we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.”***

3. A genuine Christian NEVER GETS OVER THAT!! NEVER!!!

- a. We know we deserved wrath... everyone of us, because of the sins we had committed
- b. But instead of screaming in hell's torments right now, we are here on earth, eating this food or seeing these people, or experiencing this circumstance...

- c. And no matter how difficult it may be, it is still overwhelming grace from God!
  - d. Think of Paul and Silas, singing in the Philippian jail... with no earthly blessings to think of, still overjoyed with the grace of God for them in Christ
  - e. And all the other prisoners were listening to them singing
4. Christians should be overwhelmed with thankfulness!

***1 Thessalonians 5:18 “Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”***

Paul then goes on to give a powerful warning to all who indulge in this kind of wickedness...

### III. Faith-Filled Fear of the Coming Wrath (vs. 5-7)

***Ephesians 5:5-7 For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person-- such a man is an idolater-- has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. <sup>6</sup> Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. <sup>7</sup> Therefore do not be partners with them.***

#### A. A Serious Warning

- 1. Doubled up: “Since you know this, then know that... “ KNOWING, you must KNOW...
- 2. NIV... “of this you can be sure”... be absolutely certain about this

#### B. NO IMMORAL, IMPURE, or GREEDY PERSON has an inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God

- 1. Paul goes back to the pattern of wickedness he was addressing
- 2. “Immoral” translated by KJV as a “whoremonger”... someone who frequents prostitutes.. someone who gives themselves over to a lifestyle of sexual immorality
- 3. Impure = unclean
- 4. Greedy = an idolater.... Someone living for created things in place of God

#### C. NO INHERITANCE

- 1. They are on the road to destruction that Christ spoke of

***Matthew 7:13 "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it.***

2. They are living under the wrath of God RIGHT NOW

***Romans 1:18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness***

***Romans 1:24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.***

3. They will experience far greater wrath in the future

***Hebrews 10:27 nothing to look forward to but the fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.***

4. The exact same warning given in 1 Corinthians 6

***1 Corinthians 6:9-10 "Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor slanderers, nor swindlers will inherit the Kingdom of God.***

5. No inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God

a. This is an unusual expression

b. It probably means BOTH the Kingdom of Christ NOW and the Kingdom of God that is yet to come

c. They are on the outside NOW and will be in the future if they do not repent

d. They will not be welcomed into heaven but will be cast out into eternal darkness

***Matthew 25:41 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.***

D. Deception

***Ephesians 5:6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient.***

1. False teachers deceive people with empty words when they do not warn their congregations about this severe danger

2. People who claim to be Christians but who are characterized by these sins are self-deceived... and perhaps led into deception by false teaching

3. Because of these sins, God's wrath is COMING on the DISOBEDIENT
    - a. There is a day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed
    - b. We believe that we must FLEE the wrath to come by faith in Christ
    - c. There is a day when God will judge the secrets of the heart by his searching word and no one will be able to escape his judgment at that time
  4. We MUST live holy lives
  5. Paul is not speaking here of Christians who fall occasionally into this or that sin
    - a. Every Christian is occasionally overcome by the corruption of sin that is within us
    - b. We "all stumble in many ways" (James 2)
    - c. Paul says "the very thing I hate, I do!" (Romans 7)
    - d. But a genuine Christian does not GIVE HIMSELF OVER to these sins
    - e. A genuine Christian wages war against the lusts of his heart and grieves whenever he sins
    - f. A genuine Christian HUNGERS and THIRSTS for righteousness
    - g. A genuine Christian is DEEPLY GRIEVED whenever he or she stumbles into any sin
    - h. A genuine Christian sees increasing victory over besetting sins and slays actual temptations in those areas
    - i. But hypocrites live in the mess... they are "entangled in sin and overcome"
- E. Therefore, Do Not Be Partners With Them
1. This is the Christian doctrine of SEPARATION
  2. We must separate ourselves from the disobedient
  3. Not in terms of living with them... for then, we would have to leave the world
  4. But separate in terms of these kinds of wicked thoughts, lusts, and habits
  5. ***IF WE SHARE THEIR LIFESTYLE, WE WILL SHARE THEIR JUDGMENT***

Revelation 18 depicts the terrifying fall of the city of Babylon as a symbol for the corruption of the world system

At one point, a warning voice comes out:

***Revelation 18:4 “Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues.”***

#### F. How to Fight

1. Determine in your mind to be holy as God is holy
2. Identify sin areas that consistently cause you trouble
3. Avoid temptation in those areas... “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil”
4. Identify patterns that cause you to sin and cut them off...

***Matthew 5:29-30 If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. <sup>30</sup> And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.***

Be willing to cut off cable TV or certain patterns with internet use... I know of some people that have needed to get rid of their smart phones because they inevitably caused sin

If a woman finds herself attracted to romance novels and the illicit desires they create, she should cut them out of her life

If a person is led to covetousness by walking in the mall or reading worldly magazines, they should cut them out of their lives

5. As I said before, the overall strategy on besetting sin is DEATH BY STARVATION
  - a. The longer it’s been since your last sin in an area, the weaker that temptation will be
  - b. If you feed the lust by indulging it, it will get stronger

## IV. Attractively Holy People in a Repulsively Evil World

### A. Contentment Drives Out Corruption

1. The more content you are with the blessings God has lavished on you, the holier you will become
2. Worldliness will hold little attraction for a genuinely content person
3. Discipline yourself to give thanks for everything God brings your way

***1 Thessalonians 5:18 give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.***

4. Go through an inventory of the blessings of your life and thank God for them
  - a. Thank God for your husband or your wife... do this continually in prayer, and often express thanks directly to that person for the many ways God blesses you through them
  - b. Do the same for your children
  - c. TEENS: thank God for your parents... and express thankfulness to them regularly
  - d. Everyone: Thank God for your many possessions, for the opportunities he's given you for education or employment... even if your job isn't your "dream job", still give thanks that He's enabled you to work at all
  - e. Measure everything in your life against the doctrine of deserving HELL and it will give you a whole new perspective on life

#### **B. Christians Should be the Most Attractive People in the World**

1. Holiness is the most delightful possible life there is in this world
2. Christians don't indulge in wickedness because it is intrinsically evil and repulsive
3. We see evil as it really is... not attractive, but repulsive
  - a. Sexual immorality is a destructive force that has ruined so many lives
  - b. Covetousness, the love of money, is a root of all kinds of evil in this world
  - c. We hate these things as the evil they are
  - d. Satan's smoke and mirrors, his blinding of the human heart as to the true nature of evil, is exposed

***Ephesians 5:11-14 Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. <sup>12</sup> For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in***



*secret.* <sup>13</sup> ***But everything exposed by the light becomes visible,*** <sup>14</sup> ***for it is light that makes everything visible.***

C. Christians NOT Dull Robots who Don't Do This and Don't Do That...

1. Many in the history of the Christian church have had a suspicious and adversarial relationship with their senses and with the good things of this world

Illus. *Babette's Feast*... 19<sup>th</sup> century Denmark, remote coast of Jutland; a young woman named Babette comes to live as a refugee with two elderly sisters in a strict Christian sect that follows the extreme teachings of their founding father; they wear drab clothing, eat very simple food, scuffle out a rather miserable existence on a forlorn, wind-swept coastland of Jutland; Babette serves the two sisters as a cook for fourteen years, serving them the drab food their father's faith had required.

But one day, Babette learns that she has won a small fortune in a lottery. Instead of using the money to return to Paris, she spends it all on a lavish feast for the congregation... for it turns out that Babette was once one of the greatest cooks in Paris. She pours every bit of her skill and all of the money she won in a feast for the people of this church. The sisters watch her prepare the extraordinary feast one dish after another and are worried at the sensual appeal of the delicious food... they think it's some kind of devilry. So they agree to eat the meal, but speak no words of pleasure about the food while they eat it.

There are other lessons from *Babette's Feast*, but the existence of such legalistic sense-denying Christian sects and groups is well-known... many cults and monastic movements and sects and denominations have wrestled with separation from the world in this way!

2. We were not meant to be robots like this... such people do not COMMEND the Christian faith at all!! They do not make the gospel ATTRACTIVE

***Titus 2:10 ... so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.***

3. People who say NO!! to ungodliness and that's all they do do not go far enough
4. We need to show how ATTRACTIVE the grace of God in Christ is... how delightful, how appealing, how satisfying
5. We must combat wickedness with THANKFULNESS... deep gratitude for the grace of God in Christ

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

“Let the things of the Spirit of God characterize our lives, so that as people come to talk to us, they find something attractive about us, something clean and pure, something uplifting, intelligent, thoughtful and profitable; let them feel there is an element of praise in your whole life, which causes them to say, ‘What do they find to praise God about? Where do they find it in a world like ours? I wish I were like that!’” [Comm. P. 338]

“Let us ever remember that we are saints, set apart for God, meant to live to Him and for His glory, to worship and praise him alone.