

Scriptures and Doctrine :: Vain Amusements and Worldly Entertainment

Vain Amusements and Worldly Entertainment - posted by forrests (), on: 2016/8/23 13:51

"I believe that amusements were created by the devil to take the minds of dying men off of their dying. I believe that entertainment and amusements are the work of the enemy to keep dying men from knowing they're denying and to keep men who are enemies of God from remembering they are enemies..."

~ A. W. Tozer;

in: "(John - Part 47): Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled"

<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/mydownloads/singlefile.php?lid=2467&commentView=itemComments>

Re: Tozer on Worldliness - posted by forrests (), on: 2016/8/23 13:55

"The Christian is called to separation from the world, but we must be sure we know what we mean (or more important, what God means) by the world. We are likely to make it mean something external only and thus miss its real meaning. The theater, cards, liquor, gambling—these are not the world; they are merely an external manifestation of the world. Our warfare is not against merely an external manifestation of the world. Our warfare is not against mere worldly ways, but against the spirit of the world.

"For man, whether he is saved or lost, is essentially spirit. The world, in the New Testament meaning of the word, is simply unregenerate human nature wherever it is found, whether in a tavern or in a church. Whatever springs out of, is built upon or receives support from fallen human nature is the world, whether it is morally base or morally respectable."

A. W. Tozer, God's Pursuit of Man (Camp Hill, PA: Windspread, 1950), 124.

Charles Spurgeon - posted by forrests (), on: 2016/8/23 13:59

"No high degree of Divine Grace can be attained when the eyes are fixed upon debasing things. We must have our eyes where we profess that our hearts already are—beyond the skies. We must be looking for Christ to reveal the exceeding riches of His Grace and Glory—not after vanities to display the pleasure of this present evil world—or else our souls will soon lose the force and strength of piety and we shall have good reason to cry, "Quicken me in Your way.""

~ Charles Spurgeon;

"Vanity Deprecated"

<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/spurgeon/sermons53.vii.html>

Re: Charles Spurgeon - posted by forrests (), on: 2016/8/23 14:00

There are some of you who do not think that even worldly amusements are vanity. You love them—there is a sweetness and a substance in them to you.

Perhaps you are like the lady who said to the minister that she loved to go to the play, because, first of all, there was the pleasure of thinking of it before she went—and then there was the pleasure of being there, then there was the pleasure of thinking of it afterwards—and the pleasure of telling it to one's friends. "Ah," said the man of God, "and there is another pleasure you have forgotten." "What is that, Sir?" asked the lady. "It is the pleasure of thinking of it on a dying bed, Madam." Small pleasure that! Some of you have never thought of that last pleasure and, therefore, the world's vanity is very satisfactory to you.

I know what a pig would say if he were to talk. As he munched his husks, he would say, "I cannot tell what to think of those stupid men—they call these husks empty—and throw them away. I think them very luscious and substantial." You would, then, attribute the quality of the taste to the nature of the beast. It is after the manner of a pig and so, sinners say, "We cannot make out why these strict people, these Puritans, find fault with worldly amusements—we find them very sweet." Yes, but you see that it is only a sinner who says so—it is only a sinner who feels so. The true child of God knows that both the pleasures of this world and its cares are, alike, vanity!

~ Charles Spurgeon;

"Vanity Deprecated"

<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/spurgeon/sermons53.vii.html>

Re: Charles Spurgeon - posted by forrests (), on: 2016/8/23 14:05

Again, for a Christian to have his eyes fixed on vanity is injurious to his usefulness. No, moreâ€”it does positive damage to others. When a Christian is found setting his affection upon worldly things, what do worldlings say? "Why, he is one of our own kith and kin! He is just like us! See, he loves what we love, where is the difference between us and him?"

Thus the cause of Christ gets serious injury. How can you, my dear Brother, from the pulpit, for instance, preach concerning a certain sin when you are, yourself, guilty of it? I should like, for instance, to hear a man who swears that Baptism regenerates when he knows it does not, rebuke a countess for saying that she is "not at home" when she is! I should like to hear him rebuke a draper for "a white lie" across the counter. I should like to hear him rebuke the devil, for, I think he could scarcely venture to do it!

Unfaithfulness to the Spirit of God is as great a sin as ever Satan committed! No, my Brothers and Sisters, we must keep ourselves clear of these sins, or else, for practical purposes, the tendon of Achilles has been cut and we cannot serve God with might and main! We can only do some trifling service for Him when our garments are spotted and our souls are set on vanity.

For all these reasons, then, let the Christian pray this reasonable prayer that he may be kept from vanity.

~ Charles Spurgeon;

in "Vanity Deprecated"

(No. 3026)

A SERMON PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1907.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,

AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, A LORD'S-DAY EVENING, IN THE YEAR 1864.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2016/8/23 15:02

"Those of us who have been true readers all our life seldom fully realize the enormous extension of our being which we owe to authors. We realize it best when we talk with an unliterary friend. He may be full of goodness and good sense but he inhabits a tiny world. In it, we should be suffocated. The man who is contented to be only himself, and therefore less a self, is in prison. My own eyes are not enough for me, I will see through those of others. Reality, even seen through the eyes of many, is not enough. I will see what others have invented. Even the eyes of all humanity are not enough. I regret that the brutes cannot write books. Very gladly would I learn what face things present to a mouse or a bee; more gladly still would I perceive the olfactory world charged with all the information and emotion it carries for a dog."

~CS Lewis

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2016/8/23 15:21

Why should Christians bother reading literature at all? Because reading literature humanizes usâ€”in the best sense of the word. Literature helps us realize the image of God in us in ways that we cannot afford to miss. Considerâ€”

â€”Literature exercises and develops our emotions and imaginations. People write about what they experience and how they respond emotionally and imaginatively to their experiences. As we read good imaginative literature, we begin to see our own experiences and emotions in the larger human context. Which emotions are healthy, which not? Which emotions ought we to cultivate, which should we put to death? In literature, we can see the expressions and consequences of human emotions in real-life situations and can be encouraged or take warning accordingly. It is the same with our imaginations. Reading literature gives us what Kevin Vanhoozer calls â€”the power of synoptic visionâ€”: through our imaginations responding to the imaginative writings of others, we see the important issues in life, not just the urgent and immediate circumstances around us. Imagination allows us to see the universal and timeless human issues and truths in the particular experiences of the characters in the book we are reading.

â€”Literature speaks to the human condition in which we all find ourselves all the time. As humans, we all share the same human condition. No matter our gender, race, or nationality, we all struggle with sin, experience the emotions of love and hate, give expression to our strongest desires, and we all long for something that this world cannot satisfyâ€”in the end, God. Literature connects us with others who have given effective expression to our common humanity and longings

and, while we may not agree with a writer's worldview, he or she illuminates our common condition in ways that can help us understand our situation better and relate to others outside of our immediate community. In *Windows to the World: Literature in Christian Perspective*, Leland Ryken helpfully suggests that literature "clarifies the human situation to which the Christian faith speaks." Likewise, with C. S. Lewis, a Christian can think of literature as one form of "pre-evangelism": a means to people ask the important questions "the eternal questions" and which gives us an opportunity to speak the gospel into their lives.

Literature expands us. Reading imaginative literature takes us outside of our own immediate situation. We get to meet other people from other places—even from other times—that we would otherwise never meet. When we read a novel, we don't just follow a plot line; we become acquainted with more people—some friends, some not so much friends—who hone our humanity. We get to look in on other cultures—oriental as well as occidental, contemporary as well as ancient—and in its turn that experience helps us not to be blinded to the realities of our own culture and time. Again, C. S. Lewis is helpful here. What he says in *An Experiment in Criticism* is worth quoting at some length: "We want to see with other eyes, to imagine with other imaginations, to feel with other hearts, as well as with our own." He continues, "in reading great literature I become a thousand men and yet remain myself. Like the night sky in the Greek poem, I see with a myriad eyes, but it is still I who see. Here, as in worship, in love, in moral action, and in knowing, I transcend myself; and am never more myself than when I do." Think a bit about that!

Literature can help us glorify God in our lives. Humans are "wordish" creatures. Only we, of all God's creatures, use sounds and graphics symbolically to communicate what is not immediately present to our five senses. Only we imagine and create what is not essential to our immediate needs. Only we can appreciate beauty, truth and goodness in their own rights. God made us wordish creatures, and he communicated the gospel to us in words. Even Jesus Christ is given the epithet, "Word made flesh," and only He communicates the Father to us sinful people. Because literature is a wordish medium, it is in some senses the form of artistic expression that allows us to get closest to our Creator. After all, we are all part of that great Story, and our stories fit into the larger Story. And you can't tell a story without words!

Why read literature? How can you not? It's part of our heritage as humans. But we must cultivate it if we are not to lose it again and revert to an earlier age or place where the Word and the word were both darkened. Make your words flesh that the Word made flesh might be glorified.

Leland Ryken, *Windows to the World: Literature in Christian Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985), 34.

C.S. Lewis, *An Experiment in Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 137.

Ibid., 141.

Bradley Green, *The Gospel and the Mind: Recovering and Shaping the Intellectual Life* (Crossway, 2010), 104

Re: Literature and the CS Lewis Quote - posted by forrests (), on: 2016/8/23 15:30

While I do believe that those who belong to the Lord must use discernment in what books they read (there are some that are no better than today's soap operas and full of filth and junk) - reading and literature were never really the issue at hand. And I'm quite sure you are aware of that...as I have expressed as much to you previously.

Now, with that said - I don't care to know all about this life and this present world so much as I desire to learn Christ and the one to come. Sure, nature and the world around us was made for Him and I do believe also reveal Him, but He is still to aim - not learning or experience for the sake of it.

I am referring to vain amusements and worldly entertainment - not literature. There is a difference.

I do not find the fanciful (fiction) tales of authors to be all that beneficial either... And add to that that much art and literature is allegorical and/or philosophical in nature, we ought to beware what 'literature' we are drawn to and what we do with the doctrines they peddle...

As C. S. Lewis said: "Those of us who have been true readers all our life seldom fully realize the enormous extension of our being which we owe to authors."

That is scary to me, depending on the authors you read...

Re: Vain Amusements and Worldly Entertainment, on: 2016/8/23 15:50

Dear brother, thank you for raising these points in these posts. That and the posts about pursuing holiness are a much needed cry for today.

Sure its easy to lapse into legalism and judging others or even calling these things sin, but that is not the point that is being made by Tozer and Spurgeon and the others.

Nor is that the point of your post. It is that these pursuits are vanity and we ought to consider how much time we waste on things that have no positive impact on our lives. Meaning we could live without them. But can we live without Gods Word, without fellowshiping in prayer with the Lord on a continual basis?

I just think that this word - to put aside childish things and come back to Jesus is much needed in this hour. And yet you would think we would all jump up and down and say amen and agree on this. Not so. There is a resistant to this word today and I cannot for the life of me figure out why?

Brother Blaine shared this video of a lady who is sharing about holiness and I will link it again because I watched it and the Lord used it to speak to my heart about an area of my life that I had become lax in.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xOg9-2W4F5A&feature=youtu.be>

God bless you, keep on pressing in Forrest and keep on sharing these things, they are much needed. Just don't stray into legalism and passing judgement on others. We must judge and examine our own lives first and foremost and then we must out of love for others warn them that the "bridge is out up ahead".

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2016/8/23 15:58

Forrest-

Perhaps you can give some examples of what you mean by "vain amusements?"

I picked reading because I like to read.

Is it all sports, all movies, all TV, all hobbies?

If I have free time and I am not reading the Bible or praying, am I engaged in vain amusement? Or is free time in and of itself vanity?

I do a LOT of crossword puzzles- the harder Sunday sized ones. Is that a vain amusement? After all, I could be reading the Bible instead.

Re: Amen, Mark - and Ravenhill on Entertainment. - posted by forrests (), on: 2016/8/23 16:02

Amen, good word Mark, and thanks for the encouragement and exhortation.

Here is another good one:

"Most of our joy is clapping our hands and having a good time and then afterwards we talk all the nonsense of the world. We're overboard on laughter and happiness. There's an old saying in the world, "Laugh and the world laughs with you." I change it and say, "Laugh and the Church laughs with you, but weep and you weep alone."

"Because there isn't enough real joy in the house of God, we need entertainment. Entertainment is the devil's substitute for joy. Because there isn't enough power in the house of God, people are always looking for something to take its place. We point the finger at the world, but we need to turn to the Church and say we'd better all get sackcloth and ashes and humble ourselves and say "Almighty God!" When I see the Church in the New Testament, they didn't have stately buildings or paid evangelists or a lot of money. (They couldn't get on television and beg!) But I'll tell you what they did - they turned the world upside-down!

"Have you ever seen the little plaque that reads,

"Only one life, 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last?"

Well, that's not what the poet wrote. The poet wrote this:

"Only one life, 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last. And when I am dying, how happy I'll be, if the lamp of my life has been burned out for Thee."

Do you think all Christians die happy? Not on your life! Some of them die as miserable as sinners. Why? Because they've misused their time and wasted their lives. Many of you have laid dying on a hospital bed and prayed, "Lord, if You would only spare me, I'll do this, that, or the other." Well, have you done it?"

~ Leonard Ravenhill;
in: "The Judgement Seat of Christ", a sermon.

<http://www.ravenhill.org/judgment.htm>

Re: - posted by forrests (), on: 2016/8/23 16:34

Quote:

-----by TMK on 2016/8/23 12:58:53

Forrest-

Perhaps you can give some examples of what you mean by "vain amusements?"

I picked reading because I like to read.

Is it all sports, all movies, all TV, all hobbies?

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I do a LOT of crossword puzzles- the harder Sunday sized ones. Is that a vain amusement? After all, I could be reading the Bible instead.

Do you realize that you are sort of misrepresenting what I am saying? I don't recall making so much of Bible reading...you are. Let me try to answer you (take note of the -->words between my arrows and compare and contrast them

Re: Jonathan Edwards - posted by forrests (), on: 2016/8/23 16:48

Here are some things a believer can do in lieu of entertainment and amusement (and attitudes we could pray to have in all sobriety):

1. Resolved, that I will do whatsoever I think to be most to God's glory, and my own good, profit and pleasure, in the whole of my duration, without any consideration of the time, whether now, or never so many myriads of ages hence. Resolved to do whatever I think to be my duty and most for the good and advantage of mankind in general. Resolved to do this, whatever difficulties I meet with, how many and how great soever.

4. Resolved, never to do any manner of thing, whether in soul or body, less or more, but what tends to the glory of God; nor be, nor suffer it, if I can avoid it.

5. Resolved, never to lose one moment of time; but improve it the most profitable way I possibly can.

7. Resolved, never to do anything, which I should be afraid to do, if it were the last hour of my life.

19. Resolved, never to do anything, which I should be afraid to do, if I expected it would not be above an hour, before I should hear the last trump.

62. Resolved, never to do anything but duty; and then according to Eph. 6:6-8, do it willingly and cheerfully as unto the Lord.

ord, and not to man; â€œknowing that whatever good thing any man doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord.â€

69. Resolved, always to do that, which I shall wish I had done when I see others do it.

<http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-resolutions-of-jonathan-edwards>

Edit: add link.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2016/8/23 17:06

Jonathan Edwards didn't have TV and internet. ;)

Re: - posted by forrests (), on: 2016/8/23 17:15

Quote:

-----by TMK on 2016/8/23 14:06:50

Jonathan Edwards didn't have TV and internet. ;)

"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man..."
~ 1 Corinthians 10:13a

That which has been is what will be,
That which is done is what will be done,
And there is nothing new under the sun.

Is there anything of which it may be said,
â€œSee, this is newâ€?
It has already been in ancient times before us.
~ Ecclesiastes 1:9-10

I'm sure he had his own distractions and temptations in his day that could be compared to ours...

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2016/8/23 17:32

Well, my comment was made tongue in cheek.

But it is undeniable that in simpler times there were far, far fewer "distractions."

I am not saying that is an excuse for us today, but it is just plain fact.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2016/8/24 0:12

Quote:

-----"I believe that amusements were created by the devil to take the minds of dying men off of their dying. I believe that entertainment and amusements are the work of the enemy to keep dying men from knowing theyâ€™re denying and to keep men who are enemies of God from remembering they are enemies..."

Amen, that is a very powerful quote by A.W. Tozer.

Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2016/8/24 7:54

Quote:

----- Perhaps you can give some examples of what you mean by "vain amusements?"

I picked reading because I like to read.

Is it all sports, all movies, all TV, all hobbies?

If I have free time and I am not reading the Bible or praying, am I engaged in vain amusement? Or is free time in and of itself vanity?

I do a LOT of crossword puzzles- the harder Sunday sized ones. Is that a vain amusement? After all, I could be reading the Bible instead.

We are not to be consumed by anything but God. But this is a far cry from being bound by the thought that no matter what I do, I could have been reading my Bible instead.

It matters little what I do in life, I could always have spent that time doing something else, and that is where there is a fine line between pursuit of God and entrance into condemnation of the enemy.

If I were a person who watched two hours of Andy Griffith on television a night, I think, and rightly so, that I should be convicted about how much time I am wasting. I am not redeeming the time. Instead, I am spending almost two work days sitting in front of what is probably worthless entertainment. But if my wife and I watch one or perhaps two episodes a week together when we have an evening free, I do not feel like I have wasted my time, especially if that is part of an evening together in what is usually precious little down time.

If I waste \$40 a week going to movies and am always caught up on the latest features, I would question my stewardship of time and resources. But if I carefully select a clean and wholesome movie (I know it is hard to do that, but occasionally there is one.) and watch one or two a year on a date night with my wife, I have not been a poor steward though I technically could have spent that time studying the Bible.

By the way, the only Biblical guidance I can think of on this topic is that we are to be stewards of what God has given us, we are to be about the Master's business, we are not to be slothful, we are to look on and think on things that are pure, and we are not to love the things of the world.

Oh, I love scrabble. I LOVE scrabble. It is not a worldly amusement. It is simply a mental exercise, and it is enjoyable. But, if it interferes with what God wants to do in my life, if it becomes out of balance and I find myself spending hours in it a week, then I probably need to eliminate it from my life.

Re: twayneb - posted by forrests (), on: 2016/8/24 8:25

Well put. Thank you. That is a very sober and non-legalistic way to approach this issue.

Re: C. H. Spurgeon - posted by forrests (), on: 2016/8/24 8:38

This is beautiful, and I like to think I know a bit of the experience myself (though not nearly enough, if you ask me):

"And may I tell you what I think is the means which God often uses with his people to restore and quicken them, and take their eyes from vanity? I think it is a sight of Christ!

"At any rate, my personal witness is that I never know the vanity of this world so well as when I see the beauties and the perfections of the Lord, my Master. That true man of God, Dr. Hawkerâ€"I am told by a friend of mine who visited him one morningâ€"was asked to go and see a military review that was then taking place at Plymouth. The doctor said, "No." My friend pressed him and said, "I know you are a loyal subject and you like to see your country's fleetsâ€"it is a noble spectacle." The doctor said, no, he could not go and, being pressed until he was ashamed, he made this remarkable answer, "There are times when I could go and enjoy it, but my eyes have seen the King in His beauty this morning, and I have had so sweet a sense of fellowship with the Lord Jesus that I dare not go to look upon any spectacle lest I should lose the present enjoyment which now engrosses my soul."

"I think you and I will have felt the same thing, in our measure, when Christ has manifested Himself to us. What? Look o

n vanity, my Lord, when Your pierced hand has touched my heart? What are the grandest buildings of this world, with all their pomp of architecture, compared with You, You Great Foundation Stone, you Chief Cornerstone, elect and precious ? What is the music of this world, with all its swell and roll, compared with Your name, Immanuel, God With Us."

~ C. H. Spurgeon

In: "Vanity Deprecated", a sermon

<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/spurgeon/sermons53.vii.html>

Re: - posted by StirltUp (), on: 2016/8/24 9:05

Awesome!

Re: , on: 2016/8/24 9:09

forests

The C. H. Spurgeon quotes you posted are excellent. Thank you.

On the other hand the the approval of the religious masses will not be forthcoming in this place (except for a few) or with most other religious types as you can well attest to. Keep up the good work!

Re: - posted by StirltUp (), on: 2016/8/24 9:15

I agree that you are doing great stuff on here Forrest!

"Let us encourage one another to love and good works, the more as we see The Day approaching!"

Blessings,

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2016/8/24 12:27

Travis wrote:

"If I were a person who watched two hours of Andy Griffith on television a night,"

A man after my own heart- but I agree 2 hrs a night would be going overboard.

Posting on SI could be vain amusement, on: 2016/8/24 12:44

Isn't possible that posting on SI could be a vain amusement?

Re: Posting on SI could be vain amusement - posted by TMK (), on: 2016/8/24 12:49

TouchÃ©, tuc.

Re: Posting on SI could be vain amusement - posted by forrests (), on: 2016/8/24 13:07

While it may be a lot of (not very good) things, I wouldn't call it "amusement" (if even perhaps "vain").

It is thoughtful by nature and doesn't seem to fit in to the meaning and definition that either I, or google, or the preachers I am quoting intend.

While there may be harsh words, error, offenses and self indulgence in SI posts, it is hard to believe that it is altogether vain - meaning it has no possibility of (spiritual/eternally or even temporally) truly benefiting either the poster/writer or others that read the posts.

What I mean by "vain amusement" (and I believe the preachers I cite do as well, and I perceive is the general sense of the dictionary definition of it) is time spent on things that do nothing to advance the glory of God and adds nothing to the person or others which truly serves their actual well being (mostly in a spiritual sense, but natural as well), and is totally unessential and is a waste of substantial amounts of time, and very likely has a corrupting effect on the one practicing it.. and is done for no other purpose than to obtain some sensual/fleshly pleasure and to entertain and occupy ones thoug

hts so that they are relieved of the duty of guiding and employing them themselves...

This is what I mean by "vain amusement" - so while posting on SI can very well be self indulgent, self glorifying/seeking, a waste of time, an addiction, and many other things if one is not able to hold and handle it in the grace of God and with self control; it is hard to categorize SI posting as "vain amusement" using this definition (which is the one I assumed all a long, even if I didn't articulate it very well heretofore).

Re: - posted by MrBillPro (), on: 2016/8/24 13:22

After reading this thread I'm afraid to even go outside, some kid might kick a football into the streets, and well there goes my mind focusing on something beside, the word and prayer. Could someone please start a thread on what us imperfect Christians might be allowed to do under grace?

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2016/8/24 13:27

The term "vain" is wholly subjective. Who determines what is a vain amusement? A preacher? A counsellor? Only the Holy Spirit can determine and communicate what is in fact vain and what is not to the inner man. Rest and relaxation is integral to a person's physical well-being and mental fortitude, and how a believer is permitted to relax and rejuvenate by the Holy Spirit is between them and Lord. It is nobody's business to draft a list or determine for another what is vain and what is not.

This is why Christ taught that we should refrain from making judgements based upon exterior observations, but judge according to righteousness. Since our righteousness is of Christ, and not of our own distinguishing, we must adopt His mindset -- which is to judge no man or woman according to the flesh. It is the religious who habitually judge according to appearance, as when the Son of God was judged to be a drunkard and glutton based upon exterior observation. Or the Pharisee judging the prostitute's motive who dare touch the feet of Jesus in the flesh. We only see the tip of the ice above the surface, but God alone knows the 99.9 percent hidden reality.

Re: - posted by forrests (), on: 2016/8/24 13:28

Quote:

-----by TMK on 2016/8/24 9:27:21

Travis wrote:

"If I were a person who watched two hours of Andy Griffith on television a night,"

A man after my own heart...

A man after your own heart? Your heart is Andy Griffith? Nothing against him and his show...but that is where your heart is? That's a little disheartening to hear, brother...

Don't you long for and seek to have the experience and pleasure of the fullness of joy in Christ and the presence of God to the point that you are not only spoiled for mere entertainment - but that you would fear losing the joy and presence of God by partaking of things of a baser sort as described below?

Quote:

-----""...my eyes have seen the King in His beauty this morning, and I have had so sweet a sense of fellowship with the Lord Jesus that I dare not go to look upon any spectacle lest I should lose the present enjoyment which now engrosses my soul."

"I think you and I will have felt the same thing, in our measure, when Christ has manifested Himself to us. What? Look on vanity, my Lord, when Your pierced hand has touched my heart? What are the grandest buildings of this world, with all their pomp of architecture, compared with You, You Great Foundation Stone, you Chief Cornerstone, elect and precious? What is the music of this world, with all its swell and roll, compared with Your name, Immanuel, God With Us."

Isn't Jesus your heart? Isn't pleasing Him your heart? I'm not trying to hurt or slander you - or have a "gotcha!" moment...

but they are your words...and as much as I want to write "I trust that Jesus is your heart, and that you are just joking" - they are your words and I don't have that assurance.

I personally wouldn't even jokingly imply that "my heart" was Andy Griffith (or his show) or that to like him and/or his show could be said to make one 'a man after my own heart'...

Father, let that never be said of me...and you know while it may not be amusement, I have my own vices and indulgences (sweets and food) that I, too, need to lay down for Your glory and by Your grace. Please make me the man that I wish to be, in Jesus - and then some! This will only happen at Your Gracious Hand. Amen.

Re: - posted by forrests (), on: 2016/8/24 13:30

Quote:

-----by MrBillPro on 2016/8/24 10:22:47

After reading this thread I'm afraid to even go outside, some kid might kick a football into the streets, and well there goes my mind focusing on something beside, the word and prayer. Could someone please start a thread on what us imperfect Christians might be allowed to do under grace?

Brother, it seems/feels like you are mis-characterizing what I am saying... I also sense a bit of vitriolic sarcasm in your comment. Am I wrong in this?

Re: - posted by MrBillPro (), on: 2016/8/24 13:49

Quote:

-----forrests Brother, it seems/feels like you are mis-characterizing what I am saying... I also sense a bit of vitriolic sarcasm in your comment. Am I wrong in this?

I just read in a earlier post of yours, where you said TV was a vain amusement. I'm not being sarcastic at all, I'm sincere on a starting a thread that can guide us, maybe a list, on just what passes the smell test of a good Christian. From what I've read the list can't be very long, should be a very easy thing to do.

Re: Andy griffith - posted by TMK (), on: 2016/8/24 14:06

Uhh- Forrest- I was talking about Travis being a man after my own heart because he likes the Andy Griffith show- it's just a figure of speech. That show is possibly the most innocent show ever created.

Of course my wife, who knew Andy when he lived in Manteo NC said he was a jerk in real life.

Re: , on: 2016/8/24 14:37

Quote:

-----by PaulWest on 2016/8/24 13:27:03

The term "vain" is wholly subjective. Who determines what is a vain amusement? A preacher? A counsellor? Only the Holy Spirit can determine and communicate what is in fact vain and what is not to the inner man. Rest and relaxation is integral to a person's physical well-being and mental fortitude, and how a believer is permitted to relax and rejuvenate by the Holy Spirit is between them and Lord. It is nobody's business to draft a list or determine for another what is vain and what is not.

This is why Christ taught that we should refrain from making judgements based upon exterior observations, but judge according to righteousness. Since our righteousness is of Christ, and not of our own distinguishing, we must adopt His mindset -- which is to judge no man or woman according to the flesh. It is the religious who habitually judge according to appearance, as when the Son of God was judged to be a drunkard and glutton based upon exterior observation. Or the Pharisee judging the prostitute's motive who dare touch the feet of Jesus in the flesh. We only see the tip of the ice above the surface, but God alone knows the 99.9 percent hidden reality.

I was thinking the same thing. If there is someone who can define all the things which are vain, then we should walk according to that rather than according to the Spirit. Thus, we are back to rules, regulations and legalism to establish our rig

ht-ness (righteousness).

Re: Andy Griffith - posted by dolfan (), on: 2016/8/24 14:51

I've heard Andy Griffith was reputed to be a not-nice man off screen, too.

The Andy Griffith Show got sideways after Don Knotts left. I never watch the in-color episodes, you know the ones with Howard Sprague and the replacement deputy. The Andy Taylor character got too self-important. You know, MASH did the same thing the longer it was on the air. Alan Alda and Mike Farrell got totally self-consumed in the stories. All sage, wisened figures who went from being funny and likable to being obnoxious. More of the actors' own selves came through the characters as the storylines got worn out.

So, yeah, I have no problem believing Andy Griffith was not a really nice personality. He sure did a bang-up job in No Time for Sergeants and A Face in the Crowd, though. And, if you follow the track of the Taylor character over the life of the Andy Griffith show, he went from being LIKE the No Time For Sergeants character to being a little more like his character in A Face In The Crowd. That's my own opinion anyway.

I do still like to listen to "What It Was Was Football." :D

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xus57BaY3hI>

Hope that wasn't overly vain and worldly. :D

Re: - posted by forrests (), on: 2016/8/24 15:12

Quote:

-----The term "vain" is wholly subjective.

I disagree, it is clear and definitive in its definition. It may be subjective in its application...which leads to your question..

Quote:

-----Who determines what is a vain amusement?

The Lord does, of course. And I believe that He has already revealed that amusement (as defined previously by me in this thread) is, in itself, vain.

Quote:

-----Only the Holy Spirit can determine and communicate what is in fact vain and what is not...

Amen, and I believe He largely has already in His word...

Quote:

-----...to the inner man.

Not everything needs to be so subjective and personal. In my eyes, that seems to border on a type of "spiritual enthusiasm"

sm" and seems a bit like post-modern subjectivity...a veering from the objective and universal nature of Truth toward a more "personal truth" and a general and definitive revelation of God's will and mind on certain matters to an "inward" one to each individual.

I agree that God reveals truth to us by revelation, but it is the same exact truth He has already revealed in His word, and it is the same truth that He has for all of mankind. It is just a deeper/clearer understanding of it and truly grasping of it with the heart and being conformed to it as a result. I believe in this, but this doesn't necessitate such subjectivity. Just because God may not yet have revealed some aspect of Truth to any particular person (or may not have been able to), this is not a grounds to not speak and declare it to them if He has revealed to you in some measure. Truth is universal and objective and absolute...it seems to me that your idea of it (Him) is far more subjective than the word of God reveals it is.

Also, the heavy emphasis on "the inner man" is a bit worrisome. I understand the scripture makes mention of an "inner man" and an "inward man", but given the way the scripture uses it compared to what it seems you may mean by it...something seems noteworthy, to say the least.

I don't believe that Jesus or Paul or the other apostles would excuse a man for not submitting to clear scripture that he has only yet received with his "outer man" by reading it, and has yet to have a special divine revelation from the Spirit of God to his "inner man"...

If the scripture tells us to "redeem the time", we are to do it. If the scripture tells us that God desires a people "zealous for good works" - He means it and expects it. If the scripture exhorts us to "flee youthful lusts" and not to "love the world or the things of the world" and warns the "the lust of the flesh" is not from the Father but from the world...it is imperative that we humbly accept and submit to this truth and seek the grace and power (and revelation) of God to walk in it.

But to say, "I disagree with that, or what exactly it means (in relation to me), because I have not yet had a special revelation of it from the Spirit to my inner man," is perilous! I understand God having mercy on us because of our ignorance of the truth - but our rejection of, or to say the least, our avoiding it, on account of some lack of some special, direct and deep revelation of it (once we are already believers) seems to me to be nothing other than rebellion to it cloaked in fairer terms.

To say: "I see what God is saying and I want to walk in it, but I am not sure how just yet" is a far cry from "I see what it is objectively saying, but I'm not sure how it applies to me yet due to a lack of personal revelation, so I am largely going to disregard it for now...until God shows me what it means." If we don't receive the general revelation through His prophets and apostles, can we really expect a deeper and more personal one? I believe it is the humility that examines what is said, senses the truth of it in their spirit, feels the weight of necessity of it, being bound to it, and thus receives the truth on that level and then seeks a deeper understanding and the grace needed to live the word he has received, that receives the deeper and more personal revelation of Jesus Christ to his spirit by the Spirit of God.

Quote:

-----Rest and relaxation is integral to a person's physical wellbeing and mental fortitude...

Amen, but we are not discussing rest. We are discussing amusement. Perhaps I like to get drunk while I rest...who are you to judge - I need my rest! I know this is a bit of an exaggeration, drunkenness is clearly sin while TV may be a bit more obscure, but I intentionally do that to illustrate a point. Rest is rest. We are not discussing rest, in itself, right now - but amusement and entertainment.

Quote:

-----...and how a believer is permitted to relax and rejuvenate...is between them and Lord.

This sounds a bit like a "Christian" form of "do what thou wilt" and "Am I my brother's keeper?" True, we have a personal relationship and we are personally accountable for our behavior, but there is also the reality that we are "members of one another" and we are to "edify the body in love"... And God even holds some accountable for the well being of others (say, in the case of a watchman or a teacher).

This is a type of individualism and "liberty" that is not found in God's word...not in terms of a brother's well being and in relation to things that are "good" or "evil" for the brother and addressed in the word of God.

If your position were universally true, where would the need for pastors and teachers be? Or prophets? That is the job of an elder brother, to use his wisdom and revelation to help be another set of eyes for his brother. It should be the desire of a truly born again believer to seek to glorify God with their bodies, and to offer their bodies to God as a living sacrifice (if or it is clearly their duty) - and if this desire is in them, they should welcome the other members of Christ's body that help complete them where they are lacking. We are all just a part. If the whole body were an eye... Well, if you are independent of the body, your whole body may be an eye...and you need ears and hands and a nose.. We are to lean on and help one another.

Quote:

-----...by the Holy Spirit...

I'm not too sure the Holy Spirit is going to sit with you through a lot of unholy vanity (such as what comes through the TV). He is holy, and seeks to make us holy. I doubt that He often gives rest to a person through TV. Spiritual rejuvenation, sure. Sleep, no doubt. Some literature, I would guess so. Family time, definitely. Vacation even, sure - I can see that too. .. All in their place and according to His will.

But consuming things that are "of the world" and not "of the Father" is warned about in scripture. And I have a hard time believing that the same Holy Spirit that inspired John to warn us about the "things of the world" and teach us that they are "not of the Father", would then turn and use these same things to edify and strengthen us...

Quote:

-----This is why Christ taught that we should refrain from making judgements based upon exterior observations, but judge according to righteousness.

Judgement that righteously look deeper than first appearance, sure - but a judgement that is void of considering the outward/exterior observations? No. This is "super-spiritual" and not scriptural. Jesus and the apostles instruct us to judge things by appearance at times. The appearance is most often a manifestation of the unseen things within.

Quote:

-----...judge no man or woman according to the flesh in what we think are vain amusements.

"Judge" as in condemn? Absolutely not. But I am to "judge" in the sense of "discern." Otherwise how can I see him wandering (slightly veering from the truth) if I never "judge" him?

What place is there for preaching/teaching or warning or rebuking or exhorting or anything if everything is as subjective and personal as you seem to assert?

Quote:

-----It is the religious who habitually judge according to appearance...

Sure. I am not advocating ever judging unrighteously, much less habitually. They Pharisee was holding people to man-made traditions as if they were binding, and even nullifying scripture through it. They were also inwardly corrupt themselves and were "judging" in the sense of "condemning" - which I am not, nor am I advocating.

I wouldn't see a brother drinking a beer and call him a drunkard. That would be "judging by appearance" and to judge unrighteously. That is what the Pharisees were apparently doing. I may inquire of him how much or how often he drinks (if I

know him and have a ministry opportunity through a love-relationship) and caution him to be wise and self-restrained and avoid drunkenness at all costs (if need be).

Perhaps you are "judging by appearance" when you assume I am saying something I am not?

Re: Bill - posted by forrests (), on: 2016/8/24 15:19

Quote:
-----by MrBillPro on 2016/8/24 10:49:19

Quote:
-----forrests Brother, it seems/feels like you are mis-characterizing what I am saying... I also sense a bit of vitriolic sarcasm in your comment. Am I wrong in this?

I just read in a earlier post of yours, where you said TV was a vain amusement. I'm not being sarcastic at all, I'm sincere on a starting a thread that can guide us, maybe a list, on just what passes the smell test of a good Christian. From what I've read the list can't be very long, should be a very easy thing to do.

You didn't answer my concern that you were mis-characterizing me.

Are you sure the part about seeing a kid kick a football wasn't vitriolic sarcasm?

Do you suppose that because you perceive that I am wrong about something that your sarcasm (if indeed you did use it) is warranted and justified? Is that why you decided not to answer?

Your wanting to make a list (if that is indeed not sarcasm as you say, and isn't intended to shame and humiliate me, as I suspect) sounds more like legalism and making rules than anything I have said or shared that other men of God have said. I am not dealing with specific things, but a condition in the heart manifesting itself through different "things".

Re: Julius21 - posted by forrests (), on: 2016/8/24 15:30

Quote:
-----If there is someone who can define all the things which are vain, then we should walk according to that rather than according to the Spirit. Thus, we are back to rules, regulations and legalism to establish our right-ness (righteousness).

I did not advocate this. I merely pointed to the (Holy Spirit inspired) scripture (and past preachers) to make the case that God does consider amusement vain. That is all.

Re: Taunting? - posted by forrests (), on: 2016/8/24 15:33

Quote:
-----Hope that wasn't overly vain and worldly. :D

Have you resorted to purposefully taunting? What if that does in fact offend my (weak) conscience? I guess you may feel I justified because you have knowledge and a strong conscience...

Re: - posted by dolfan (), on: 2016/8/24 15:56

Quote:

Quote:

-----Hope that wasn't overly vain and worldly. :D

Have you resorted to purposefully taunting? What if that does in fact offend my (weak) conscience? I guess you may feel justified because you have knowledge and a strong conscience...

;)

Re: - posted by StirltUp (), on: 2016/8/24 16:25

Hi F,

I, for one, appreciate your posts and think I understand where you are coming from.

I will certainly not be the one to discourage your zeal for real practical holiness in daily living and a true consecration.

A prophet was never a comfortable person to be around and maybe your forthright sharing is making a few of us squirm a little?

Keep pressing in, brother.

I think we all can use this opportunity to take stock of our lives and where we are not redeeming the time in these evil days.

Have some of us become puffed up through much learning but sub standard living?

I have been challenged and pray the Lord grant us repentance and a renewal of obedience to our First Love.

Blessings,

Re: , on: 2016/8/24 16:31

Is anyone equating "vain" with "sin"?

Re: Encouragement - posted by forrests (), on: 2016/8/24 16:37

William,

Thank you for your encouragement brother. It is always a cup of cold water when we have the encouragement of the brethren. Much appreciated and I am sure you will not lose your reward.

Grace to you to stand in this evil day!

~ Forrest.

Re: - posted by MrBillPro (), on: 2016/8/24 16:41

Quote:

-----twayneb...I matters little what I do in life, I could always have spent that time doing something else, and that is where there is a fine line between pursuit of God and entrance into condemnation of the enemy.

Love this statement, this is something plain and simple to understand.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2016/8/24 18:31

Forrest- you mentioned on another thread that you were feeling outnumbered or ganged up on.

I dont think its anyone's intent to gang up on you- sorry it is coming across this way.

I don't think any of us have a problem with what you are saying in general terms.

What is bothersome is when you start touching on specific things that I, or others, have no personal conviction from the Lord about.

Let's use the Andy Griffith show for instance. I have watched this show for years because I like its down home humor and it really is light hearted innocent entertainment. I have never one time, in all my Christian life, ever felt a check in my spirit about watching an episode of this show.

Now, when you, or Spurgeon, or whoever, starts calling watching this show, a "vain amusement" it is going to raise my hackles. Because the implication is that I am not spiritual enough or obedient enough to "perceive" that the HS is warning me about watching this, and you (or Spurgeon or whoever) has the right to tell me as much.

But it is EQUALLY possible that the Lord has no problem whatsoever with me watching this show. And THAT is why I have no check in my spirit about it.

That being said, YOU may have the hugest check in the world about watching this show. You sense the HS telling you not to watch it. If that is the case, you should not watch.

But just because you have a true check in your spirit, it does not mean that the HS is similarly checking every other Christian on the planet.

The tone of your posts is that practically anything other than Bible reading, witnessing, praying, is vain amusement.

I certainly shouldn't have played baseball, which raises my hackles once again because I loved playing baseball growing up through high school. My parents, who are very solid believers, and my dear departed grandmother, a saint of saints, loved watching me play and she loved her Chicago Cubs. But she loved her Lord and Savior far more. They never had an issue with me playing baseball. But you are suggesting that they were encouraging me to take part in a vain amusement and that their watching me play was a vain amusement. And you don't have any right to say that for anybody else, only yourself.

So that is probably why you are feeling a tad ganged up on. You are stepping on toes that perhaps do not deserve to be stepped on because the Lord has no problem with what the toes were or are doing.

Re: - posted by MrBillPro (), on: 2016/8/24 19:32

Great post Todd! May I interject something. I don't think Forrest has any patent around here on his thoughts, I think he might be feeling a little ganged up on, because he's sort of new, and come through the door with a Bible in one hand and a whip in the other. Maybe he was a southern baptist preacher at one time in his life. We've heard the same from a few others here, but I think we've grown immune to their rants. I've said this many times here before, we're all headed for the same destination, we're just on different roads, personally I want to be on the road the Holy Spirit is leading me down not man.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2016/8/24 19:49

Saints,

I did not follow this thread from the beginning, but we have to make it clear that SermonIndex promotes the message of holiness and godliness and does not side with modern preaching that makes everything in our culture and world acceptable to the Christian.

On the about page is says:

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Sermonindex is not an attempt by man to build something for God. It began as God gave the burden and only will continue as He is guiding the work being fully trusted. It began by a work of God's Spirit and for His glory: Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD Almighty (Zechariah 4:6). The work and ministry of SermonIndex can be encapsulated in this one word: Revival. Concepts such as Holiness, Purity, Christ-Likeness, Self-Denial and Discipleship are hardly the goal of much modern preaching. Thus the main thrust of the speakers and articles on the website encourage us towards a reviving of these missing elements of Christianity. This biblical balanced Christianity is something needed desperately today. Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labor in vain (Psalm 127:1). The desire for a Spiritual Awakening (revival in a larger-sense) is close to the heart of this ministry. That we would see God working in such a way that sin would be forsaken, restitution be made, Christ honored and the morality of society even changed.

=====

We are living in a day of deception where the things of this world are growing exceedingly lustrous and bright and not "dim" as the hymn says. We are not to love the passing world (1 John 2:5) and seek things above (Colossians 3:1-3).

Re: - posted by MrBillPro (), on: 2016/8/24 20:08

Great post Brother Greg, I would love to hear a few of your personal thoughts on grace, I guess grace is still relevant, even in today's times.

Thanks!

Re: The Great God Entertainment by A.W.Tozer - posted by forrests (), on: 2016/8/24 20:59

The Great God Entertainment
by A.W.Tozer

A German philosopher many years ago said something to the effect that the more a man has in his own heart, the less he will require from the outside; excessive need for support from without is proof of the bankruptcy of the inner man.

If this is true (and I believe it is) then the present inordinate attachment to every form of entertainment is evidence that the inner life of modern man is in serious decline. The average man has no central core of moral assurance, no spring within his own breast, no inner strength to place him above the need for repeated psychological shots to give him the courage to go on living. He has become a parasite on the world, drawing his life from his environment, unable to live a day apart from the stimulation which society affords him.

Schleiermacher held that the feeling of dependence lies at the root of all religious worship, and that however high the spiritual life might rise, it must always begin with a deep sense of a great need which only God could satisfy.

If this sense of need and a feeling of dependence are at the root of natural religion, it is not hard to see why the great god Entertainment is so ardently worshiped by so many. For there are millions who cannot live without amusement; life without some form of entertainment for them is simply intolerable; they look forward to the blessed relief afforded by professional entertainers and other forms of psychological narcotics as a dope addict looks to his daily shot of heroin. Without them they could not summon courage to face existence.

No one with common human feeling will object to the simple pleasures of life, nor to such harmless forms of entertainment as may help to relax the nerves and refresh the mind exhausted by toil. Such things, if used with discretion, may be a blessing along the way. That is one thing, however, the all-out devotion to entertainment as a major activity for which and by which men live is definitely something else again.

The abuse of a harmless thing is the essence of sin. The growth of the amusement phase of human life to such fantastic proportions is a portent, a threat to the souls of modern men. It has been built into a multimillion dollar racket with greater power over human minds and human character than any other educational influence on earth.

And the ominous thing is that its power is almost exclusively evil, rotting the inner life, crowding out the long eternal thoughts which would fill the souls of men, if they were but worthy to entertain them. The whole thing has grown into a veritable

ble religion which holds its devotees with a strange fascination; and a religion, incidentally, against which it is now dangerous to speak. For centuries the Church stood solidly against every form of worldly entertainment, recognizing it for what it was—a device for wasting time, a refuge from the disturbing voice of conscience, a scheme to divert attention from moral accountability.

For this she got herself abused roundly by the sons of this world. But of late she has become tired of the abuse and has given over the struggle. She appears to have decided that if she cannot conquer the great god Entertainment she may as well join forces with him and make what use she can of his powers. So, today we have the astonishing spectacle of millions of dollars being poured into the unholy job of providing earthly entertainment for the so-called sons of heaven. Religious entertainment is in many places rapidly crowding out the serious things of God. Many churches these days have become little more than poor theaters where fifth-rate "producers" peddle their shoddy wares with the full approval of evangelical leaders who can even quote a holy text in defense of their delinquency. And hardly a man dares raise his voice against it.

The great god Entertainment amuses his devotees mainly by telling them stories. The love of stories, which is a characteristic of childhood, has taken fast hold of the minds of the retarded saints of our day, so much so that not a few persons manage to make a comfortable living by spinning yarns and serving them up in various disguises to church people.

What is natural and beautiful in a child may be shocking when it persists into adulthood, and more so when it appears in the sanctuary and seeks to pass for true religion. Is it not a strange thing and a wonder that, with the shadow of atomic destruction hanging over the world and with the coming of Christ drawing near, the professed followers of the Lord should be giving themselves up to religious amusements? That in an hour when mature saints are so desperately needed vast numbers of believers should revert to spiritual childhood and clamor for religious toys?

"Remember, O Lord, what is come upon us: consider, and behold our reproach. The crown is fallen from our head: woe unto us, that we have sinned ! For this our heart is faint; for these things our eyes are dim." AMEN. AMEN.

Taken from Root of the Righteous, Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, 1955, p. 32-33.

Taken from this blog: <http://theconstructivecurmudgeon.blogspot.com/2006/07/w-tozer-on-our-idol-entertainment-1955.html?m=1>

Re: - posted by dfella (), on: 2016/8/24 21:03

I knew a brother who went to be with the Lord last year, He was the brother I have mentioned here on several occasions who used to drive 3.5 hours each way to teach a handful of hungry men whom God had called out of the institutional denominational church.

He was a gifted teacher but trust me he stepped on a lot of toes. This brother had lived a completely separated life, everything brother Forrest is saying this brother would give a hearty amen to.

I loved this man, he was a very dear and close brother in the Lord, but in the end of his life he had been abandoned by all in the area of spiritual things. He had seven children all of whom still go to church but even they had abandoned their father. I was one of only a handful of friends who spoke with him regularly at least 4 - 5 times per week.

This man had no ties, affection, or desire for the things of this world, He loved the Lord with all his heart and he was not a man who would compromise his beliefs for no one.

The reason he was left alone was because people could not stand his convictions, his convictions made them feel uncomfortable. When I first met this man and his wife they were happy serving the Lord and he had six of seven of his children still living at home. The eldest moved away estranged from his father till the day he died. Then his eldest daughter married, and then eventually another son rebelled against his parents wishes and eloped. Then another daughter married.

Then his wife died leaving him with three children left in the home. Two more married, and the last left in rebellion and went the way of the world for a season.

While his wife was alive and five of the children were home they began a house church and all five children appeared content in their families home church, many other families came and participated and eventually people began leaving offended even to the point of the children.

As his health was declining, he would not go to the doctor, hospital, or take medicine. Either God was going to heal him or he was going to die. I remember getting a phone call from him in the middle of the night as he was truly at death's door but I knew a phone call to 911 was not an option for this man, period.

As he struggled to breathe, barely being able to speak, and was cold and clammy, we prayed and waited because that was the ONLY 911 call he was going to allow. By God's grace and mercy he rebounded and began to warm up, his breath came back, and the Lord intervened.

This happened several months later during the night and the same thing happened. He lived for two years after these episodes but was clearly declining in health.

I drove to his home 3 hours away the day he died, I got to pray with him and I was the one who had to make the call to 911 which was something I never would have considered before because of his convictions.

There were two elderly sisters in the Lord who also loved this man very much and they were there for several days because he could no longer care for himself and they cared for him and were heartbroken that his children could not see, admit, or believe their father was nearing the end.

As we prayed all day and ministered to him he couldn't even lift his head and realizing the two sisters caring for him would no longer be able to handle him, I felt a peace and the Lord told me to call 911. A couple of his children came and were shocked at his state of being and then the phone calls went out. They were horrified, shocked, and in tears.

They too knew their father's convictions when it came to hospitals, doctors, and medicine. When I said it was time to call 911, and that the Lord said it was okay, they agreed.

As they put him on the stretcher he only had enough strength to say, "The blood of Jesus". I hugged him and whispered in his ear it was okay and that he was going to be with Jesus and that I would see him soon.

When he went to the hospital that man finally got what he had so longed for this side of eternity and that was to have his family united by his side.

Even the estranged son came and each one with heavy tears kissed and loved on their father and thanked him for being the man of God he was. He was far from fake or hypocritical, he was a man who chose to be separate and came out from this world.

Did I agree with every conviction, no, he was not my vessel, but the Lord's. Did we ever argue, debate, disagree, no, because we loved each other enough that there was no desire to hurt or offend one another. It was true Christianity in its purest form.

Do you know why I will not debate or argue? Because of him, he was my mentor, my teacher, my friend, my example. He was a man of God to the utmost, one of the faces I look forward to seeing when I reach heaven.

If we have convictions, hold to them with everything you have, when others have convictions, don't try to talk them out of them, just love them, and pray for them, and in doing so, you will fulfill the law of Christ.

I say this with the sincerest humility and concern, I love you guys, you don't know what an encouragement it is to me, when we have moments of unity and like-mindedness, extending grace and love to one another.

I love to see when heated discussions end up with an apology or confirming love one to another.

We had a young lady post here recently and shared a beautiful testimony at first it scared me because my first thought was, "Is she reading every thread"?

I was offended for her and ashamed. I recently seen a picture of Jeff's beautiful family and kids and I thought to myself, would I feel comfortable if they witnessed some of our discussions and debates?

I love 1 Corinthians 12 and I am going to do it a bit of injustice by pulling out two scriptures for us to consider.

1 Corinthians 12:25-26 KJV (25) That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. (26) And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it.

I will rest on this, time for bed.

BD

Re: - posted by MrBillPro (), on: 2016/8/24 21:12

Wow!! Brother David, that blessed my socks off, thank you so much for taking the time to post that.

Re: Greg and dfella - posted by forrests (), on: 2016/8/24 21:19

Greg, I am encouraged and strengthened to hear you defend holiness and the "old paths". Thank you for pasting the statement from the SI "About" page. I was beginning to wonder if I was the odd man out. Now I feel that these types of exhortations are agreeable to SI. Thanks.

And dfella, thank you for pouring your heart out. I hope to glean a bit of the fruit of this brother's life through your words. You are truly blessed to have had such a man of God to walk beside for a time. Perhaps you could introduce me to him one day. ;) Thanks for sharing that.

Re: - posted by mama27, on: 2016/8/24 21:30

Forrests, I have really appreciated your posts. Please don't stop posting....

Re: - posted by MrBillPro (), on: 2016/8/24 21:47

I don't think there is anyone here that don't appreciate everyone's post to some extent, if not we should. What seems sad to me here sometimes is, we're picking apart the Bible, we can't turn the Bible into a buffet, especially when we don't preach grace. Sometimes we just minimize the importance of God's saving Grace in our lives by not thinking about it, by not giving God glory for it, by not talking about God's grace in our lives. So we talk about our favorite baseball team, we talk about how awesome our yard looks, we talk about the upcoming .

All that is fine and good, unless we don't talk about the grace of God that actually brought our salvation, that gave us a new identity, and showered us with a new view of life.

When we don't do that, we are in danger of doing what the Galatians did, nullifying the grace of God.

I think one of the truest statements I've ever heard from any pastor was, when I heard one say one time "you haven't ever been beat up until you've been beat up by a Christian"-Adrian Rogers. That's a very powerful statement.

Re: dfella, on: 2016/8/24 22:30

David,

That was beautiful, just beautiful...one of the most wonderful things I have ever read on this forum. Thankyou!!!

Re: mama27 - posted by forrests (), on: 2016/8/24 22:41

Quote:

-----Forrests, I have really appreciated your posts.

Thank you so much for making that known to me. I am very blessed and encouraged by it. God bless you for that cup of cold water.

Re: , on: 2016/8/24 22:55

Forrest,

I do appreciate your posts and your heart, I really do. I believe like you that we are to pursue holiness, without which no one will see the Lord. And we should. You should and you should not let up in that pursuit in any way.

As long as a person does not believe that their pursuit of holiness actually makes them better than anyone else then they should continue in these good works. And as long as they do not believe that obtaining said holiness makes them acceptable before God, then their efforts are not dead works.

The problem with many within the church is that they fall into these errors of dead works. They believe wrongly that they are better than others because they have cleansed their garments a little more thoroughly than another brother. And they are also confused by thinking that their personal holiness is the same thing as the righteousness of Christ that is credited to their account by faith in Christ Jesus.

I believe that personal holiness is something that we pursue as the Lord gives us light, not something that we pursue because so and so says so. The key is "as the Lord gives us light". Sometimes we are given light on certain things and there comes great joy in following the Lord in obedience...including entertainment and leisure. But in so many areas this is a subjective thing, it really is something that the Holy Spirit must show to each person. Some people are so distant from the light that they cannot see any problem with watching filthy R rated movies. Some have more light and do not watch these movies but spend every night in front of their television sets. Is this sinful? Will they lose their salvation over these things? I doubt it, but the point is that until they get light on this we must not judge them and try to be their personal Holy Spirit about every facet of their lives. Sure, if the Lord prompts us to bring something up then we should speak to them, but that in and of itself is something we must wait on the Lord about before we open our mouths and try to "fix them".

Because if we attempt to fix everyone around us from pursuing vain amusements, who is to say that the things we personally do are not also vain amusements? Hobbies, vacations, taking our kids out for ice-cream, surfing the internet, reading the news etc etc. You get the point.

Re: - posted by MrBillPro (), on: 2016/8/24 23:38

I think a lot of the problems when posting on forums is, is this person practicing what their preaching, unless we've met each other we have no clue. I trust that most everyone here does practice what they are preaching, but I have no proof other than what they say in their posts. I think if we all personally knew each other, and knew how this person lives, it would help us all be more passionate towards one another. When I read posts here that strike my attention, I'm opened minded enough to to accept some of their information and put it to work in my life, but what I won't do is be lead by man, I am totally lead by the Holy Spirit and no one will ever change that. I would just like to know why more don't preach grace here, should we just be preaching part of the word, are all of the word?

Re: Grace teaching us - posted by savannah, on: 2016/8/25 0:45

What the Grace of God teaches us;

Titus 2:11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; 13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; 14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

15These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise you.

Re: - posted by forrests (), on: 2016/8/25 0:54

Quote:
-----I would just like to know why more don't preach grace here, should we just be preaching part of the word, are all of the word?

This is a thread with a particular topic.

Re: - posted by forrests (), on: 2016/8/25 1:17

Quote:
-----by savannah on 2016/8/24 21:45:09

What the Grace of God teaches us;

Titus 2:11For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; 13Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; 14Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

15These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise you.

Amen, brother. Amen. I worry that those who see God's grace as a license to 'save lives' know very little about grace.

Liberty is not being free to do my own will - I had that liberty at one point...and then I repented and was born again. True liberty is freedom from the bondage of self and my own will and having the true grace of God working in me to will and to do His good pleasure. That is liberty and grace.

Also, for those who seem to believe I am preoccupied with this topic and don't preach the whole council of God (the best way I know how) - I guess those commenting in the "Mark of the Beast" thread only know that and harp only on that string and need to talk about the grace of God...or any other thread. No? I'm making a point, and I perceive that others are making a lot of assumptions.

Re: brother Mark - posted by JFW (), on: 2016/8/25 1:48

I really appreciated your last post and find it to be a timely word:)

Had been thinking much the same thing tho you are more articulate than I prolly would've been-

Thanks for the humility and earnestness in your response:)

Re: - posted by brothagary, on: 2016/8/25 1:54

I say amen to your posts to forest ,can't really fault it .

You only saying what the old saints have said for years .

If a revivle comes ,thoses who are effected by it will think the same ,

Who cares about what this world can offer us ,when the holy spirt gives new desires of the heart , when that manifest presence takes over nothing matters but god and communing with him ,and intersection and witnessing,

Last I checked the gifts of the spirit didn't include the holy ability to watch tv , ,if your truly moving in the spirit of prayer and supplication,under the anointing , none of mundane things of this world come close to pleasures of the spirit .

I can hear Duncan Campbell ,,,,revival !!!!! Revival !!!!

When God stepped down !

Re: - posted by StirltUp (), on: 2016/8/25 2:22

Fitting scripture Savannah.

Kinda sums it all up!

Blessings,

Re: Too good to let it get buried - posted by forrests (), on: 2016/8/25 2:48

I found this to be a very faithful word, and read it to my family. I want to re-post it in case some didn't see it:

The Great God Entertainment
by A.W.Tozer

A German philosopher many years ago said something to the effect that the more a man has in his own heart, the less he will require from the outside; excessive need for support from without is proof of the bankruptcy of the inner man.

If this is true (and I believe it is) then the present inordinate attachment to every form of entertainment is evidence that the inner life of modern man is in serious decline. The average man has no central core of moral assurance, no spring within his own breast, no inner strength to place him above the need for repeated psychological shots to give him the courage to go on living. He has become a parasite on the world, drawing his life from his environment, unable to live a day apart from the stimulation which society affords him.

Schleiermacher held that the feeling of dependence lies at the root of all religious worship, and that however high the spiritual life might rise, it must always begin with a deep sense of a great need which only God could satisfy.

If this sense of need and a feeling of dependence are at the root of natural religion, it is not hard to see why the great god Entertainment is so ardently worshiped by so many. For there are millions who cannot live without amusement; life without some form of entertainment for them is simply intolerable; they look forward to the blessed relief afforded by professional entertainers and other forms of psychological narcotics as a dope addict looks to his daily shot of heroin. Without them they could not summon courage to face existence.

No one with common human feeling will object to the simple pleasures of life, nor to such harmless forms of entertainment as may help to relax the nerves and refresh the mind exhausted by toil. Such things, if used with discretion, may be a blessing along the way. That is one thing, however, the all-out devotion to entertainment as a major activity for which and by which men live is definitely something else again.

The abuse of a harmless thing is the essence of sin. The growth of the amusement phase of human life to such fantastic proportions is a portent, a threat to the souls of modern men. It has been built into a multimillion dollar racket with greater power over human minds and human character than any other educational influence on earth.

And the ominous thing is that its power is almost exclusively evil, rotting the inner life, crowding out the long eternal thoughts which would fill the souls of men, if they were but worthy to entertain them. The whole thing has grown into a veritable religion which holds its devotees with a strange fascination; and a religion, incidentally, against which it is now dangerous to speak. For centuries the Church stood solidly against every form of worldly entertainment, recognizing it for what it was—a device for wasting time, a refuge from the disturbing voice of conscience, a scheme to divert attention from moral accountability.

For this she got herself abused roundly by the sons of this world. But of late she has become tired of the abuse and has given over the struggle. She appears to have decided that if she cannot conquer the great god Entertainment she may as well join forces with him and make what use she can of his powers. So, today we have the astonishing spectacle of millions of dollars being poured into the unholy job of providing earthly entertainment for the so-called sons of heaven. Religious entertainment is in many places rapidly crowding out the serious things of God.

Many churches these days have become little more than poor theaters where fifth-rate "producers" peddle their shoddy wares with the full approval of evangelical leaders who can even quote a holy text in defense of their delinquency. And h

ardly a man dares raise his voice against it.

The great god Entertainment amuses his devotees mainly by telling them stories. The love of stories, which is a characteristic of childhood, has taken fast hold of the minds of the retarded saints of our day, so much so that not a few persons manage to make a comfortable living by spinning yarns and serving them up in various disguises to church people.

What is natural and beautiful in a child may be shocking when it persists into adulthood, and more so when it appears in the sanctuary and seeks to pass for true religion. Is it not a strange thing and a wonder that, with the shadow of atomic destruction hanging over the world and with the coming of Christ drawing near, the professed followers of the Lord should be giving themselves up to religious amusements? That in an hour when mature saints are so desperately needed vast numbers of believers should revert to spiritual childhood and clamor for religious toys?

"Remember, O Lord, what is come upon us: consider, and behold our reproach. The crown is fallen from our head: woe unto us, that we have sinned ! For this our heart is faint; for these things our eyes are dim." AMEN. AMEN.

Taken from Root of the Righteous, Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, 1955, p. 32-33.

Taken from this blog: <http://theconstructivecurmudgeon.blogspot.com/2006/07/w-tozer-on-our-idol-entertainment-1955.html?m=1>

Re: , on: 2016/8/25 2:52

Quote:

-----by StirltUp on 2016/8/25 2:22:28

Fitting scripture Savannah.

Kinda sums it all up!

Blessings,

Amen, great scripture!

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2016/8/25 10:22

Quote:

-----...it is clear and definitive in it's definition.It may be subjective in it's application...which leads to your question..

My friend, there no qualifier for what constitutes vanity under the New Covenant, no list of activities, no specific topic of conversation. This is because the vanity of a given activity is not determined by rote external observation, but rather by the condition of the heart. Me posting this very response to you may be considered "vain", if the motive of my heart in doing it is less than sincere. In fact, some of the most outstanding and morally-upright actions on the exterior (which no reasonable religious person would consider vain), such as scripture memorization and Christian forum participation can be sprung from the wells of vanity if the hidden intentions are off. Only the Holy Spirit can search the heart and make this determination. I know you know this.

Quote:

-----In my eyes, that seems to border on a type of "spiritual enthusiasm" and seems a bit like post-modern subjectivity...a veering from the objective and universal nature of Truth toward a more "personal truth" and a general and definitive revelation of God's will and mind on certain matters to an "inward" one to each individual.

Again, if you can produce a definitive list of actions the Holy Spirit has deemed as "vain" for all believers which preclude the individual motive of the heart (in other words, conclusively objective), such as enjoying a Greek tragedy or observing

an athletic competition or philosophical debate -- all of which were prevalent in Paul's day, yet unlisted by God as actions proscribed -- then I will side with you. I agree that all these "can" be vain. But there are no such religious codes or regulations or requirements to be found under the New Covenant other than to show charity to the poor and love your neighbor as yourself. And even these we do out of joy, propelled naturally by God's love and grace toward us. When filled with the Spirit one cannot help but reciprocate love, for God is love.

When I am filled with God's love, I do not pour out a laundry list of "do's and don't's" on another believer in response, but more love. I admonish them in love, I exhort them in love (though not always, to my shame). I try to become sensitive that with all things being lawful in Christ, not all things are yet edifying.

No man or woman truly apprehended by God's Holy Spirit will continue in sin habitually. It is as impossible as a dead man suddenly sitting up in a casket at a funeral home. Along the way, as we journey and grow in Christ, we have setbacks and failings, and also times of great joy and excitement! In our young years, we are tempted to make lists of things Christians should and should not do. This is understandable. Babies need great guidance, until they are old enough to stand and walk --- and then as a teenager they are introduced to the essentials...and hopefully begin putting them into practice! We go from milk to gradually meat. I see the meat as Christ, and Christ alone: the implications of finality regarding His death and resurrection, the believer's henceforth spiritual position of sonship in Him, and He being hidden in God with us in Him and all this being decreed by the will of God before the foundation of the world. Is this not real meat to chew on and ruminate upon!

Quote:
-----If your position were universally true, where would the need for pastors and teachers be? Or prophets? That is the job of an elder brother, to use his wisdom and revelation to help be another set of eyes for his brother. It should be the desire of a truly born again believer to seek to glorify God with their bodies, and to offer their bodies to God as a living sacrifice (for it is clearly their duty) - and if this desire is in them, they should welcome the other members of Christ's body that help complete them where they are lacking. We are all just a part.

The purpose for all you mention is in the perfecting of the saints. Just as my seven year old son needs a teacher. The best teacher on earth is the one who teaches a child how to teach himself by fostering a sincere love for the subject. Likewise, the best teacher/pastor/elder is one who shows the younger brother or sister the ineffable glory and riches of Christ's love and grace, and how to access it themselves. It is he who shows the new believer their position in the Son of God, and reminds them of it over and over again. That instead of condemnation codes governing hairlength and going to the movies or listening to a pop song on the radio, they are directed to the Source Himself who alone has sole authority in actually naming specific vanities which are as custom to the individual as their prayers are to God.

Re: PaulWest - posted by forrests (), on: 2016/8/25 10:32

It seems pretty clear to me that you are not understanding what I am saying. I am talking about entertainment (ignore the words "vain" and "amusements" if it helps).

I am discussing the Christian seeking to fulfill a longing inside with the dross of the world instead of the pure gold of Christ.

That is what I am seeking to bring attention to.

Have you read the A.W. Tozer article below, "The Great God of Entertainment"?

Do you mind commenting on that? If you would..?

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2016/8/25 10:53

My friend, I am only using those terms because you chose them as a title to this thread. But I can discuss entertainment with you if you wish.

Yes, I've read the article. In fact, there were several years where Tozer and Ravenhill were all I read. I am inspired by their fiery positions on holiness and sanctification. But I do have my reservations with them, knowing that even the best of men are men at best.

Are you aware that what we are doing now is form of entertainment that can be used to fulfill the same longing? And if so, it can be construed as vain. My point is that drawing black and white lines such as Tozer often did is not always so easy. Because appearances can be deceiving. Tozer did not have light on certain things. I also do not have light on certain things. Tozer had a lot of very good things to say, for sure, but his articles and books are not scripture and as such they should be digested with a grain of salt and discernment.

Re: The Great God of Entertainment - posted by forrests (), on: 2016/8/25 11:30

Quote:

-----by forrests

Do you mind commenting on that? If you would..?

Quote:

-----by PaulWest on 2016/8/25 7:53:54

My friend, I am only using those terms because you chose them as a title to this thread. But I can discuss entertainment with you if you wish.

Yes, I've read the article. In fact, there were several years where Tozer and Ravenhill were all I read. I am inspired by their fiery positions on holiness and sanctification. But I do have my reservations with them, knowing that even the best of men are men at best.

Are you aware that what we are doing now is form of entertainment that can be used to fulfill the same longing? And if so, it can be construed as vain. My point is that drawing black and white lines such as Tozer often did is not always so easy. Because appearances can be deceiving. Tozer did not have light on certain things. I also do not have light on certain things. Tozer had a lot of very good things to say, for sure, but his articles and books are not scripture and as such they should be digested with a grain of salt and discernment.

You didn't comment on the article...

...and when I see Jesus, I see all kinds of "black and white lines"...ones that the modern "mature" Christian avoid at all costs and criticize believers for believing and repeating...

...I suppose this conversation is not going to be profitable...

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2016/8/25 11:43

Quote:

-----...and when I see Jesus, I see all kinds of "black and white lines"...ones that the modern "mature" Christian avoid at all costs and criticize believers for believing and repeating...

I see. You've made your point crystal clear.

Quote:

----- ...I suppose this conversation is not going to be profitable...

You're probably right. It's really a shame, as it could have been profitable for many people. Have a wonderful day, and thank you for your time.

Re: qualifiers & lists - posted by savannah, on: 2016/8/25 11:56

Paul says,(in part)

"...there no qualifier for what constitutes vanity under the New Covenant, no list of activities, no specific topic of conversation. This is because the vanity of a given activity is not determined by rote external observation, but rather by the condition of the heart."

"Again, if you can produce a definitive list of actions the Holy Spirit has deemed as "vain" for all believers which preclude the individual motive of the heart (in other words, conclusively objective), such as... "

These arguments hold a few lbs. of weight on one scale, yet on another scale they're found wanting.

A judge was hearing arguments regarding a pornographic crime.

The defense argued thus,

"Would any here be willing to furnish me a list of acceptable or unacceptable clothing that defines modesty, immodesty or pornography, for that matter?

The courtroom was silent!

"Your honor", said the defense lawyer, "I rest my case on the grounds of there not being any justification to indict my client and bring a guilty verdict and consequently a conviction."

He added,"Unless of course, your honor is able to furnish the court with such a definition."

The wise judge was silent momentarily. As the whole court anticipated his answer, he broke the silence with seven simple words in reply, "I know it when I see it." He stood up with a firm voice and said, "I pronounce this man guilty as charged!"

He then pronounced the sentence against this man!

May we, His holy people, be as wise as this judge.

Re: qualifiers & lists - posted by forrests (), on: 2016/8/25 12:11

Amen. And Christ Himself is said list. He is the Word made flesh. He is the Express Image of the Invisible God. We are to be conformed to Him and 'walk as He walked.'

"For He shall grow up before Him as...a root out of dry ground."

~ Taken from Isaiah 53:2

Re: - posted by forrests (), on: 2016/8/25 12:37

"By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith."
~ Hebrews 11:7

"And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed."
~ John 3:19-20

"If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."
~ John 15:18-19

"You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. They are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them. We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error."
~ 1 John 4:4-6

Is there anything about your life or gospel that would cause the world to hate you in any way? Does either the light of life (Christ) shining in/through you expose their unfruitful works of darkness and 'condemn the world' - or does your gospel do the same? Does the world 'hear you' or do they hate you?

I'll tell you one reason the world will hate Christians, if their life and gospel works as a cross to bring death to what they hold so dear and live for - namely pleasure and self will.

This will get you hated by many:

"Whoever desires to come after Jesus, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Him. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for His sake and the gospel's will save it."

That will get you beat up (by professing Christians and heathens). Trust me. That is an "aroma of death" to those who are perishing...

...but it is a "sweet aroma" to the LORD...

The tabernacle had an altar of burnt sacrifice outside the door, and an altar of sweet incense inside...

"For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things?"
~ 2 Corinthians 2:15-16

Re: - posted by dolfan (), on: 2016/8/25 13:27

"I know it when I see it." Justice Potter Stewart, concurring with the majority holding in *Jacobellis v. Ohio* (1964). In that case, a movie was deemed to be not "hard-core" pornographic and was protected by the First Amendment and not subject to being banned by Ohio government officials.

Just letting you know where the "I know it when I see it" thing about pornography came from.

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2016/8/25 14:50

Quote:

-----Just letting you know where the "I know it when I see it" thing about pornography came from.

Thank you for the background info, Tim. It's great having a lawyer on board here. My business partner and I were just in consultation with an attorney the other day, drawing up a series LLC for our car dealership. I say it's great having an attorney here on SI, but even more so, that he's another dear brother in Christ. God bless you and yours.

Paul

Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2016/8/25 18:19

Quote:

----- The abuse of a harmless thing is the essence of sin. The growth of the amusement phase of human life to such fantastic proportion is a portent, a threat to the souls of modern men. It has been built into a multimillion dollar racket with greater power over human minds and human character than any other educational influence on earth.

The above from the Tozer quote.

This is, I think, the pivotal point in all of this. I think all agree that if it is clearly sin, we stay away from it. At least I would hope this would be the case. But what if it is not clearly sin? I understand Paul was specifically talking about what we eat, but it has broader application. All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient. All things are lawful for me but I will not be brought under the power of any.

Very little in life is neutral. Perhaps I am overworked. Perhaps between job, family, and ministry I am to a point where I am physically or mentally worn down and, because I am human, need rest. So, I take a day off, watch a good clean movie, attend a baseball game, and then top it off with an evening by the river fishing. Then, rested and refreshed, I reenter ministry, work, etc. This is very different from having to attend every new movie, watching two hours of TV a day, playing hooky from work to fish, and feeling I have to memorize every baseball stat and see all of the games for my favorite team this year.

Amusement is something that I lose myself in when I really ought to be doing something else. It comes from the root A, meaning "not" and muse, meaning to think. It is to check out mentally, spiritually, and emotionally when we really ought to be checked in and doing something. I think this is different from refreshment which often includes some form of entertainment.

Perhaps that is where the application of the word "vain" enters the picture. On the one hand, I was refreshed by my actions and it really did serve a valuable purpose for me. On the other hand I completely gave myself over to the amusement and it was empty and accomplished nothing worthwhile in my life.

I will say this. The Bible teaches modesty, which means temperance and self control in all areas of life. In my opinion, if I am so enraptured with baseball that I can tell you every game's outcome, all of the stats, and can talk about all of the players as if they are close friends, I will bet that baseball is, for me, very out of balance in my life and I probably need to abandon it. It is most likely taking time and energy away from what God wants to do in my life.

Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2016/8/25 18:26

Quote:

Quote:

-----I would just like to know why more don't preach grace here, should we just be preaching part of the word, are all of the word?

This is a thread with a particular topic.

I for one think that grace is discussed, and usually comes out very strongly in most threads that are discussed. I guess one question I would have here is, "What is grace?" Our definition, or our image of what grace is, will determine our response.

I don't think the idea of casting aside vain amusements in pursuit of the glory of God is in any way contradictory to God's grace. In fact, it will come naturally and in ever increasing measure in our life as we walk and live in God's grace. I find that I want less and less to participate in things that do not build me up spiritually and more and more in the things of God.

Re: Amen, twayneb. - posted by forrests (), on: 2016/8/25 18:43

Amen, twayneb. Thanks for sharing your wisdom and insight.

Alan L. Barrow: "Man of God." - posted by forrests (), on: 2016/8/27 1:41

Alan L. Barrow

Reading: 1 Timothy 6:3-16

THE phrase 'Man of God' occurs quite infrequently in the New Testament. So far as I can discover it is only used on two occasions and they are both in Paul's letters to Timothy. Elsewhere in the New Testament it is not found, except that Peter describes those who were responsible for writing the Old Testament as 'holy men of God' (2 Peter 1:21). This is a reference back and surely enough, when we come to consider the Old Testament, we find that the phrase 'man of God' occurs frequently. There were well-known prophets who were described as men of God; there were virtually unknown prophets who appeared on the scene and then disappeared but who were also called men of God. David was referred to as a man of God, particularly in relation to his music, his capacity of providing a vehicle of praise for God's people. And then Moses was described as "the man of God". So we see that in the Old Testament many were so designated, and in some cases considerable emphasis was placed on the title. In the New Testament, however, the phrase is hardly used at all.

Now what does this mean? Surely not that men of God are of less importance now. There must be some reason for the particular stress which is found in these writings to Timothy. It is possibly due to the fact that Paul had a very close relationship with Timothy. He knew the family. He and Timothy had worked together and travelled together for quite a long time, and had shared much adversity. There seems every evidence that the apostle regarded Timothy as something of an investment for the future, and so gave a considerable amount of time and attention to this next generation servant of the Lord. Having observed Timothy under a variety of circumstances and been associated with him in their working for God, he naturally was very concerned for him and for his spiritual success. The close relationship between the two men is indicated by the fact that Paul wrote to Timothy as "my true child in the faith". It seems likely that the younger man found Christ as a result of Paul's visit to Lystra. The apostle addressed him as "Timothy, my son" (1:18) and added weight to his exhortations by saying: "O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you ..." (6:20). We are not surprised at the personal element, for this -- unlike most of the others -- was a very personal letter. In the second epistle Paul referred to his acquaintance with Timothy's childhood, as though everything to do with him was a matter of ultimate knowledge and concern to the writer. To such a man, under such circumstances, the apostle wished to stress the importance of being 'a man of God'.

This is not a term which we would think of applying to ourselves. We never refer to ourselves as men and women of God. This may be due to a very proper modesty, but it may also be because we feel that it should be an exceptional title, reserved for someone who is quite unusual. This might have been true in Old Testament times, but it should not be true today. Could the phrase be rightly applied to us? Could Paul write to us and address us as men and women of God? I suggest that it will be a profitable occupation to look closer into the implications of the title, seeking to discover what are the implications of being 'a man of God'.

GOING back to the Old Testament we note that the man of God was primarily a prophet, which means that he was a man with a job to do. He seemed to come into some situation with a task assigned to him and, so far as I know, he

always fulfilled that task. I cannot find a single instance of a man described as 'a man of God' who failed to do the job assigned to him. So naturally he was a man of determination, one who had an air of purposefulness about his movements and actions. There is no sense of drift associated with the Old Testament men of God; they did not wait around needing some sort of entertainment or amusement to keep them going; they never seemed to be bored. Whether the man of God was a public figure or whether he was quite unknown, he was moved by a clear appreciation of what he was called to and what he was meant to be doing. He did not unduly concern himself with what other people were doing: he knew what his own particular job was and he got on with it.

It is true that Christ was not described as a 'Man of God', partly because He Himself is God but chiefly because His self-chosen title "the Son of man" covered all that we are now to consider. His title was unique, and rightly so, but He is to us a true example of the kind of man God requires and so from Him we may learn something of how a man of God behaves. His was certainly a life of purpose. It is inconceivable that He should have spent a single day seeking amusement or needing entertainment. As He moved about, morning by morning and afternoon by afternoon, He always knew that there was something to be done for God; people to be met, needs to be dealt with, situations to be faced; for Him every moment was one of purpose. Of course He enjoyed refreshment, and one might even say recreation. I would suggest, though, that He never felt in need of entertainment.

If I am asked what is the difference between entertainment and recreation, I would advance the explanation that everything depends on the end in view. Entertainment seems to me to be an end in itself, entertainment for entertainment's sake. Recreation, however, is not an end in itself but is meant to equip a man better for the demands and challenge of the work which he is called to. The very same thing could be entertainment (and therefore somewhat dubious) or recreation which would be most commendable. As we know, Christ had periods of recreation, periods of refreshment. He did not drive Himself relentlessly just for the sake of keeping on. On the other hand, with Him it was never a case of looking round for something to occupy His time, as though there were nothing important to do. What would be sheer entertainment for some might well be recreation for others, the whole point being the purpose 'behind what is being done. Is it to equip those who are concerned with God's service, to freshen them up for that service? Or is it because they cannot think of anything else to do and have no purpose to govern their behaviour? Well, the man of God has a purposeful life to live, and in that sense there can be little doubt that -- modesty apart -- we should all be marked out as men and women of God.

It has occurred to me that there must be a reason for the title being 'man of God' and not 'man from God'. This may be possibly because the prophets came not just as those with whom God had entrusted a message which had no relevance to their own character. They did not just come with words from Him. Rather is it God's way to have embodied the message in the man. The man was the message. Indeed if the message is to be rightly understood it seems necessary for God's purpose that it must be enshrined in human life. This is, of course, the principle of the incarnation, for as a Man Christ embodied the message which He brought to earth. We can have our teaching, our convictions, have all the facts and all the rules, but they will be very cold and unhelpful if they are not enshrined in people in whom those principles are seen to be working. So God has His prophets and His priests, and pre-eminently He has His Christ in whom can be seen the living reality of what it is that He is saying to us. And He has us all. His 'saints', those who are set apart to be men and women of God in this sense, that we enshrine and illustrate the message which we bring. It may be right to suggest that we are bringing people a message from God. Are we not called ambassadors for Christ? Yet even so, it may be asked if we have a right to a hearing, and the answer lies in what we are as well as what we say. It is those who themselves embody their message who can truly be called men and women of God.

THE man of God should "follow after ... godliness" (verse 11). We might naturally suggest what he should aim at would be the possibility of leadership in the church of God, the ability to make his mark by preaching in power, prevailing in prayer, studying his Bible or other similar activities. In fact these would be legitimate ambitions, but the stress of the apostolic appeal touches something more fundamental. He is to aim at godliness. It is worthy of note that the thought of godliness occurs time and again in these letters to Timothy and Titus, and then only again in 2 Peter. Not that the rest of the Bible fails to indicate this important quality, but it seems that in this letter there is a special concentration on the need for godliness. By the time that he wrote these words to Timothy Paul had had much experience of spiritual matters. He had seen Christian churches founded; he had seen them flourish and he had also seen them fail or flounder. He had seen individual Christians start well, and had also seen some of them come to near disaster. At this stage of his life, therefore, and with only two more pastoral epistles to write, he must have had a clear perspective of the needs of the churches as well as of individual Christians. It is interesting to note that it was also in his final epistle that Peter made this same emphasis on godliness.

1 Timothy 2:2

In this verse we find that godliness -- or the need for it -- provides a reason for praying about our circumstances. The argument seems to be that we should ask God for the kind of governments and rulers which will provide an environment which is helpful to a life of godliness. It surely does not mean that too much importance should be devoted to the quietness or peaceableness of our surroundings, but rather that we are to welcome and pray for everything which can be used by God to further this most important aim of godliness. It is the godliness and not peaceful conditions which is to be the real objective of our prayers. The passage goes on to speak of the women folk and how godliness can be expressed by them (verse 10). Here again the main concern is not on the outward but on the inward, not on rules and regulations concerning dress but on the godly character of those concerned. God is just as concerned to have women of God as men of God, and calls for the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit which He values so highly. Both by prayer and by behaviour we are to seek to deal with anything which can obscure true godliness.

1 Timothy 3:16

According to this passage the tremendously important secret of true godliness is revealed in the person of Christ, so that right at the heart of this letter we are given this concept, that the very essence of the idea of godliness is to be found in the incarnation. Christ came to show us what God is like. "Manifested in the flesh." In the life, death and glorification of the Man Jesus, we can see the quality of character which is called godliness. The mystery of godliness had to wait a long time before it was disclosed, since only in the person of the Lord Jesus could it be fully revealed. Now we are instructed as to the real godliness of man as God meant him to be, and in the Man Christ Jesus we are shown how we ought to be have ourselves in that household of God which is the Church of the living God.

1 Timothy 4:7

Here we are told that we should train ourselves in godliness, stressing the effort involved by a comparison with bodily training. We live in a day when in any sphere concentrated training is regarded as absolutely vital. You will even meet people running round the block at all hours of night or day, seeking to prepare themselves for some contest, and the whole matter is regarded as proper and reasonable. Why should we be less devoted in seeking to be spiritually 'fit'? Surely in this matter of godliness we ought to make use of the same sort of discipline and ordered planning. The man of God does not regard godliness as a hobby but as the prior commitment of his whole life.

1 Timothy 6:3

Godliness is also a test which may rightly be applied to teaching. It is useless to put emphasis on 'sound words' merely as orthodox teaching. They must be backed by that 'orthodox' Christian living which is shown in godliness of life. The words of our Lord Jesus were substantiated and confirmed by His manner of life, and it was He who warned us to test every would-be prophet or teacher by enquiry into the way they live as well as the words they speak. Paul had no hesitation in saying that it is impossible to accept teaching which is not being made valid in the life of the teacher.

1 Timothy 6:6

"There is great gain in godliness with contentment." In going on to remark that as we brought nothing into this world we shall not be able to take anything out of it, the apostle implies that there is something which we can and will take with us into eternity, the great and lasting gain of godliness. Godliness is not just a quality of character but it is a relationship that we have with God through Christ. It is this relationship which we must develop, an ever growing maturity in the matter of trust and love. Hence the argument that this is something worth disciplining ourselves for, something worthy of all our attention and effort, since it is the only wealth which we will be able to carryover from this life into the next.

I hope that I have established my point, that as he looked at the Church situation and at his fellow workers and fellow believers, he came to the conclusion that it was most important that they should put godliness above all else. He loved Timothy greatly and could speak frankly to him, and so he made his appeal: 'O man of God, aim for godliness'. If he felt like this about the Christian life then, I wonder what the apostle would think today of the current vogue among many Christians which seems to be more concerned about show and entertainment than about solid godly living. So much effort and so much money is spent that there is almost an industry being built up for the purpose of entertaining Christians. We are not here to be entertained: we are here to pursue godliness. In any case we are not so concerned with what Paul would think as with what Christ thinks of this claimant need for Christian entertainment. He who was incarnate godliness here on earth calls us to be men of God, women of God. A right sense of modesty will prevent us from adopting such a noble title, but we must accept that this is our calling, and seek grace from God to pursue it and to encourage one another to be men of God.

<http://www.austin-sparks.net/mags/ttm03-5.html>

Re: Alan L. Barrow: "Man of God." - posted by TMK (), on: 2016/8/27 10:37

I am not aware of any time in the 20th (and probably every century) where a majority, or even a significant minority, of Christians have lived to the ideal this article describes.

Either they are not getting the message, the HS is not convicting, or the HS is convicting and he is being ignored.

Does God intend every Christian to be a Tozer or a John the Baptist or a Leonard Ravenhill?

I have no idea.

Re: - posted by Theophila (), on: 2016/8/27 14:16

Dear brother,

What the Lord intends is in 1 Corinthians 1:2....every believer is called to be a saint, sanctified unto the Lord.

Can you imagine what Sunday service would be like if we all took our callings as sanctified vessels of the Most High seriously?

OTOH, imagine if an "ordinary deacon" called Stephen in Acts 6:5, had wondered if all the saints were supposed to be like Peter, James and John? Verse 8 may never have happened.

I don't know about you but my experience has been less exposure to entertainment, generally correlates with increased spiritual sensitivity.

Re: , on: 2016/8/27 15:25

Imagine what our Monday through Saturday walks would be like, too.

Re: TMK - Man of God - posted by forrests (), on: 2016/8/27 17:32

Quote:

-----by TMK on 2016/8/27 7:37:07

I am not aware of any time in the 20th (and probably every century) where a majority, or even a significant minority, of Christians have lived to the ideal this article describes.

I don't understand what you are getting at, but I hope you aren't trying to undermine the weight of the word of Christ or the truth contained in the article by appealing to the existence of carnal Christians and false professors...?

I do not see anything in the NT that excuses believers from striving for holiness and godliness...nor do I see any real class system of Christians in the revealed will of God. Sure, some are carnal but that is not the will of God. Some are babes, but that is supposed to be temporary and they are called to grow and bear much fruit.

There are elders and deacons, but it seems to me that those are simply the more mature believers, but this does not mean that God expects or desires that brothers and sisters that aren't elders or deacons are excused from being holy, godly, mature or bearing fruit...

After reading my bible (especially the OT), I don't find it hard to believe that men (even God's covenant people) do always resist the Holy Spirit...

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2016/8/27 17:43

I was just telling the truth. What "the church" has been doing for the last few hundred years ain't working.

Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2016/8/27 17:51

I love T. A. Sparks. His writing is so full of truth. I tried listening to him and could not do it. It was like listening to paint dry, but words leap off of the page when he writes.

I find nothing in Sparks article that is inconsistent with Biblical Christianity. Our concern for Godliness in our own lives, to be like Jesus, should be the driving force behind every decision we make. We are flesh. We don't always get it right. Praise God for grace and forgiveness. But we are to passionately pursue the one who has called us to glory and virtue. We are to take the exhortation of the NT writers to holiness seriously and allow the Holy Spirit to transform us as we seek to obey God in every area of our lives. Everything else is secondary and flows out of our relationship with God.

I don't think we totally understand Romans 6 and Gal. 2:20. I no longer live my own life. I died to myself and I now live for, or, to, and through Him, or more appropriately I think, I now live BY Him or He lives through me. I voluntarily gave up my right to make my own decisions and plot my own course. I gave up my right to royally mess up my life and submitted myself to Him. To the degree that I can learn to allow Him to live unhindered through me, then I can live to His standard of holiness. Obviously I did not say that I would ever attain unto this. I am made just as righteous as Him, but my growing in holiness will never stop until I am glorified at His return. Then I will have attained. But I press in and strive to allow him to have more of me.

Re: - posted by JFW (), on: 2016/8/27 18:21

Brother Todd I totally get what you're asking and can answer honestly.....No.

There were, are and will continue to be (this side of heaven) sanctified saints who are at varying levels of maturity in a host of different areas.

The scriptures are quite clear on this when one has an honest eye to read with.

Having said this, the holiness preachers are and always (I imagine) will be my faves and there's a need in these days for exhorting, admonishing, encouraging and rebuking. Unfortunately in a digital forum where we're only known by how we choose to present ourselves, which like most forms of social media, are at best a willful misrepresentation of the whole truth of a person and as such can and do create unreal avatars of what we hope to be or wish we were but aren't quite there yet...

This I learned from scripture (spirit) and experience of godly peoples (spirit)- the more conformed to the image of Christ one is, the more loving and less likely to throw rocks or even be presumptuous regarding another person's walk. Rather they are ever increasingly dependant on the Lord and more often than not encourage others to be so as well.)

Zeal/passion is a good thing,... but zeal without discipline is a dangerous thing-

ie; salt is a combination of sodium and chloride. When separate both of these elements can be harmful even poisonous, .. So it is with truth and love. When separate from love truth can be very harmful just as apart from truth love can be very unstable and naive. But just like with sodium and chloride, when both love and truth are present they have a stabilizing and preserving affect that gives much by bringing out the flavors hidden within.)

But if they become unbound from one another and lose their savor.... Well you know the rest ;)

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2016/8/27 18:58

Sweet post Fletcher.

Just so no one misunderstands me- I am in 100% agreement that we are called to holiness and must pursue same as it is never automatic.

But when 90% of the Church does not exhibit the lifestyle laid out in the Sparks article, it means the Church has failed miserably in getting this message across.

I am going through something of a spiritual funk myself that I have been trying to shake for about 6 months and it is not

going away quietly. This may be flavoring some of my posts so take them with a grain of salt. And say a prayer for me if it comes to mind.

Re: brother Todd - posted by JFW (), on: 2016/8/27 20:34

Honestly I can relate somewhat to your general disposition regarding the present day "church" and by contrast what the scriptures plainly teach... I wonder sometimes if the bible is actually read and studied or just (cherry picked) used to justify a sort of pragmatic humanism. It befuddles me and at the same time gives occasion to pray/intercede.

I've seen many of not most saints go thru "dry seasons" over the years and it seems to me to be part of the Lords refining process in purifying His people. Much like in the refiners fire, there are periods of intense albeit controlled heat being applied but those are always followed by a cooling period where by the substance is strengthened so as to be able to withstand further refining without destroying the thing itself.

So maybe it is as such with you dear brother-

A "trick" I learned from the beautiful man whom discipled me,...

"Give thanks to the Lord for it" and you'll find out real quick just how near He is to you and that He is faithFULL to bring to completion the work which He Himself began in you+)

Re: , on: 2016/8/27 22:52

"I've seen many of not most saints go thru "dry seasons" over the years and it seems to me to be part of the Lords refining process in purifying His people. Much like in the refiners fire, there are periods of intense albeit controlled heat being applied but those are always followed by a cooling period where by the substance is strengthened so as to be able to withstand further refining without destroying the thing itself."

Such an important topic, perhaps you could start a new thread on this brother Fletcher?

Re: , on: 2016/8/27 23:04

Quote:
-----I don't know about you but my experience has been less exposure to entertainment, generally correlates with increased spiritual sensitivity.

I had the same experience.

I also noticed that not all entertainment is equally harmless: for example listening to a popular worldly song coupled with evil official videoclip is more harmful than listening to a simple street musician. The reason is that subliminal messages and satanic symbolism is not found in the street musician but might be found in professional music videos, where the makers often purposely and hiddenly express their satanic ideas.

Re: , on: 2016/8/27 23:44

<http://www.charismanews.com/opinion/40721-giving-in-to-effective-prayer-the-david-wilkerson-story>

David Wilkerson when he was a young preacher and experienced a dry period, sold his tv.

I believe he was lead to do so by the Holy Spirit. Everyone should be doing as the Spirit leads, we can not make a rule of this.

Todd, I have been praying for you, and continue to do so. God bless you, Zsuzsanna

Re: Paris Reidhead: "Finding the Reality of God." - posted by forrests (), on: 2016/8/28 20:57

"Some have the erroneous idea that God has His first-class citizens and second-class citizens; that the important thing is to get people "saved." Then if somebody wants to move on to "the deeper life," "the higher life," "the fuller life," or "the sanctified life," â€" well, that's up to them. But _everything_ God provided through the Lord Jesus and his work on the cross is important. That's why the Spirit of God insists, "how shall we escape, if we neglect" anything God intended to be ours?

"In a parable, Jesus taught about a king who sent out many invitations to a great banquet. (See Luke 14:16â€"24.) One of those invited refused because, he said, his new real estate acquisition required him to go and manage it. Another was also busy buying and selling and said he had to take care of his financial interests. Still another man had domestic interests which resulted in his refusal of the king's invitation.

"So whether it is real estate, building a bank roll, or one's sensual desires for comfort (and it may be many other things), The application of this parable to our hearts says to the listening soul that the world is too much with us these days.

"In His parable, Jesus pointed out that the worldly heart is not compatible with the heavenly riches God has planned for his own."

Paris Reidhead;
In: "Finding the Reality of God."