

THE WORLD'S BIBLE #4

By Keith Greer

“ANOTHER FORM OF WORLDLINESS”

Many of us pride ourselves on the fact that, "I don't gamble, drink, swear, dress immodestly, dance, ..." In other words, we are not "worldly". Or, are we? Can we be worldly without ever practicing some of these "worldly" habits?

The apostle Paul told Timothy that " ... the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." (1 Timothy 6:10)

Americans live a bountifully rich life, materially, compared with the majority of people in the world. While we do indeed have citizens who live below the "poverty level", for many of us, being "poor" means we can't buy a new car or camcorder.

So, as a Christian, what is your attitude towards "this world's goods"?

Paul went on to tell Timothy to "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich In good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. (1 Timothy 6: 17-19)

Oh, but you may say, "I don't have to worry about that. I'm not rich. I'm in the Air Force. Or, I'm in business for myself and I really have problems " Or, worse yet, "I'm just a poor preacher. A preacher and his family are the most mistreated of all. "

The apostle Paul told Timothy that the LOVE of money is the root of all evil: ..." Some of the most worldly advice I have ever received, in regards to money, has been from the mouths of other preachers.

Is preaching a difficult job? Without a doubt. There are many of my fellow-laborers who are making great personal sacrifices in order to preach the gospel. There are also those among us who have made a "business" out of being a preacher.

While it is true that we can't read into each other's hearts, and we will each stand before God in judgment, we need to be careful how we sound. When we stand up in the pulpit and preach "Christ and Him crucified", and then our speech away from the pulpit is filled with covetousness, we hurt our effectiveness. If the desire for "things" is truly what is in our hearts, we are also in danger of losing our own souls.

Sadly, I believe many in the Lord's church have a spiritual disease called "acceptable worldliness." What do I mean? Christians who have just enough spirituality in their

lives to ease their conscience. Yes, they come to the services on Sunday morning and maybe at other times as long as it's convenient for their schedules. Do they attend meetings? Do they regularly study their Bibles? Do they have a good prayer life? Do they visit the shut-ins, sick, weak or those just having a difficult time? Do they treat being a Christian as being a "part-time" occupation instead of a way of life? Dear reader, if you're feeling uncomfortable maybe you have the disease!

Good news – here is the cure." ... BUT BE THOU AN EXAMPLE OF THE BELIEVERS, IN WORD, IN CONVERSATION, IN CHARITY, IN SPIRIT, IN FAITH, IN PURITY." {1 Timothy 4:12} Truly all the people who could be considered as "worldly" may not be in the world at all! ***