

Sermon to the Saints of God assembled at Topeka, KS: Sunday, May 31, 2015
Be Not Conformed to This World – Part 2 of 2

Romans 12:1 ¶ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Today, we will finish the brief examination that we began last Sunday, of the sobering instruction that we “be not conformed to this world”. As a reminder, we spent some time last week on some general concepts around this instruction, and then began a more practical application under three headings: How we look, How we behave and talk; How we spend our time. We covered the first topic last week; before we consider our other two topics, let’s look at some reasons why we shouldn’t be conformed to the world:

- Because of the wicked, lest you encourage them in their wicked ways.
- Because of the corrupt, devilish, fading, nature of this world, which will all be melted with a fervent heat.
- Because of our brothers and sisters in Christ, lest we lay a stumblingblock before them.
- Because of ourselves, lest we tempt God, and be led into temptation and sin.

Our citizenship is in heaven – we are merely pilgrims and sojourners here. By any measure, our time in this world is a vapor when compared against our long home in eternity. Consider it this way – if we knew that we were going to be in a place for three days, how ridiculous would it be to plant crops? It would be equally absurd for our hearts to have roots planted deeply in this world of our shame and sojourning. We can either serve God, or mammon – not both. We must use mammon in our service to God, without turning aside to serve mammon. The god of this world is Satan; to be conformed to the world is to be conformed to Satan; to love this world is to worship Satan. The pleasures and attractions of this world are the bait that Satan skillfully employs to lure us away from worshipping God, and toward worshipping him; it is the exact game that he ran with the Lord Jesus, tempting him with the things of this world, as a reward, if he would just bow down and worship Satan. Little by little, he subtly deceives the heart, until we look up one day and find ourselves ensnared in sin.

As we consider these matters, remember those beautiful concepts of moderation (suitable; sweet reasonableness), and temperance (take or leave the things of this world, with contentment). We keep a loose grip on the things of this world, content to

use them, but not abuse them. Please also remember that my purpose here is not to aim these words at a particular person, but rather, that all of us – myself included – be stirred up in remembrance of these blessed things that we already know. Don't look around and see how these things apply to others – let's first be sure that we are applying them to ourselves.

How we behave and talk:

Sobriety is the word for the hour! Sober: serious minded, controlling our spirits, governing our passions, vigilant, watchful. For a servant of God, that concept necessarily includes that our thoughts and actions are driven by a sincere, serious minded, godly, disciplined, scriptural outlook ON ALL THINGS. We have a mature outlook toward God, and are continually comparing our behavior, and our circumstances back to the scriptures – the plumb line – and adjusting accordingly. This idea of sobriety does not exclude joy – in fact, when we have a right outlook toward God, our spirits are overflowing with joy – real, lasting, meaningful joy! There is no true joy in the things of the world – only some temporary, fading enjoyment, which ought to be received with thanks unto God, but not looked to, or relied upon for our joy.

Ecclesiastes 7:2-6 “2 It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart. 3 Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. 4 The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth. 5 It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools. 6 For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool: this also is vanity.”

Titus 2:1-12 “1 ¶But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: 2 That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. 3 The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; 4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. 6 Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. 7 In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, 8 Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you. 9 Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; 10 Not

purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. 11 ¶ For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;”

1Peter 1:13-16 “13 ¶Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 14 As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: 15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; 16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.”

1Peter 5:8,9 “8 ¶Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: 9 Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.”

1Timothy 5:5-8 “5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. 6 ¶ Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. 7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. 8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.”

1Peter 4:7-11 “7 ¶But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. 8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. 9 Use hospitality one to another without grudging. 10 As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 11 If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

We are to have our conversation (behavior) honest among the gentiles:

1Peter 2:11-17 “11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; 12 Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall

behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. 13 ¶ Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; 14 Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. 15 For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: 16 As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. 17 Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king."

Ephesians 4:17, 22-28 "17 ¶ This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind ... 22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. 25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. 26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: 27 Neither give place to the devil. 28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."

The way of the world is to be deceitful – lying, stealing, cheating – it must not be so with the people of God. It makes our profession hypocritical and empty! It brings shame upon the name of the Lord! We can come up with a MILLION excuses why we should be dishonest in a given situation, but none of them hold water – the instruction is to “put away all lying”. I’m not being righteous over much, or pretending that I never say things that aren’t true. I’m saying we should not, and we should constantly be warring against that fleshly tendency – be not conformed to this world! How much pain have we each caused for ourselves – and others – because of lying? Likewise, no stealing! Period! The church of the Lord Jesus Christ will not countenance stealing! Good old fashion theft is only the tip of the iceberg on this issue. Clearly we shouldn’t walk into a store, or a house, or our jobs, and steal things, but we can steal in SO many other ways! You can be deceitful at a store, and try to cheat their system to get a better deal, or take advantage of a mistake that they’ve made, or to angrily insist that you need a discount because you’ve been “wronged” in some way. We can find something that doesn’t belong to us, and keep it, when there was a reasonable way to track down its owner and return it. You can steal from your employer, by misusing your stewardship – frittering away your time, or otherwise misusing their resources – that’s called purloining. You can live beyond your means, with no intention of paying back what you owe. This generation is big on this one – buying things on credit that they do not need, and cannot afford, making themselves a servant to the lender (Proverbs

22:7), a servant to mammon, and ultimately a thief, when they don't pay their debt! All of these behaviors are the way of the world - be not conformed to this world!

Romans 13:11-14 “11 ¶And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. 12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. 13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. 14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”

1Corinthians 6:9-11 “9 ¶Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

1Corinthians 5:11 “But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.”

1Peter 4:3,4 “3 For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: 4 ¶ Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:”

The way of the world is hedonism – it is the religion of Satan – if it feels good, then do it! If you want it, then take it! Forget the consequences to body and soul! We know how the people of this world behave. They are covetous and idolatrous in the extreme; fornication is much too tame a word to describe the brazen, proud, defiant sexual impurity that goes on around us; they are gluttonous and drunken; they live riotously, selfishly, and make provision for every desire of their flesh. That behavior must not be named among the people of God! Be not conformed to this world!

Speaking of drunkenness: Several years ago, I had a young woman (in her mid 20's – a member of the church at the time) ask me if the Bible forbids drinking alcohol. I told her no, and the obvious verses that contradict such a prohibition. What the Bible forbids is drunkenness! She lit up at that proposition, saying that her parents had told

her that she could not drink alcohol without their express permission, which they would only rarely give, and that they are unreasonable, since the scriptures don't hold such a requirement; even going so far as to suggest (with Satan's own hiss) that Jesus Christ may have promoted drunkenness by turning water into wine! What foolish, contentious, godless wrangling! I told her to forget everything that I had said about the scriptural position on alcohol – in this case IT IS IRRELEVANT! This matter has ZERO bearing on your ability to serve God. As an unmarried person, you reside under the authority of your parents – they gave you their will in the matter – so SHUT YOUR CONTENTIOUS MOUTH AND OBEY THEM, WITH THANKSGIVING THAT THEY CARE FOR YOUR SOUL! On that point, I suggest that you read the fascinating events of Jeremiah 35, which tells us about the Rechabites, who refused to drink wine, when Jeremiah the prophet set it before them. They said “we shall drink no wine, for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons for ever.” Because of that obedience done unto their father, and with a heart toward their God, the Lord pronounced a great blessing upon them, that they “shall not want a man to stand before me forever.” This is simple stuff! Obey your parents – obey your husband – obey all those in authority over you, as UNTO GOD! This is a concept that is Anathema to the flesh – which WILL NOT SUBMIT ITSELF!

The way of this world is a proud refusal to submit to any authority, whether in this earth, or to the God that made them. This is a selfish, “me-centric” generation. Everyone thinks that they are smarter and better than the next guy, and everyone does that which is right in his own eyes! We are not to be conformed to such satanic folly, but rather, we are to esteem others better than ourselves, we are to submit ourselves, and give obedience – to any in authority over us, to our parents, to our husbands, to the elders of the church, to all of our brothers and sisters in Christ, and ultimately to God! Part of that submission is that we seek, and desire godly counsel – from those who will give you faithful, true words from the scriptures; relaying the instruction that the Holy Spirit has given them in applying those scriptures to the experiences of their lives – their senses having been exercised by reason of use. The way of this world is to reject that notion, and stiff arm any and all counsel that is contrary to what you WANT! Be not conformed to this world! We must be open and honest, submitting ourselves – happily and thankfully! There is great instruction, wisdom, help, and safety in that! Desire and seek after godly counsel – reject and avoid the counsel of the wicked, and their satanic world!

Hebrews 13:16,17 “16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. 17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.”

1Peter 5:5-7 “5 ¶Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. 6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: 7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.”

1Thessalonians 5:11-15 “11 ¶Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do. 12 And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; 13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. And be at peace among yourselves. 14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. 15 See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.”

Proverbs 11:14 “¶Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.”

Proverbs 12:15 “¶The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.”

Proverbs 15:22 “¶Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.”

Proverbs 19:20,21 “20 ¶Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end. 21 ¶ There are many devices in a man’s heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand.”

We must not be conformed to the world, in the way that we raise our children. The parents of this generation are letting their children raise themselves! They believe themselves to be wiser than God, and to have standards and remedies that are above his ways. They obsess over having these children upon their own terms – aborting babies that don’t fit in with their selfish plans, and otherwise tampering with the matters of the womb, in order to have exactly the number of children that they desire, at exactly the time that they desire; then they immediately consume those children upon their lusts – teaching them that there is no God of judgment, and that they should live for their own “happiness”, “express themselves”, and “be who they are”, “find their own way”. The closest they come to discipline is either violent outbursts, when their children interfere with their worldly pleasure, or a “time-out” so that they can “think about” what they’ve done. Of course, the end result of that behavior is a godless

generation of selfish, lazy, entitled, violent, lawless, uncontrollable, dirt dumb beasts. As a result of which, these hateful parents want nothing more than to get these children grown, and out of their homes. In the mean time, they seek to make us ashamed if we espouse, or lean upon the standards and remedies that God has provided. It must not be so, amongst the people of God! We are to recognize the blessing that God has given us with each child – “an heritage of the Lord” – wherein we have a fresh opportunity to show OUR thankful obedience to him. We are to train up a child in the way that he should go, binding the standards of God upon them from their youngest days, keeping it as blinders before their eyes – a straight path of obedience, by which they are mightily blessed! We are to discipline them – lead them along – not with angry lashing out, or human speak, according to our flesh; but with measured, appropriate, timely discipline, that is filled with godly, scriptural instruction. This is our joyful duty, my friends! We don’t do these things for our children, because we think that we can save their souls – God alone owns their heart. We are not goal or outcome oriented; we are obedience, and process oriented. If they come to years, and depart from the faith, then let them depart – but let that blood be on their heads, and not on ours! No matter how hopeless it might look – do your duty - betimes – leave it all on the field – and trust God. Parents are to properly exercise their authority, and children are to OBEY! Sweet, Joyful, Humble, Proactive obedience – children – stop chafing against your parents! Align your will with your parents’ will. Wives – align your will with your husband’s will. All of us must align our will with God’s. That concept is DESPISED by this world, because it is so hated by the god of this world, Satan, who fell from heaven because of his rebellion!

Isaiah 3:11,12 “11 Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him. 12 As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths.”

Isaiah 8:18 “Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.”

Proverbs 29:15 “¶The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.”

Proverbs 22:6 “¶Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

Proverbs 22:15 “¶Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.”

Proverbs 29:17 “¶Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.”

Proverbs 13:24 “¶He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.”

This world is full of useless, unclean, godless talking. Whatever filthy, blasphemous thing pops into the dark, depraved mind comes flying out of peoples' mouths, without the least bit of fear! The mouths of the wicked are filled with lightness, ludeness, and mockery. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignities! The people of this world believe their goofy thoughts to be of the utmost importance, wisdom, and weight. Especially in this “information age” where every vain matter under the sun is spoken of ad infinitum, we see that people think they are instant experts on every topic, answering matters before they have even heard them! It is time to shut up! Let us not be conformed to this world's mouths – our words ought not to be filled with cursing, bravado, mocking and levity. We must rule our tongues, and our spirits. For our own sake, for our brother's sake, and for our neighbor's sake. If our hearts are full of pride, malice, envy and mocking, then our words will also be full of those things. If our hearts are sober, then our tongues should be sober. If we have proper, grave, reverent thoughts of God and eternity, then we ought not to lightly throw around foolish, profane words – particularly in that context! We can all do better about these things! We ought to help each other with great humility, knowing how easy it is for our tongues to get away from us, and kindle a fire.

Psalms 141:3,4 “3 Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips. 4 Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity: and let me not eat of their dainties.”

Luke 6:45-46 “45 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh. 46 And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”

Lamentations 3:26 “It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.”

Ephesians 4:29-32 “29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. 30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye

are sealed unto the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

James 1:26,27 "26 If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. 27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

James 3:5-11 "5 Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! 6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. 7 For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: 8 But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. 9 Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. 10 Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. 11 Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?"

Proverbs 16:32 "¶He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

How we spend our time:

The scriptures tell us plainly that we are to redeem the time that we have been given:

Ephesians 5:15-18 "15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, 16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. 17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. 18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;"

Colossians 4:5,6 "5 ¶Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. 6 Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."

Redeem the time – cash it in - make wise use of it. It is our most precious, and finite resource. Once it is spent, it is gone forever. Our time is not our own - like all of our

resources (time, money, skills, wisdom, favor, our children, etc.), time is lent to us by our Creator, and we are to return it to the Him WITH INTEREST! It should be used productively, in the service of our King, and of our fellow servants. We should redeem the time diligently, and fervently, not making continual provisions for our flesh, such that we are filling our days with a continual series of worldly distractions.

Ecclesiastes 9:10 “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.”

Colossians 3:23-25 “23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; 24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. 25 But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.”

Proverbs 6:6-11 “6 ¶Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: 7 Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, 8 Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest. 9 How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? 10 Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: 11 So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.”

Lamentations 3:27 “It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.”

Luke 16:9 “And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.”

We should “**pass the time of [our] sojourning here in fear.**” (1Peter 1:17) We should be diligently occupying – investing our time and resources – laboring - in the service of our King, particularly in the ministry of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, thereby loving our neighbor: “**But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.**” (2Timothy 4:5) We should invest our time and resources in willingly, heartily, actively ministering to the saints of God that we are **privileged** to dwell amongst – giving succor (help) with our might! [washing their feet! no job is beneath any of us! No respecting of persons!] We should be investing our time in the scriptures: “**Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.**” (2Timothy 2:15) We should spend our days in prayer – continually framing up our prayer in our minds. (Romans 12:12, Colossians 4:2) We should be

investing our time communing with the saints – speaking often to one another (Malachi 3:16); speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; (Ephesians 5:19, Colossians 3:16) encouraging, and edifying one another – EVERY DAY! (1Thessalonians 5:11, Hebrews 3:13) On the contrary, we should NOT be having undue communion with the people of this world, who are deadly vipers – ravenous wolves – working the will of their father, the devil.

“Be aware of wicked company: and let your delight be in the saints, the excellent ones of the earth; and this, by the blessing of God, will be a mighty preservative from being conformed to the sinful courses and practices of the wicked world.” (Ralph Erskine)

Psalm 45:10,11 “10 ¶Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father’s house; 11 So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him.”

We should occupy in this world, with a spirit of contentment, not a spirit of covetousness and idolatry. We should not be constantly dreaming up the next thing, or activity that we want, in order to fulfill the desire and lust of our flesh – like a chain-smoker – not finishing one worldly activity or obsession, before we are planning and beginning our next worldly activity. There is no quota – no minimum requirement – for worldly activity in a day. When there’s too much to do in a day, the first thing on the chopping block should be worldly pursuits, not spiritual things!

Matthew 6:19-21 “19 ¶Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: 20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: 21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

What we treasure, and where we invest our earthly treasure (our time and our resources) is where our heart will inevitably be. If our time and resources are largely spent on the world, then our heart will follow. If we serve mammon, then we will indeed leave off from serving God – we cannot serve both. Again, the standard is moderation and temperance; we can use, but must not abuse the things of this world. Let’s look at some concrete examples in our day:

1Timothy 4:7-9 “7 But refuse profane and old wives’ fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. 8 For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. 9 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance.”

Bodily exercise profiteth little – it has some value, but it should be kept in perspective, and done in moderation. What is the value of exercise and sports? We should take reasonable steps to keep our bodies healthy and functioning well, so that we can apply our strength to serving God. It would be irresponsible of us not to do that! They can teach us discipline and hard work. They can be a way to spend good time in fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ – a time of encouragement – a time of instruction. Beyond those things, we should take care not to give more attention here than is due. We shouldn't be shaping our lives around obsessive exercising. We shouldn't be crafting our bodies for vain glory's sake. We shouldn't be overly taken, or occupied with sports. Be not conformed to this world!

2Thessalonians 3:11,12 “**11 For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. 12 Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.**

Social media is a wonderful tool that God has provided whereby we are able to preach to the world. Consider what the Lord has done through the means of Twitter in just the past few days! Instant preaching, the whole world over! We utilize social media as a (primarily) one-way preaching tool. To do otherwise – to invest our time in social media after the manner of the world, is a dangerous, foolish thing. The kindest thing that I could say, is that it is an incredible waste of time. It is also a satanic, demonic, heretical playground, like no other. To open that door is to invite Satan directly into your home for a little chat. Every form of pride, filth and blasphemy flies past your eyes. “O my soul, come not thou into their secret”! (Genesis 49:6) It is vain glorious in the extreme! It is the home of the modern day, supercharged tale-bearer and busybody – shut up, and mind your own business! The phony “Christians” who seem to live for, and live on these social media sites, need to shut up with all of their self-serving, self-righteous palaver! Endlessly striving over theory and nonsense, rather than picking up their armor, and jumping into the fight! I don't want to hear you babble – what are you going to do? We ought to give Satan ZERO opportunity to assault us through the means of social media. Be not conformed to this world!

1Corinthians 6:12 “**¶All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.**”

We ought to be careful with how we use any and all forms of earthly “entertainment” (television / movies / music / video games / professional sports, etc.). These are the things that make up the most important part of a worldling's life – it's where they

spend their resources - it's what they live for! There is a VERY limited value to all such things, and they ought to be treated in that way. In the moderate measure that we use these things, we ought to be clear about the nature of what we're dealing with, and not be brought under the power of any of it! We should be able to take it, or leave it at any time! Each of these things comes with some form of Satanic lie – some subtle bait to allure us.

We have instant access, right in our pockets, to all of the aforementioned worldly pursuits, through our cell phones. Once again these are wonderful devices that the Lord has provided, that make our lives so much easier, and allow us to wage war, and preach to the whole world! Thank God for that! They are also extremely dangerous – particularly in the hands of a young, inexperienced person. The way of this world is to shove one of these devices into the hand of a child, and turn them loose! The children of this world believe that they are entitled to them, and to use them with complete autonomy and privacy, in whatever fashion they desire. They waste away their days on these devices, shooting off filth and mischief into the ether. We do not owe our children any such thing, and in fact owe it to them to set straight paths for their feet. Use it for its purpose, and then PUT IT AWAY! Be not conformed to this world!

1John 2:15-17 “15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

Luke 9:23-25 “23 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. 24 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. 25 For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?”

These are indeed sobering matters to contemplate – let us search the scriptures, speak often with one another, and seek the Lord, that he would help us to be conformed to the spirit, and not to the world.

I love you all. Amen.