**Respectable Worldliness**

**Introduction**

1. “This world is not my home, I’m just a’ passing thru. My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue.”
   1. What does this actually look like?
2. We must be careful that we don’t think of worldliness simply in the basest of terms – sexual immorality, drunkenness, covetousness, etc.
3. Worldliness takes many forms – **1 Thessalonians 5:22** (“every form of evil”)
4. Perhaps, for the Christian the most dangerous forms are not the most obviously vile – **2 Corinthians 11:14** (Satan disguises himself)
5. There is a kind of respectable worldliness of which we must beware.
6. Worldliness
7. What is it?
   1. World – *kosmos* – (3) the sum total of everything here and now (BDAG, of 8 definitions).
      1. (6) the ungodly multitude; the whole mass of men alienated from God, and therefore hostile to the cause of Christ (THAYER)
      2. (7) world affairs, the aggregate of things earthly (THAYER)
         1. (7a) the whole circle of earthly goods, endowments riches, advantages, pleasures, etc, which although hollow and frail and fleeting, stir desire, seduce from God and are obstacles to the cause of Christ (THAYER)
   2. Worldliness – the concern of everything here and now.
      1. “concern with material values or ordinary life rather than a spiritual existence” (New Oxford American Dictionary)
      2. “of, relating to, or devoted to this world and its pursuits rather than to religion or spiritual affairs” (Merriam-Webster)
   3. Demas was worldly – **2 Timothy 4:10**
      1. Does not necessitate involvement in base immoralities.
      2. He simply prioritized the world over Christ.
   4. Inaccurate Evaluation – **Mark 8:36-37; 1 John 2:17**
   5. Misplaced Priorities – **Matthew 6:33**
   6. Nearsighted Living – **2 Peter 1:9**; Compare – **Hebrews 11:13-16**
8. What does God think about it?
   1. He has nothing to do with it – **1 John 2:16** – not of Him. (**John 4:24** – is Spirit)
   2. He is ashamed of people characterized by it – **Hebrews 11:16**
   3. He is entirely opposed to it – **James 4:4**
9. Respectable Worldliness
   1. Respectable – not in the sense that it is actually so, but in the sense of the activity itself – i.e. it is respectable in itself.
   2. **1 Corinthians 6:12** – being brought under the power of lawful (respectable) things.
   3. **Romans 14:14-18** – good that is spoken of as evil.
      1. Context – liberty of eating meat being abused to the detriment of a weak brother.
      2. Respectable – in the sense of eating meat being right in itself.
      3. Worldliness – in the sense of this being prioritized over a brother in Christ, especially to his stumbling.
10. Respectable Worldliness
11. Excessive Industry
    1. Work is necessary – **2 Thessalonians 3:10; 1 Timothy 5:8**
    2. Laziness is destructive and sinful – **Proverbs 6:6-11; 24:30-34**
    3. However, the vanity of such labor must be understood in regard to its comparison with the purpose of life – **Ecclesiastes 2:17; 12:13-14**
    4. The Workaholic
       1. The mindset:
          1. Concern turned to worry – **Matthew 6:19-34**
             1. **(v. 25)** – “Therefore” – worry is the cause of **(vv. 19-24).**
             2. Worry – *merimnaō* – “worry” “anxious” “care”

Care – **Philippians 2:20** – in a good sense, concern and provision.

Care – **1 Corinthians 7:32-33** – remain as you are in present distress (persecution).

Care in a good sense, but in the present distress there is the added difficulty of proper balance.

Worry – “(1) to be apprehensive, have anxiety, be anxious, be (unduly) concerned” (BDAG)

**(vv. 31-32)** – God knows you NEED.

Good to have concern, but not worry.

**(vv. 19-21)** – worry places your hearts focus on earth.

**(vv. 22-23)** – worry splits your vision.

**(v. 24)** – result of split vision – neglecting God.

* + - * 1. **(v. 33)** – instead, prioritize God and trust He will provide for His children. (The workaholic fails in this regard – truly takes matters into his own hands.)
      1. Physical provision to the neglect of spiritual provision – **Luke 12:15-21**
         1. **(v. 15)** – so we shouldn’t worry about them.
         2. **(vv. 16-19)** – worried about a problem, things of a solution, and finds pseudo comfort in his plans.
         3. **(vv. 20-21)** – never thought about the spiritual because too preoccupied with physical.

Maybe, “Get this taken care of and then I’ll focus on the spiritual.”

* + 1. The negligence:
       1. Domestic duties – headship, love of wife, training/teaching children, being with the family you’re working so hard to provide for.
       2. Church duties – forsaking assembly to work more hours, not enough time to be dependable for other needs.
       3. Spiritual devotion – personal study, evangelism, growth.
  1. The Working Mother
     1. A matter concerning priority – right to work, but where?
     2. **Titus 2:4-5** – homemakers.
        1. *oikouros*; from 3624 and οὖρος ouros (a guard; be “ware”); a stayer at home, i.e. domestically inclined (a “good housekeeper”). (STRONG)
           1. 1) caring for the house, working at home (THAYER)

1a) the (watch or) keeper of the house (THAYER)

1b) keeping at home and taking care of household affairs (THAYER)

1c) a domestic (THAYER)

* + - 1. ***“workers at home” (ASV, NASB); “working at home” (ESV***)
      2. ***“keepers of [their own] houses” (YLT)*** – more than simply the upkeep of the house…
         1. Young widows (under 60 – **v. 9**) – **1 Timothy 5:14** – manage home.
         2. *Oikodespoteo* – “to rule a house,” (VINE)
         3. ***“rule the household” (ASV); “guide the house” (KJV)***
         4. Spiritual endeavor – training/caring for children.
    1. Society – two income household, or stay at home dad, leave the children with another – not their responsibility.
       1. “THE HAND THAT ROCKS THE CRADLE IS THE HAND THAT RULES THE WORLD” – how are your children being shaped by others watching them. (Can’t do as good a job as you.)
       2. The wife/mother has the God-given task to look after the children.
       3. LIE – happiness/fulfillment is outside the home in the workplace – NO, IT IS IN FILLING YOUR DIVINELY APPOINTED ROLE.
    2. **Romans 12:2** – we must not bend to the perversions of society but live by God’s word.

1. Wasted Time
   1. **Ephesians 5:15-16** – time is a precious commodity that cannot be replaced.
      1. Redeeming – *exagorazō*; from 1537 and 59; to buy up, i.e. ransom; figuratively, to rescue from loss (improve opportunity) (STRONG)
         1. Not buying BACK lost time, but TAKING ADVANTAGE OF BY USING WHAT IS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE.
         2. Takes sacrifice – I AM GOING TO SACRIFICE DOING WHAT I WANT, OR ORIGINALLY THOUGHT TO DO SO I CAN MAKE THE BEST USE OF THIS TIME.
      2. Time – *Kairos* – an occasion, i.e. set or proper time; OPPORTUNITY (STRONG)
         1. Not CHRONOS – chronological time.
         2. Opportunities present themselves to do what is God’s will **(v. 17),** BUT WE MUST SEE THOSE SEASONS OF TIME AS OPPORTUNITIES.
      3. Days are evil – evil reduces such opportunities.
         1. Not always evil in itself, but something lawful used in evil way to take away opportunities for good.
         2. Evils devil uses to rob us of our opportunities include matters which are good in themselves, but are mis-prioritized.
   2. What are we busy with? – **Luke 2:49** – our Father’s business?
   3. Things we don’t get around to doing because of a suggested “lack of time” – study (individual, family), Bible lesson, Bible reading, prayer, meditation, assembling with the saints (gospel meetings), additional studies (ladies’ studies, men’s studies), etc.
   4. Obsessed with recreation – from Latin recreatio(n-), from recreare ‘create again, renew’.
      1. From God – **Ecclesiastes 2:24** – not evil.
         1. RE-CREATE – refresh so as to not overburden – NEEDED.
      2. However – **Ecclesiastes 11:9-12:1, 6-8, 13-14** – God will bring us into judgment for these things.
         1. Have we used them properly?
         2. Have they taken precedence over spiritual matters?
      3. After a long day/week of work – desire to be renewed – various forms of entertainment/leisure – BUT SHOULD THERE BE A LIMIT.
   5. Negligent planning – **James 4:13-17** – not including God in plans, great or small.
      1. **(v. 15)** – in planning did not include the Lord – weren’t thinking of Him.
      2. **(v. 17)** – leads to the negligence of the priority of service to God – **Ephesians 5:16** (failure to redeem time).
      3. Think – planning vacation before knowing of a faithful congregation to worship with (or not intending to worship), not planning around a meeting week, not making plans on a regular basis for spiritual growth, etc.
   6. EXAMPLE – **Luke 10:38-42** – Martha was worldly in that moment.
      1. She wasn’t committing some great immorality.
      2. She had prioritized the physical over the spiritual – failed to redeem the time.
      3. Microcosm of some of our greatest problems as Christians in the 21st century.

**Conclusion**

1. We do not have to be thieves, adulterers and adulteresses, promiscuous, covetous, drunkards, etc. to be worldly.
2. All we have to do is ***“set [our] mind[s] on earthly things” (Philippians 3:19).***
3. **Romans 8:6-8** – the carnal mind means more than simply one devoted to sinful thought/practice – it includes the one who is preoccupied with temporal things to the neglect of the spiritual.
4. We must avoid giving ourselves a free pass so long as we aren’t doing things that are grossly immoral. Are we truly setting our minds on things above? (**Colossians 3:1-4)**