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One Century in the Service
of our Lord Jesus Christ

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Newz of His

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Guided by His Word,
Serving in His Love

Deadly Appetites

"Potato chips, cheese curls, and candy may be some of your favorite things to eat, but for a few mule deer in Arizona's Grand Canyon National Park, these foods proved to be deadly. Park rangers had to kill over two dozen mule deer because they became hooked on junk food left by visitors to the park.

"Once they get a taste of the sugar and salt, the deer develop an extreme addiction and will go to any lengths to eat only junk food. The result is the animals ignore the food they need, leaving them in poor health and on the edge of starvation. Because of junk food cravings, the deer lose their natural ability to digest vegetation. One park ranger called the junk food 'the crack cocaine of the deer world.'"

Richard Young, *Arkansas Democrat Gazette* (Spring 1995)

John warned believers in his day of similar deadly seductions:

¹⁵Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For everything in the world - the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does - comes not from the Father but from the world. ¹⁷The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever. - 1 John 2:15-17

The term "world" is used in various ways in the New Testament. It refers to the creation, something we behold as a work of beauty that directs our praise to God. The term refers to the human population of this world, which the Father Himself loved so much that He sent Jesus to redeem it. If the Father loves the world in this sense, then, we must love what He loves. But, "world" also applies to the system of evil that grips and governs this present creation. The "prince" of this system is the devil himself. This is the sense in which we are to *NOT* love the world. Its enticements are captivating, and we are to evade their perilous allure.

John's, however, was hardly the first emphasis in the Scriptures warning us to not love the world. For as long as this creation has been fallen, God has pleaded with His covenant children to guard themselves in this matter. Nevertheless . . .

- ✓ Lot, the nephew of Abraham, when given a choice, opted to live near to the "cities of the plains" (*Genesis 13:12*) and, eventually, settled in the moral cesspool of Sodom itself.
- ✓ After several years on the run, Jacob settled in Shechem, in spite of the fact that He had promised God that he would return to Canaan. Some year's later, his daughter Dinah, "went out to visit the women of the land" (*Genesis 34:1*) The phrase indicates that she was enticed by this culture. Ordinarily, young women did not wonder about as they pleased. This was almost certainly a way to be introduced to pagan sin and pagan men. Ultimately, Dinah was raped by the prince of that land.
- ✓ Samson might have been the greatest judge that ever led Israel. His legacy, however, is marred by his tendency to live too close to the world. He preferred pagan girls to the ones in Israel. His marriage to one created a series of conflicts and disasters. Later, his Philistine girlfriend enticed him to disclose to her the secret of his great strength. This led to his final downfall.

Example after example could be cited. Ultimately, the allure of the world surrounding Israel led to the complete extinction of half of the nation and seventy years of captivity in a foreign land for the other half.

The warning to seek God's kingdom and to live in wariness of the world is no less urgent today for the people of God. The beliefs we profess and the values we hold are direct contradictions to the wisdom of this world and to the system of values that is advocated by the world. And, these days we are not simply warding off worldly enticements. We are actually placed in a position to have to deflect torrents of ridicule by a world that considers us to be fools, rubes and retro-thinkers.

Still, we are citizens elsewhere and we must never lose sight that there is great danger in loving what this world has to offer rather than seeking above all things the kingdom of God and its righteousness.



Karl's Korner