

THE RIGHTEOUS PURSUES HOLINESS

Chapter 2 Lesson 2

Chapter's Subject: Created Anew in Righteousness and True Holiness

Main Point: Cheap Grace?

Today's Study: A. Allurements of the World (*Covered in Lesson 1*)

B. Abuse of Divine Grace

C. Adapted to an Evil Environment

We will briefly discuss as many questions as possible from our previous lesson (Chapter 2 Lesson 1).

Introductory Notes

1. The sad situation of too many who were deceived by Satan
 - (a) The allurements of the evil will always be a reality (at least in this life) and many are deceived and trapped.
 - (1) Satan enticed and enticed, and that's what he is all about, he is the tempter
 - (2) He will dangle the carrot before your eyes as we saw in our previous lesson
 - Showing the grand and glorious privileges, the awesome opportunities, etc.
 - Giving the assurance that there are untold pleasures beyond your wildest imagination
 - Etc.
 - (3) That has been Satan's trick ever since he trapped Adam and Eve (Gen. 3, NB vv. 1-5)
 - (4) Eventually the tempted caves in only to find out, too late, the awful consequences as a result of yielding to temptation (Gen. 3: 6-21).
 - (b) **The problem is many have tasted sin and enjoyed it!**
 - (1) This is true because there are many who say that "Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant" (Prov. 9:17).
 - (2) Yet the pleasures of sin are not only destructive (Rom. 6:23; etc.) but they are only temporal (Heb. 11:25; 1 Tim. 5:6).
 - (3) Irrespective of the facts that sin leads to death (separation from God and eventually eternal damnation), there are so many who have chosen the derogatory lifestyle is and enjoying it because although God's light shows the way, they prefer darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil (John 3:19; 1 Tim. 5:6; Isa. 47:7-11; Luke 8:14; 2 Peter 2:13)
2. **Conflict of Interest!!**
 - (a) Living in sin and professing Christ are inconsistent lifestyles; they do not blend and cannot; there is a great difference!!
 - (b) What many have failed to acknowledge is that a person who lives an inconsistent Christian life is under the control of the flesh and not the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:16-21).

- (c) A **habitual sinful lifestyle** is contrary to the lifestyle of a person who is genuinely and truly born of God!! (1 John 3:1-10).
- (d) **It should be remembered that a double standard lifestyle in like crucifying Jesus Christ afresh (Heb. 6:6).**
- (1) Such a person is referred to as being double minded and unstable in all his ways (Jams 1:8)
 - (2) His lifestyle is out-rightly inconsistent and destructive (Matt. 7:15-23)
 - (3) ALL their solemnities are vain and useless in the sight of God (Isa. 1, NB vv. 10-17)
3. **Absolutely! God forgives, but sin must be confessed and be forsaken!!**
- (a) Some preachers are afraid to make it known that there are consequences for sinful practices.
 - (b) We have heard the illustrations used today by many preachers as they try to soften sin and its consequences in order to charm the sinner and build their church membership. These illustrations contain part truth and they do not give an account of the whole story. Yes, we need to be caring, compassionate, etc. but not concealing or compromising the standard of righteousness. Below, I have briefly noted **some** of these statements (*there is no intention to condemn anyone or to criticize but to factually face the truth ... also note, these are brief comments*)
 - (1) **King David**
 - The idea taught is that although David was regarded as a man of God's own heart he committed adultery and murder
 - While this is true there are several factors to be considered, we have time for a few
 - There were consequences for his sins and David paid greatly for his transgressions (2 Sam. 11, 12, 13, 16, 17) Note what Nathan brought to David's attention (See 2 Sam. 12:10-12 and that exposure was done by his son Absalom (2 Sam. 16:20-22)
 - David repented of his sin!! (2 Sam. 12:13-14; Psa. 51)
 - Here is the amazingly wonderful thing; there is no account of David repeating this transgression again.
 - **SIN MUST BE FORSAKEN!!**
 - (2) **Peter the cursing/swearing saint**
 - The emphasis is that Peter, who was one of Christ inner circle and an outstanding leader of the Church, used profanity and denied Christ.
 - Yes! But he bitterly repented; he too like King David had a broken spirit and a contrite heart (for Peter's account see Matt. 26:69-75, NB v. 75)
 - See the different Peter after the crucifixion and Pentecost; **he too did not repeat his transgressions.**
 - In fact, see the First Epistle of Peter and observe the emphasis on holiness of life (in the entire First Epistle)
 - **SIN MUST BE FORSAKEN!!**

(3) The Adulterous Woman

- Absolutely, she was caught in the very act and that cannot be denied.
- To the surprise of the hypocritical Jews, Christ did not condemn but forgave this woman who was coming in contact with Christ for the first time (John 8:11).
- Her burden of sin was lifted because of the mercy and grace of God.
- So many hymns reflect what transacted in this situation; one of those hymns is “At Calvary”
The Refrain
Mercy there was great and grace was free;
Pardon there was multiplied to me;
There my burdened soul found liberty,
At Calvary.
- Oh for the depth, riches, compassion, etc. of God’s great love for lost humanity!!
- Here is something we need to emphasize in regards to this woman’s forgiveness: **Christ instructed her, “GO AND SIN NO MORE” (John 8:11)**
- **SIN MUST BE FORSAKEN!!**

4. Too many are preaching salvation and ignoring the need for repentance!!

- (a) Remember, repentance is compulsory (Acts 17:30)
- (b) Failure to repent means to be doomed (Luke 13:3, 5)
- (c) As we discussed in chapter 1, repentance involves two acts
 - (1) Sorrow for sin (2 Cor. 7:10)
 - (2) Stop sinning (John 8:11)

*That’s why it is referred to as a U-Turn. It’s turning **away** from the pathway of sin to God and His righteousness.*

5. Salvation delivers one from the compulsion of sin and yes, the possibility of sinning is possible.

- (a) But when one **habitually** sins, something is wrong! (1 John 3:9-10).
- (b) If you are in such condition then get help (see 1 John 1, and do not ignore verses 5-6).
- (c) Our solution to victorious living is in Jesus Christ (Phil. 4:13; etc.) but we must continue to **abide in Him** (John 15:1-10; etc.)

CHEAP GRACE?**A. Allurements of the world**

This first sub-point was discussed in Lesson 1. In that lesson, 1 John 2:15-17 was repeatedly discussed for emphasis and to reinforce the fact that we are involved in spiritual warfare and we must be aware of the wiles of our arch enemy. Victory is assured because we are more than conquerors through Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:28-39 NB v. 39. This verse is also a repeated reference throughout this study).

B. Abuse of Divine Grace

*I recommend that you read Romans chapters 1 through 8 with emphasis on Chapter 6. Today, we will have time for highlighted comments on **Rom. 6:1-4***

NOTE:

In Rom. 3:21-5:21 Paul made it plain how God has provided for our redemption and justification; this was also discussed in chapter 1 of this study and in essence is the foundation on which this entire study is built. One song writer speaks of the “joy of **full salvation**”, and went on to say “glory, glory to His name!” In the following chapters (Rom. 6, 7, 8) Paul goes on to explain the doctrine of sanctification, a life of victory, a life of separation to the glory of God.

A sanctified life is essential if we are to grow to maturity in Christ. Paul discusses the subject in three parts (1) freedom from the tyrant sin (chap. 6), freedom from the condemnation of the law (chap. 7) and (3) life in the power of the Holy Spirit (chap. 8).

1. **Dead to Sin , Alive in Christ (Rom. 6)**

- (a) The chapter is an “Exhortation to Holiness”.
- (b) For Rom. 6, I will present an outline with some pointers and limited comments in Lesson 3 of this chapter.
- (c) Below are the two main points for the chapter
 - (1) The Nature of Sanctification
 - (2) The Necessity of Sanctification

(See Lesson 3 of this chapter for a breakdown of the verses)

2. **We will briefly discuss: “Abuse of Divine Grace”, the second sub-point of this chapter.**

- (a) We are all acquainted with the word “abuse”.
 - (1) In essence the word means
 - Corrupt practices or custom
 - Improper use or treatment
 - To treat cruelly: mistreat
 - Etc.
 - (2) We have seen examples of abuse in so many areas of life. This bad habit or cruel act is like a plague in today’s world.
 - Spouse abuse
 - Parent abusing children
 - Children abusing parents
 - Politicians, etc. abusing power allotted them.
 - Executives abuse privileges given them
 - Etc.
- (b) Many abuse the grace of God, some do so openly and some in the darkness

- (1) In fact there are those who believe and teach others that once saved we are always saved no matter the lifestyle lived. What this doctrine does is to foster careless and inconsistent Christian living and it is an abuse of the grace of God!!
 - (2) Time would not allow but we have seen on display, so many, many examples of abusive situations, as it relates to God's mercy and grace. For example:
 - Sexual immorality to the highest degree.
 - Those who are lords over God's heritage and many use such situations for their personal benefits.
 - There are those who believe that they can serve God and mammon; these are those who are sold out for the mighty dollar and will do anything for financial wealth.
 - Financial corruption has helped to minimize the place of the Church (Universal) in today's world; even then Christ says the "gates of hell shall not prevail".
 - Deception is common among so many ... we have seen fake miracles, fake prophets, some have seemingly placed great interest on church growth, emphasizing building the kingdom of God, when in truth it is all about money fame, etc. (see 1 Tim .4 "Apostasy", etc. has been addressed NB vv. 1-9; see also 2 Tim. 4:4; Heb. 3:12; 2 Pete 3:17; etc.
 - Etc.
- (c) **I have noted before that there is an overemphasis on the love of God while neglecting the other attributes of God.**
- (1) Absolutely, God is love! Indeed He is a loving, merciful, forgiving, restoring, etc. God. He freely bestows His mercy and grace upon unworthy sinners.
 - (2) While we need to place emphasis on God's love, we have often done so while overlooking other attributes of God which are very important, for example, the justice of God (*which we have discussed before*):
 - God is just (Deut. 32:4; 1 John 1:9). He is angry at sin because of His love for righteousness (Rom. 3:5-6; Ps. 97:2; 119:137; etc.).
 - He reveals His wrath against every form of wickedness (Rom. 1:18; etc.)
 - It was to satisfy His justice why He sent Jesus Christ into the world to die for sinners (John 3:16; 1 John 4:9-10; etc.)
 - Etc.
 - (3) Some lingering questions are: What have you done with Jesus? Are you abusing God's boundless love so freely outpoured upon you? Do you know that ALL works will come to judgment?
 - (4) See beloved, when we lose focus on the essentials of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and focus mainly on things that tickle man's ears, or solely stir the emotion, pleasing the crowd, etc. the fundamentals of the cause of Christ will be neglected and each man will continue to do what is right in his own eyes! It is discouraging to see the way some Christians live, so many have only a form of godliness but no power to overcome the sinful allurements of the

world. This is not pleasant to say but it is a fact, the way many churches operate help to cater for the carnal gratification of the flesh. This is so prevalent in the world; it's like proclaiming the gospel but according to the dictates of the world.

3. **ABUSE OF DIVINE GRACE (Rom. 6:1-4)**

(a) The puzzling questions:

- (1) If God loves to forgive, why not give Him more sins to forgive?
- (2) If forgiveness is guaranteed, do we have the freedom to sin as much as we want?
- (3) What shall we make of this sweet and comfortable doctrine, why not live relaxed lives, doing what we want, as we desire?

(b) **Shall we do evil that good may come?**

There are some who actually believe that we need to do evil in order for God's goodness to be outpoured. In fact this has been true through the history of the Church, for example see 1 John 3 and study it carefully; note verses 4-10 (this passage will be discussed later in the study). You will also observe the emphasis Paul placed on the fact that the true believer has died to sin and alive in Christ, for example Rom. 6: 11-18).

- (1) **Rom. 3:8** (If you are not acquainted with the context you should carefully and prayerfully read the chapter)

Amplified Bible

"And why should we do evil that good may come? – as some slanderously charge us with teaching. Such [false teaching] is justly condemned by them".

Life Application Study Bible

"And some people even slander us by claiming that we say, 'The more we sin, the better it is!' Those who say such things deserve to be condemned".

- (2) God's grace is measureless, shall we not make use of the opportunity and encourage ourselves to sin, because the more that we sin the more God's grace is experienced?
 - But this is the best way to make use of the boundless love of God made available through His infinite grace?
 - Paul's affirmative response (my translation: "Absolutely not!!") **Rom. 6:2 Amplified Bible:**"Certainly not!"
 - Because such practice would be the "Abuse of Divine Grace!"
 - **Rom. 6:2 (KJV) "God forbid"**
 - **"Be it far from us to think such thoughts!!"**
 - Paul responded in a similar way that Christ responded to Satan's most deceptive temptation (see Matt. 4:10)
 - **KJV:** Get thee hence ..."
 - **Amplified Bible:** "Begone Satan ..."

- (3) The evil results of such deceptive nature in regards to continuing in sin that God's grace may abound:
- They give countenance (approval) to sin.
 - They open the door to practical immoralities
 - **They may look attractive and applicable to the advance of free grace but they are to be rejected with the greatest abhorrence.**
 - This opinion is obviously a sign of ignorance mixed with an abuse of divine grace.
- (4) **Such an attitude of deliberately sinning, it is something decided ahead of time to take advantage of God's grace, shows that there are those who do not understand the seriousness and consequences of sin.**
- It should never be forgotten that for one to **habitually** sin is living contrary to the standards required by God.
 - Sin is direct rebellion against the known will of God; as we saw with Adam and Eve (Gen. 3); or with Israel (See for example Ezek. 3; 12:2-3, 25; etc.), as well as we have seen in many other situations.
 - Since Jesus Christ came there is no cloak (no covering up) for sin (John 15:22).
 - **God's forgiveness does not make sin less serious.**
 - His Son's death on the cross for sin shows the dreadful seriousness of sin.
 - We all know the account of redemption; Jesus paid the ultimate price!! He gave His life that we may be forgiven!!
 - **The availability of God's mercy must not become an excuse for careless living and moral laxness (looseness).**

4. **One way of victory over the abuse of divine grace is to focus on who you are (ought to be) in Christ. For example see Rom.6:3**

Rom. 6:3 Amplified Bible

"Are you ignorant of the fact that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?" (See also verse 4)

Time wouldn't allow for a detailed discussion but observe the following and the follow-up on verse 4

- (a) Immersion was **the form of baptism** used in Paul's days as well as others and continues today (although neglected by some).
- (1) The new Christians were completely "*buried*" in water (went under all the way ... **immersed**).
 - (2) They understood baptism to symbolize **the death and burial of the old life.**
 - (3) Coming up out of the water symbolized **resurrection of the new life with Jesus Christ.**
- (b) **"Baptized into his death" (Rom. 6:3 KJV)**
- (1) Into a participation of the privileges purchased by His death.
 - (2) Into an obligation both to:

- **Comply with the design of His death, which was to conform to the pattern of His death, which was to redeem us from all iniquity.**
- **Conform to the pattern of His death, that is, as Christ died for sin, so we must die to sin.**

(c) **This brief coverage of verse 4 will add to and reinforce the above.**

Water baptism for the Christian represents his or her burial and resurrection with Christ, but it is more. **When accompanied by true faith, baptism is part of our rejection of sin and our commitment to Christ, resulting in a continual flow of grace and divine life to us.** Baptism means identifying with Christ in His death and burial in order that we may live in union with His resurrected life (Rom. 6:4-5). **As surely as Christ rose from the dead, so surely we who exercise true saving faith in Him will walk in the newness of life (Rom. 6:5).**

5. **A FEW CLOSING THOUGHTS:**

- (a) We can consciously choose to treat the desires and temptations of the old nature as if they were dead.
- (1) Then we can continue to enjoy our wonderful new life with Jesus Christ
 - (2) See Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:12; 3:1-4.
- (b) Beloved, this is a call to holiness!!
- (1) Separation from the world unto God!
 - (2) Freedom from the dominion of sin!
 - (3) We do not abuse the grace of God, we walk in the newness of life!
 - (4) We are dead to sin but alive in Christ!!

Gal. 2:20 (NKJV)

“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me”.

(c) **Take a Stand! Adapt and Maintain a Firm Position!!**

- (1) Do not give in to sin!! (Prov. 1:10; 4:14)
- (2) Temptation is not sin but yielding to temptation is sin!! (Rom 6:13)
 - Protect what you have! It was purchased with the precious blood of Jesus Christ!!
 - **Absolutely!! Grace is not cheap!!**
 - God gave His only begotten Son (John 3:16)
 - The Son willingly laid down His life, which included the most gruesome, painful, disgraceful experience imaginable (John 10:15; Gal. 1:4; etc.)
- (3) **The Hymn: Yield Not to Temptation**
 Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin.
 Each victory will help you some other to win.
 Fight manfully onward; dark passions subdue
 Look ever to Jesus; He will carry you through

Shun evil companions; bad language disdain.

God's name hold in reverence, nor take it in vain
 Be thoughtful and earnest, kindhearted and true.
 Look ever to Jesus; He'll carry you through

To him that o'er-cometh God giveth a crown
 Thro' faith we shall conquer, though often cast down.
 He who is our Saviour our strength will renew
 Look ever to Jesus He will carry you through

REFRAIN

Ask the Saviour to help you,
 Comfort, strengthen, and keep you.
 He is willing to aid you;
 He will carry you through.

C. Adapted to the Evil Environment

1. Introductory Notes

(a) Psalm 1:1

"Blessed is the man that **walks not** in the counsel of the ungodly, **nor standeth** in the way of sinners, **nor sitteth** in the seat of the scornful". (scornful: *scorners, mockers etc.*)

(b) The progression of one adapting to an evil environment is easily seen in this verse ... *briefly note*:

(1) The straying sheep (Believer) walks or **strolls** in the counsel of the ungodly.

The focused righteous stroll not in the counsel of the ungodly (Ps. 1:1)

(2) The straying sheep (Believer) **stands** in the way of sinners

The focused righteous does not stand in the way of sinners (Ps. 1:1).

(3) The straying sheep (Believer) **sit** in the seat of the scornful.

The focused righteous does not sit in the seat of the scornful (Ps. 1:1).

(c) Briefly defining the word "adapt".

(1) To make or become suitable for a new use or purpose

(2) To adjust oneself to different conditions, environment, etc.

(3) By adapting to an evil environment, the individual(s) have adapted (They take as their own, etc.); they are now associates, belonging to, ideally a part of, have become an integral part of that environment.

(4) Here are some synonyms: accommodate oneself to, attune to, conform to, habituate oneself to, etc.

(d) **AT HOME IN THE WRONG ENVIRONMENT**

(1) **Abram Stayed in Haran (Gen. 11:31-32)**

- Scholars believe that Abram (later...Abraham) loved Haran because it was a prosperous city, etc. However it was still too close to the pagan society that God was calling him from.

- No matter what was Abram’s reason for staying in Haran; **Haran was not Canaan!!**
 - It was still an environment polluted with idol worship, etc.
 - Separation for Abram was imperative!! He fully complied after receiving a second call from God as we have seen in Gen 12:1-3. (See also Acts 7:1-8)
 - (2) **Lot Settled in Sodom (Gen. 13, 14, 19)**
 - In Chapter 13, we see “The Glitter of Sodom”
 - Like a carrot on a pole Satan dangled the glitter of Sodom before Lot’s eyes (Gen. 13:10)
 - He fell for Satan’s trick by being deceived by what he saw with the eyes. By choosing to take the route that he took, he forsook the covering that he experienced under God’s covenant with Abram (Gen. 13:11-12).
 - Genesis chapter 14 shows the glitter and glamour vanished. Lot being degraded to being a captive slave; but for the goodness of God through his uncle Abram, he was delivered but he stayed in Sodom.
 - In Genesis chapter 19 we have seen Devastation, Destruction, Degradation.
 - Lot was at home in Sodom not liking the depraved practices but not enough abhorrence to get out.
 - Observe, he was even slow in getting out when Sodom was about to be destroyed.
 - His wife was so saturated with this evil environment that she could not take the idea of leaving and most likely was also slow to believe it would be destroyed.
 - (3) **Seven Steps in Peter’s Downfall** (*Christ’s crucifixion*)
 - Scholars differ as to the power points showing these seven steps down but they all agree on one thing: **Peter settled in the wrong crowd.**
 - One such source states that, Peter’s seventh step down was to: **“sit with the ungodly”**.
 - I have checked the account and observed the following:
 - **Matt. 26:62:** “... Peter sat ...”
 - **Mark 14:67:**
 - Peter was seen warming himself with the wrong source of heat (wrong crowd)
 - Remember Samson’s final down fall occurred after he got a hair cut in the wrong barber’s chair. Samson was also totally saturated with the pleasure of women with whom he should have avoided. There are many other examples of this evil association which eventually led to ruin, for example King Solomon.
 - **Luke 22:55:** “... Peter sat among them ...”
 - **John 18:18** “... Peter stood with them and warmed himself”.
- (e) As we continue to discuss this situation of adapting to an evil environment we have seen that this downward spiral happens in phases.

(1) The individual is allured (enticed) into a situation to which he gradually caves in and yield to temptation. Eventually, this or these individual(s) adapted to the evil environment and become settled among sinners living like them.

(2) **Look again at Psalm 1:1**

- **KJV**

“Blessed is the man that **walketh not** in the counsel of the ungodly, **nor standeth** in the way of sinners, **nor sitteth** in the seat of the scornful”.

- The Amplified Bible renders “sitteth” as “to relax and rest”.
- We do not relax and rest if we are not comfortable with the situation. This person feels so at home he finds it fitting to “relax and rest”, although it is an immoral environment.
 - Remember, it was simply a gradual stroll, then he stood, then he sat.
 - The eyes to the mind, to the heart, and into action.
 - **Bit by bit until you take a mouthful!!**
 - That mouthful poisoned the soul
 - It hurts your relationship with God (sin separates anyone from God)

(3) **Restoration is possible but ONLY through Jesus Christ**

- First there must be **remembrance**
- Second there must be **repentance**
- Third there must be a **return**
- If not there will be a **removal**

See Rev. 2:1-7

(f) The sad state of adapting to the evil environment is what we will briefly highlight in the two examples discussed below.

(1) The Corinthian Church

(2) The Church at Laodicea

(3) And yes, sad but true, we are witnessing this situation within the Church (Universal) in this closing Church age.

We sang the chorus years ago about “Sailing On” and yes we are sailing (The Universal Church) but there is water coming in the ship from several areas. A great holiness preacher many years ago preached a message to a Camp Meeting audience of his denomination under the subject “There is a Hole in the Whole Holiness Movement”.

Irrespective of anyone’s denomination the Church (Universal) consists of “Called Out People” and we need to come out from the world (2 Cor. 6:17) and the distinction must be maintained!!

2. Background Scriptures

(a) **1 Corinthians**

(b) **Rev. 3:14-22**

(c) **HIGHLIGHTING THREE REFERENCES**(1) **Psalm 1:1 Amplified Bible**

“Blessed (HAPPY, fortunate, prosperous, and enviable) is the man who walks and lives not in the counsel of the ungodly [following their advice, their plans and purposes], nor stands [submissive and inactive] in the path where sinners walk, nor sit down [to relax and rest] where the scornful [and the mockers] gather”.

(2) **Rev. 3:21-22 Amplified Bible**

“He who overcome (is victorious), I will grant him to sit beside Me on my throne, as I Myself overcome (was victorious) and sat down beside My Father on His throne. He who is able to hear, let him listen to and heed what the [Holy] Spirit says to the assemblies (churches)”.

(3) **2 Cor. 6:17-18 Amplified Bible**

“So, come out from among [unbelievers], and separate (sever) yourselves from them, says the Lord, and touch not [any] unclean thing; then I will receive you kindly and treat you with favor [Isa. 52:11.] And I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty [Isa. 43:6; Hos. 1:10.]

3. **Living above the environment**(a) Some teach that no one can live above his environment and that is a lie from the pit of hell!

- (1) They say if you go to Rome, you do what the Romans do, and that is also a lie!
- (2) They say if you are away from home, especially away on a vacation, **anything** that you do stays at that particular place and that is also a lie.
- (3) They say that a child will do exactly what his father does and that is also a lie
 - Many of us have lived different lives from our fathers; my dad had several children out of wedlock with God’s help that has not been my experience.
 - Some say if one’s father is a jail bird, his son is likely to become a jail bird and that is also a lie.
- (4) Satan is a liar and the father of lies (John 8:44), any chain of bondage can be broken by the power of God (Isa. 61).

(b) Obviously, and as we have seen throughout history, those who feel captivated and conformed to an evil environment are those who refuse to submit to the will of God.

- (1) This is seen for example, in the book of Judges (Read the entire book)

Judges 21:25 Amplified Bible

“In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes”.

(c) **We can live above an evil environment!!**

At his time only a brief listing is possible of a few who lived above their environment:

- (1) Noah (Gen. 6, NB vv. 5-8, emphasis v. 8)
- (2) Moses (Heb. 11:11-27)
- (3) Joseph (Gen. 39:9)
- (4) Daniel and his friends (Daniel 1:8-21; 3:8-18; in chapter 6 NB vv. 10-17)
- (5) Jesus Christ
 - We know He was truly God and truly man but the facts remain, for the time He was on earth He lived above His environment.
 - He was tempted in every way we are tempted yet without sin (Heb. 4:14)
 - He is our perfect example
- (6) The Philadelphia Church (Rev. 3:7-13)
 - Stood out among the seven churches addressed in Rev. 2 and 3.
 - It was a faithful church that kept Christ's Word and did not deny Him.
 - **They endured opposition from the world and resisted conforming to the evil trend of other churches.**
 - **They also persevered in loyalty to Jesus Christ and the truth of the New Testament gospel**

*The two churches discussed below were plagued with derogatory, destructive issues because **they were infiltrated by the evil society in which they served.** This should not have been because the Church (Universal) is supposed to be light and salt (we will discuss these characteristics in another lesson ... in chapter 3). I know that we are living in evil times but we, as a Church (Universal), have been called as ambassadors of the heavenly kingdom where only the righteous will be allowed. We cannot expect to be part saint and part sinner that simply doesn't exist; we are either righteous or unrighteous.*

4. TWO CHURCHES THAT ADAPTED TO THEIR EVIL ENVIRONMENT

(a) The Corinthian Church

(1) Corinth

- Corinth, an ancient city of Greece, was in many ways the most prominent Greek Metropolis of Paul's time.
 - One of the most strategically located in the ancient world.
 - Corinth was the center of industry and commercial pleasure.
- Like many of today's prosperous cities:
 - Corinth was intellectually arrogant (offensive pride, haughtiness, etc.), materially affluent and morally corrupt.
 - Sin of every kind flourished in this notoriously sensual city.

(2) Here is a brief listing of some of the problems Paul addressed that existed in the Corinthian church:

- 1 Corinthians addresses the kinds of problems that churches experienced when members remain carnal (1 Cor. 3:3).

- This derogatory life style is applicable to those who do not decisively separate themselves from the pagan society around them (2 Cor. 6:17).
- **Some of those problems:**
 - Divisiveness; party strife and pretensions to wisdom (1 Cor. 1:10-4:5; 11:17-22)
 - Tolerance of sin, like incest (1 Cor. 5:1-3)
 - Sexual immorality in general [liberty and license] (1 Cor. 6:12-20)
 - Secular lawsuits between Christians (1 Cor. 6:1-11)
 - Marriage and Divorce (1 Cor. 7:1-40)
 - Conflicts over Christian liberty [Idolatrous food] (1 Cor. 8:1-13)
 - Paul's defense of his apostleship (1 Cor. 9:1-27)
 - Further warning against idolatry (1 Cor. 10:-11:1)
 - Humanistic thinking about apostolic truth [the resurrection] (1 Cor. 15)
 - Etc.
- (3) **Outstanding issues addressed**
 - Among the most important contributions of 1 Corinthians is Paul' teaching on the manifestation and gifts of the Holy Spirit in context of cooperate worship (1 Cor. 12-14)
 - As listed above, he also addressed issues such as (a) matters related to celibacy and marriage (1 Cor. 7) (b) Public worship, including the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11-14), (c) the collection for the church (1 Cor. 16:1-4), (d) etc.
- (4) **PROBLEM PLAGUED CHURCH!!**
 - Once more I must point out that details are not possible. As we carefully examine the Corinthian church, it is obvious that it was a problem plagued church.
 - Situation was so serious that it was stated that the Corinthian church was about to collapse.
 - **You will also observe that despite the many serious problems facing the Corinthian church, the matter of divisiveness was FIRST addressed.**
 - Obviously, the Corinthian church was sadly infiltrated by the immoral environment in which they served. The lifestyle of the ungodly society was very much an active part of this church and as noted above, **this happens when there is a reluctance to be separated from the pagan society around them.**
- (5) We cannot afford to be fooled:
 - Merely by our faithful attendance
 - Merely by our activities
 - Simple by going through the motion of worship
 - Or by so many things that is done vainly. Jesus speaks of those who draw nigh externally but the heart is far from God (Matt. 15:8; etc.)
- (6) We cannot afford to be merely external believers, the Word of God warns against formalism: Isa. 1:13; 29:13; Matt. 23:23; Gal. 4:10-11; 2 Tim. 3:5; etc.

(b) The Laodicea Church (Rev. 3:14-22)**(1) Laodicea**

- Laodicea was the wealthiest of the seven cities mentioned in Revelations 2 and 3.
 - It was known for its banking industry.
 - It was known for manufacturing wool.
 - It was known for its medical school that produced eye ointment
- The city had a problem with its water supply
 - An aqueduct (pipe line to bring in water) was built to bring water from the springs.
 - But by the time the water reached the city, the water was neither hot nor refreshingly cool, **only lukewarm.**
 - **The Laodicea church had become as insipid (bland) as the tepid (lukewarm) water that came into the city and that was God's evaluation.**

(2) LUKEWARM!!

- Lukewarm water makes a disgusting drink.
- The church in Laodicea had become lukewarm, and was thus distasteful and repugnant (offensive).
 - The believers didn't take a stand for anything, indifference had led to idleness.
 - By neglecting living wholeheartedly for Jesus Christ the church had become hardened and self-satisfied, and it was destroying itself.
 - **There is nothing more disgusting than a half-hearted, nominal Christian who is self-sufficient.**
 - **DO NOT SETTLE FOR GOD HALFWAY!!**
In fact 99.5% is not good enough. In one of the churches I was a pastor, we had a brother who usually sing a song in reference to the fact that 99 ½ won't do. We must not leave room for the devil! There are many hymns of consecration that authenticates this fact of giving "ALL" to Jesus; for example "I Surrender All"
 - **Let Jesus Christ fire you up and get into action!!**

(3) There are other points that we do not have time to discuss and you are encouraged to dig deeper into this subject, for example:

- **Many, even some preachers seem to assume that material possessions are primarily are one of the signs of God's spiritual blessings.**
 - The Laodicea church thought so but God said they were wretched, miserable and poor (Rev. 3:17).
 - Jesus Himself made it clear: "... for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he posseth" (Luke 12:15).
- **Laodicea prided itself on its precious eye ointment that healed many eye problems.**

- God told them to buy ointment for their eyes that they may see (Rev. 3:18)
- They may have produced ointment for the physical eyes but spiritually they were blinded to the truth (John 9:39).
- **You will also observe they had clothing and dyeing institutes but God said they were spiritually naked (Rev. 3:18).**

(4) Why they were a lukewarm, insipid church?

- Lukewarm because it compromised with the world.
- Lukewarm because it resembled its surrounding society.
- Lukewarm because it professes Jesus Christ, yet in reality does not know Him and is in a spiritually wretched state.

(5) Warning against lukewarmness (Rev. 3:15-16) briefly noted.

- As noted above the church at Laodicea professed Christ but in their activities and actions they denied Him by adapting to the evil environment in which they served.
- “Christ severely warns the church about His judgment against spiritual lukewarmness(Rev. 3:15-17)
- Christ sincerely invites the church to repent and be restored to a place of faith, righteousness, revelation and fellowship (Rev.3:18-19).
- In the midst of a lukewarm church, Christ knocks at the door desiring to “come in to him, and will sup with” them (v. 20), a picture of His enduring desire for close friendship and intimacy with His people. To believers who persevere in faith and are over-comers in the midst of a spiritually lukewarm church, Christ promises that they will share in the authority of His throne (v. 21)”.
(The above three pointers were quoted from Life in the Spirit Study Bible)

5. Beloved, separation from the world is imperative!!

(a) The facts speak for themselves.

- (1) In too many situations the Church is not dispelling darkness but getting used to the dark.
- (2) It is not just a saying but this is very much a reality and that is, the Church is getting too worldly.
- (3) In so many areas we have taken things of the world and **tried** using them to win souls, keep our members, etc. but what we do need is a purging and sanctification is a purging experience. *(Don't get me wrong I am hereby referring to things that hurt us spiritually; we know what they are and no need for a listing at this time)* The old leaven MUST be removed!!

(4) Etc.

(b) Consider these references:

- (1) **Rom. 12:2 Amplified Bible**

“Do not be conformed to this world (this age), [fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs], but be transformed (changed) by the [entire] renewal of your mind [by its new ideals and its new attitude], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His sight for you]”.

(2) **2 Tim. 2:4 Amplified Bible**

“No soldier when in service gets entangled in the enterprises of [civilian] life; his aim is to satisfy and please the one who enlist him”.

(3) **1 John 2:15**

“Do not love or cherish the world or the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him”.

(4) See also: 1 Cor. 7:31; Gal. 6:16; Heb. 11:24, 25.

In closing a brief comment on 1 John 5:4; lifting: “Overcometh the world ... even our faith”

The faith that overcomes the world is a faith that sees eternal realities, experiences the power of God and loves Christ to such an extent that the sinful pleasures, secular values, ungodly ways and selfish materialism not only lose their attraction for us, but also are looked upon as disgust, aversion and grief.

Oh! Beloved, if only we can steadfastly focus on whom we are in Jesus Christ and live accordingly with the help of the blessed Holy Spirit we would see a great difference in the Church (Universal).

Read 1 Peter 2, note verse 9

1 Peter 2:9 (NKJV)

“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light”.

2 Tim. 2:15

KJV

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”.

Amplified Bible

“Study and be eager and do your utmost to present yourself to God approved (tested by trial), a workman who has no cause to be ashamed, correctly analyzing

and accurately dividing [rightly handling and skillfully teaching] the Word of Truth”.

Chapter 2 Lesson 2 Review Questions

1. Complete the following:
The pleasures of sin are not only (a) _____ Rom. (b) _____ ;
But they are only (c) _____ Heb. (d) _____.

2. Complete the following:
A habitual sinful lifestyle is (a) _____ to the (b) _____
of a person who is (c) _____ and (d) _____
of (e) _____ (1 John 3:1-10).

3. Give the references that prove (a) King David (b) Peter repented of their sins.

4. Briefly state what Paul discussed in Rom. 3:21-5:21.

5. In order for one to grow to maturity in Christ what must be experienced?

6. How did God satisfied His justice in regards to man's sins? Give references.

7. Briefly explain Rom. 3:8.

8. What are some evils that result from teaching that continuing in sin in order that grace may abound?

9. The form of baptism used in Paul's days was immersion; in regards to the believers at that time, explain (a) what baptism symbolized? (b) What coming out of the water symbolized?

10. Complete the following:

When accompanied by true (a) _____ baptism is part of our (b) _____ of (c) _____ and our (d) _____ to Christ, resulting in a (e) _____ flow of (f) _____ and (g) _____ life to us.

11. List the progressive steps noted in Psalm 1:1 of one adapting to the evil environment.

12. Abram was called of God twice before he moved on to Canaan. (a) Give Scriptural proof of his calls, (b) briefly state why it was important to leave his original environment and neighboring city.

13. List the steps of restoration God gave the church at Ephesus (Rev. 2:1-7) and what would be done if they didn't follow through?

14. Seven churches are mentioned in Revelations chapter 2 and 3. Briefly list in what ways the Philadelphia Church stood out among the seven.

15. Complete the following:
1 Corinthians addresses the (a) _____ of (b) _____
that churches (c) _____ when members (d)
_____ (e) _____.

16. Despite the many serious problems within the Corinthian church; which one was first addressed by Paul? Briefly explain why.

17. What problem existed in the city of Laodicea that God used to describe the church of Laodicea as: "lukewarm"?

18. Complete the following:

There is nothing more (a) _____ than a (b) _____
nominal (c) _____ who is (d) _____.

19. Briefly state the reasons why the Laodicea church was a lukewarm an insipid church.

20. Briefly explain what is conveyed by this quote: "... overcometh the world ... even our faith". (1 John 5:4) (*Discussed in our lesson*)

We will discuss the answers to as many questions as possible in our next class.