

LETTERS TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE

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Love Not The World!



Dear YPFers,

The following is the start of a series of letters addressed to the young people of True Life Young People's Fellowship. The aim is to edify YPFers through the study of God's Word. It is the desire of the fellowship that its young people may grow to become godly men and women after God's own heart.

For the first issue of the series, let us examine 1 John 2:15-17.

"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. 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. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

In 2006, many of us are entering new phases of our lives. Some of us are entering secondary school for the first time. Others are entering the army or the university. As we enter into these new phases of life, we will find that the world will continually lure us. However, we must be aware that the things of the world are not from God. If we are not careful, we may fall in love with the things of the world. The Bible emphatically tells us that anyone who does so does not have the love of the Father in him (v.15).

The apostle John categorises the things of the world into three types of lusts – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life (v.16). From the beginning, man has been tempted by these lusts. We can read of this in Gen 3:1-6. When Eve was tempted to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, she saw that the tree was good for food (lust of the flesh), pleasant to the eyes (lust of the eyes) and a tree to be desired to make one wise (pride of life). Falling to temptation, Eve ate of the fruit and gave also to her husband to eat. This was the cause of man's fall into sin.

The same temptations are around in the world today and the devil will do his uttermost to attract us to them. As young people, we are most vulnerable to follow after the things of the world, especially when entering new phases of our lives. We have to be aware and guard ourselves against them.

(I) BEWARE the Lust of the Flesh!

As we grow up, we may find ourselves attracted to the opposite sex. That is perfectly normal. God made Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve! However, we must approach with caution, or we may end up falling prey to the lust of the flesh.

The world today is very much affected by the Hollywood version of love. This version of love places emotions and romance as foundations of love. The emphasis is on physical attraction. Pre-marital sex is glorified. Shows perpetuating these values are shown in the media and many youths are influenced. They soon adopt these values as part of their lifestyle. A recent report in the newspaper reveals that teenage sex is on the rise. Surveys also reveal a growing proportion of youths condoning pre-marital sex. This is the lust of the flesh!

As Christians, our views on boy-girl relationships (BGR) must be scriptural. The Bible is our sole authority in faith and practice. We must not feel pressurised to enter into relationships just because our friends are starting to pair up. The purpose of entering into courtship is to for a man and a woman to get to know each other better and seek God's will with marriage in view. If you are not ready to think about marriage, you should avoid getting involved in BGR at all costs. One must also have the right perspective of love. Read 1 Cor 13. According to our advisor, Dr. Jeffrey Khoo, love is not marshmallows but muscles!

What about pre-marital sex (called fornication in the King James translation)? The Bible makes it clear that there is to be no sex outside the marriage covenant. Consider the following verses:

*"But **fornication**, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, **let it not be once named among you**, as becometh saints;" – Eph 5:3*

*"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should **abstain from fornication**:" – 1 Th 4:3*

*"But that we write unto them, that they **abstain from** pollutions of idols, and from **fornication**, and from things strangled, and from blood." – Acts 15:20*

*"Now the **works of the flesh** are manifest, which are these; Adultery, **fornication**, uncleanness, lasciviousness," – Gal 5:19*

We must also not be involved in any BGR with unbelievers. 2 Cor 6:14-7:1 teaches us this vital principle of **Biblical separation**. Remember that courtship is to be engaged in with marriage in view. All believers are to marry only in the Lord. There is no way that one can have spiritual fellowship with a non-believer. Entangling yourself emotionally with an unbeliever will only result in sorrow. One should also not get involved in evangelism dating (i.e. the act of trying to evangelise the non-believer that you date). The act of evangelism should always be constrained by the love of Christ. It should not be used to serve as an instrument to justify one's relationship with an unbeliever. There are also many cases where the non-believer professes Christ to obtain a right to carry on the relationship, only to declare that he/she had never believed in Christ later in life. The risks of dating evangelism are simply too great.

Dear reader, keep yourself away from such temptations. Beware the lust of the flesh!

(II) BEWARE the Lust of the Eyes!

The lust of the eyes is around us in many deceiving forms.

Firstly, the lust of the eyes can manifest itself in the unhealthy desire of following the fashion of the world. Flipping through the magazines, some get attracted to clothes designed to accentuate our physical features. Following this, they proceed to spend more money on less cloth. Blinded by the glamour of fashion, they fail to realise that their dressing is stumbling others. Ladies take note. It is godliness that attracts and not your outward fashion. Cultivate a meek and quiet spirit. Read 1 Peter 3:3-4. The same applies to men. Godliness with contentment is great gain (1 Tim 6:6).

Secondly, the lust of the eyes can manifest itself in unhealthy websites on the internet that propagate pornography, scantily clad women (or even men) or violence. Sometimes we type the wrong URL and behold, we enter into one of these websites. Some dwell on these websites for too long and they are hooked. Men are especially susceptible to this. But this is not to say that ladies are immune from temptation. Remember David. One look at the naked Bathsheba bathing on the roof top is enough to send him tumbling into a myriad of horrible sins. Men take note. Beware of the strange woman for her ways are death! Read Proverbs 7.

Thirdly, some of us may be addicted to computer games. These games may involve violence or witchcraft. Some of these games may even glorify stealing. To those of us that may be addicted to games with such doubtful content, consider these words of scripture:

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” – Gal 5:19-21

After reading the warning from God’s Word, do you still want to continue your addiction to such games of doubtful content?

The lust for the eyes can manifest itself in many other ways. Beware the lust of the eyes!

(III) BEWARE the Pride of Life!

As young people, most of us are still involved in studying. The Lord demands us to walk worthy of any vocation that we are in. This means that we should do our best in our studies for the Lord. We are not to be lazy. Slothfulness is clearly frowned upon in the Bible. In contrast, God’s Word urges us to be diligent (see Pro. 6:6-11). However, in a society where we are often judged by our academic achievements, our pursuit for excellence can turn into a selfish obsession. This is where the pride of life sets in.

During my days as a student, I regarded my results as very important. I would often work hard to achieve good results. I regarded academic results as important stepping stones to a better career and hence a brighter future. When I scored well, I will always

want to compare results to show that I was more intelligent. However, when I did not do well, I will always pretend that results do not matter. I would often hide in one corner and not talk to anyone. Sometimes I would lie about my results to hide my “shame”. This is the pride of life!

We also live in a highly materialistic society. The perpetual mantra is “Money, Money, Money”. We envy our friends when they obtain the latest handphone model. We get jealous when our neighbours start changing cars. We get frustrated when others climb the corporate ladder and earn more than us. We desire to rub shoulders with the rich and powerful. To achieve our aims, we work our socks off till the late night sets in. We cast our families away. God is forgotten like a dream. This is also the pride of life.

Dear readers, the devil fell because of the pride (Is 14:12-15). Beware the pride of life!

(IV) BE DOING the Will of God

As young followers of Christ, what should we be doing? Answer: We should be doing the will of God! Verse 17 tells us that the person that does the will of God abides forever. Jesus also tells us that whosoever does the will of God, the same is His brother, sister and mother (Mk 3:35).

How do we know the will of God? Answer: We know God’s will by the Word of God. In the gospels (Mat 4; Lk 4), we read of the devil tempting Jesus in the wilderness. The devil tempted Jesus to:

- (a) turn stones into bread (lust of the flesh)
- (b) worship him and obtain all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them which he showed Jesus from the top of an exceeding high mountain (lust of the eyes)
- (c) tempt God by jumping from the pinnacle of the temple in by misrepresenting the scriptures that God will save Jesus by sending angels to protect Him.
(pride of life)

In each of the instances, Jesus resisted the devil by quoting from the scriptures – Deut 8:3, Deut 6:13 and Deut 6:16 respectively. The Word of God is powerful. If we keep God’s Word in our hearts and obey accordingly, we too will be able to resist the devil and the world’s manifold temptations.

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Col 3:1-2). **Love the Word, not the World.** Amen.



C Chew
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Next Issue: Heavenly Life in a Fallen World