

## Giving up Sinful Pleasure

We all have been created with the supreme privilege of free will – the ability to choose. Even when we are in the bondage of our addictions, we still have choices confronting us. When we are in recovery, we face the nagging lure of falling back into our addictions. The freedom to choose brings with it the burden of the consequences of our choices. These choices affect our life and the lives of our children. Free will is our blessing and our responsibility.

God spoke through Moses saying, ***“Now listen! Today I am giving you choice between prosperity and disaster, between life and death. I have commanded you today to love the Lord your God and to keep His commands, laws and regulations by walking in His ways. If you do this, you will live...and the Lord your God will bless you...But if your heart turns away and you refuse to listen...then I warn you now that you will certainly be destroyed... (Deut. 30).***

Sounds like an easy choice – prosperity over disaster; life over death; blessings over curses. And yet many of us choose instead to follow our own devices and desires and suffer the consequences. Why? Because we don't want to give up our pleasures. Many of our behaviours are destructive and sinful and yet we choose to cling to them because we enjoy them. Sin can be very enjoyable! That's why we do it. But God's blessings and benefits are not automatic. They require that we choose to give up our sinful pleasures and walk in *His* ways, following *His* instructions.

Unfortunately many people think that they can live any way they want as long as they go to church, read the Bible, pray on occasion and call Jesus “Lord.” They believe these activities put them in right standing with God. They are mistaken. We can't have both sin and God in our lives. Our God is a holy God and can not stand to live in the presence of sin.

***“Not everyone who calls me Lord, Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven but he who does the will of My Father in heaven” (Matt. 7:21).***

That is not to say that all of us won't slip up from time to time and need to confess our wrongdoing. But that is different than willfully clinging to a lifestyle of sinful behaviour because it brings us pleasure.

***“Get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the message God has planted in your hearts, for it is strong enough to save your souls. And remember, it is a message to obey, not just to listen to. If you don't obey, you are only fooling yourself...But...if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it” (James 1: 21-25).***

God's instructions for living are not intended to cramp our style and prevent us from having a good time. They are meant to bring freedom. God knows that sinful behaviours will cause our downfall. Sins grow, multiply and eventually dominate us. They are like weeds in a garden; we need to keep them out or they will take over.

Choose life. Choose blessings. Choose prosperity. Our pleasures will last only a moment. God's blessings last for all eternity.

### **Questions for Reflection and Discussion**

1. In what ways have I chosen my sinful pleasures over the blessings of God?
2. How do I feel knowing that I will have to make an account of my life before God when I die?
3. What one thing can I do this week to begin changing my lifestyle from one that causes disasters, curses and death to one that brings life, prosperity and blessings?