

Worldliness

*From a sermon delivered by Rev. T. G. Oshokoya
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¹⁴ I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ 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.

**¹⁷ And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.
1 John 2:14-17**

This epistle general of John is addressed to the generality of people from the father to the children. It does not excuse anybody, for instance the father to say that I have enjoy part of this world, and will now live the rest with God or for the parent to say that I will run after the world and enjoy the best of it, and after some time I will come back to God. It is not unlikely the fact that the father had been in the will of God in the love of God and have been serving God, but towards the old age time, they may feel that well I have served God for many years, I come become complacent now, and enjoy this world and give myself to the lust therein. But this epistle says it is not possible. It is possible for the children to carry a wrong notion by feeling that I am too young and tender in age, and when I reach the age of my father, after all my father enjoyed a bit of the world before he became to know the word, when I have enjoyed that much of this world, I will come back to serve God, but this epistle of John says that children should not have that notion but rather that they should start serving God from their youth. Why are we forbidden to love the world? Because "**if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.**" This means that it is not possible to love the world one side and love God on the other side. It is not possible to get hold of God with one hand and get hold of the world with the other hand or to love the world with half of our heart and with the other half to love God with it. If that is the case therefore, we know that God had been in existing from the foundation of the world; it is a being we cannot see with our physical eyes, and is the beginning and the end of everything. Who is the world? Is it the tree that we have in the world or the magnificent buildings that we have in different places, or the inventions of man in various diversities, these are the things many people call as the world. **For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,** these are the things referred to that we must not love.

In some other portions of the scripture it is revealed to us those things which are in the world.

⁵ And GOD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually.

**⁶ And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.
Genesis 6:5-6**

These two verses that we have just read let us understand that what we referred to as the world are the evils committed in the world.

¹ And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them,

² That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they *were* fair; and they took them wives

of all which they chose.

Please take note of this.

³ And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also *is* flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.

⁴ There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare *children* to them, the same *became* mighty men which *were* of old, men of renown. Genesis 6:1-4

¹¹ The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.

¹² And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.

¹³ And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Genesis 6:11-13

All these verses of scripture which we have read are pointing to the wickedness of man. In the epistle according to John he was addressing the children of God – fathers and children. That is the children of God are not referred to as the world, but the wicked people of the world are referred to as the world. In Genesis 6, we are exposed to what happened in the early generation of human existence, that there were the children of the world and the children of God. There are two categories, two groups of people, the children of the God and the children of this world. We are told that in those days, there were giants, men of renown. Many people begin to wonder, how did giants come into existence in this world, people begin to say, are they not angels? We will find out later. They were not angels; they were from the lineage of Cain. We have read in the Bible that Cain was that violent man who murdered his brother Abel.

¹⁶ And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.

¹⁷ And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch. Genesis 4:16-17

In those early days, God allowed people to marry from their own kins and kindred's, and we are told here that Cain went to the east of Eden and married to a woman there. He started to have his own family. His own generation became renowned and were very good at metal works. They were very strong and violent people. The fact that his family were very violent and strong people, they have taken after their own father Cain because he was violent and killed his brother Abel because his prayer was acceptable.

²⁵ And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, *said she*, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.

²⁶ And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD. Genesis 4:25-26

When we talk of children of God after the death of Abel, people begin to wonder how this came about. But this account tells us that after the death of Abel, many years have rolled by, well God looked down in mercy and gave Adam another son. He named this son Seth, and been interpreted that God had given him another son instead of Abel. Who was Abel was a righteous man. Abel offered an acceptable sacrifice unto God. Although he was dead, but at this time, at the birth of Seth, well the same righteousness from his brother Abel appeared in his life, and from this time people began to seek the favour of God by praying unto God. When we read in Chapter 6

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² That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they *were* fair;

So when we read about the sons of God here, we know where their generation began. Right from the time of Seth, there had been a group of people following the way of God, following the way of their father Abel and who were

righteous. God was keeping watch on them, taking care of them, he was blessing them. But after some time, these same children of God started to look into the world, they had association with the children of Cain the children of murderer. You can imagine what would result of such an association when a godly person associates with a murderer. Well his own life, his own behaviour would be influence in a bad way. Well the scripture tells us that we were born and shapened in iniquity. Well like myself like an example, I was born into a home where my father did not teach me how to be wicked; I never met my father using alcohol. My father did not tie me down at home and teach me all the evils in the world, but I just found myself growing up in wickedness, growing up in the use of liquor, growing up to become a smoker, growing to become violent. This is to prove that we are born and sharpened in iniquity and we can understand the violence and the evils perpetrated by the children of Cain.

You can imagine what would result from the association which the children of God from the lineage of Abel had with children of Cain, they corrupted themselves, and they corrupted the whole world. This grieved the mind of God to the extent that he determined to give them 120 years during which he expected them to repent and should they fail to repent, he decided that he would destroy all of them. God said that the wickedness of man had increased upon the face of the earth because man had corrupted himself, and because of this he would destroy the world. It is in this respect that we heard that Noah gained God's favour. Thank God for the merciless love of God which often goes all over the place looking for people who would hearken to the ways of God? This was what happened to Noah during this time that the whole world was corrupt. The love of God sought out Noah and he saw him that his heart was tendered and he would yield to his ways. He commissioned him on what he should do during the 120 years which God had given the children of men at that time to repent. While he was building the ark simultaneously, he was preaching to this people that they should change because God's judgment was coming upon them. But in spite of his preaching, in spite of his own Godly life, he could not get a single person out of the whole humanity to hearken to the ways of God. In spite of the preaching of Noah, the desire of the heart of men at that time to continue in their wickedness increased until he reached a climax that God decided to bring judgment upon the human race at that time. He opened the windows of heaven, and there was a heavy downpour, and rain fell to the extent that there was a great flood which swept away the whole world and it was only Noah and members of his household, - 8 in number that survived. If we examine very critically, why was it that this people could not repent, it was because they refused to have the knowledge of God in their lives. Because God had no pleasure in the death of the wicked but that the wicked to turn to him and do that which is right and live. But if man refuses to hearken unto the ways of God, to repent and be saved, God will leave such people to a reprobate mind.

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Romans 1:18

That is God has not changed his judgment over the unrighteousness and wickedness of man. That is God had not yet stopped in making man to realise that he must live a righteous and godly life.

²⁸ And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Romans 1:28

This verse is telling us that if man turns a deaf hear to the warnings of God, if man refuses to hearken to the way of God, if man refuses to repent and get saved, God says that he would leave such a person to a reprobate mind, he cause his eyes to be blind spiritually, he would cause his ears to be deaf spiritually, and if he continues in that wickedness, he would die and go to perdition.

²⁹ Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,

³⁰ Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

³¹ Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:

³² Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them. Romans 1:29-32

These things which we read are the attitude of the world which God does not want us to be part of or abide in. Not until one has shunned the love of God, not until one had forsaken the mercy and the loving kindness of God, you do

not find these things in one's life. If surprisingly to you, you find that there is one or many of these things are in your life, what you need to do is at that instance examine your heart thoroughly and see where you have erred away, it is an indication that you have dislike the gospel, you have hated instructions, you have failed to heed the warnings which God had sent to you and you have forsaken the gospel and you have been left over to a reprobate mind and the consequence of this is that all these things appearing your life. Practising stealing may be a thing which you may consider that is very bad and worse indeed, but you would not be surprise to find yourself in backbiting. To commit murder, you may consider that as an outrageous sin, for which you would not like to be associated, but you may be filled of envy. What about those people who gossip, what about fornication, what about haters of good things, what about covetousness, what about maliciousness, what about pride, what about boasting? We are made to understand all those that do these things that we have mentioned, they know about the judgment of God, that God's judgment is coming upon them, but not only that they go away from such, but that they have pleasure in those that commit such evils. Many who have been saved, sanctified and filled with the Holy Ghost, in short who have been saved from committing such evils, you will find them in close association with people who perpetrate these evils. You find them choosing their bosom friends from among these people who perpetrate these evils, but the word of God tells us that you're going away from these evils is not enough, but for the fact that you have pleasure in those that do these evils, it is the same judgment that is awaiting you. We have read about the spiritual illness which have overtaken those who forsook the word of God and consequently they become worldly minded.

There is still a part of what we read in the epistle of John about which we have not touched which we shall refer to now, which is the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

¹⁶ Moreover the LORD saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet:

¹⁷ Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will discover their secret parts.

¹⁸ In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of *their* tinkling ornaments *about their feet*, and *their* cauls, and *their* round tires like the moon,

¹⁹ The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers,

²⁰ The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings,

²¹ The rings, and nose jewels,

²² The changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins,

²³ The glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils.

²⁴ And it shall come to pass, *that* instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; *and* burning instead of beauty.

²⁵ Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war.

²⁶ And her gates shall lament and mourn; and she *being* desolate shall sit upon the ground.

Isaiah 3:16-26

We have read from the epistle of John about the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. We have read about the lives of some people who have lived that type of life in Isaiah 3:16-26. Isaiah told us that the daughters of Zion were very proud. They walked about in stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go and making a tinkling with their feet. Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will discover their secret parts. This is God's judgement on pride. This is God's judgement of worldly adornment.

In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of *their* tinkling ornaments *about their feet*, and *their* cauls, and *their* round tires like the moon,

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Extravagant adornment as we see it done by these worldly people, they have a lot of these earrings in the ears, a lot of necklaces, a lot of bangles, all these things are what the worldly people do by which they annoy God. To Christian women their own adornment should be that of the inner man, meekness, humility and fear of God. What use to exist in the world in the past generation still exists today? We can see the judgement of God on the way man or women are adorning themselves today. There has been so much development in textile industry, that you find people this day instead of using material made of cotton, they prefer to use material made of ordinary paper, and it does not cost them anything to spend so much money on these useless material, sometimes about N70 to N200 a yard to buy useless material like this in their making up their dresses. Well you find people instead of using materials that will cover their nakedness, they prefer to go in perforated materials and that is why that God says he will reveal their nakedness. Instead of their nakedness been covered, you find their nakedness been reveal. Well it is only people who have fractured bone or whose legs have been amputated and whose legs are not normal, are often recommended to use orthopaedic shoes, but what do we find in the market these days, we have a lot of high heel shoes used by our young men and our young women and as a result you find these people cannot walk normally in the street, they walk as if there is something wrong with them, this is a sign of God's judgement. Look at many people, we as a race we are made black, but many people are not interested in their being black, they want to change colour and that is why they go into bleaching of their faces only to find out that it turns out to be another thing. There are many who are not interested in weaving their hair. When we grew up we met our nation particularly women, they were very moderate in the way they plait their hair and this look very beautiful. But these days, our young women are not interested in this, and that is why the scripture says that instead of well plaited hair there will be baldness. How did this arrive, when they start to do their hair in a very sophisticated way, little by little the hair falls away, and when the hair is no more long, well they want to use long thread to make it long, by and by, the head becomes bald, so what do they use instead, they use wig to cover these up. Not that alone, you find many people who are indulge in this expensive adornment, they suffer a great deal, they suffer rheumatism, they suffer within and without, there is no peace everywhere, it is my earnest prayer that children should not go into these habits.

²⁴ And it shall come to pass, *that instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty.* Isaiah 3:24

A lot of us stink a great deal and we do not know the reason. We buy a lot of perfumes to cover the smell, but this will last for a while, but your own bad smell/odour will persist.

and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; *and burning instead of beauty.* Isaiah 3:24

A sackcloth? Do you think people just run to wear sackcloth, it is the curse of God. When they became extravagant in their adornment in their doing things, then God left them to a reprobate mind, they started doing things which were not convenient.

instead of well set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; *and burning instead of beauty.* Isaiah 3:24

Consider the various materials people are using today, God did not put people into mourning, but you find people mourning about. Some people are like masquerades, when you see them it is red from top to bottom. In good old days, whenever we wanted to behave rascally, then we put on red garments. As soon as we are clothed in red garments, we became violent. We cannot understand a woman today in red from top to toe, under the disguise of adornment.

***and burning instead of beauty.* Isaiah 3:24**

If you look at facial appearance of women today you will notice that a lot had been lost. God said that this is not the end of it, if they persist in doing it, He would have their men killed. God said that the reason why the women are doing this is to entice the men fold. Well God said he would cause the men fold to be dead at war, and when there are no men, these women would be begging for the available men that please let me go by your name and call me your wife, and that is all. That is worldliness. We are reading about worldliness.

²⁶ For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Matthew 16:26

You may begin to examine your life very critically in the light of this, my attitude to follow the word, what reward will I get from it, is it God's judgement or God's blessing? God had told us that those that do such things are worthy of death. Those who have given their life and love to following the things of this life are worthy of death, they are not worthy of blessings. If you are to consider ourselves as individual in the sight of God in the light of this word right from here to everywhere we are in the family and ask the question are we worthy of God's judgement or blessing? That is why the judgement of God is coming upon us by the death of our loved ones; they are passing to eternity in great number.

²⁶ For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

²⁷ For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

²⁸ Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom. Matthew 16:26-28

The son of man will come in the glory of his father with his holy angels. Then he shall reward everyone according to his own work. Imagine if Jesus should come this morning, will he judge you on the face of your appearance here, is it because you are moderately dressed today or will he judge you to your very home, think about this, know what place you will give God in your heart. Think about it, to know how you will arrange your life with God, the Son of man will come in his glory with his angels, when he shall come, he will reward everyone according to his worldly adornment, his desire of his heart and his way of life. You can make a new covenant with God; a new resolution can change the judgment of God.