

# The Christian and the 21st Century

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# The Christian and the 21st Century

## Lesson One: A Secular World

### “God Gave Them Over”

*Rhetoric to the contrary, the United States has never been a Christian nation, at least not in the sense of being primarily populated by people who have given their lives to the Lord. Lip service has always been more popular than discipleship. However, whatever their spiritual failings, Americans of a century ago generally accepted some of the Bible’s core moral precepts: you ought to go to church, you ought to stay married to the same person all your life, and so on.*

*Today, we are in the final stages of the dissolution of that moral consensus. The recent disputes over homosexual marriage are nothing more than a rearguard action. The larger battles, over the acceptability of things like premarital sex, abor-*

*tion, and divorce, have already been fought and lost. The Bible has been dethroned from word of God to self-help book, occasionally useful (like when it says “Judge not, lest you be judged”) but eminently ignorable.*

*This is a novel spectacle in the United States, but it is an extremely familiar pattern. Every year, we take another step down the trail blazed by the Gentile nations of old as described in Romans 1. Our nation has never deserved the appellation of “Christian”, but it is well on its way to earning the designation “pagan”.*

## The Christian and the 21st Century: Lesson Thirteen

6. Pornography
7. Depression
8. Anxiety
9. Time Management
10. Materialism
11. Homosexuality
12. Lights in the World

# The Christian and the 21st Century

## Lesson Thirteen: Review

For each of the lessons listed below, summarize the Biblical perspective on the topic. Cite particularly relevant passages.

1. A Secular World

2. A Timeless Gospel

3. Worldliness

4. Distraction

5. Social Media

## The Christian and the 21st Century: Lesson One

1. Romans 1:21-22 describes the basic thought process that led to the moral collapse of the ancient pagan civilizations. What is it? Do we see evidence of this same attitude today? If so, where do we see its effects?
2. What result of moral decay does Romans 1:32 describe? Is this at work in our society today? Why does this matter to Christians?
3. It is commonly asserted that the United States used to be “a Christian nation”. How accurate is this statement? Consider Luke 6:46 in your answer.
4. How does the psalmist describe his situation in Psalm 42:3? According to 42:4, what was his situation before? What problem does he face? How can the world in which we live give us the same problem?

## The Christian and the 21st Century: Lesson One

5. According to John 17:14, what is the situation of the disciples of Jesus? Nonetheless, in 17:15, what does Jesus not ask God to do? What can we learn from this about the impulse that we sometimes feel to isolate ourselves from an increasingly wicked world?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. What problem does Jesus identify in Matthew 6:23? How, culturally speaking, can this be a danger for us?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. What instruction does Paul give in 2 Corinthians 6:14? What rhetorical questions does he ask in 6:14-16? What point is he trying to make? How does this support his instruction? How should we apply this?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. What does 2 Corinthians 6:16 reveal about our relationship with God? According to 6:17, what logically follows from this? According to 6:18, what will the results of this behavior be? What should we learn from this?

## The Christian and the 21st Century: Lesson Twelve

4. Listed below are several passages that discuss a way in which our speech should help us to shine. For each passage, identify the word or action being encouraged, explain why it is helpful, and discuss how we should practice it.
  - 1 Peter 3:15
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - 2 Timothy 1:7-8
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - Titus 2:7-8
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - 2 Timothy 2:24-26



# The Christian and the 21st Century

## Lesson Two: A Timeless Gospel

### Arrogance

*Our culture has many unpleasant characteristics, but one of the most prominent is its arrogance. Most modern Americans unquestionably assume their superiority, not only over the other peoples of today's world, but over those who came before us as well. It has not occurred to most that the future's judgment of us is likely to be as condescending as our judgment of the past.*

*This arrogance exposes us to an array of errors, but the most significant mistake concerns the modern judgment of the Bible. The sages of Hollywood, who do as much to shape our philosophy as anyone, have decreed that the word of God is actually an outdated collection of myths, and that we, with our supe-*

*rior sense and moral understanding, are able to discern a more righteous (and more inclusive) path. Sadly, their ignorance of the Scripture has led them to overlook what it teaches about the way that is broad and well traveled.*

*In reality, the Bible is not an antique curiosity. It is the ageless revelation of an ageless God, no less relevant today than 2000 years ago. It is the mirror of our souls, and the modern distaste for what it reveals does not make it any less accurate.*

## The Christian and the 21st Century: Lesson Twelve

1. In Matthew 5:14, how does Jesus describe Christians? What real-world comparisons does He make in 5:14-15? In 5:16, what does He urge us to do? What does this mean for our lives?
2. Each of the passages listed below describes a responsibility we may have as Christians. For each text, identify the responsibility and explain how fulfilling the responsibility helps us shine as lights in the world.
  - 1 Peter 2:13-15
  - 1 Peter 2:18-19
  - Romans 13:6-7

# The Christian and the 21st Century

## Lesson Twelve: Lights in the World

### God's Requirements

*If indeed the world around us is growing steadily darker (and it probably is), one of the characteristics of darkness is that it makes the light much brighter. In decades past, many of the evangelistic efforts made by brethren were directed at people who attended denominational churches and knew at least a little bit about the Bible. To a Hindu, say, or a Buddhist, the discussions that we had in that era would have appeared to be about doctrinal technicalities: instruments versus no instruments in worship, baptism for the forgiveness of sin versus baptism as the inward sign of an outward grace. These discussions were and are important, but it is hard to frame them in a way that makes*

*clear the need for change.*

*Today, by contrast, we increasingly interact with the unchurched, people with no denominational attachment, no knowledge of the Bible, and perhaps only the vaguest of beliefs in God. They could not be more different from us, and the contrast between their godless lives and the word of God could not be more stark.*

*It was in an environment like this, the pagan culture of the first century, that the gospel enjoyed its greatest success. Today, we have the opportunity for similar success, as our call for change will be founded not on the details of the Bible, but on its greatest themes. The denominational churchgoer thinks he has God; the worldling knows he needs to find Him.*

### The Christian and the 21st Century: Lesson Two

1. According to 1 Peter 1:23, what is not true of the seed of which we were born? What is true? What is the seed? In 1:24-25, how is it described? What are the implications of this description?
2. For many years, the relevance of the Bible has been under attack by assorted human critics. Listed below are three passages that help explain the motivation of these critics. Summarize each verse, and explain how the traits each describes might lead someone to argue that the Scripture is irrelevant.
  - 2 Timothy 4:3-4
  - 2 Timothy 3:1, 4
  - Romans 1:21-22

## The Christian and the 21st Century: Lesson Two

3. Below are five Scriptures in which the Bible provides justification for its own continued relevance. Summarize each, and explain why they lead to the conclusion that the Bible is still significant today.

- Ecclesiastes 1:9

- Hebrews 13:8

- Psalm 100:3

- Psalm 139:1-3

## The Christian and the 21st Century: Lesson Eleven

9. According to James 4:17, what is sin? How is this passage relevant to our understanding of homosexuality?

10. What three groups of people does Jesus describe in Matthew 19:12? What is He talking about here? What does Jesus encourage? What does this mean in the context of homosexuality?

11. Advocates of the practice of homosexuality often argue that it is unjust to expect Christians with homosexual inclinations to remain celibate all their lives. Are such Christians the only Christians of whom celibacy is expected? The story of Ezra 10:18-19 may help you answer. Why is this important?

12. What does Jesus say in Matthew 13:45? In 13:46, what does this merchant do? What should we learn from this? How should this shape our understanding of homosexuality?



## The Christian and the 21st Century: Lesson Eleven

5. It is sometimes argued that the sin of the men of Sodom was their failure to show hospitality to guests. What does Jude 7 say about the people of Sodom? How does this relate to the above argument?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. What groups of people appear in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10? What is true of them? Why is this important?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. In 1 Corinthians 6:11, what does Paul reveal about some members of the Corinthian church? What happened? Why is this significant?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. What does Hebrews 4:15 reveal about Jesus? Is it a sin for anyone to be tempted? Why or why not? Is it a sin for a man or woman to be tempted to practice homosexuality? Why or why not? What should this teach us?

## The Christian and the 21st Century: Lesson Two

4. Our final set of Scriptures for this lesson describes the results that obeying God's word will produce. For each passage listed below, explain its main point and discuss why it shows the relevance of the word.
  - Jeremiah 6:16
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - Acts 4:12
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - Ecclesiastes 12:6-7
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - John 12:48

# The Christian and the 21st Century

## Lesson Three: Worldliness

### Purity

*It is extremely Biblical to say that Christians should be “in the world, but not of it.” “In” is emphasized by texts such as John 17:15 and 1 Corinthians 5:9-10, while “not of” is emphasized by James 4:4 and 1 John 2:15, among many other passages. Here, as in many areas of our walk with God, balance is key.*

*However, God’s people inevitably find this balance hard to strike. Many Christians view their discipleship in an almost monastic light. They recognize the dangers posed by the world, but in response to those dangers, they seek to withdraw their children and themselves from the world. Their motives are good, but in so doing, they often forfeit the opportunity to be a godly influence, both by moderating their*

*children’s exposure to the world and by shining the light of Christ for the sinner to find.*

*On the other hand, many other Christians struggle with the opposite problem. They fail to hear the urgency of the Bible’s call toward purity. They are quick to recognize the appeal of worldly practices, but slow to acknowledge their dangers. Most of all, they fail to admit that most of the people around them are really, really going to lose their souls because of the evil choices they make.*

*Worldliness is not a sudden spiritual death. It is moral decay by inches. Imperceptibly, we become more like the world until we become indistinguishable from it, as far from God as the world is, and as certain to share its fate.*

## The Christian and the 21st Century: Lesson Eleven

1. It is commonly asserted that Jesus taught nothing about homosexuality. What subject does Jesus discuss in Matthew 19:4-5? What does He say about it? Does this reveal anything about the practice of homosexuality? Why or why not?
2. In Romans 1:24, what is God described as doing? How does 1:25 explain God’s action? Why is this text significant to this topic?
3. What is God described as doing in Romans 1:26? How does 1:26-27 explain this description? Is there any legitimate doubt about the subject of this discussion? Why or why not? Why is this important?
4. What happens in Genesis 19:4-5? In 19:24-25, what does God do in response? Is this important to us today? If so, why?

# The Christian and the 21st Century

## Lesson Eleven: Homosexuality

### God's Requirements

*Of all of the issues this workbook explores, few are as talked-about as homosexuality. This is most likely due to its political dimension. However, as absorbing as the latest court decision or ballot initiative may be, we must remember that discipleship is not about the laws of the U.S., but the laws of God.*

*Even though our society uses the word "homosexual" to describe someone who is merely inclined toward homosexuality, the term is never used in that sense in Scripture. The Bible does not condemn those who experience homosexual temptations, whatever the reason for those temptations may be. Instead, the word warns against the practice of homosexuality, when men and women make the choice*

*to surrender to their homosexual temptations and sin.*

*It is possible, then, for someone whom our culture would describe as homosexual to be a faithful Christian. "Gay marriage" is not a Biblical concept; such a Christian can never have a godly outlet for his homosexual urges. If he has no interest in women, the Scripture requires him to live a celibate life, like the man or woman who has been unscripturally divorced.*

*This is no easy walk; indeed, many deny that God requires this because it is so difficult. However, the disciple who is willing to submit in this will receive no lesser reward than the rest of us, and next to that reward, any amount of suffering is trivial. To him who is able to accept this, let him accept it.*

### The Christian and the 21st Century: Lesson Three

1. In James 4:1, what does James ask? How does he answer himself? What pattern of life does he present in 4:2-3? To whom is he speaking? What should this tell us?
2. What principle does James state in 4:4? What conclusion does he draw from it? What should we learn from this?
3. What unpleasant situation does Jesus bring up in John 15:18? What does He say we should know in this circumstance? How does 15:19 explain the reasons for this experience? What does this mean for us?
4. What warning does John issue in 1 John 2:15? Why? In 2:16, how does he explain this? How should we use this text to evaluate our conduct?

## The Christian and the 21st Century: Lesson Three

5. What contrast does John emphasize in 2:17? How does this reveal the greatest problem with worldliness?
6. In 1 Corinthians 5:9, what does Paul say he has done? According to 5:10, what did he not mean by this? Why? How should this shape the way we understand our interaction with the world?
7. Who is the first person we meet in 2 Timothy 4:10? What has he done? Why? What does this tell us about the dangers of worldliness?
8. What situation does Peter describe in 2 Peter 2:20? How does he describe it? In 2:21, how does he explain this harsh description? Why is this true?

## The Christian and the 21st Century: Lesson Ten

9. What does Jesus state in 16:10? What rhetorical questions does He ask in 16:11-12? What's the point? What warning does He issue in 16:13? What should this teach us?
10. To whom is 1 Timothy 6:17 addressed? What does Paul urge them not to do? What does he urge them to do? Why? How should we apply this text today?
11. In 6:18, what does Paul instruct this group to do? According to 6:19, what will the result of this be? How should we practice this instruction?
12. In Matthew 6:19, what does Jesus tell us not to do? Why? In 6:20, what does He tell us to do? Why? In 6:21, what explanation does He give? What should we understand from this?

## The Christian and the 21st Century: Lesson Ten

5. Who is the subject of the parable that begins in 12:16? According to 12:16-17, what is his situation? According to 12:18-19, what does he resolve to do about it? What flaws are evident in his thinking at this point?
6. In 12:20, what happens to this man? What does this reveal about his plans? What general application does Jesus make of this in 12:21? How can we avoid this trap today?
7. Whom do we meet in Luke 16:1? According to 16:1-3, what problem does he have? In 16:4-7, what solution does he arrive at? What do we think of his solution?
8. What happens to this man in 16:8? Why? What does Jesus urge in 16:9? What does this mean?

## The Christian and the 21st Century: Lesson Three

9. What two proverbs does Peter use to describe the fallen-away in 2:22? What is our emotional reaction to these images? Why would Peter choose such images to describe his point?
10. What does Peter urge us to do in 1 Peter 4:1? Why? According to 4:2, what result will this have? In 4:3, what does he reveal about the opposite decision? What does this teach us?
11. What appeal does Paul make in Romans 12:1? What are the implications of regarding our lives in this way?
12. In 12:2, against what does Paul warn us? What does he want us to do instead? What will this enable us to do? What does this tell us about our manner of life as Christians?

# The Christian and the 21st Century

## Lesson Four: Distraction

### An Undistracted Mind

*Lord, make in me an undistracted mind.  
Clear from my eyes the cares that leave me blind.  
Tear from my heart the thorns that choke my love;  
Help me to set my mind on things above.*

*Lord, make in me an undistracted mind.  
Make it renewed, transformed to seek and find.  
Remind my soul, when stressed by many things,  
One thing I need: the portion Jesus brings.*

*Lord, make in me an undistracted mind.  
Help me press on and leave the past behind.  
One thing I do: reach forward to the goal,  
Each thought restrained with chains of self-control.*

*Lord, make in me an undistracted mind.  
Fill it with thoughts for which it was designed.  
Make me know love beyond all human thought;  
Then I will find my God whom I have sought.*

—Stephen Rouse

## The Christian and the 21st Century: Lesson Ten

1. In Colossians 3:5, how is covetousness described? Why is this true? What should it teach us?
2. What does Paul reveal in 1 Timothy 6:6? How does he explain this in 6:7? What attitude does he endorse in 6:8? What makes this attitude so counter-intuitive today? How can we develop it in our lives?
3. What different attitude is discussed in 6:9? What does this lead to? How does Paul explain this in 6:10? According to Paul, how severe can the consequences be? What should we take from this?
4. What is Jesus asked in Luke 12:13? In 12:14, what reply does He make? According to 12:15, what related warning does He issue? Why is this warning important today?

# The Christian and the 21st Century

## Lesson Ten: Materialism

### Idolatry

*The proverb, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush" accurately represents the thought processes of mankind. We hate to lose things. Studies have shown that people will expend much more effort to avoid losing a hundred dollars than they will to gain a hundred dollars, even though the monetary amount in each case is identical.*

*Because loss is so painful to us, the ways in which we seek security from loss reveal a great deal about us. For many people, perhaps most people, materialism is about protection. If we have money and possessions, they will keep us safe, safe from the contempt of the Joneses with whom we have kept up, safe from boredom and ennui, safe from bad schools for our children, safe*

*from poverty, safe from sickness, and perhaps even (we hope, but we dare not say) safe from death. We are tempted to worship Mammon not because he will bless us, but because he will keep us from disaster.*

*This is the core disaster of materialism. It leads us to set our hope, not on God, who can deliver us, but on wealth, which cannot. The Scripture says that money is protection, but its powers must inevitably fail, along with all those who trust in it.*

## The Christian and the 21st Century: Lesson Four

1. What state does Hebrews 3:14 describe? What condition does it attach to this state? What does this imply about our hope of heaven?
2. What soil does Jesus discuss in Mark 4:7? What happens with this soil? How does Jesus explain this portion of the parable in 4:18-19? What does this reveal about the dangers of distraction?
3. In 2 Timothy 4:9, what does Paul ask Timothy to do? In 4:10, how does he explain this request? What does this tell us about distraction as a spiritual problem?
4. What does Paul tell Timothy to do in 2 Timothy 2:1? According to 2:2-3, what two activities will result from this? What does this reveal about the struggle against distraction in our own lives?

## The Christian and the 21st Century: Lesson Four

5. In 2:4-6, what three illustrations does Paul provide to warn about distraction? Could we employ similar illustrations today? What can we learn from the pursuit of earthly goals about the pursuit of godliness?
6. What observation does Paul make in 1 Corinthians 9:24? What does he exhort the Corinthians to do about this? What should this look like in our lives?
7. What does Paul say about athletes in 9:25? Why do they do it? Why should we do it? Why is self-control important to avoid distraction?
8. In 9:26, what does Paul say he isn't doing? According to 9:27, what does he say he is doing? What ironic fate is he concerned about? What danger of distraction does this highlight?

## The Christian and the 21st Century: Lesson Nine

9. What way of life does Peter commend in 1 Peter 4:2? What does he say about a contrasting way of life in 4:3? What does this tell us about the practice of vice once we have become Christians?
10. In Acts 6:1-4, what do the apostles refuse to do? Why? What do they do instead? What can we learn from this about redeeming the time in God's kingdom?
11. According to Hebrews 5:12, where should the audience of the book be spiritually? Where are they actually? What does this imply about the use of our time?
12. In Colossians 4:5, what time-redeeming activity does Paul identify? According to 4:6, what is necessary for the time to be redeemed in this way? How can we put this passage into practice?



## The Christian and the 21st Century: Lesson Nine

5. What quotation does Paul cite in 2 Corinthians 6:2? How does he apply it? How does this apply to any godly activity?
6. What question does Solomon ask in Ecclesiastes 3:9? What answer does he give in 3:10-11? What does 3:11 identify as an impossibility for us? What does this tell us about the value and the shortcomings of our work?
7. What does Solomon endorse in Ecclesiastes 9:7-9? In 9:9, how does he explain himself? What does this teach us about the value and significance of leisure?
8. What situation does the parable of Luke 13:6-9 describe? What point is Jesus making here? What should we learn from this about God's expectations for our lives?

## The Christian and the 21st Century: Lesson Four

9. What is the situation of Jesus and His disciples in Mark 6:31? What does Jesus suggest? What is Jesus finally able to do in 6:45? According to 6:46, what does Jesus use this opportunity to do? What can we learn from this about an important antidote to distraction in our lives?
10. What type of person does 1 Timothy 5:5 discuss? What is her attitude? What does she do about it? What do these things have to do with distraction? How can we incorporate them in our lives?
11. What does Hebrews 12:1 urge us to do? According to 12:2, what are we supposed to do instead? What is true of Him that makes this a worthwhile exercise? Why is this important for disciples to do?
12. What instruction does Hebrews 13:7 give? What should this lead us to do? How does 13:8 explain the usefulness of this activity? What should we learn from this?

# The Christian and the 21st Century

## Lesson Five: Social Media

### The Fullness of the Heart

As James says in James 3:2, any man who is able to control his tongue isn't going to have any trouble controlling the rest of his life either. For many of us, our most common spiritual challenges concern the things we say. Many sins—*theft, adultery, and so on*—require us to invest effort in sinning. By contrast, the sins of the tongue are nearly effortless. We can express an ungodly thought with little more effort than it takes to think it.

When Satan already has this kind of advantage, it doesn't hardly seem fair to give him the Internet too! Online, many of the obstacles that inhibit our face-to-face expression are removed. We don't have to look someone else in the eye as we express our anger and contempt for

*him. The distance provided by the computer screen helps us forget that real-life people are going read the words and see the pictures we post. Some Internet forums even allow us to speak anonymously, freeing us from concern for our relationships and reputations. Nowhere are we as free to express what is in our hearts.*

*The only way to prevent ungodly speech on the Internet, then, is to uproot ungodly thoughts from our hearts. As soon as we have a thought, rather than impulsively expressing it, we must learn to consider it and evaluate it, to determine whether it is from below or from above. We must temper our self-righteousness with humility, our anger with wisdom, or the evil in our hearts will flow over our keyboards and our lives.*

### The Christian and the 21st Century: Lesson Nine

1. What does Jesus urge in John 9:4? How does He explain this? What is He talking about? What does this reveal about our existence? Why is this important?
2. In Ephesians 5:15, what does Paul advise us to do? According to 5:16, what will this lead us to do in practice? Why? What does this tell us about the sort of life we should lead?
3. In James 4:13, what does James cite his audience as saying? According to 4:14, what's the problem with that? In 4:15, what does James encourage instead? How should understanding this change our attitude toward our lives?
4. What does Solomon tell us to do in Ecclesiastes 9:10? Why? In practice, what does this mean?

# The Christian and the 21st Century

## Lesson Nine: Time Management

### Word Versus Deed

*It is fair to say that my father is a cynical man. He likes to joke that one of these days, he's going to collect all the cynical things that he and other members of my family have said, inscribe them on sheets of bronze, and entitle the result The Book of Bassford.*

*Were he ever to compile such a book, the first entry would be, "People always find the time to do what they want to do." If we're really committed to doing something, we'll find a way to fit it into our lives. If we aren't, we'll shrug and say, sincerely but incorrectly, "I couldn't find the time."*

*This principle is useful for the way it illuminates the priorities of others, but it is especially useful when we*

*apply it to ourselves. What really matters to us is revealed not by our fine words and good intentions, but by what we actually do. The choices that we make accurately reflect our priorities. In particular, those choices accurately reflect the importance we place on God. If we give Him all kinds of lip service but can't find the time during the week to serve Him in truth, our lives show He actually isn't very important.*

*As the Bible repeatedly says, failing to put God first is a disaster in the making. If we aren't giving God our time, we need to make the time to give Him. The more we do this, the more our devotion to Him will increase. The Lord has said that where our treasure is, our hearts will be also, but it is also true that where our time is, our hearts will be there too.*

## The Christian and the 21st Century: Lesson Five

1. Each of the verses below lists a spiritual problem. Identify what each problem is, and explain how it appears in the world of electronic communication.

- Proverbs 10:19

- Proverbs 18:2

- Proverbs 12:16

- Proverbs 20:3

## The Christian and the 21st Century: Lesson Five

- Proverbs 18:8

- Luke 8:17

2. Each of the passage below provides a solution to a spiritual problem that we may encounter in using social media. For each verse, explain the meaning of the text and how we should apply it today.

- Psalm 141:3

- Ephesians 4:29

## The Christian and the 21st Century: Lesson Eight

9. What final warning does David give in 37:8? Why? What promise does he make in 37:9? What problem with anxiety does this pinpoint? Why is this a problem?

10. What situation does Luke 10:38 describe? What two contrasting patterns of behavior appear in 10:39-40? Are there times in our lives when we are given a similar choice? If so, when?

11. In 10:40, what does Martha ask? In 10:41-42, how does Jesus describe her? What does He say about Mary? What can we learn from His words here?

12. According to Philippians 4:6, what are we not supposed to do? What are we supposed to do instead? According to 4:7, what result will this have? How do we put this passage into practice?



# The Christian and the 21st Century

## Lesson Six: Pornography

### The Heart, Part II

*Whenever we get on the subject of the sins that seem to flourish in the Internet age, it's easy to think of the Internet and all the other modern communications technologies as somehow evil. That isn't true. The Internet is neither good nor evil. It's a tool that makes it very easy for our hearts to get what they truly want. Our problems with the Internet, then, are really heart problems that now have an outlet.*

*Back in the day, pornography wasn't so easy to come by. You had to go to the convenience store and wait while the clerk smirked at you as he got the smutty magazine out from under the counter. You had to drive across the county line to the XXX video store with painted-over windows by the interstate. Worse*

*still, you had to do all these things in public, and Somebody—somebody you went to church with, even—might see you! Laziness and fear conspired to keep a lot of would-be porn hounds on the couch watching Family Ties instead.*

*Today, by contrast, the streaming video can go straight to our laptop screens, the steamy novel can go straight to our e-readers, and not even our spouses will know.*

*We must remember, though, that the real problems with pornography continue unchecked. If we use it, it will inevitably corrupt our hearts further, damaging our marriages and our lives in ways we can't imagine. Worse still, God will always know, and we cannot give our lives in service to such things and still serve Him.*

## The Christian and the 21st Century: Lesson Eight

1. In Luke 12:22, what does Jesus instruct His disciples not to do? How does He explain this in Luke 12:23? What are the implications of this statement?
2. What illustration does Jesus introduce in 12:24? What does He say about these creatures? How does He compare them to us? In 12:25, what does He ask? In 12:26, what follow-up question does He ask? What should this teach us about anxiety?
3. What second illustration appears in 12:27? According to Jesus, what is true of the subject of this illustration? What rhetorical question does He ask in 12:28? To what does He attribute anxiety? Why is this true?
4. In 12:29, what does Jesus discourage? What does this mean? According to 12:30, who engages in this practice? What does 12:30 reveal about God? What does 12:31 promise? In practice, what does this mean for us?

# The Christian and the 21st Century

## Lesson Eight: Anxiety

### Anxious for Nothing

*At first glance, Paul's admonition to "Be anxious for nothing" appears utterly unhelpful. It reminds me of the bad old days back when I was still single and dateless, and well-meaning friends would tell me, "Just relax and be yourself, and everything will be fine." In other words, the path to success was not caring about something I cared very much about. How helpful!*

*It's easy to read the Biblical warning against anxiety in the same light. For many of us, anxiety is as omnipresent as the air we breathe. We're worried about our jobs, we're worried about our finances, we're worried about our families, and Jesus and His disciples come trotting into our lives and tell us to quit. Once again, how helpful!*

*However, we would do well to heed the divine injunction. Even in practical terms, anxiety isn't useful. It drains us of the energy that we might use to solve our soluble problems, and if the problem is insoluble, why fret over the inevitable?*

*In spiritual terms, anxiety is even worse. It is a symptom of foolish reliance on the self. In reality, there is nothing that any of us can do of ourselves to make our work successful or our finances stable or our families happy. All of those blessings are in the hand of God, to give or withhold as He chooses. They do not lie within our power. The only thing we can control is our relationship with Him. All we can do is seek His kingdom first and trust Him to provide for us all the other things that we need. Anxiety accomplishes nothing.*

## The Christian and the 21st Century: Lesson Six

1. From a dictionary, define "pornography". In your own words, explain what this definition means. According to this definition, what forms of entertainment are pornographic?
2. Each of the four verses listed below supplies a negative definition or consequence of lust. List at least one definition/consequence for each Scripture and explain how it applies to us.
  - Matthew 5:27-28
  - 1 Peter 2:11
  - Ephesians 2:3

## The Christian and the 21st Century: Lesson Six

- Colossians 3:5-6
3. What principle does Numbers 32:23 state? How does this apply to pornography use? Why is this important?
4. Below, there are three verses that explain a Biblical defense against pornography and lust generally. For each verse, give the defense, explain what it means, and explain why it is effective.
- Romans 13:14
  - Colossians 3:1-2

## The Christian and the 21st Century: Lesson Seven

9. Depression is a modern concept, but all of the above texts describe a man of God whose emotional experience is at least similar to depression. What applications can we make from these texts to depression?
10. Below are listed two encouraging verses. Explain the meaning of each one, as well as the usefulness of each to a Christian experiencing emotional difficulty.
- 1 Peter 1:18-19
  - 2 Corinthians 4:16-18
11. Does the encouraging nature of the Bible mean that a Christian struggling with depression should rely only on the word and not seek professional help? Why or why not?



## The Christian and the 21st Century: Lesson Seven

5. What does Elijah repeat in 19:14? In 19:15-16, what does God tell Elijah to do? In 19:17-18, what does God predict? What lesson is here for us?
  
6. What happens in 2 Samuel 12:15? According to 12:16-17, how does David react to this? Why would David react in this way? What does this passage reveal about David?
  
7. According to 12:18, what result do David's prayers have? What do David's servants do about this? Why? What can we learn from this?
  
8. According to 2 Corinthians 1:8, what happened to Paul and his companions in Asia? How serious was this? How does 1:9 describe their attitude toward this? What should this teach us?

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- 1 Corinthians 7:2
- 
5. Both of the two passages cited below reveal something about godly sexual desire. Describe the overall point of each text and explain what we should learn from it.
    - Proverbs 5:15-19
  
    - Song of Solomon 5:10-16
  
  6. What principle does Jesus expound in Matthew 7:17-18? What does this principle tell us about the use of pornography as a marital aid? Why?

# The Christian and the 21st Century

## Lesson Seven: Depression

### The Unlikely Foe

*At least from a surface perspective, the United States of America should be one of the happiest nations ever to grace the planet. Most parts of our territory haven't felt the hand of war for a hundred years or more, even the poor among us know a level of prosperity that would provoke envy among the wealthy of 2000 years ago, and our abundance of natural resources and strong government seem likely to safeguard these things for the foreseeable future.*

*Nonetheless, the United States has higher reported rates of depression than any other nation on earth, even those with a medical establishment as well developed as our own. Each year, 3 to 5 percent of American men and 8 to 10 percent*

*of American women will experience a major depressive episode. The number of people this affects is well into the millions; the economic and emotional toll on society is incalculable. Apparently, not only can money not buy happiness, it may even make the situation worse.*

*The causes of and treatments for clinical depression are well beyond the scope of any Bible class, but an acknowledgment of the problem is not. The disorder has a spiritual dimension too, and it may well lead Christian sufferers not only to hide their condition for fear of the judgment of others, but also to shrink back, both from their brethren and from their God. We must learn to deal wisely and compassionately with one another in this area, lest we make an already dangerous problem worse.*

### The Christian and the 21st Century: Lesson Seven

1. What happens in 1 Kings 19:1? In 19:2, what does Jezebel do about it? In 19:3, how does Elijah react? What effect would this incident have on Elijah? Why?
2. In 19:4, what does Elijah want? What does this reveal about him? In 19:5-6, what answer does he get? According to 19:7-8, what instructions does he receive? What can we learn from the way God deals with Elijah here?
3. What happens in 19:9? In 19:10, what answer does Elijah give? What does this show about Elijah's thinking?
4. What does God tell Elijah to do in 19:11? In 19:11-13, what events does Elijah experience? Where is God? Why does God reveal Himself in this way?