

## Staying Clean in a Wicked Age



David Wilkerson September 1, 1979

Is it possible for a Christian to stay clean and pure in a world filled with violence, immorality, and corruption? Or is it inevitable that the spirit of this age will wear down the saints of God and vex their souls? It happened to Lot and his family in Sodom, and it is happening to multitudes of Christians all around the world. The overwhelming temptations of this evil generation have already caused numbers of Christians to compromise and indulge in ungodly practices.

I believe it is possible to not only stay clean in the midst of a moral landslide, I believe it is possible to grow in holiness and purity - even though hell engulfs this generation. It is not inevitable that God's people should fall by the wayside, victims of demonic powers let loose on this earth.

There is a sensuous spirit of wickedness gripping the land, and many Christians live with a growing fear that they may be slowly giving in to it. We are constantly bombarded with that which is lewd and immoral. Magazines, movies, and TV parade before viewers scenes of nudity, lust, and violence. Adultery is glorified, and one is given the impression that nearly everybody is indulging in a secret affair with a new partner. Drugs, alcohol, and sexual promiscuity are glamorized. Popular TV hosts boast about their drunken escapades, their numerous divorces, their flaunting of all moral codes - and the audiences love it! The more shameful their deeds, the greater the applause.

Ministers and evangelists who speak out against all this immorality and filth are mocked and ridiculed. Comedians smirch the good names of Anita Bryant, Billy Graham, Rex Humbard, and all other preachers of righteousness, by making the pursuit of purity the butt of their devilish jokes. On Judgment Day, the multitudes of revilers and mockers will watch in silent terror as all the sacrilegious comedians and cartoonists are called before our holy God to give an account. Our all-powerful God will shake the heavens when He laughs in their faces. They will all tremble and scream for mercy when face to face with Him whom they've mocked and ridiculed. He will roar at them in holy indignation, "As you did it unto one of these, the least of my servants, you have done it unto Me."

It's Time to Take Inventory

Truly honest Christians must now take inventory and ask of themselves these important questions, "Are my moral values changing? Is the wickedness of this age seeping into my life? Am I being affected by the barrage of sensuality I see all around me? Am I developing an appetite for worldly things? Am I changing for the worst without knowing it?"

The truth is, most of us now allow things in our lives we condemned just a few years ago. We have no holy indignation left in us. We are not only silent about the eroding morals of our land, we slowly but surely give in to the mounting pressures and accept the lies of Satan. We are all being lured by powerful but insidious forces of lust and sensuality. You may not like such a charge, you may even think you are immune to such an accusation - but examine your life honestly for a moment. Do you watch filthy programs like, "Saturday Night Live"? What about all the immoral movies? People can accuse me of legalism, narrow-mindedness, or anything else they choose, but in all honesty these programs flaunt divorce, adultery, infidelity, and even homosexuality. We claim to be God-fearing Christians, yet we still feed our souls and minds on too much of this satanic filth.

Just a few short years ago, our generation was shocked by the antics of the Beatles and other such rock groups who invaded this nation with music that extolled drugs, sex, and violence. People now look back at those days and

say, "How stupid we were. What was all the fuss about? Why did we get so worked up about them? They were just innocent kids out to make a buck. It was just a put-on, a commercial ripoff." But friends, have we really grown up? Are we now more intelligent, more tolerant? Or are we now so intimidated by evil forces, we accept with resignation what we once knew to be sinful and corrupting? Look at what has happened. Rock music has moved into the house of God; the drug-induced sounds were given a weak Christian message, and multitudes of young Christians have now developed an appetite for a music style that was borne in the minds of demonic mockers of God. I have been in meetings where "Christian" young people laughed at some old-timers singing, "The Old Rugged Cross." But what a shame that so many of the young people today do not know how to enjoy the glorious hymns that were borne in revivals of righteousness.

Yes, we are changing. Our music has changed. Our standards are falling. Our tolerance for evil is ever growing. Our silence against encroaching immorality is more and more evident. We boast to ourselves that we are now more educated and enlightened, more able to cope with and accept the moral changes without being affected. We like to think we are above being tainted by pornography, dirty TV, and the growing tide of immorality that engulfs us today. An ever-increasing number of Christians can now parade into dirty movie houses, leer through pornographic magazines, watch hours of filthy TV, socialize with ungodly crowds in ungodly places, then lie down on their beds at night thinking to themselves, "All this and Jesus too! I am not in the least bit affected by all the dirt and filth around me. I'm still the same Christian I always was.

But could it be that we are now so lukewarm, so cozy with the "new morality," we have become blind to our true spiritual condition? I, for one, want the Holy Spirit to turn His searchlight on my soul and expose every wicked or evil way that is encroaching into my life. I want a revival of righteousness in my life. I want to hunger and thirst anew for true holiness.

The Culprit Is Not Just "The Spirit of This Age"

What really corrupts a Christian? What is it that causes the Christian to "fall away" and become worldly minded? Why is it that so many Christians today are spiritually dry and empty? Why is it that so many complain that it is getting more difficult to stay clean and pure in this age? Is it because there is a spirit in this age that is more devious and deceptive than any previous generation? Are we fighting bigger and meaner demons than our forefathers? Is the level of corruption higher today than it was a hundred or a thousand years ago? Does Satan have some kind of special power over this century? I say no! Satan may be angrier than ever before, evil men may be waxing worse and worse, sin may be abounding on all sides - but it is not Satan's power nor the spirit of evil loose in the land that is corrupting Christians. Other generations have experienced outbreaks of violence and corruption. Noah's generation was so evil God was forced to wipe it from the earth. It was an evil and perverse generation that constructed the tower of Babel. The prophets all thought of their generation as being the most evil and wicked in history. Listen to the prophet Hosea crying out against his generation, and it sounds like he is talking about our modern society:

"There is whoredom and adultery... people think God is excusing their sins....There is none that calleth upon God....They have mixed themselves among the people... like silly doves they mix with the heathen..God's people are casting off the things that are good and making idols of silver and gold. They are turning my altars into altars of sin... Prophets are speaking foolish things, and the spiritual man is mad, because there is a multitude of iniquity in his heart..." (Hosea 7-9).

Hosea said to his generation, "You have forgotten your Maker. You claim to know God, but you don't consult Him anymore. You are busy building, pursuing the things of this life, but in the process, you have become empty vines-trees without fruit - half-baked cakes."

Isaiah thought his generation was the most wicked and vile in all times. He said of his society, "Wicked, rebellious... sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters..." (Isaiah 1:4). Children that are corrupters? An evil generation that has forgotten God? Does it have a familiar ring to it?

Jesus referred to His generation as "...evil... wicked, perverse." Long after Christ ascended to the Father, Peter was crying out against the sins of that generation, saying,

"You have eyes full of adultery... You can't cease from your sins. You love unrighteousness... You have hearts exercised with covetous practices... You even curse children" (2 Peter 2:14,15).

In every one of these former generations, there was a spirit that caused man to forsake God and rebel. There have

been juvenile delinquents in every past age. Drunkards, harlots, and murderers have been flaunting their sins from the beginning. Adultery, divorce, fornication, and all the other iniquities of our generation have been just as widely practiced in the past. Evil has always been present. Satan has been busy in all past generations. The devil tried to tempt and deceive David, Isaiah, Paul, and the people of God in every generation just as forcefully as he seeks to devour God's people today. In spite of it all, God has always had a remnant. No matter how violent and corrupt a generation became, God always had a people who remained true to the end. The spirit of their age did not overwhelm them. They grew strong and holy in the midst of persecution and evil. In every generation there have been some who have never bowed their knees to the devil's idols. They continued in God's presence with clean hands and pure hearts. They rejected the world and all its pleasures and looked to Christ as the prize of their lives.

You tell me past generations did not have to cope with pornography, dirty movies, flaunted homosexuality, sexual deviations, and promiscuity? That the evil seducers of today are more powerful and have more unique tools of seduction? In answer to that I say, sinful human nature is the same in every generation. Roving mobs of violent homosexuals turned Sodom into one of the most wicked and unsafe cities in the world. These murderous multitudes, among them many young men, tried to rape visiting angels.

Archaeologists have discovered pornographic drawings on the walls of ancient diggings. Centuries-old Chinese literature is rife with sexual deviation and eroticism. In the fourteenth century, writers spoke with alarm about young people out of control, disobedient to parents, full of anger, and ready to destroy those who opposed them.

No! It is not just the dirty magazines, the filthy movies, and corrupted TV. It is more than a spirit of wickedness that is causing men to have eyes full of adultery. People are not indulging in sin and falling away simply because they have become victims of an overwhelming force of evil.

**We Are Becoming Strangers to God**

This generation is becoming wicked and vile because it is losing its faith in God. And that faith is dissipating because the Bible is no longer consumed as a life-giving force. If faith comes by hearing God's Word, and the Word is neglected and put aside - no wonder the faith of so many has dissipated.

Don't blame the devil for your spiritual decline. Don't blame the pornographers, the movie producers, the television moguls, the pushers of drugs, nor the makers of alcoholic beverages. Our backslidings are a result of one thing: a lack of prayer and Bible reading.

I can find but a handful of Christians today who take time to pray. We know we should pray, we know what happens to our spiritual lives when we ignore the Lord. We know Christ waits for us in the secret closet of prayer to renew us and fill us daily with His power and holiness. We are not ignorant of how God works. We fully understand that His way to purity and holiness is simple and easy to follow. Yet we find it almost impossible to shut down our lives for even one hour a day to spend in God's holy presence.

We have time to watch hours and hours of television. We have plenty of time to socialize, go out to eat, attend sports events, etc., etc. But we end the day too tired, too mentally exhausted to pray or read God's Word.

Honestly now - how much of God's Word do you read each day? Each week? How much time do you spend shut in with God, all alone, to pour out your heart to Him? The truth is - this entire generation has little or no time for either prayer or Bible reading.

**We Can Change! We Can Be Purged!**

God has been challenging me to return to the secret closet of prayer with a renewed determination to shake off the worldly influences of this age.

The world can change me only when my inner man is cold or lukewarm. The sin and filth all around can affect me only when my soul is dry and empty. When the soul is on fire with love for Jesus, when the mind is lifted in prayer and praise, when the Word of God is fresh and alive in the heart - no demon or devil from hell can touch or influence me. No worldly pleasure can entice me. No ungodly crowd can draw me aside. Nothing Satan parades before my eyes can allure me - because I am alive with the power of God's holy presence.

Christians, shame on us all! Shame on us for giving our precious Lord so little of our time. Shame on us for sitting at the devil's table, feasting on worldly things. Shame on us for compromising and calling it maturity. Shame on us for letting the Bible sit there on the table, unopened, unused - neglected!

Sure, prayer is difficult at times. God fully understands the pressures we feel. He is not a hard taskmaster; His yoke is easy and His burden is light. But God will not much longer permit this generation of Christians to remain lazy about prayer and faith. Satan is cleverly making us too busy to take time with God. And how easy it is nowadays to simply "take things by faith." No prayer, no searching of God's Word for help and direction. We feel God owes us every promise; that it is no longer important to block out of our schedule a time and place to pray. We shout at God what we call "thought prayers." We console ourselves in believing that God should be pleased that we think about Him occasionally throughout our busy days.

We are not going to make it, Christian, not through the coming flood of demonic corruption - unless we get back to fervent, diligent prayer and Bible study. God is longing to find men and women who will step away from the sensuous parade and fall on their knees in repentance and who will cry for power to overcome the world.

We need to be praying, "Oh God, cause me to see how cold I have become. Cause me to know how weak I now am. Put in me a new hunger for spiritual things. Make me to yearn for holiness and righteousness."

God is ready to meet this generation in the closet of prayer. He is ready to pour out more grace than ever before known to mankind. He is wanting to enlist an army of men and women, young and old, who will return to the old paths of holiness and purity.

I believe it is possible to stay clean, no matter how wicked and vile this world gets. I believe it is possible that this wicked and vile generation can witness the growth of some of the greatest Christians the world has ever known; uncompromising, unafraid to preach against sin, unwilling to bend or break! I want to be one of those men of God. I want, out of this wicked and perverse generation, to experience His gift of holiness.

Here is God's desire for all who live in the midst of depravity:

"That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Philippians 2:15).

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