John Holland

SESSION 3 | AVOIDING WORLDLY PITFALLS

I. INTRODUCTION

"My worth is not in what I own
Not in the strength of flesh and bone
But in the costly wounds of love
At the cross.

I rejoice in my Redeemer
Greatest Treasure
Wellspring of my soul
I will trust in Him, no other.
My soul is satisfied in Him alone."[1]

II. DISCERN WORLDLY PITFALLS

Proverbs 30:7–9

> *[7] Two things I ask of you;*
> *deny them not to me before I die:*
> *[8] Remove far from me falsehood and lying;*
> *give me neither poverty nor riches;*
> *feed me with the food that is needful for me,*
> *[9] lest I be full and deny you*
> *and say, "Who is the LORD?"*
> *or lest I be poor and steal*
> *and profane the name of my God.*

[1] Keith & Kristyn Getty, Fernando Ortega, "My Worth Is Not In What I Own"

A. Riches

"Too soon, we forget the source of the provisions that flood our lives. Abundance tends toward arrogance and independence… How can this be? Should not the mercies of God lend to denial of self and submission to God (Rom. 12:1-2)? Yet, like the rich man who built bigger barns, we are blinded to the Giver by the very gifts He gives (Luke 12:16-21)."[2] - John Kitchen

Matthew 6:24 - *"No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money."*

B. Poverty

"A severe lack may not guide one into reliance upon God, but rather impetuous self-preservation ('steal'). The word translated profane. . . pictures the name of God being handled roughly, treated commonly." [3] - John Kitchen

"95% of believers pass the test of persecution, while 95% of believers fail the test of prosperity." - Alcorn

C. Debt

"I must have" mindset

Six key assumptions of a debt mentality:[4]

1. We need more than God has given us.
2. God doesn't know what our needs are.
    a. Is it possible that God has intentionally limited us so that we might lean on Him, pray to Him, save responsibly rather than presume "we got this" and create another payment plan?
3. God has failed to provide for our needs, forcing us to take matters into our own hands.

[2] Kitchen, John. *Proverbs: A Mentor Commentary* (Geanies House, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2006) pg. 685.
[3] Ibid, pg. 685
[4] Alcorn, Randy. *Money, Possessions, and Eternity* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House, 1989) pg. 309.

4. If God doesn't come through the way we think He should, we can find another way.
5. Just because today's income is sufficient to make our debt payments, tomorrow's will be too.
6. Our circumstances won't change–our health will be good, we'll keep our present job, our salary will keep up with inflation, and God won't direct us to another job with a lower salary or lead us to increased giving.

D. Hoarding

"I must keep" mindset

Ecclesiastes 5:13 - *"There is a grievous evil that I have seen under the sun: riches were kept by their owner to his hurt…"*

III. DISCOVER GODLY PATHS

A. Contentment

1 Timothy 6:6 - *"But godliness with contentment is great gain…"*

1 Timothy 6:8 - *"But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content."*

Philippians 4:11–13 - *"[11] Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned, in whatever situation I am, to be content. [12] I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. [13] I can do all things through him who strengthens me."*

B. Giving

Proverbs 11:24–25

[24] "One gives freely, yet grows all the richer;
another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want.
[25] Whoever brings blessing will be enriched,
and one who waters will himself be watered.

Scripture addresses our motives and attitudes in giving:[5]

- Giving is to be generous, not stingy (2 Cor. 9:6)
- Giving is to be enthusiastic, not grudging (2 Cor. 9:7)
- Giving is to be deliberate, not haphazard (2 Cor. 9:7; Acts 11:29)
- Giving is to be discreet, not showy (Matt. 6:1-4)
- Giving is to be with faith, not anxiety (Mal. 3:10)

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." - Jim Elliot

"For the richer any man is, the more abundant are his means of doing good for others."[6] - John Calvin

Giving to support the work of the church remains an expectation for believers:[7]

1. Giving to support individuals (Acts 4:34-35)
2. Giving to support the church's leaders (1 Cor. 9:13-14, 1 Tim 5:17-18; Gal. 6:6; Ex. 23:19; 1 Cor. 16:2).
3. Giving to support the extension of the gospel (Phil. 4:15-16)

"Let me be bountiful and liberal, for so shall I be like my Lord. He gave Himself for me, shall I grudge Him anything?"[8] - Charles Spurgeon

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[5] SGCL Membership Class, written by Jeff Purswell.
[6] Calvin, John as quoted in Ryen, Leland's *Worldly Saints* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986). Pg. 67.
[7] SGCL Membership class, written by Jeff Purswell.
[8] Spurgeon, Charles in *Faith's Checkbook* as quoted in "Stinginess and the Generosity of God" Desiring God article by Randy Alcorn.