

# Two Cures for Consumption!

Sunday, January 16, 2022

## **INTRODUCTION:**

- We all know someone who you can count on being late. It doesn't matter if they have the entire day free, they will be late. It isn't a matter of the time available as much as it is a matter of discipline.
- So it is with our spending. It has been said that living within our means & saving money is exercising the muscle of character. Is your "spending character" flabby or firm?
- In our society we are constantly pushed to live a consumptive lifestyle. Billboards say stop at McD's, AT&T, Verizon and T-Mobile say "upgrade today!" Gas station says get a car wash, grocery store says get x free if you spend x amount. Cyber Monday says if you didn't get what you needed on Black Friday sit at home (or work) and buy it on Monday! We are constantly pushed into a lifestyle of consumption.
- What is a consumptive lifestyle? Simply, it is spending more than you make. Living a consumptive lifestyle leads us to use credit cards, lines of credit and other forms of unsecured borrowing. This is dangerous debt that is usually uncollateralized and offers high interest rates!
- For the Christian trying to honor the Lord with their wallet, the goal is to spend less than you make. Let's look at how the Bible addresses this issue.

## **BIBLE STUDY:**

1. Man's way is IMMEDIATE GRATIFICATION. God's way is PRUDENT PLANNING (Proverbs 21:20).
  - a. Man says, "Spend it now," but God says, "Save."
  - b. Spending more than you make is linked with foolishness (vs. 20). Why is this foolish?  
*Allow for the class to discuss this and then point out these following points:*
    - i. It is wasteful of God's provision.
    - ii. It is not prudent (Proverbs 27:12). The Lord expects us to look ahead and anticipate future needs.
    - iii. It invalidates future planning. The Lord expects us to plan & prepare for the future.
    - iv. It is evidence of a lack of self-control (fruit of the Spirit)
  - c. The wise person does not spend all they have. They exercise self-control by saving for future needs or big purchases.
    - i. God admonishes us to look at nature as an example. The ant does not waste all her resources now but saves for the future (Proverbs 6:6-8).
    - ii. Even ants know there will be no food in the winter unless it's saved in the summer.
2. Man's way is CONSUMPTION. God's way is CONTENTMENT (1 Timothy 6:6-10, Hebrews 13:5).
  - a. Man says, "I want more" but God says, "Be content."
  - b. Material possessions and monetary increase do not provide lasting satisfaction (Eccl. 5:10).
    - i. Realize the impact advertisers/marketing have on your buying decisions. They say, "your clothes aren't flashy enough, your car is not safe enough, your décor is out of style, your deodorant is not strong enough, etc..." Their goal is to create discontentment in you so that you will purchase their product.
    - ii. There has been much research done on the subject of "product placement." Advertisers want to position their product in a store so you will buy it (think of all the things for sale on the end of aisles or close to the cash register).
  - c. Contentment is God's plan for the Christian (1 Timothy 6:6-8, Hebrews 13:5).
    - i. Discontentment is a sin and contentment is a spiritual virtue commanded in Scripture.
    - ii. 1 Timothy 6:6 & Hebrews 13:5 teach that the Christian should know that the most valuable asset in life is Godliness. This is knowing God through Jesus Christ

- and then walking with Him in a daily relationship through the Word of God, prayer & obedience.
- iii. In verse 7, the Christian should know that he/she will die just like they entered the world – empty handed.
  - iv. Vs. 8 teaches that the Christian should be content knowing that their NEEDS are met.
  - v. "Contentment" translates as an inner peace which external circumstances cannot alter.
  - vi. Hebrews 13:5 instructs us to "keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have." When you surrender fully to God as your King, your possessions are his and his joy is yours.
- d. Man says, "I want riches," but God says, "Riches are not the purpose of work" (1 Timothy 6:9, Prov. 23:4-5).
- i. Review from last week: God provides work as a means to please Him, provide for our families, bless others and fund His work through the local church with tithes & offerings.
  - ii. The purpose of work is not to get rich/wealthy.
- e. Paul addresses in 1 Timothy 6:9 – "*those that will be rich.*" This implies a striving to be rich. It refers to those in whom this becomes the object of earnest desire and who plan their lives around it.
- i. When someone is focused on becoming rich they become ensnared/trapped by this lifestyle which results in destruction.
  - ii. Many men could give testimony of the loss they incurred by having a desire to be rich (loss of testimony, family, money, job, etc...).
  - iii. Note that the Bible does not say money is the root of all evil but that the love of money is.
  - iv. When we set our heart/affections on material possessions we set ourselves up for hurt.

#### **APPLICATION:**

- Which of the two points in this lesson do you need to tackle personally? How well are your finances planned? How easily do you slide into the consumption mindset?
- Is your habit of life "spending it up" or spending what is required and saving the rest? Discuss the difference between hoarding & saving.
- What are some smart things to save for? (Purchases, retirement – a time when you will no longer be able to work but will still require income, education, reserve funds for an emergency, car replacement, appliances, Christmas, etc...)
- Does contentment mean "to settle" in life and not strive for excellence and growth? NO! Contentment is a matter of heart attitude toward money and possessions but is revealed in our actions toward these matters.

**TO DO:** Take the CURE FOR CONSUMPTION WORKSHEET home and complete. The goal of this exercise is to determine if I am leading a lifestyle of CONSUMPTION. This is not to be discussed in class!

#### **CONCLUSION:**

During World War II when fuel was precious, billboards routinely asked motorists, "Is this trip necessary?" Every resource used for individual convenience was one less resource available for the nation's central concern: winning the war. Today, we're engaged in a spiritual battle that requires great resources (Eph. 6:12). Spending excessively on our own private concerns leaves less for the kingdom's central concern. We should ask, "Is this item necessary? Does it contribute to my purpose in being here on this earth? Is this item an asset or liability to me as a soldier of Christ?" (*Taken from "Money, Possessions & Eternity" by Randy Alcorn.*)