

WHY TEENAGERS ARE SO WORLDLY?

By Denver Cheddie

One of the most disheartening trends in the church today is the lack of enthusiasm displayed by teenagers concerning the things of God, in contrast with their fanatical fascination with the things of the world. Even children of very good Christian people seem to be caught up in the trend. In some churches, worldly gospel music is adopted to appeal to the youths. This is testimony to the fact that we have lost faith in the power of prayer and the Word of God to solve our problems. But the fundamental problem remains. These youths may come to church solely for the music and fellowship, but deep down have no desire for God or His Word.

We may be tempted to conclude that since this tendency is so widespread that it must be normal. I refuse to believe that it is normal for children to be a little rebellious at a certain age. Rebellion is never normal and always demonic (1 Sam. 15:23). It is never normal for people to reject God, it is always the devil who has blinded them (2 Cor. 4:4). We have been so duped by secular philosophy that we have accepted the demonic as the norm.

The devil is targeting youths. Being the subtle creature that he is, he knows that if he could impress the minds of people when they are young, he could seriously affect the course of their entire life. Most of our learning is done in the early years. That serves as a foundation on which the rest of our lives are built. Solomon encourages us to remember God in our youths because it

is harder to do so when the evil days come (Eccl. 12:1). The devil's goal is to corrupt the youths. What we are witnessing in the church today is a growing acceptance of the spirit of the world in its various forms. The love of God and the love of the world are mutually exclusive (James 4:4; 1 John 2:15). The devil's mission is to get people so attached to the spirit of the world that they become sidetracked from the things of God. I would say he is succeeding.

What are his strategies? The Bible says we are not to be ignorant in this regard (2 Cor. 2:11). In the Garden of Eden the devil's goal was to get Adam to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He really did not care about Eve. But he knew he could not just go to Adam directly because he would not have succeeded. Instead he used a round about approach.

1. He befriended Eve by engaging in conversation with her (Gen. 3:1).
2. By her words he perceived that she did not really know what she was talking about (3:2, 3).
3. He preyed on her ignorance by advancing a half truth (3:4).
4. He convinced her to eat of the fruit by appealing to the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life (3:5, 6 cf. 1 John 2:16).
5. SHE then gave it to Adam who ate (3:6).
6. THEN both their eyes were opened (3:7) – MISSION ACCOMPLISHED.

No wonder he is called the most subtle of all creatures (Gen. 3:1). Little by little, step by step, he worked his way into the scene, and without anyone realizing it, he was able to take complete control. The devil is inconspicuous in that he is rarely ever noticed when he first makes his move. It is only when the lump appears do we realize we have a cancer. It is only when we get a toothache do we realize that tooth decay has set in. It is usually too late then. The problem started a long time before that. True spiritual warfare is recognizing his first move and cutting him off right there and then.

Many Christian parents find themselves in a situation where their teenaged children want nothing to do with God, they love worldly music, television, worldly fashion, unsaved friends and by the day they slip further away. Do you think that happened overnight? We only recognize the problem when it reaches that state. But when they brought home their first worldly CD, no one took notice. When she wore her first mini-skirt or extra-tight pants as a child, everyone thought it was so cute? It was no big deal when he first pierced his ears. But that set the precedent. The natural tendency for humans is to make the most of what they can get away with. It starts off small, but grows like a cancer, and like a wild fire and is soon out of control.

Now is worldly music unscriptural? Are mini-skirts unbiblical? No! There is no rule that says a Christian should not indulge in these things. But they may signify something much deeper, and may merely be the initial step in a journey that leads away from God. That's when they become a problem. Worldly music, television and associations are means by which the spirit of the world infiltrates our lives. They are anti-Christian in substance, and

brainwashing in nature. I personally believe that parents should put an end to any worldly trend before it even begins. My personal belief is that children should not be allowed to listen to worldly music in the first place, the television should be well censored, and they should be taught early in life how to value their own identity so they would not be too easily swayed by peer pressure later on.

That is also the view of the Bible. It says to train up a child in the way he should go [while he is young], so that when he is older he would not depart from it (Prov. 22:6). This is a conditional promise. Most parents "don't want to force religion on them". "They are too young for church. Let them make their own decision. We don't want them to resent God. [Duh! They already do!] We will give them freedom and pray for them that in God's timing they will be saved." This is the exact opposite of what the Bible teaches. As cruel as it may sound, the problem with teenagers stems from slack and careless parenting. They allow their children to watch anything, listen to anything, associate with anyone, read anything, and then later on wonder what went wrong.

Pastor John Hagee tells of a drug problem he had as a child. His parents forced him to go the church, Sunday school and Bible study, they injected him with family prayer, and today he is addicted to Jesus. I wish that this were the rule and not the exception.

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