

LOVERS OF PLEASURE OR LOVERS OF GOD?

Note to the speaker:

Explain the subtle danger of allowing love of pleasure to dominate one's life. Point out the devastating effects such a course could have on one's happiness and spirituality. Encourage all to develop a balanced view of pleasure and to earnestly endeavor to keep love for Jehovah in first place

WIDESPREAD LOVE OF PLEASURE HAS REACHED EPIDEMIC PROPORTIONS (5 min.)

Scriptures foretold that in last days men would be "lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God" (2Ti 3:1, 4; w88 6/15 17)

While many claim to love God, they spend more time in and show greater devotion to pursuit of pleasure than of spiritual things

Many rationalize or try to find excuses for this in effort to justify selfish heart inclinations (Jer 17:9, 10)

Such inclinations inherited from Adam, whose own heart became enticed by selfishness. Manifested on large scale in Noah's day when self-indulgence led to other forms of badness, resulting in destruction of ungodly world (Ge 6:5; 2Pe 3:6)

Christians must be extremely careful that this spirit does not infect them

Pleasure-seeking often leads to drunkenness, drug abuse, immorality, and even untimely death (Ga 6:8)

Only those seeking and loving God have prospect of surviving end of present wicked system (Zep 2:2, 3)

SATAN AND THE WORLD PROMOTE LOVE OF PLEASURE (12 min.)

Jehovah is "the happy God," taking delight in his perfect works (1Ti 1:11)

Desires his intelligent creatures to be happy also

Our senses are designed to perceive a tremendous variety of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and textures (1Ti 6:17)

He wants us to enjoy food and drink (Ec 5:18)

Jesus accepted invitations to meals and banquets but kept his spiritual balance; he never became a 'lover of pleasure rather than a lover of God' (Lu 5:29; 19:5, 6; Joh 4:34)

Satan and the world exploit our inherited desire to be happy

Jehovah's servants must be on guard for traps urging them to put pleasure first

Solomon gave a realistic view of pleasures (Ec 2:1, 2)

Pursuit of pleasure cannot bring lasting happiness

We should be moderate in the number of social gatherings we attend and the amount of time we devote to them

Take care that wholesome Christian gatherings do not become noisy, boisterous affairs of self-indulgence (2Pe 2:13)

Do not allow gatherings to become occasions of unrestrained merrymaking, heavy drinking, and sensuality (Isa 5:11, 12; 1Pe 4:3)

Wedding receptions, anniversaries, and the like should not be turned into occasions for worldliness (1Co 10:31; w92 8/15 15-20; w84 4/15 16-22)

The big thing in our life must be practice of true worship, not pursuit of pleasure (w83 11/1 24-7)

Guard against satanic reasoning: "Do your own thing"; "Be your own person"; "God knows our weaknesses and understands"; "God loves us and wants us to have a good time"; "It's only normal relaxation," and so forth (Jude 4)

Satan wants people to live as if there were no tomorrow (Isa 22:13; 1Co 15:32)

Lovers of God, as holy people, should never for one moment forget that "the day of Jehovah" is imminent and the promised new world is at hand (2Pe 3:11-13)

Jesus warned us of the grave dangers of becoming lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God (Lu 21:34-36; w83 7/1 3-7; w77 520-4)

BAD FRUITS OF BEING LOVERS OF PLEASURE (12 min.)

(Speaker should relate some experiences and examples of how pursuing pleasure has damaged the spirituality of some and resulted in unhappiness for them and their families; yp 296-9; g88 7/22 24-7; g86 2/22 13-17)

Lovers of pleasures have only "a form of godly devotion" (2Ti 3:5)

They become idolizers of sports, theatrical, motion picture, and musical figures (yp 220-1; w72 754)

They have a form of religion—the creed of hedonism (w90 4/15 31; g72 1/22 26)

Many have put pleasure in the place of God (w83 7/1 3)

In the United States, some refer to pursuit of pleasure as the number-one industry (g79 8/22 4)

Pursuit of pleasure does nothing to deepen one's relationship with God (w82 3/15 30)

Solomon found that it left him with an empty feeling (Ec 2:3-11; w86 7/1 14-15; w77 58-9)

Jesus denounced the empty, shallow life of pleasure-seekers who live only for their own comforts (Lu 6:25)

Pleasure seeking may interfere with theocratic activities

Do you allow this to happen? Are you “keeping close in mind the presence of the day of Jehovah”? (2Pe 3:12)
Which do *you* seek first, pleasure or the Kingdom? Whom do you really love—Jehovah or pleasure? (Mt 6:33; Mr 12:30)

Pleasure seeking often takes one into worldly places and bad association (1Co 7:31)

May lead to immorality, drunkenness, drugs (*w88* 6/15 18-19)

Sad consequences include reproof or disfellowshipping

AIDS IN COMBATING LOVE OF PLEASURE (12 min.)

Prevent problems at social gatherings (*w86* 5/1 18-19; *w77* 524-6)

To avoid social gatherings with worldly overtones, guard against association even with some congregation members (2Ti 2:20-22)

Not obligated to invite those given to excesses (2Th 3:6, 7)

Keep gatherings to reasonable size, and see that Jehovah is honored (1Co 14:25)

Control drinking and music (Eph 5:18, 19; *w84* 4/15 17-22)

Develop the proper view of pleasures (*w92* 8/15 17, 18; *w83* 11/1 24-7; *g78* 4/22 27-8)

Wholesome relaxation is fine (Ec 8:15)

Avoid spending excessive amounts of time in pleasures (*w89* 7/15 11-12)

All things should harmonize with Christian faith (Php 4:8)

Fill life with worthwhile activities

Youth is the ideal time to begin (Ec 11:9, 10)

All should seek joy and satisfaction in spiritual activities

Have you made a disciple? There is no greater joy

Proficiency in ministry brings deep satisfaction

Make God’s work the main course, relaxation the dessert

REWARDS FOR KEEPING PLEASURES IN THEIR PLACE (4 min.)

Balanced living yields good conscience

Stability and steadiness that help us stay on Christian course (Mt 7:13, 14)

More time for spiritual development and growth

Lovers of God to live forever (1Jo 2:17)

(Adhere closely to the outlined material, and observe the indicated timing of each section. Not all cited texts need be read. Source material in parentheses need not be mentioned)