DISTRACTIONS

(Selected Scriptures)
1/16/05

Introduction: *All of us are on this Earth to fulfill a purpose. We were created and Redeemed that we might know God; spend time with God; walk with God; and to serve God.*

Now, more than any time in human history, there are more distractions to capture the attention of God's people so as to divert them and render them unfruitful for God.
We are BUSY, BUSY, BUSY with no time for God!
**** Don't miss God's Perfect will, by being Led Astray by Worldly Distractions:***

I. A Word of <u>CAUTION</u> regarding Distractions:

A. Beware of Worldly Distractions that can
<u>STEAL THE HEART</u> away from God
(The Worlds System and Things Divert our love from God) - 1 John 2:15-17

B. Beware of Worldly Distractions that can
<u>CHOKE THE WORD</u> to prevent Fruitfulness
(The Cares of this world and the Deceitfulness of Riches Strangle the Seed of God's Word) - Matthew 13:22

II. A Word of <u>CURE</u> regarding Distractions:
(How to Conquer the Temptation of Distractions)

> ***Don't blame anyone else; The heart of the problem is the problem of the heart***
> *Jas 1:14 But every man is tempted, when he is <u>drawn</u> <u>away</u> of his own lust, and enticed.*

A. Make this a Daily Matter of Prayer
"Deliver us from temptation" (Matthew 6:3)

B. Keep your eyes Focused on Jesus Christ
"For to me to Live is Christ" (Philippians 1:21)

C. Seek God every Day of the Week
"Early will I seek Thee" (Psalm 63:1; Isaiah 26:9)

D. Make a Priority List and Schedule and Follow it
"Seek ye First the Kingdom of God" (Matthew 6:33)

E. Remove as many distractions from your life as you can

DISTRACTIONS

(Selected Scriptures)
1/16/05

Song: "I Was Made to Praise the Lord."

All of us are on this Earth to fulfill a purpose. Ultimately we are here to glorify God; We live for the grand purpose of doing "all to the glory of God" (I Cor. 10:31).

We were created and Redeemed that we might know God; spend time with God; walk with God; and to serve God.

We were made for God:

Proverbs 16:4 The LORD hath made **all *things* for himself**

Isaiah 43:21 This people have I formed **for myself**; they shall shew forth my praise.

Romans 11:36 For of him, and through him, and **to him, *are* all things**: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen.

Hebrews 2:10 ¶ For it became him, **for whom *are* all things**, and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

- **We were created and redeemed to bring pleasure to God:**

  Revelation 4:11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure [for Thy desire] ***they are and were created.***

  God created all things for himself.
  Romans 11:36
  For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen.

  "The prayer of the upright is His delight" (Prov. 15:8)
  God created man (and all of creation) to bring pleasure to Himself (We accomplish his by fulfilling His will - I Th. 5:18)

  Why live for God? It's not that there is some motion in God that needs to be satisfied; but when we speak of pleasing God, we speak of fulfillment of His will and desire.

  All creation exists presently ("they are" - present tense) to fulfill God's desires.

  If the heavens declare God's glory (Ps. 19:1), why shouldn't God's people?
  Cp. Triumphal Entry (Lk. 19:37-40) - "The stones would immediately cry out"

Ps. 50:23 - "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me."

Heb. 13:15 - "The sacrifice of praise"

Colossians 1:16 For by him [Christ] ***were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:***

Jesus created everything.

1) All beings and things "in heavens and in earth"
2) All that is material and immaterial
3) All laws, governing authorities and powers

"In Heaven" - Jesus created the angelic realm (the host of angels including Michael and Gabriel; the cherubim and seraphim, etc.)

"In earth" - everything from the Swiss Alps to the Islands of Hawaii; every kind of plant, tree, fruit, vegetable; every animal, fish, reptile and insect. And the crown of His creation - mankind - was made by and for Jesus Christ.
No wonder the elements obeyed His voice; and the demons trembled in His presence and respected Him. He is LORD of all, Creator of all!

It does not matter where it is (location); or what it is (essence); or how it is ("the powers that be") -- Jesus made it all.

The powers that be are ordained of God (Rom. 13:1) particularly of Jesus Christ!

When Jesus became man, He worked as a carpenter. A fitting trade for the one who built the universe, and yet what a humble trade. What humiliation for the Creator who spoke the world into existence to work much of his 33 years on earth using the simple tools of man and the elements of His own creation, to construct with.

"By ("dia") Him and for ("eis") him" - Christ is the beginner and benefactor of creation; He is its source and goal. He did it, and is to be glorified by it. He is Creation's author and finisher. He is the architect and owner!

You were created by Jesus and for Jesus.

He made you for Himself; to glorify Him, to live for Him.

"Were created" - perfect tense, meaning that everything that Jesus created in the past, still exists in the present for Him; for His glory and purpose.

Although not perfect, several Bible heroes had a testimony of pleasing God.

Hebrews 11:5 By faith **Enoch** was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

Noah – A Builder for God
Abraham – A Friend of God
Moses – A Leader for God
David – A Heart for God
Joseph – A Useful Vessel for God
Daniel – A Stand for God
Paul - A Church-planter for God

Now, more than any time in human history, there are more distractions to capture the attention of God's people so as to divert them and render them unfruitful for God.

Since the industrial revolution and picking up steam every day, today there exist more

- gadgets,
- consumer products (computers, electronic gismos for all ages)
- entertainments, amusements, & sports
- communication devises, such as telephones, cell phones, email, instant messaging,
- toys for all ages,
- recreational opportunities,
- motion pictures (movies, videos, DVD's),
- audio devises (radios, CD players),
- printed materials (newspapers, magazines, & books),
- mind altering substances (drugs & various forms of alcohol),
- various mediums for pornography,
- hobbies galore
- Transportation devises (the time spent on the Car)
- Home improvement resources
- Financial opportunities (more places to earn it, spend it, invest it etc.)

(not all of which are necessarily sinful, but can be weights

Today there is more to catch the eye
more to pull on the heart
more to tease the lust
more to take up our brief time on earth
than ever before in human history

Basically the pursuit of other things, pleasures, & relationships take the heart away from God; Not to mention the maintenance of the "stuff"

We are BUSY, BUSY, BUSY with no time for God!

No wonder John the Baptist chose a simple life (both in clothing & dining)
No wonder Jesus traveled light (without even a pillow to lay his head)
No wonder Paul said it is advantageous to remain single (if one was so gifted)
No wonder the Monks chose the secluded monasteries
No wonder the Amish chose the isolated lifestyle (though they often lack the true knowledge of God, Grace and basically have zero impact on the World at large)

Who got distracted in the Bible?

- Samson with his lust for pleasure & women
- David with his spare time (leading to an adulterous affair)
- Solomon with his multiple marriages
- Judas with his lust for money
- Peter (momentarily) with his return to his former Career (Fishing)
- Demas with his appetite for the world
- Martha with her business with good things

**** Don't miss God's Perfect will, by being Led Astray by Worldly Distractions:***

I. A Word of <u>CAUTION</u> regarding Distractions:

A. Beware of Worldly Distractions that can <u>STEAL THE HEART</u> away from God

(The Worlds System and Things Divert our love from God)

1 John 2:15-17

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. "

What *"Love not the world"* does <u>not</u> mean:

1. John is <u>not</u> saying that we should despise the <u>planet</u> (globe) upon which we live (that which God created was called good; we should not worship the creation, however.).

2. John is <u>not</u> saying that we shouldn't love <u>people</u> (mankind) (God loves the world in this sense and so should we - John 3:16).

"World" - *Cosmos* (cp. Cosmetics) - speaks of an adornment or an arrangement of things.

The "world" of which he speaks is <u>not</u> of the world order as God originally established, but of the world order which has been twisted and perverted by sin and Satan.

The word "world" refers tot he world's organized system (in its lust for material possessions and personal status) as headed by Satan ("the god of this world". . . "the prince of the power of the air"); a system which ignores God, glorifies the temporal, and opposes God's righteous ways.

The "world" is simply that system of man which has <u>God left out</u> (the worst thing about TV and movies is that they depict life without God as normal).

When John speaks of not loving the world, he is referring to a world order and mindset that is at enmity with god, lost in sin, wholly at odds with anything divine.

Worldliness is a "radical individualism" that displays a kindly attitude toward Satan's evil world system and manifests itself in self-centeredness, self-advancement, and autonomy (Jon Trainer citing Chuck Colson).

"Neither the <u>things</u> that are in the world" - speaks of a materialistic mindset.

All believers must use the things in this world, but when we love them in place of God (when they become the center of our attention), we <u>abuse</u> their use (I Cor. 7:31 - "And they that use this world, as not abusing it, for the fashion of this world passeth away").

God promises to meet our needs for certain “things” when we seek first the kingdom of God (Mt. 6:33).

We ought to seek the “things” which are above (Col. 3:1-2 - “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth”).

America has approximately 40,000 missionaries on the foreign field (over half are over 60 years old!).

America has approximately 40,000 students in “Bible colleges” and less than 400 will go to the foreign mission field. The greatest major in Bible colleges and universities today (sad to say) is Business not Bible! (Rom Brooks, Baptist World Mission).

What is the reason for such worldly priorities? They learned it at home.

The world is attractive.

In three short phrases, John summarizes the world’s allurements:

“flesh” - the sensual
“eyes” - the sensational
“pride” - the self-sufficiency

1) The lust of the flesh - The world’s vain pleasure

“Lust” - (*epithumia*) - appetite or desire (used here in a negative sense)

Physical appetites are not wrong (in themselves); they become wrong when satisfied in a wrong way (either through perversion or obsession).

You love the world when you live for pleasure (“lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God” - II Tim. 3:4)

A carnal (fleshly) worldly person is one who:

--places comfort over duty and discipline
--esteems food over fellowship
--prioritizes play over prayer
--desires sensual fulfillment over moral restraint
--seeks immediate gratification over patience and God’s will & timing
--gives in to rest and recreation over the spiritual disciplines of Bible reading and church attendance

2) The lust of the eyes - The world's vain possessions

Seeing is not always a virtue ("If thy right eye offends thee, pluck it out...").

So much of the world is designed to attract the eye (and thereby attract the heart).

"The lust of the eyes" is an appeal to:

--Beauty over virtue
--Temporal over the eternal
("seen = temporal. . . unseen = eternal")
--Externals over internals

Beware of a covetous spirit over clothing, cars, houses, your own appearance, etc.

3) The pride of life - The world's vain prestige

Vain glory in one's livelihood or means of life.

--what do you brag about?
--what things in their life do you confidently boast in?

"Not of the Father" - such lusts do not come from God; He is not the source.

This world, instigated and deluded by the devil, is the originator of such.

These three avenues of lust were the three areas of attack by Satan on two occasions in Scripture:

--In the Garden with Eve (Gen. 3:6) -

1. "Flesh" - "good for food"
2. "Eyes" - "pleasant to the eyes"
3. "Pride" - "a tree to be desired to make one wise"

--In the wilderness with Jesus (Lk. 4:4ff) -

1. "Flesh" - "bread" (4:4)
2. "Eyes" - "shewed Him all the kingdoms" (4:5)
3. "Pride" - "cast Thyself down" (4:9)

B. Beware of Worldly Distractions that can

CHOKE THE WORD to prevent Fruitfulness

(The Cares of this world and the Deceitfulness of Riches Strangle the Seed of God's Word)

Matthew 13:22

"He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful."

*This soil characterizes the easily distracted man (one who is preoccupied, other things are more important).

The thorns rob the water and minerals in the ground and choke out the sunlight from reaching the crop.

"The care of this world" = The pre-occupations and anxieties of this present age.

--More worried about your career (job)
--More worried about your fame (status)
--More worried about paying your bills (Mt. 6:33)
--More worried about your marriage, world events, etc.

"Worry" will keep you from reading Bible and benefiting from it.

"The deceitfulness of riches" -

--Money is a deceiver (Mt. 19:23)

See: I Tim. 6:6-10, 17

--Things preoccupy

II. A Word of CURE regarding Distractions:

(How to Conquer the Temptation of Distractions)

> ***Don't blame anyone else; The heart of the problem is the problem of the heart***
> ***Jas 1:14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.***

A. Make this a Daily Matter of Prayer

"Deliver us from temptation" (Matthew 6:3)

B. Keep your eyes Focused on Jesus Christ

"For to me to Live is Christ" (Philippians 1:21)

C. Seek God every Day of the Week

"Early will I seek Thee" (Psalm 63:1; Isaiah 26:9)

Ps 63:1 - A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah. O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;

Isa 26:9 With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

D. Make a Priority List and Schedule and Follow it

"Seek ye First the Kingdom of God" (Matthew 6:33)

E. Remove as many distractions from your life as you can

I'm not suggesting amputations, but the Lord Jesus did make a point when He said:

Mr 9:43 And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

Mr 9:45 And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

Tape these Scriptures to your TV & Computer Monitor

Ps 101:3 I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.

Ps 119:37 Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way.

If you don't plan to "eat" don't "set the table"

Ro 13:14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.