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BEWARE OF DESTRUCTIVE FORCES IN SOCIETY





REDEEMING THE TIME

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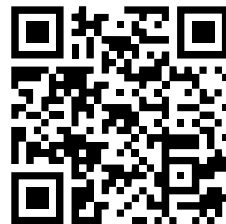
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On the Cover ▲

Social drinking is widely accepted, even among Christian circles. But what does the Bible have to say about it?



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BEWARE OF DESTRUCTIVE FORCES IN SOCIETY

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Glamorising of Sorcery



In recent years, a skinny, dark-haired orphan with a lightning-bolt forehead has captured the imagination of myriads of children (and even adults) all over the world. The boy, Harry Potter, is the invention of British writer J. K. Rowling, who has made publishing history by grabbing the top three spots on the New York Times bestseller list with her children's books—"Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone", "Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets", "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban". More than 35 million copies of her first three books have been printed around the world. (They are immensely popular in Singapore also.)

The big question is: whether Harry Potter's world is a good one for the intended children audience (aged 8 to 12). Some parents have opposed the introduction of Harry Potter books into schools by saying that "the books have a serious tone of death, hate, lack of respect, and sheer evil", with one educator commenting: "Harry interacts with many fascinating characters in a series of magical adventures. The books ... are suspenseful and humorous, but ... are increasingly dark..." Without doubt, Harry Potter literature is increasingly descending into darkness. It raises concerns of parents and school boards around the world. Moral ambiguity and alienation of youth are strong themes in the series, which are marketed as harmless fantasy. We do well to pay heed to Scriptural exhortation to "Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good" (Romans 12:9).

REAL SORCERY AND WITCHCRAFT IN HARRY POTTER

Harry Potter is a boy who attends the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and

Wizardry, and what is really being described in the book is sorcery. Sorcery and witchcraft in some cultures are the same thing. In fact, the same Hebrew word in the Old Testament is translated as both "witchcraft" (cf. 2 Kings 9:22) and "sorcery" (cf. Isaiah 47:12). It can include using potions, incantations to spirits, communing with the dead, etc.

Contemporary witchcraft is a form of religious neo-paganism, which is an occult practice, and usually involves casting of spells. Contemporary sorcery is based on a belief of accessing and manipulating energy through various methods and rituals, and usually involves practising of ritual magic. Sorcerers take their practice very seriously; it is no fantasy, but a very real part of the occult arts. Some of what is taught at Hogwarts—studying the movement of the planets, the history of magic, herbology, potions, spells and charms—could be part of either contemporary sorcery or witchcraft, or both. In essence, sorcery is nothing less than an attempt to replace God, since it is one's will that is primary in practising sorcery. Hence, the ideas and teachings contained in those books must be examined.

There are elements of fantasy and skilful storytelling in these books. At the same time, the whole story is set in an occult context, and with references to real occult practices and views mixed in with fantasy. The hero of the story is a wizard, whose goal is to learn how to use his powers through the occult. Though it is claimed that the author wrote while she was on welfare, penning down her story lines at a café, it seems unlikely that everything she wrote was totally from her imagination.

Certainly, she did not imagine alchemy, charms, astrology, the Dark Side, and many other occult concepts and information. It is only reasonable to assume that Rowling did some research or had had some exposure to occult and magical practices. The idea of using sorcery to fight evil, or using “good” magic to fight “bad” magic, is a major component of her stories’ plot. Harry Potter, far from teaching against the occult, gives a rousing cheer for it (even glamorising it). Those opposed to witchcraft or wizardry are mocked and painted as stupid.

Notwithstanding the fictional nature of the stories, there ought to be a difference between fantasy and the occult. Fantasy can be used in a way that totally leaves out references to the occult. But this is not what happens in Harry Potter books; instead, fantasy feeds on the occult, and is fuelled by it! Yes, it may be just a (fictional) story, but stories can teach and influence. Stories can present ideas and endorse worldviews. Does this book desensitise children to the occult? What happens when they get older and encounter peers who practise occult magic, cast spells, and attempt spirit contact? These practices are becoming more popular, and are already widespread among adolescents these days.

DOES HARRY POTTER INFLUENCE CHILDREN?

Do children accept Harry Potter’s lessons in practical witchcraft as an open door to an occult reality? Many, including Christian leaders, blissfully deny any such potential danger, but author J. K. Rowling had admitted that this possibility did happen. In an

interview with Newsweek, she said, “I get letters from children addressed to Professor Dumbledore (headmaster at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, which provides the books’ setting), and it’s not a joke, begging to be let into Hogwarts, and some of them are really sad. Because they want it to be true so badly, they’ve convinced themselves it’s true.”

May we be vigilant to warn our children against the increasing number of games, books and shows with occult messages. The growing number of books and TV shows, like “Harry Potter” and “Sabrina the Teenage Witch”, encourage an interest in magic as harmless fun. However, for some young people, it could fuel a fascination that leads to dangerous dabbling with occult powers. In the name of “spooks and spells”, such fascination can lead to serious psychological and spiritual damage!

It may be just a fictional story, but stories can teach and influence. Stories can present ideas and endorse worldviews.

THE SCRIPTURES PROHIBIT SORCERY

Undeniably, Harry Potter glorifies the occult! But God condemns the occult. Scripture repeatedly condemns involvement in any form of occult or sorcery. Read the following biblical passages:

- “Ye shall not eat any thing with the blood: neither shall ye use enchantment, nor observe times ... Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God” (Leviticus 19:26, 31).
- “And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people” (Leviticus 20:6).
- “...thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one ... that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these

things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee” (Deuteronomy 18:9–12).

- “Therefore hearken not ye to your (false) prophets, nor to your diviners, nor to your dreamers, nor to your enchanters, nor to your sorcerers, which speak unto you ... for they prophesy a lie unto you...” (Jeremiah 27:9–10).
- “And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, ... and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts” (Malachi 3:5).

Dear Christian parents, should we take lightly a book that endorses what God has so expressly forbidden? If your children had already read some of these books, then use the books as a “tool” to teach them from God’s Word what He says about the occult. Teach them how to share this information gently and lovingly with their friends. It is essential that they be equipped with God’s truths to deal with the increasing acceptance of occultism in our culture. ■

GODLESS PRESENTATION OF MODERN ENTERTAINMENT



MODERN ENTERTAINMENT DISREGARDS THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Today, Christians at large entertain themselves by watching others break all of the Ten Commandments. It seems that for many, God's eternal standards have no bearing on the artistic and media entertainment of modern times. This problem is especially acute for Christian youths who find that most of their friends (both Christian and non-Christian) have watched nearly all of the innumerable movies targeted at their generation.

It is totally wrong to assume that as long as an activity pleases one's heart, it should be alright to engage in it. The natural thoughts, imaginations and desires of human hearts are always evil. "And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5). But through the Law of God, we can know and fulfil God's righteousness and truth. As the psalmist wrote, "Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth" (Psalm 119:142).

In what follows, we shall consider the principles taught in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1–17; cf. Deuteronomy 5:6–21) and discover how much the entertainments of our day—even those being engaged in by many Christians—have veered off the paths of righteousness as delineated by God's Law.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS CONSIDERED

1. I am the LORD thy God... Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

It is totally wrong to assume that as long as an activity pleases one's heart, it should be alright to engage in it. The natural thoughts, imaginations and desires of human hearts are always evil.

Entertainment is one of the biggest income-generating industry everywhere in the world today. Christians are also being lured into working in the secular entertainment sector. Jesus has cautioned us, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:21). Therefore, Christians must be wary of anything that would cause them to neglect the priority of a consecrated relationship with God. The focus of every Christian should be to put God first in his life. The Christian must beware of letting any entertainment-

related activity or endeavour occupy the seat of his affection and devotion, lest it becomes an idol having first place before God. So, when it comes to entertainment, we must ask: Does this honour God in that it does not usurp God as having first place in my life?

2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.

Idolatry is not just a problem confined to some past pagan culture. Today, there is as much energy given to the worship of things and persons, as ever before in history. We are not unaware of the strong inclination of many people who “idolise” popular media celebrities. This is as good as having a “graven image” as object of one’s adulation and worship. In fact, the cultural images that people identify with are almost certainly key indicators of the deep aspirations of the heart. Jesus has already warned that “no man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other” (Matthew 6:24). When it comes to entertainment, we must ask: Does this help me to keep my focus on God?

3. Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain.

Misuse of the name of God appears to be a common feature of contemporary entertainment. Would we really feel at ease sitting before a movie or show, where the name of God (who is thrice-holy, and to whom is due honour and glory) is being uttered in a demeaning or even abusive manner? Our Lord Jesus has solemnly declared, “Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name” (Matthew 6:9). God’s

name is holy and awe-inspiring, and must be uttered accordingly. When it comes to entertainment, we must ask: Does it give due reverence to God’s name and character?

4. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

The Lord Jesus has said that “the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath” (Luke 6:5). Jesus is to be the object of our attention in our spending of the Lord’s Day. We must not spend our time on the Lord’s Day for worldly entertainments, but for the worship of Christ and the mutual edification of our souls. Be cautioned against allowing recreation and entertainment to replace worship, fellowship, prayer and meditation of God’s Word on the Lord’s Day. Excessive involvement in sports and other activities especially tend to have such effect. Today’s professional sports are fast becoming one of the chief idols in the lives of people today. It is reported that in countries like America, England and Australia, which were once homes of ardent and devout Christians, fewer people attend churches when a major sports event is held on a Sunday. When it comes to entertainment, we must pre-emptively ask: Does this keep me from dwelling in the house of the Lord and praising Him on the Lord’s Day?

5. Honour thy father and thy mother.

Today, traditional family values are being belittled, brushed aside, or even mocked at by what is called modern entertainment. Perhaps the least-valued ideal of family relationships in these days is parental honour, though there is great value in entertainment circles being attached to relationships

bound by mutual honour. Such fraternal kindness tends to be manifested in the showing of tolerance or acceptance of all sorts of ungodly practices—to the mutual excusing of one another’s sinful lifestyles. Charity begins at home. Without God-honouring relationships within the family, where godly virtues and values are upheld, there is no true love even towards fellow men. When it comes to entertainment, we must ask: Does this build up and give honour to loving relationships in the family?

6. Thou shalt not kill.

One of the two main pillars of media power is the unreal presentation of violence. The raw emotions of this generation are exploited for money. Jesus has taught us, “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you... that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:44–45; cf. Romans 12:18–19). When it comes to entertainment, we must ask: Does this cause me to view others as potential children of God?

7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

The other pillar of media power is the unreal presentation of sex. With all the temptations of growing up in a sex-ridden culture, we can no longer stand idly by while the passions of this generation are exploited for money. Further, we must all guard against seeing people as objects of pleasure. Jesus has warned, “That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matthew 5:28)! When it comes to entertainment, we

must ask: Does this cause me to view sex as a matter of faithfulness in marriage?

8. Thou shalt not steal.

Stealing is wrong, no matter what the circumstances. In fact, the modern myth of “stealing from the rich to give to the poor” is largely advanced by the entertainment-minded media elite. When it was demanded that Jesus redistribute a certain man’s inheritance (apparently so that it may be more equitably allotted among the family members), He responded by saying, “Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you? ... Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Luke 12:14–15). Being desirous of others’ abundance is the spirit behind dishonest dealings with others’ possessions, which may lead to actual stealing. So, “take heed”, and be contented with our lot. When it comes to entertainment, we must ask: Does this cause me to think of my possessions with thanksgiving to God?

9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

Too often, emotional stories are employed, which tend to cloud one’s discernment. Just because we are told that a certain story is “based on the truth”, we have no guarantee that there is no falsehood whatsoever in the particular story. In modern media entertainment, issues can be played up in an exaggerative manner that tug at the heart strings of viewers. The truth could actually be misrepresented, or even distorted! Jesus has said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by

me” (John 14:6). When it comes to entertainment, we must ask: Does this cause me to see the truth of Christ?

10. *Thou shalt not covet.*

Lust is the excessive desire for something that we cannot, or should not, have. Christians are admonished to “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16). Too often, we are tempted to entertain ourselves with what we know is “the lust of the flesh (and mind)”—on the excuse that we are morally “strong enough” to withstand the temptation. But Jesus has in no ambiguous terms said, “Out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man” (Mark 7:21–23). Do not let the media and modern entertainment stir us to give in to our covetous cravings. When it comes to entertainment, we must ask: Does this cause me to desire only the good that God has given for my pleasure?

MODERN ENTERTAINMENT IN THE LIGHT OF GOD’S LAW

From the above consideration and application of the Ten Commandments, it should be clear that modern entertainment is most of the time a gross violation of God’s holy laws. The question we need to ask is: Does this form of entertainment provide a proper avenue to honour God’s Law? We need to constantly check whether our choices of entertainment are aligned to the biblical principles of the Ten

Commandments, and whether they reflect on our consecrated relationship with God, who gave us His Law to protect and provide for our life.

Admittedly, when nominal Christians encounter consecrated believers who are discerning in their choice of entertainment, it is quite natural for them to discount their righteous practices as “legalistic”. However, a commitment to God’s precepts will require a Christian to abstain from the many forms of modern entertainment. In the final analysis, when challenged by those who retort, “Is this entertainment really that bad?”, the obedient Christian should turn the tables on the sceptical compromisers by countering: “Does it *really* honour God’s holy laws?” ■

We need to constantly check whether our choices of entertainment are aligned to the biblical principles of the Ten Commandments.

ACCEPTANCE OF Social Drinking

The Bible teaches abstinence from all intoxicating drinks, including alcoholic wine. God’s wisdom clearly warns us to keep away not only from drunkenness, but also from drunkards, places of drinking, and from the strong drink itself.

It is very startling to note that a growing number of Christians have either ignored or twisted the Scriptures to make their sin of drinking alcoholic beverages appear acceptable. There are Bible teachers who not only say that the Bible does not prohibit drinking alcoholic wine, but also join others to drink such. Now and then, we also hear of Christians who make big money by selling alcoholic beverages in their shops and restaurants.

Let us examine the Scriptures to know the divine counsel concerning the drinking of alcoholic wine and other alcoholic beverages.



WHAT DOES THE BIBLE MEAN BY “WINE”?

The following Hebrew words are translated in the Scriptures as “wine”:

- **“Yayin”—wine.** It is a general term for grape beverages, which includes all classes of wine—alcoholic and non-alcoholic; fermented (cf. Proverbs 31:4a) and unfermented (that is, in the process of fermentation). The context will show whether it is alcoholic wine or not. The Greek word *“oinos”* is the counterpart to the Old Testament word *“yayin”*. Again, the context has to be used to determine whether the drink was intoxicating (cf. Ephesians 5:18) or not (cf. Luke 10:34). *“Yayin”* (as well as *“oinos”*), when used properly, was always diluted with water.
- **“Mimsak”—mixed wine.** This word has traditionally been understood to refer to some kind of mixed drink, usually wine with spices or honey. Cocktails are mixtures of distilled liquor with other liquids.
- **“Shekar”—strong drink.** It normally denotes barley beer, but it is also used to refer to any alcoholic beverage prepared from either grain or fruit. The Greek counterpart is the word *“sikera”*. It is the word for strong drink, unmixed wine, as in Luke 1:15.
- **“Tiros”—new wine.** The word is used 38 times; 20 of these are mentioned in conjunction with grain or oil as the fresh produce of the field. The word is never

associated with drunkenness, except perhaps in Hosea 4:11, where *“yayin”* is also mentioned. Its Greek counterpart is the word *“gleukos”*, which refers to fresh wine, new wine, or freshly squeezed grape juice.

Incidentally, the wine that people normally drank in biblical times, whether fermented or not, was always mixed with water. Many wine-drinking Christians today mistakenly assume that what the New Testament meant by “wine” is identical to the wine used today. This is false. In fact, today’s wine is, by biblical definition, “strong drink”, and hence forbidden by the Bible. Therefore, Christians ought not to drink wine, beer, or other alcoholic beverages, for they are actually “strong drink”, forbidden in the Scriptures.

God’s wisdom clearly warns us to keep away not only from drunkenness, but also from drunkards, places of drinking, and from the strong drink itself.

All alcoholic beverages used in our culture fall under the biblical classification of “strong drink”, and are therefore forbidden. The least ratio of water-to-wine mixture used in Bible times was 3 parts water to 1 part wine. That produced a sub-alcoholic drink that was 2.5% to 2.75% alcohol. Normally, the ratio was even higher, up to 20 to 1. There is certainly no biblical support for Christians drinking the alcoholic beverages of our day! What early believers drank was sub-alcoholic by today’s standards. Moreover, pastors, elders and deacons are cautioned to steer clear of even the sub-alcoholic stuff (cf. 1 Timothy 3:3, 8)!

WARNINGS AGAINST DRINKING ALCOHOLIC WINE

It Will Lead to Deception and Folly

Proverbs 20:1 sounds an alarm to all those who love wine—“Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.” Wine and strong drink (or beer) are personified in this verse as the degraded people of Proverbs, namely, a mocker and a brawler. The idea is that wine mocks the one who drinks it and strong drink (or beer) makes him aggressive (i.e. “raging”). The warning here is that intoxicating drinks can lead people astray, causing them to do foolish things.

It Will Lead to Poverty

We are warned, “Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh: for the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty” (Proverbs 23:20–21a). One way to avoid being impoverished is to avoid drunkenness

and gluttony. Proverbs 23:2 says it in a very dramatic fashion—“And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite.” These two sins of drunkenness and gluttony cause drowsiness, which results in laziness and poverty. Proverbs 23:21 confirms this warning—“for the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.”

It Will Lead to Sensual Living

Drinking alcoholic beverages will lead one to commit serious sensual sins. “Who hath woe? ... who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine... Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things” (Proverbs 23:29–30, 33). Womanising, revelling, suggestive bantering and other resultant wanton behaviour may follow.

It Will Lead to Drunken Stupor

Proverbs 23:30 is instructive in describing those who indulge in drinking alcoholic wine—“They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.” The phrases, “tarry long at the wine” and “go to seek mixed wine”, suggest continual attempts at, and therefore a certain degree of addiction to drinking. A similar expression in Proverbs 23:35b also alludes to the addictive nature of wine or beer drinking—“when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.” Sadly, once a person is intoxicated, he is oblivious to the wasting of precious time and opportunities. He gets addicted and becomes unaware of the time that he wastes.

It Will Degenerate Leaders

That is why in Proverbs 31:4–5, we are told explicitly that alcoholic beverages were not for kings, princes or rulers. “It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink: lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted.” Furthermore, in Leviticus 10:9, Aaron and all the high priests were instructed to abstain from alcoholic beverages. The clear warning is that poor judgment and perversion of justice are common problems of those who drink strong drink. The point is: anybody who is a priest, or a king, or a ruler, or in a position where they make very significant decisions that have implications for a large number of people should avoid wine, so that they may not be operating without full control of their mental faculties.

It Will Bring Distress, Disputes, and Foolish Talk

Proverbs 23:29–30 highlights another thought-provoking question to alert us to the distress brought by drinking habits—“Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? ...They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.” Drunkenness will not help to get rid of one’s sorrow and pains. Instead, it will afflict one with more problems (“woe”), as further warned by Isaiah 5:11, 22—“Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them! ...Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink”.

What’s more, winebibbers are pointed out as contentious people. That means they are likely to get themselves involved in unnecessary disputes. Wine-drinking will also lead to mental distress, hallucinations and confusion, resulting in foolish talk (“babbling”). Irrational behaviour and idiotic speech are common characteristics of those who are given to consuming strong drink.

It Will Bring Destruction

That’s not all. Proverbs 23:29b also warns of physical harm a winebibber opens himself to—“...who hath wounds without cause?” Physically, a drunkard is off balance as he walks. Also, a drunkard in his stupor is insensitive to pain when people hit him. Drunken people are also prone to getting into fights, accidents, etc. Aptly, Proverbs 23:31–32 describes the habit of drinking wine as getting in the way of a poisonous snake—“Look not thou upon the wine when it is red... At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.” This is descriptive of experiencing bodily harm and destruction.

IS DRINKING ALCOHOLIC WINE PROHIBITED OR ALLOWED BY THE BIBLE?

From the above Bible verses, consumption of alcoholic wine is clearly prohibited by the Scriptures. We are commanded not even to look at wine when it is poured into the cup for drinking—“Look not thou upon the wine...” (Proverbs 23:31). If the Bible says, “Don’t even look at it”, how can we assume that casual wine-drinking is allowed?

We are told in Habakkuk 2:15 that it is an accursed thing to pour alcoholic drink for someone—“Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that puttest thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!” Even keeping company with drunkards is also forbidden by the Bible. “But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat” (1 Corinthians 5:11). Furthermore, it is said that drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:9–10). Only by being “born again”, can a drunkard be cleansed of his sin and be made ready for heaven. (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:11). Total prohibition of strong drinks is consistent with the Bible’s overall teaching on this subject.

Incidentally, some believers feel that there is nothing wrong with drinking in moderation. The Bible only warns against drinking in excess, they say. Those who misguidedly point to Ephesians 5:18 for support—“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit”—fail to realise that Ephesians 5:18 is not instructing us to drink wine. What Paul is saying is: “Do not drink wine, because it will lead to excessive behaviour.” The Greek word for “excess” (asotia) appears two other times in the New Testament; on both occasions, it is translated in KJV as “riot” (cf. Titus 1:6; 1 Peter 4:4). The word “excess” means “recklessness”, “debauchery”, “dissipation”, “wildness”, “prodigality”. It is not saying, as some would like us to think, “You may drink, but just make sure that you don’t drink too much.” Rather, it is saying, “Don’t

start drinking; it will lead to excess and unruly behaviour!”

Admittedly, there seems to be an exception to such prohibition. In Proverbs 31:6–7, permission seems to be given to use wine or strong drink for medicinal purposes. “Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more.” This is certainly not a reference to social drinking, where people would drink one or two glasses of wine. Here we are only allowed to use wine as an anaesthetic or a medicine to deaden deep physical and emotional pain of those who were dying.

CONCLUSION

Nevertheless, the biblical teaching is clearly total abstinence. Social drinking is dangerous and therefore warned against in the Bible. Social drinking is a worldly activity, in the light of the fact that believers are exhorted to be not conformed to the world (Romans 12:2) and to love not the world (1 John 2:15). Social drinking may have increasingly “helped” Christians to feel accepted in worldly gatherings, but it has not advanced the cause of Christ. Neither has it glorified God. Social drinking is simply a means by which the devil uses to blunt our testimony for Christ and squeeze us into his mould. ■



LURE of WORLDLINESS

Christians are strongly warned about the dangers of worldliness by the apostle John: “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” (1 John 2:15–17).

WORLDLINESS PREVALENT AMONG MODERN CHRISTIANS!

No Christian should consider the dangers of worldliness to be trivial

matters. Especially in these days, worldliness is found in great measure among the saints. Churches are worldly. Worship services are worldly. Pastors, preachers and their families are worldly. Elders, deacons and their families are worldly. Churchgoers are worldly. Even their homes and businesses are “altars” of worldliness.

Christians are living like worldlings. Few today separate themselves from worldliness. There is hardly a distinguishable boundary that separates Christians from the world. In fact, many go to church with the hope that this will give them the material prosperity they are craving for. Not surprisingly, many fall away

from the church when their wealth, health, houses, businesses and other secular interests are endangered. Alas, sad to say, there is even worldliness in the motives and actions of many Christians. There is worldliness in their domestic life, in the education of their family members, in their businesses and employment, in their expenditure, in their religious activities, in their reading material and conversations, in their sports and entertainment, etc.

The apostle John herein (in 1 John 2:15–17) has a very crucial message for the modern Christians who are increasingly embracing worldliness. He mentions two specific spiritual dangers.

WORLDLINESS EXCLUDES LOVE OF THE FATHER

Firstly, John warns: “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (v. 15b); that is to say, such a man has no relationship with God. It is impossible to love the world and God at the same time. Love for the world pushes out love for God, and love for God pushes out love for the world. Love for the world cannot coexist with love for God in the same heart.

The absolute thrust of John’s statement is striking, and compels careful and serious reflection. The stakes are high. Because the Father’s kingdom is at war with the kingdom of this world, the two will never coexist peacefully. When love for the world increases, love for God dwindles. No human heart can hold these two opposing loves together. To pledge allegiance to one side is to declare opposition to the other. Worldliness

will put you together with all the God-haters of the world. “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (James 4:4).

Worldly Christians are vexed and disturbed by the demands of a godly, service-oriented Christian life. They are not large-hearted when it comes to the service of God; they are not willing to spend and be spent. They are not like those whose eyes are ever set on the incorruptible inheritance which God has prepared for them. They grudge and murmur about the labour, fatigue, expense and trouble that they have to bear in the “service” of God’s kingdom, being engaged as little as possible in the things of God, and indulging more in their worldly comforts. They choose to stay away from fellowships, prayer meetings and other spiritual activities. They spend more of their time and money in the amusement and enjoyment offered by the activities of the world, whether it be shopping, clubbing, watching TV or other entertainment. When pursuit of the material world increases in their hearts, their delight in the things of God fades away.

This danger is further emphasised by John in v. 16: “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.” All that constitute worldliness—“the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life”—are not of the Father. Once the world takes over the heart of a Christian, he will soon lose his enjoyment of the Father’s love, and

his desire to do the Father's will. The Bible will become a boring book to read, and prayer a difficult chore. Even Christian fellowship will seem empty and uninteresting. Not that there is something wrong with those Christian activities, but rather, the Christian's heart has become worldly.

WORLDLINESS EMBRACES THE TEMPORAL AT EXPENSE OF THE ETERNAL

Secondly, John warns: "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (v. 17). The world and its lusts are heading towards everlasting destruction, while the obedient Christian is going to live eternally. The world and the genuine Christian do not share the same destiny.

The world is passing away! It is rushing to eternal hell. Would you buy stock in a company that is sure to go bankrupt? Would you like to spend a day to relax on a sinking ship? Would you like to dance the night away in a nightclub that is on fire? Truly, for anyone to set his heart on the perishing world, it is to inherit heartache and misery at the end. The apostle Paul said bluntly in 1 Corinthians 7:31, "the fashion of this world passeth away." The world, with all its fashions and lusts, is heading towards eternal peril. This is also affirmed by the apostle Peter: "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men... But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with

fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Peter 3:7, 10).

So, if you love the glories and pageantry of this world, you will pass away together with them. You will not only lose your treasure, but also your soul. If you love the world, it will pass away, taking you along with it. Christians, be cautioned: worldliness distracts us from taking delight in things that abide forever, even doing God's will. If you are stuck in some worldly living, be forewarned of your quick destruction. But there is a blessed hope – "he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (v. 17b). What is the will of God that you should obey so as to live forever? Jesus gives the answer to this question: "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:40). If your heart would love the Lord Jesus and follow His Word, instead of loving and following the world, you will abide forever.

CONCLUSION

Do not flirt with the world. People in the church are very prone to forget their role as pilgrims in this present evil world. Our dignity as God's chosen people is not in craving for the things of this world, but in doing His will and thereby getting ready for His glorious appearance. Let us not allow the world to obscure or blur our vision of the glory and kingdom of God that He has called us to inherit. Dear Christians, let us live on earth as heavenly citizens. ■



PROMOTION OF THE CONSUMER CHURCH

CHURCH'S ACCEPTANCE OF MARKETING PHILOSOPHIES BRINGS DEFORMATION

Churches everywhere are lured into adopting modern marketing principles to help their ministries grow. Many pastors seem to have lost their conviction that the way the church should grow is by keeping out the worldly philosophies of life and by preaching unashamedly the truth of God's Word. Because the expectations and ways of modern society have changed, they thought it would be to their advantage that they consider and accept prevailing marketing mentality and philosophies. However, such

marketing principles are incongruous to the biblical truths concerning the ministry of the church. If we adopt a welcoming attitude to such principles of the consumer world to set the course of our ministry, spiritual calamity will befall the church. Those principles are packed with subtle dangers to the spiritual integrity of the church, and must be exposed to forewarn Christians to guard themselves.

Success in church ministry is not about accepting extra-biblical or secular ideologies to strategise a new path for the church, but rather keeping the church away from them, that it might not be led away from the sovereign plan and power of God as revealed in His Word. The acceptance of marketing philosophies has affected the preaching from pulpits across the world in a deformative way. These ideas shift the church's focus from its all-important intrinsic spiritual qualities to its outward appearance. Sad to say, they have been drastically changing the spiritual character and outlook of many churches into one of entertainment centres!

To understand this deforming effect of the marketing principles on the church, let us examine three ideas brought in from the modern marketing world.

THE "SPECIALIST" MENTALITY

It is said that today's world is always looking for specialist services in all areas of life. People seem to be unsatisfied with non-specialist services. So the church is told to cater to this "specialist mentality" of the consumer world, with the belief that by providing specialist

services to the society (e.g. phonics classes, tuition lessons, child-care, and counselling sessions), the church will be able to attract children and their parents into the church buildings. But let us not forget the crowds that used to gather around our Lord Jesus. They appeared to be eager and excited to be around Jesus. Yet, all that most of them wanted was provisions for their physical needs. They wanted healing, food for their hungry stomachs, and plenty of thrills by watching His miracles. They wanted no spiritual food. When our Lord spoke to them concerning the spiritual truths, they would respond, "This is an hard saying; who can hear it?"—and walk away from Him (John 6:60, 66).

People have not changed in their attitude today. They will go where they can find some help. If it is in the church, then they will go there. But this does not mean they believe in Jesus, the Son of God or are seeking spiritual things. The kind of specialist help that people are after in these days is very often humanistic, even heathenish! You can be sure Jesus would not commit Himself to minister to such (cf. John 2:23–24). No matter what people desired, Jesus never allowed them to influence the content of His message. He was willing to let them go away, if they didn't submit to the truth of His teachings. He would even tell His disciples, "Will ye also go away?" (John 6:67). To Christ, the truth was absolutely more important than the number of people who would gather around Him.

Unfortunately, modern churches that have accepted marketing philosophies, such as "specialist mentality", dare not challenge the crowd: "Will ye also go away?" On the

contrary, the "specialist" solutions that many churches dish out are absolutely baffling to the true spiritual growth of people. For example, the so-called "Christian psychology" offered by "specialists" in the church have long betrayed the truth of God's Word. The church's fascination with psychology has made light the seriousness of people's sins, often trying to minister peace without any true spiritual renewal that comes through acknowledgment of sins and repentance. What do we get in the church with this kind of "specialist" mentality cultivated to please the society? We get churches crowded with people who, though possessing a form of godliness, in reality deny the power of a holy life. They assemble to seek soothing words of the "specialists" in the church who welcome them regardless of their worldly, sensual orientation. Crowds that come for "specialist services" disappear when God's Word is truthfully expounded and applied. They do not come for the love of the truth, but for a quick fix to their problems. They leave if they are not satisfied. To continue in the church, one needs to humbly love the truth in all experiences of life.

THE "SUPERMARKET" MENTALITY

We are also told that the church must adopt a "one-stop, shop all" philosophy, so that people can see the church as not just a place of worship but also a place that provides other physical programmes, such as sports activities, cooking lessons, etc. When such "supermarket" mentality is accepted in the church, one of the first philosophies that comes into the church is that the church will have to be customer-centred, rather than God-centred.

"Consumer satisfaction" then requires that the content of preaching be altered to make the listeners comfortable. This means that the standard of truth and holiness in preaching will be determined by the audience, not God's Word. Sadly, we know that this marketing philosophy has diluted and altered the message the modern church preaches, though the proponents claim to be loyal to the biblical doctrines! Contemporary churches are pulled between faithfulness and "effectiveness". They count effectiveness in terms of big crowds that the church can draw. In a rapidly secularised and affluent world, Christians wonder if they must "sell" the church to a clientele that is not easily persuaded to "buy". Are we not risking false advertising when we offer people the spiritual blessings without telling the costs of following Christ? The overriding goal is church attendance and worldly acceptability, rather than people's transformed life!

Are we not risking false advertising when we offer people the spiritual blessings without telling the costs of following Christ?

The greatest danger of this kind of thinking that without new marketing techniques the church will not progress, is that it denies the sovereignty of God who is able to save and sanctify people through His ordained method of preaching of the Gospel. The Great Commission is not a marketing manifesto. Evangelism does not require salesmen, but preachers of the Gospel who are convinced of its power. “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Romans 1:16). The church must repent and return to the truth of God’s Word, that the power of God be manifested through faithful preaching of the Gospel. Preaching Christ without any dilution of the Gospel is what Scripture demands. This will invariably cause offence to some. We are not to remove the offence of the cross. “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God” (1 Corinthians 1:18).

THE “STRESS-RELIEF SUPPORT GROUP” MENTALITY

Furthermore, we are constantly told that our society is very stressed, and the church must provide support groups and other stress-relieving programmes for all who come to the church. It is emphasised that if we have support groups that can relate to the needs or troubles of the people, people will be comforted. These “felt needs” of people usually centre around their feelings of inward inadequacies that they experience, like loneliness, fear of failure, poor self-image, depression, and anger mismanagement. Whether

real or perceived, these inadequacies are often cited (no doubt “legitimised” by modern psychologists) as reasons behind drug addiction, sex addiction and many other sinful conduct. But the real problem is the depravity of human nature, the sin that reigns in the human mind. Yet that truth is deliberately skirted in the teachings of the typical “market-driven” churches.

Clearly, support groups and so-called Christian counselling take people’s emotional needs more seriously than their real but unfelt spiritual deficiencies which Scripture addresses. Such approach does not eradicate the root of the problem. Most problems have their origin in the sinful and unbiblical lifestyles of the people, which the support groups very seldom deal with in a biblical way. It is not the gathering of people who are in the same predicament that brings divine comfort to them. The “support group” idea is something very secular. The peace of God comes only when a person is reconciled to God through our Lord Jesus Christ. So what we need urgently is not the support groups where people sit in circles and talk about one another’s struggles. We desperately need godly pastors, teachers and Christians who can analyse people’s problems in the light of Scripture—and tell them where they have gone wrong, and how they can be reconciled to the Lord, that they may enjoy His everlasting peace and joy!

Undeniably, the church has the duty of encouragement and support. But the church should not be lured into daydreaming that peace can be administered without dealing with people’s sin. “There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked” (Isaiah

48:22). Increasingly, today’s church leaders are becoming like the leaders of the ancient Israel in Jeremiah’s time. They assured people of peace without dealing with their sins, but the peace they offered was superficial and temporary (cf. Jeremiah 6:13–15). Real, lasting peace exists only when one comes to Christ on His terms. “Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them” (Psalm 119:165). It is not through some form of preferred method, but only through Christ and His promises, that peace comes to people. “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee” (Isaiah 26:3; cf. Psalm 29:11).

CONCLUSION

True spiritual success is not getting results at any cost. Church ministry is not geared towards prosperity, power,

prominence, popularity or any other worldly notions of success. Real success in ministry is doing the will of God regardless of the consequences. The following are principles which the Holy Spirit has given to the church (through Paul’s exhortation in 2 Timothy 4:1–5) for a ministry in the last days:

- remember your calling (v. 1);
- preach the Word (v. 2);
- be faithful in and out of season (v. 2);
- reprove, rebuke and exhort (v. 2);
- don’t compromise in difficult times (vv. 3–4);
- be sober in all things (v. 5);
- endure hardship (v. 5);
- do the work of an evangelist (v. 5);
- fulfil your ministry (v. 5)

May we thus steadfastly adhere to the above biblical philosophy of church ministry. Amen. ■



WHAT ARE YOU LISTENING TO?

The Bible says in Romans 10:17, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

Bible Witness Media Ministry has a 24/7 online radio, at biblewitness.com/bwwr. Listen to godly Christian music and edifying sermon extracts, anytime, anywhere.

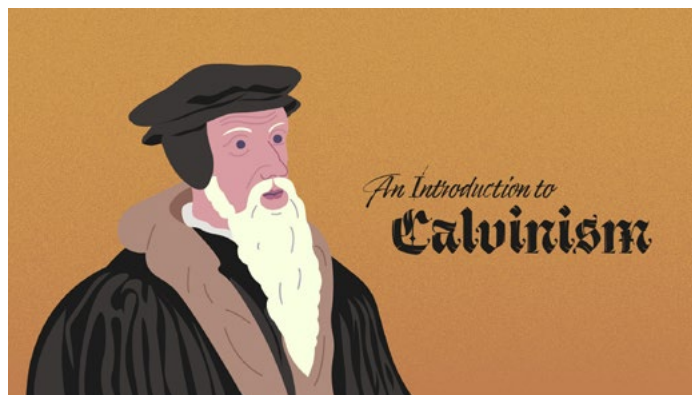
Upcoming BWTV Programmes



Redeeming the Time

Airing August–September 2023

In Ephesians 5:16, the apostle Paul wrote, “Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” What did the apostle mean by “redeeming the time”? In this six-part series, Rev. Reggor Galarpe will teach us important biblical truths about time and God. We will learn about the preciousness of time, and what it means to truly “redeem the time”.



An Introduction to Calvinism

Airing October 2023

In the month of October, many reformed Protestant groups will take the time to commemorate the 16th Century Protestant Reformation. One of the leaders of the Reformation in Geneva, Switzerland, was John Calvin. His most seminal work would be the “Institutes of the Christian Religion”, which is the basis of the theological tradition now known as “Calvinism”. BWTV will air a five-part series introducing the key tenets of Calvinism.



Understanding the Times

Airing November 2023

In the epistle of Jude, Jude talks about “the last time”. What does he mean by “the last time”? What are some of the distinguishing signs of the last time? In this three-part series, Pastor Prabhudas Koshy will teach us what is meant by this phrase, and how we as Christians should live out our lives in these end times.



Messianic Titles of Christ

Airing November–December 2023

In Isaiah 9:6, we read a prediction concerning the first advent of Christ: “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” As we commemorate the first advent of Christ during the month of December, let us consider the five names of Christ listed in Isaiah’s prophecy in this five-part series on BWTV.

ABOUT BIBLE WITNESS TV

Bible Witness TV (BWTV) is a video on-demand resource for Christians. From devotionals for adults to Bible lessons for the children, BWTV aims to provide godly, reformed Christian content for Christians around the world. You can watch BWTV at biblewitnessstv.com, or by using the Gethsemane BPC app. You can download the app from your app store by searching for “Gethsemane BPC”, or by going to gethsemanebpc.com/app.

(*Note: The programmes listed on this page are tentative and might change according to BWTV’s production schedule. See page 33 for the children’s programme, Bible Witness Kids.)

Anna Reinhard

(d. 1538) – Part I

Retold by Jenny Lok
Illustrated by Andronicus Koshy

It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God!

Ulrich Zwingli thundered from the pulpit of Zurich Cathedral in Switzerland. Many flocked to the church to listen to wonderful truths of the Gospel from their new priest, who had taken up his post since January 1519.

Anna Reinhard was among those who faithfully attended the church service. She had been following Zwingli's preaching on the Book of Matthew since the time he came. The powerful preaching of God's Word never failed to minister to her every time.



Occasionally, while listening, she would nod in full agreement, but there were moments when silent tears of sorrow would flow unceasingly down her cheeks. Feeling embarrassed, Anna would quickly wipe away her tears before anyone noticed it.



On one occasion, Anna was so moved by the Word of God that she prayed

Gracious Heavenly Father, I praise Thee and thank Thee that Thy Word is indeed glorious! Oh, that I may feed on it daily.

Thou knowest my struggles in bringing up my three poor fatherless children in Thy righteous ways, and so I look to Thee who art 'a father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows' (Psalm 68:5).

Lord, I believe in Thee and trust in Thy saving grace. Please help me, an unworthy sinner. In Jesus' name, Amen!



Anna's heart was slowly but surely transformed by the sound preaching of God's Word. She had decided to give up all her past religious superstitions and forsake the false teachings of the Roman Catholics. To her, Jesus is indeed "the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by [Christ]" (John 14:6).

Meanwhile, Zwingli, the new priest of Zurich Cathedral, started visiting members of his congregation who lived in his parish, and Anna was one of them.



Zwingli knew that Anna was a widow with three very young children. Her husband John Meyer of Knonau, who was with the Swiss army, died of a grave disease in 1517 after he returned from fighting a war against France. Zwingli cared deeply for the family, in particular Gerold the eldest son, who immediately caught his attention.

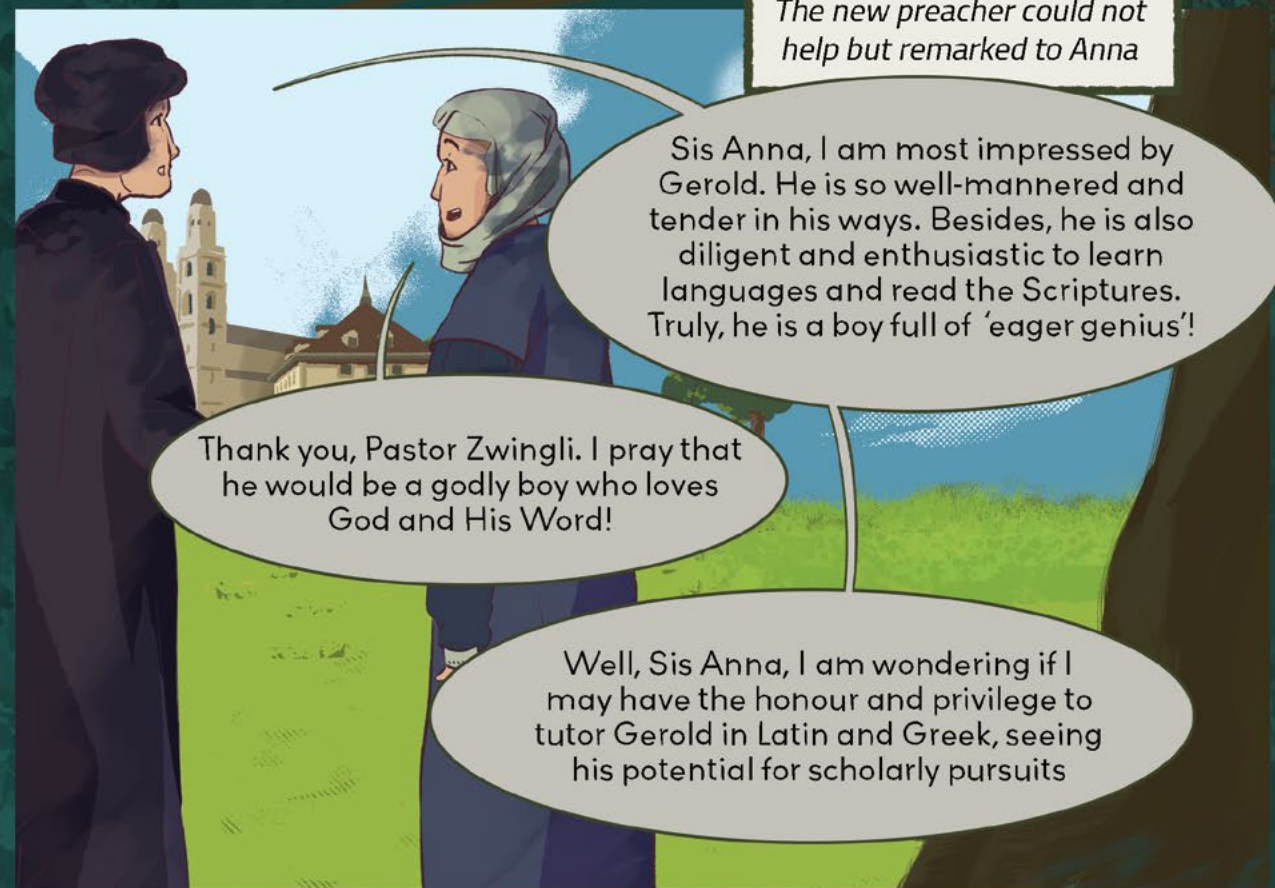


The new preacher could not help but remarked to Anna

Sis Anna, I am most impressed by Gerold. He is so well-mannered and tender in his ways. Besides, he is also diligent and enthusiastic to learn languages and read the Scriptures. Truly, he is a boy full of 'eager genius'!

Thank you, Pastor Zwingli. I pray that he would be a godly boy who loves God and His Word!

Well, Sis Anna, I am wondering if I may have the honour and privilege to tutor Gerold in Latin and Greek, seeing his potential for scholarly pursuits





Pastor Zwingli, I am not sure what to say. I can only thank God for your kindness. It will be a great opportunity and joy for Gerold to learn Latin and Greek from God's servant!

Thank you, Sis Anna, for entrusting Gerold to my care. I promise to be exemplary to him!

Both Zwingli and Gerold got along very well, and Zwingli urged the young boy to further his studies by preparing him for higher education at Basle, "a city on the Rhine River in northwest Switzerland close to the country's border with France and Germany".

Gradually, Zwingli became a father figure to Gerold and a close confidant of Anna.

In order to encourage Gerold to walk close to the Lord, Zwingli wrote a book specially for him, to remind him constantly of God's presence. Gerold did not disappoint both Zwingli and Anna, for he did extremely well in Basle and was given a very influential position years later. Anna praised God for Gerold's success, as did Zwingli. Zwingli had also long admired the way Anna handled her children.

He was well aware that Gerold's pious and gentle upbringing was due to God's grace upon Anna, who loved His Word and all that was godly. Zwingli and Anna's close bond with Gerold providentially brought them into a closer relationship with each other.

However, in August of that same year (1519), the beautiful city of Zurich was struck by the Black Death, a plague that took the lives of almost one third of the population.

A great number of congregants in Zurich Cathedral fell seriously ill, and some even died. Despite the risk to his life, Zwingli continued to visit the afflicted ones and comfort the dying, as well as those who had lost their nearest and dearest. Anna saw Zwingli's dedication to God's people, and was absolutely touched by his kind and selfless acts.

Over time, Zwingli himself contracted the disease – and was on the verge of death!

I pray that our gracious Heavenly Father may raise you up again. You have yet to finish your work on earth!



My dearest Anna, let the will of God be done! Whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's (Romans 14:8).

Zwingli remained ill for a very long time while Anna continued to pray and wait for signs of his recovery. When he slowly regained strength, Anna declared with thanksgiving in her heart, "Praise be to God, the Almighty!" Having experienced God's miraculous deliverance, Zwingli preached even more fervently "on the sinfulness of sin and the glorious remedy in Christ".

Many in Zurich rejoiced in God's truths and were strengthened in their faith, including Anna. Moreover, through this period of trial and affliction, Zwingli and Anna had grown to love one another, and Zwingli made up his mind to marry her.

Although his vow of celibacy as a priest forbade him to marry and have a marital relationship with a woman, he decided to go ahead as planned, for he believed firmly in the holy and honourable institution of marriage according to Scriptural principles. Anna was likewise convinced, though she foresaw opposition from the Roman authority.

To avoid public attention, Zwingli and Anna were married in 1522 in a private ceremony.



Only two years later in 1524, when the vow of celibacy was abolished, did they make known their marriage to the outside world. As expected, the Roman Catholics were not slow to hurl insults and accusations against Zwingli for his marriage to Anna. They were sure that Zwingli had married Anna because of her wealth (brought about by her son Gerold's success) and her beauty.

My wife Anna has a very small dowry even though she had once married a man from an aristocratic family. By God's grace, her children might be successful, but she always remembers her humble origins. In fact, after marriage, Anna has stopped wearing her expensive garments, rings and other jewellery (which were previous gifts from her loved ones) for the Gospel's sake!

Deep in their hearts, both Zwingli and Anna knew very well that the enemies were out to slander them, and to destroy Zwingli's work as a Reformer of the Protestant faith. All the more, Anna was determined to live a simple and modest life to dispel further gossip about her marriage to Zwingli.

Life as Zwingli's wife was busy but joyous for Anna. Often, Zwingli had to deal with a large correspondence due to his pastoral and preaching ministry, as well as his role as advisor to the Zurich council. And most certainly, Anna's wisdom had aided him in making many major decisions. When Zwingli was preoccupied with his work from morning till night, Anna would always say to him, "Take a little more rest, my dear." Anna took such good care of Zwingli that he called her "my dearest housewife"

to be continued

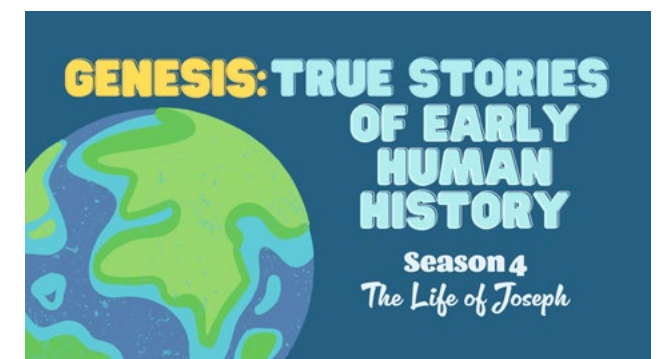
Upcoming BWTV Kids Programmes



Soteriology for Kids (Season 3)

Airing September 2023

Soteriology—the doctrine of salvation. Join Preacher Cornelius Koshy as he teaches on important truths pertaining to our salvation. In this series, difficult topics such as election and predestination will be taught to children in simple and clear terms.



Genesis: True Stories of Early Human History (Season 4)

Airing October 2023

In Season 4 of "Genesis: True Stories of Early Human History", children will learn about the life of Joseph. Learn from Teacher Theya Lagapa, who will take your child through Joseph's life—from his being sold into slavery to his promotion as prime minister of Egypt.

(*Note: The programmes listed on this page are tentative and might change according to BWTV's production schedule.)

BIBLE TRIVIA

DEUTERONOMY 11 & 28

SARAH YONG

A. Read Deuteronomy 11:1–21, and then arrange the text boxes in the order as they appear in the passage. Once that is done, use the corresponding letter at the top of each box to fill in the blanks below (in the corresponding order) to complete the given sentence.

B	C	D
God then provided for His people in the wilderness.	They must keep God's words in their heart, and teach them to their children.	But He also punished the rebellious Israelites, when the earth swallowed them up.

I	N	O
Moses urged the people to love the LORD, and to serve Him with all their heart and soul.	They are to take heed, and not be deceived to serve other gods.	The LORD did miracles and mighty acts unto Pharaoh, and destroyed the Egyptian army.

_ _ E _ _ E _ _ E
1 2 3 4 5 6

to God's Word is required from His people.



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B. Read the selected verses from Deuteronomy 28, and then fill in the missing words to complete the respective sentences.

Blessings for Obedience

v. 1—The LORD thy God will set thee on high _____ nations of the earth.

v. 7—Thine enemies shall be _____ before thy face, and shall _____ before thee seven ways.

v. 9—The LORD shall establish thee an _____ unto Himself.

v. 12—The LORD shall _____ unto thee His good treasure, and bless all the _____ of thine hand.

Curses for Disobedience

v. 15—These _____ shall come upon thee, and overtake thee.

v. 20—The LORD shall send upon thee vexation, until thou be _____.

v. 25—The LORD shall cause thee to be _____ before thine enemies.

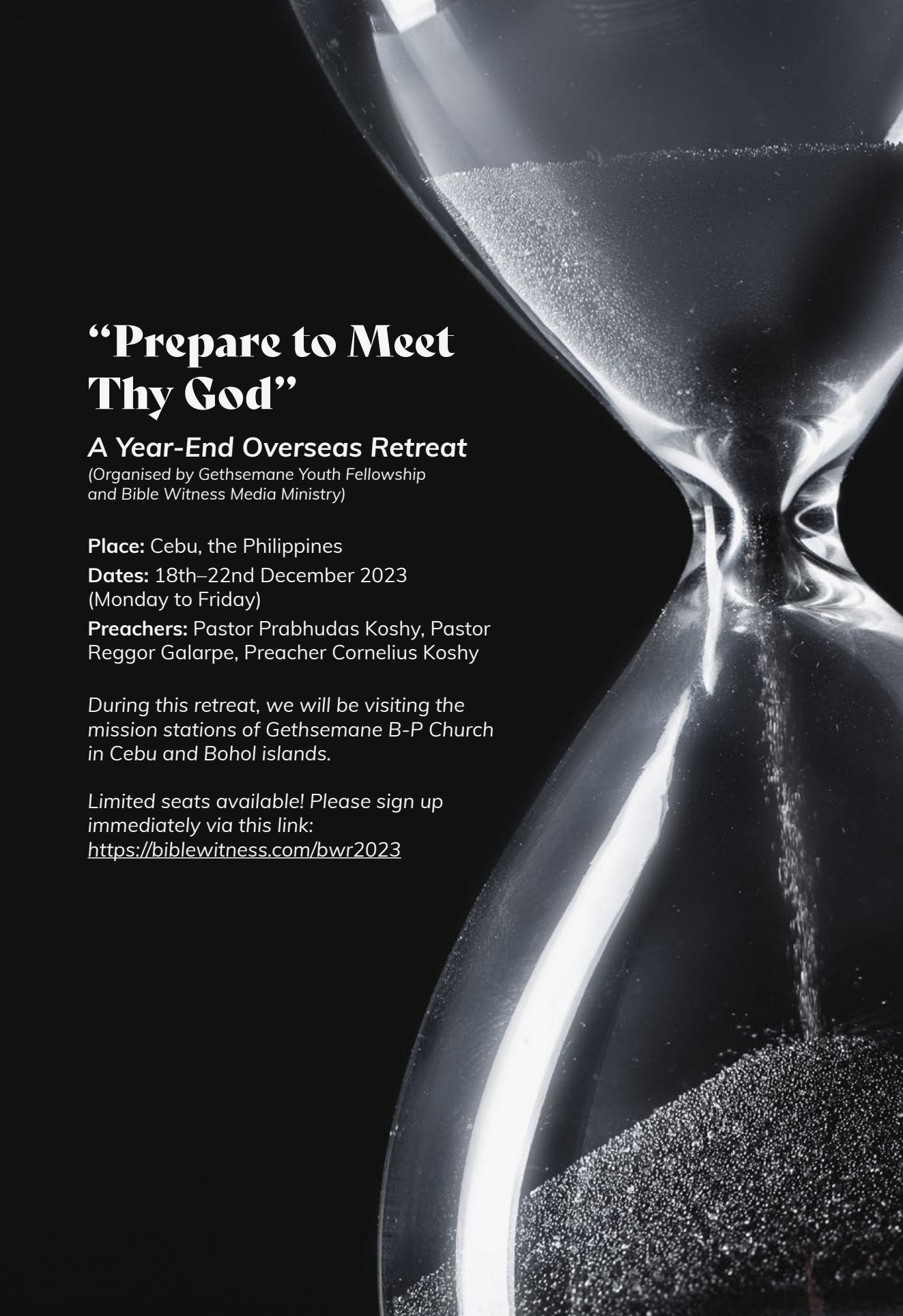
v. 48—Thou shalt _____ thine enemies which the LORD shall send against thee.

v. 49—The LORD shall bring a _____ against thee from far, from the end of the earth.

v. 64—The LORD shall _____ thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other.

Answers to Bible Trivia—Deuteronomy 9 & 10
(Vol. 23, Iss. 3, pp. 30–31)

D, A, F, B, G, C, H, E



“Prepare to Meet Thy God”

A Year-End Overseas Retreat

*(Organised by Gethsemane Youth Fellowship
and Bible Witness Media Ministry)*

Place: Cebu, the Philippines

Dates: 18th–22nd December 2023
(Monday to Friday)

Preachers: Pastor Prabhudas Koshy, Pastor
Reggor Galarpe, Preacher Cornelius Koshy

*During this retreat, we will be visiting the
mission stations of Gethsemane B-P Church
in Cebu and Bohol islands.*

*Limited seats available! Please sign up
immediately via this link:*

<https://biblewitness.com/bwr2023>