

Doctrine of the Sons of Belial

The Problems of Instant Gratification

1. The sons of the prophet Eli, are called in the Bible the sons of Belial, because they knew not the Lord. This means they did not fear the Lord, and were willing to take by force what they wanted in life.
 - *1 Samuel 2:12 Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the Lord.*
 - *1 Samuel 2:16 And if any man said unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat presently, and then take as much as thy soul desireth; then he would answer him, Nay; but thou shalt give it me now: and if not, I will take it by force.*
2. The sacrifice was to be well cooked, and offered as a sacrifice to the Lord. But the sons of Eli were taking the sacrifice for themselves. That was their sin.
3. They wanted it now. “Thou shalt give it me now” they said.
4. This is the instant generation. We have instant television. There was a time when the TV took a minute or two to come on. Now it comes on instantly. We have instant meals, instant soup, and instant coffee. We even have instant death, in the form of nuclear missiles and drones.
5. All through the Bible are people who wanted things in an instant.
 - Esau wanted a bowl of soup, and sold his birthright to get it. He was hungry, and did not care what the cost was to feed his body.
 - David saw Bathsheba, and told his soldiers, “Go get her now. I want her now.” David had lust in his heart, and forgot all the things he had been taught by the Lord.
 - Absalom wanted the throne immediately. He did not want to wait for the death of his father. He wanted it now, and he rebelled against his father.
 - The prodigal son in Luke 16, went to his father, and said, “I want what is mine now. I do not want to wait for it.”
6. Today there are thousands of young people who want instant pleasure, instead of true happiness.
7. A famous and beautiful movie star wrote a suicide note which said, “I only wanted to find a little happiness.”
8. On television, a ballet dancer said at the end of an interview, “I am really searching for my spiritual self. I really don’t know who I am.”
9. Question. “Do you know who you are?”

10. The American journalist Max Lerner (Dec 20, 1902 – June 5, 1992) once said, “America’s way of life is sinking rapidly into Babylonian existence.”
11. Historian Arnold Toynbee (April 14, 1889 – Oct 22, 1975) said, hedonism will destroy a nation within before any outside forces get to it.
12. No one chased pleasure more than Lord Byron (Jan 22, 1788 – April 19, 1824) who climbed to the pinnacle, only to die at age 36. He said, “My life is in the yellow heap. The flowers of the fruits of love are gone. The worm, the canker, the grief are mine alone.”
13. True happiness, and peace, is in knowing Jesus, and loving God. Those who obey and serve Him, shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures. But those that do not obey the Lord, and spend their youthful years in pleasure, shall perish (Job 36:11-12).
14. The Bible says that in the last days men shall be lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.
 - *2 Timothy 3:2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, 4 Traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;*
 - *1 Timothy 5:6 But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.*
15. It is possible to be spiritually dead, but physically alive. There is no contradiction. People can be dead to God right where they sit. There is no relationship with God.
16. This is understandable. There are some people whose marriage has gone dead. They live with someone, but they have no relationship. It is dead.
17. Some people are just dead inside. They have no appetite for life. They have so much pleasure, they are satiated with it.
18. How different from William “Bill” Featherston. He was only 16 in 1864, when he wrote these words.

“My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine;
 For Thee all the follies [pleasures] of sin I resign;
 My gracious Redeemer, my Saviour art Thou;
 If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, ’tis now.”

19. Featherston had forsaken all the pleasures of this world for the joy of following Christ. That was the decision he made.
20. The Bible says, “*Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore*” (Psalm 16:11).

21. Do you know those pleasures which Christ can give?

- There is the pleasure of knowing the forgiveness of sin. Jesus said, *“Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28).*
- There is the pleasure of not bearing the burden of condemnation. *Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*
- There is the pleasure of having a clear conscience before God. The apostle Paul was able to say, *“I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day” (Acts 23:1).*
- There is the pleasure of bringing others to salvation. Paul called the people in Philippi his joy. *Philippians 4:1 Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.*
- There is the pleasure of possessing eternal life. *John 17:3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*

22. As there are people who want instant pleasure, instead of true happiness, so there are others who want instant sex, instead of true love.

23. There is a difference. Sex is a biological urge. True love is a choice of the heart. Many young people are choosing to surrender to a biological urge, with the result that teenage pregnancy is at an epidemic proportion. The girl is not to be blamed alone. Blame the boy.

24. Venereal diseases multiple with indiscriminate sex. Children see, and hear, sexual material that did not exist a generation ago. In the movies, on the internet, even on ads on TV there is a proliferation of sensual content.

25. The message is grasped. Gratify your lust immediately.

26. Calling young people to repentance, Sebastian Temple, the Catholic folk singer from Africa sings.

“Love is silence,
 lust a roar.
 Love is a sacrifice
 lust always wants more.
 Lust only takes,
 love is a mending of hearts that lust breaks.”

27. Lust is rooted to sin. Sin is the flaw in human character that separates a person from God.

28. The only way to deal with the flaw of sin in the heart is to come to Jesus Christ. With a new heart, the Christian can flee from sin.

- *2 Timothy 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.*

29. Jesus was tempted. He met the temptation by quoting Scripture to Satan, not by debate.

30. There is something else people want. They want instant wealth, instead of true treasure. Jesus said, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (Matt. 19:24).

31. Riches cannot bring happiness. Christ can.

- *Proverbs 11:28 He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch.*

32. The rich are to be reminded to place their trust in the living God.

- *1 Timothy 6:17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;*

33. The rich man is not to glory in his riches.

- *Jeremiah 9:24 But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.*

34. A rich person can end up a fool.

- *Luke 12:16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: 17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? 18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. 20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? 21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.*

35. Then there are people who want to be more popular, than they want to do what is right. People long for instant attention, manifested in selfies and Instagram.

36. The word Christian is used three times in the Bible, and in each case suffering is involved.

- Christians were mocked in Antioch. *Acts 11:26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.*
- Paul preached while being a prisoner of Rome. *Acts 26:28 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.*
- Peter exhorted Christians not to be ashamed. *1 Peter 4:16 Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.*

37. Christians are destined for suffering.

- *2 Timothy 3:12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*

38. Christians can glory in their sufferings by knowing Christ. Paul did.

- *2 Corinthians 11:30 If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.*

39. Other people are searching for instant peace, instead of true serenity. Millions are taking drugs and tranquilizers instead of repenting, and turning from sin.

- *Isaiah 1:18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*

40. Still others are seeking for instant knowledge, instead of an understanding of God's truth.

41. Three thousand times the Old Testament prophets claimed to be speaking the Word of God. People need the Word of God.

- *Colossians 2:8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*
- *2 Timothy 4:2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;*

42. The Bible is inspired by God. Jesus never once indicated He doubted the Scriptures.

- *2 Timothy 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*

43. The Bible tells the truth about sin. It tells the truth about why we were put on earth. It tells the truth about the need to repent. The Bible tells us the truth about how to live for God. It tells the truth about how to get to heaven.
44. Then some people demand instant satisfaction, instead of true sacrifice. Paul wrote about Demas, who forsook him, for love of the world.
- *2 Timothy 4:10 For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.*
45. Every person has to make a decision. There is a world system that is not to be loved.
- *1 John 2:15 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.*
 - *James 4:4 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.*
 - *John 15:18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.*
 - *Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*
46. Be transformed. Be different from the things that are in the world. Be filled with love, joy, kindness, and humility. Christians should not be like the world that is at war, and is filled with evil, and violence.
47. Instant decisions should lead to a lifetime commitment. That is what faith in Christ will do at the moment of salvation. All it takes is a faith as small as a mustard seed. Come to Christ.