

“The Influence of Life: The World or The Spirit II”

Ephesians 5:18-21 (PHILLIPS)

15-21 Live life, then, with a due sense of responsibility, not as men who do not know the meaning and purpose of life but as those who do. Make the best use of your time, despite all the difficulties of these days. Don't be vague but firmly grasp what you know to be the will of God. Don't get your stimulus from wine (for there is always the danger of excessive drinking), but let the Spirit stimulate your souls. Express your joy in singing among yourselves psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, making music in your hearts for the ears of God! Thank God at all times for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. And “fit in with” each other, because of your common reverence for Christ.

- What truly “stimulates” you?
 - From what do you get your influence in life?
 - What gives you the most “charge” in life?
 - Since Paul uses the example of wine, the question may be;
 What are you intoxicated with?
- I. The story and warning of a particular church in scripture is a story we all should take to heart!
- A. The city of Laodicea was a commercial center of that part of the world in present day western Turkey.
1. It was a very fertile valley that produced various goods.
 2. This allowed for the prosperity of the folks in that region.
 3. Christians enjoyed wealth and influence in society.
 4. Historical records indicate that a man named Archippus, the son of a rich merchant named Philemon, may have been the pastor or minister of the church in Laodicea.
 5. In this great city was an enormous amphitheater and Roman coliseum. All indications of great peace and prosperity!
- B. What did Jesus say to this church through the Apostle John?

Revelation 3:14-22 (NLT)

14 “Write this letter to the angel of the church in Laodicea. This is the message from the one who is the Amen—the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God’s new creation:

15 “I know all the things you do, that you are neither hot nor cold. I wish that you were one or the other! 16 But since you are like lukewarm water, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth! 17 You say, ‘I am rich. I have everything I want. I don’t need a thing!’ And you don’t realize that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. 18 So I advise you to buy gold from me—gold that has been purified by fire. Then you will be rich. Also buy white garments from me so you will not be shamed by your nakedness, and ointment for your eyes so you will be able to see. 19 I correct and discipline everyone I love. So be diligent and turn from your indifference. 20 “Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends. 21 Those who are victorious will sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat with my Father on his throne. 22 “Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches.”

1. He says, “I know what you do. You reach out in good works.”
2. You literally think and act as if you need nothing!
3. You are actually naked, blind and in great need!
4. Turn from your indifference and unconcern!
5. Then He says, “I want to share life with you!”
6. Listen carefully with God’s heart and His ears and you will accurately see the way life really is!

C. What is interesting to know is Jesus’ statement about being “lukewarm.”

1. All around Laodicea were extremely cool and also extremely warm springs.
2. Some decided to try to take advantage and “pipe in” the warm springs from one direction and also the cool springs from another direction.
3. The problem was by the time either water flowed the distance from the source it was neither “hot or cold” but rather “lukewarm” or room temperature!
4. It seems Jesus’ point was that any time we get too far from the source we are the temperature of the world around us!

II. All throughout the scriptures we find stories of people becoming distracted with life and not staying faithful to God!

- A. You and I, for the moment, live in a “Laodicean Existence”. We are comfortable, safe, at peace and prosperous!
1. We have come to saving faith early in life for the most part.
 2. We then came to church either on occasion or “every time the door was open.”
 3. All, many of us know, is a comfortable and predictable church life where we express our Christian faith together!
 4. We don’t need anything...but yet we need so much!
- B. The Psalmist put it this way:

Psalm 139:23-24 (TPT)

23 God, I invite your searching gaze into my heart. Examine me through and through; find out everything that may be hidden within me. Put me to the test and sift through all my anxious cares. 24 See if there is any path of pain I’m walking on, and lead me back to your glorious, everlasting ways—the path that brings me back to you.

- C. A couple of quotes:
1. Leonard Ravenhill said:
“The Church has been subnormal for so long that when it finally becomes normal, everybody will think it’s abnormal.”
 2. Watchman Nee said:
“By the time the average Christian gets his temperature up to normal, everybody will think he has a fever.”
 3. What I am saying is this: He is standing at the door of your life desiring fellowship with you! Open your life up to Him! He wants to spend time with you!
 4. That’s how we become more like Him!