

## A Pure and Simple Faith

2 Corinthians 11:3 (NASB)

3 But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

\* We should all first acknowledge how common it is for Christians to become DISTRACTED in life from what is of utmost importance....

our relationship with God !!!

\* There are as many ways to do this as there are types of distractions!

\* Our passionate pursuit in life should be to simply know the Lord more and understand more and more, how to be like Him!

\* A perfect example of this distraction can be seen in the story of Martha and Mary:

Luke 10:38-42 (NIV)

38 As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. 39 She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. 40 But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" 41 "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, 42 but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

\* Does this mean that we should just ignore what needs to be done? No, this means that we should not let life distract us from our relationship with The Lord!

I. Notice the emphasis behind this statement of Paul to the Corinthian Church.

2 Corinthians 11:2 (TPT)

2 You need to know that God's passion is burning inside me for you, because, like a loving father, I have pledged your hand in marriage to Christ, your true bridegroom. I've also promised that I would present his fiancée to him as a pure virgin bride.

A. Paul is explaining several things in this one phrase or verse:

1. There was a "supernatural" care given to him by God to minister to the Church! God was loving through Paul!
2. Paul was committed to the Church in Corinth to disciple them to maturity in Christ!

3. Paul also was committed in His devotion to Christ to work hard to help prepare the Church to be received as Christ's Bride!
4. I strongly feel that this is the nature of ministry in general as it relates to the local church. This is my heart for you!

B. Notices Paul's statement to other parts of the Church in other cities!

Colossians 1:9-11 (NIV)

9 For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives,[a] 10 so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, 11 being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience,

Ephesians 1:15-18 (NIV)

15 For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, 16 I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. 17 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people,

1. Paul is saying, "I want you to know God's will for your life."
2. He is saying, "I want you to have spiritual understanding in life."
3. He says, "I want you to bear the fruit of your relationship with God." Or in other words...ACT LIKE JESUS!
4. Paul says, "I want you to fully understand your redemption!"

C. This is what I want for each and every one of you at Magnolia!

II. Seeing what Paul was driven by and his call of God to the Church, let's look at this "simplicity and purity of devotion" statement from him.

A. The word PURE refers to something that has no defect or blemish.

1. Nothing has been added that would dilute it.
2. It is pure and unmixed.

- B. The word SIMPLICITY is similar in that it means something that has singular focus.
1. This speaks of later focus.
  2. Without distraction, undivided and whole-hearted.
  3. It means nothing is fake, no pretense or holding back.
- C. The word DEVOTION simply means “to or into.”
1. It carries the thought of “moving towards.”
  2. It is the thought of being positioned directly in the center of something.
- D. When you put all of these descriptive thoughts together, you begin to see what Paul is saying from the depths of his heart.
1. The Corinthian Church, after only a few years of accepting Christ as their Messiah, were straying away from the Lord!
  2. It is so obvious that the 21st century Church is in the same desperate situation here in the United States!
  3. We have become distracted from our relationship with our Messiah by: prosperity, security, comfort, leisures/pleasures, ambitions, knowledge and our own abilities!

III. Notice what some of their distractions were. What were some of the ways the Corinthian Church strayed from their simple devotion?

1 Corinthians 3:1-4 (NIV)

1 Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ. 2 I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. 3 You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans? 4 For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not mere human beings?

- A. Our utter inability to love, respect and honor those who may live out their faith a little different from ours shows just how immature we really are!
1. It’s undeniable from this scripture that division in the Body of Christ shows we have room to grow!

2. This is true both corporately as the Body of Christ as well as individually as a Christian who must always have it my way!

Romans 12:10 (AMP)

10 Be devoted to one another with [authentic] brotherly affection [as members of one family], give preference to one another in honor;

3. This is the absolute only way for the Body of Christ to thrive in diversity! And we are definitely diverse!

B. Another telltale sign of our distraction and lack of devotion to The Lord.

1 Corinthians 3:5-9 (NIV)

5 What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. 6 I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. 7 So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. 8 The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. 9 For we are co-workers in God’s service; you are God’s field, God’s building.

1. The Body of Christ has become fascinated by certain “Super Saints” and have lost our fascination with Jesus Christ!
2. We have “glamorized” certain talents, gifts and people and have developed a “spiritual celebrity” attitude that has usurped the place of the King of all Kings and Lord of all Lords in our lives.
3. We have denied the moving of The Spirit in our midst through the common church member and relegated “true ministry” to the “professionals.”

1 Peter 2:9 (NIV)

9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.