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“The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest” (Luke 10:2)

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THE OTHER 98 PERCENT

There are 24 hours in each day. If we average 8 hours of sleep per day, that means we have 16 waking hours per day, 112 hours per week. Out of those 112 hours, most of us typically spend 2-3 of those hours at church services, roughly 2% of our week. What are you doing with the other 98%, and is it something that glorifies God and shines His light, or do we spend the time only on worldly things? There is nothing wrong with enjoying sporting events or having hobbies, but what is wrong is allowing those things to consume our lives. Think about how much time you spend watching TV or on social media. How does that time compare to the time you are praying or

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studying the Bible?

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (2 Tim. 2:15)

It is important that we study so that we are able to know what is truly what God wants and intends and what is not. If we do not spend time studying and we rely solely on what a preacher says on Sunday morning, we will miss a lot. In addition to that, if we rely only on what a preacher is saying, there is a chance that we start to believe things that are not true. Sometimes intentionally, and sometimes unintentionally a preacher will interpret something in a different way. If we do not study on our own, we might not see the misinterpretation and might be led astray.

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. (Mat. 7:15-20)

By spending some of our other 98% studying, we are giving ourselves ammunition in the never-ending battle against sin. We use the word of God to teach us right from wrong, and God can see if we are sincere with our study and with how we live our lives.

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Heb. 4:12)

It is especially important that parents use some of that other 98% to teach their children about God outside of church services. If a child's only exposure to the Bible is in church services, there is no way that they can fully soak in all that they need to follow God.

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. (Deu. 6:4-7)

The passage from Deuteronomy emphasizes that parents should teach their children at home and away from home, during the day and during the night. It shows that parents should always be training their children to follow God. This can be done in a variety of ways whether it is a bedtime story, a chapter reading at breakfast, a family Bible study, a nightly prayer, etc. While it is important that a child is in church services each week, it is also important that the time not in services is spent wisely and that the children see that giving God the other 98% is important too. There is not a right or wrong way to study and teach children at home, the only wrong thing is to not do it. We owe it to our children to give them all that they need to be successful, not just in life but in their spiritual journey. There is a famous Proverb that is used a lot regarding this: *“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it”* (Pro. 22:6).

Training up a child is more than taking them to church services each week; it is giving them a strong foundation of keeping God at the forefront of everything that we do. The Hebrew word that is translated ‘teach’ in Deuteronomy 6:7 (see above) can also be translated as ‘whet’ or ‘sharpen’. We need to make sure that we are properly sharpening our children so that they

can cut through the problems of this world.

When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also. (2 Tim. 1:5)

But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. (2 Tim. 3:14-15)

We have a responsibility to our children to make sure that they have the tools that they need but, in the end, we are each responsible for our own salvation.

But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. (Gal. 6:4)

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. (Php. 2:12)

This is not just about reading and studying the Bible. It is about keeping God at the forefront of our thoughts.

Pray without ceasing. (1 The. 5:17)

For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe. (1 The. 2:13)

We need to keep God in everything that we do. We are to love God first, more than anything in this world. The only

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way to do that is to give Him more than 2% of our weekly time. If we are using all the other 98% of our time on other things without thinking about God, we are not putting God first.

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)

You spend the most time with what you love. Can you look at the other 98% of your time and truly say that you love God and put Him first?

A. D.

DO NOT LOVE THE WORLD

The apostle Paul had been imprisoned for preaching the gospel of Jesus. Over the period of time that he was bound, various Christian brothers were with him and ministered to him; mention is made of Luke, Demas, Mark, Aristarchus, Crescens, Timothy, Titus, and Onesimus. He certainly taught them the things of God. Perhaps they brought him food and other necessities. Luke, being a physician, probably ministered to Paul's health. Some were Paul's messengers to carry letters to the churches or to preach the gospel in some location that needed to hear the word. Paul had obviously sent Timothy on some mission because he wrote two letters to him. In Paul's second letter to Timothy, he asks him to return because he needed him.

Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. (2 Tim. 4:9-10)

Of special note is Demas. Demas had forsaken Paul. Demas had ministered to Paul, had been taught by Paul, and had suf-

ferred alongside of Paul. But Demas had had enough; this life as a Christian was difficult and not what he wanted. He wanted to enjoy the pleasures of this life rather than to deny himself. Demas loved this present world.

What does it mean to love the world? The apostle John taught us what it means.

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)

To love the world is to have a strong desire or lust for the things of the world. The lust of the flesh is a strong desire for the sensual pleasures of life. This would include sexual pleasures and desires for lots of delicious food and drink. From the list of the works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-21, I believe the lust of the flesh would include adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, drunkenness, and revelries. The lust of the eyes would be anything that you see that creates in you a strong desire to possess it. This might include a beautiful or handsome person, clothes, houses, lands, furniture, motorcycles, cars, trucks, toys, cell phones, guns, and travels. The pride of life is anything that makes you feel superior to someone else. This might include honors or titles you receive, your accomplishments, your physical or mental characteristics or skills, knowledge you have, special family members, and important people you know or have met - anything you can be proud of or will make people look up to you. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life are not of the Father, but are of the world. These are the things that people of the world desire and seek. To love the sensual pleasures of life, to love the possessions of this life, and to desire to be superior to others is to love the world. Apparently, Demas wanted these things rather than to love and serve God.

John said that if you love the world, you don't love God the Father. In other words, you can't have a love for both – it's one or the other. Jesus taught in Matthew 6:24,

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. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

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. (Jas. 4:4)

You may want to somehow have both a love for the things of the world and a love for God. But it is clear that you must make a choice because they are opposed to each other.

So, when you love God, does that mean you must give up all pleasures and enjoyment in life? Of course not!

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; (1 Tim. 6:17)

God wants you to enjoy the things He richly gives you. You can enjoy a beautiful sunset or flowers or rocks or wildlife or the stars; you can enjoy the wonders and beauties of God's creation. You can enjoy intimacy with a loving wife or husband. You can enjoy the birth of a child. You can enjoy the possessions He has given you.

There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God. (Ecc. 2:24)

You can enjoy a simple meal with loved ones. You can enjoy the fruit of your labor. God gives you much to enjoy in life. In fact, I dare say that when you love God rather than the world, you will have more true pleasure in life.

Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:)

for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. (Mat. 6:31-33)

God's will is that you first seek Him and His kingdom and His righteousness, then your needs will be satisfied and He will give you much to enjoy in life.

Loving God means that you deny yourself rather than love the things of the world.

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? (Mat. 16:24-26)

My encouragement is to love God. Deny yourself in that you do not love the world. By loving God you will find your life.

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SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

Remember last month's questions?

1. What was the name of Joseph's youngest brother?
BENJAMIN (Gen. 44:12)
2. What was the name of the woman who hid the spies at Jericho?
RAHAB (Jos. 2:3-4)
3. Why did Solomon turn away from God when he was old?
HIS FOREIGN WIVES TURNED HIS HEART AFTER OTHER GODS (1 Kings 11:4)
4. Out of the ten lepers who Jesus healed, how many came back to say thank you?
ONE (Luke 17:15)
5. Who did Jesus pray for that his faith failed not?
(SIMON) PETER (Luke 22:31-32)