

## **A Form of Godliness**

**By Mark Moseley**

“But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God” (2Tim. 3:1-4).

It's easy to pick up a newspaper or turn on the television and think, “We must be nearing the end.” Senseless killings abound. Children are committing atrocious acts. The quickest path to fame, fortune and celebrity seems to require nothing more than a willingness to publicly debase oneself. And that is getting more and more difficult because our morals are so degraded that very little shocks us anymore.

It's not hard to find a large segment of society that is self-absorbed and excessively self-indulgent. There seems to be little true appreciation for how good that we have it. If there is thanksgiving, it is nothing more than a proud relief that says, “I am thankful I'm not like that wretch.” Rather than gratitude there is a sense that people somehow feel cheated because they have yet to receive what they deserve.

In this “ME First” society, people are willing to do nearly anything in order to achieve self-satisfaction. There are no holds barred. There is no conduct too outrageous, too cruel, and too evil to be avoided.

But before we go into a tirade about how awful the world has become; before we begin ranting about evil that surrounds us in a godless, immoral world; before we pat ourselves on our religious backs and declare how glad we are to have avoided the godless world around us – keep reading: “holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; avoid such men as these” (verse 5).

These are RELIGIOUS men! Understand me. Sincere people who trust in Christ and are struggling to break free of the world will sometimes be shocked and disappointed at their own capacity for sin and wickedness. They are not in Paul's mind here. Paul is describing those who hold to a “form” of godliness – but have none of the substance. They are poisonous roots in God's garden. Notice Paul's instruction – AVOID SUCH MEN AS THESE. Why? Because they will not only use and abuse us – they will entice and corrupt us. They will rob us of our own substance if we let them.

Be careful of “Christians” who gossip and backbite. Be careful of those who encourage you to make reckless and questionable moral choices. Watch out for those who are only interested in things that are “fun.” Take heed of those who are conceited and want to draw you into an “elite” clique. Look out for the one who is determined to get rich and are pre-occupied with status. Look out for those who encourage others to disregard the will of their parents and talk disdainfully of those who have responsibility for our spiritual well-being.

Today, after watching some pretty shocking things on the news, I read this to be reminded. Of course people without God revel in ungodliness and are consumed by wickedness. Why should I be surprised to find that as the world moves away from God it becomes darker and darker? That is tragic. Yet, as long as Christians serve the Lord from the heart there will be light in the world. It is when we who are to be lights in the world become darkness, that times will truly be difficult.

### **A Little from God**

“Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day” (Psalm 119:97). “Through Your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way. Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Psalm 119:104-105).

John Bunyan wrote his allegory "Pilgrim's Progress" after studying the Scriptures and sensing that God had spoken again and again through its pages. He said, "Although you may have no commentaries at hand, continue to read the Word and pray; for a little from God is better than a great deal received from a man. Too many are content to listen to what comes from men's mouths, without searching and kneeling before God to know the real truth. That which we receive directly from the Lord through the study of His Word is from the 'minting house' itself. Even old truths are new if they come to us with the smell of heaven upon them." (From Bible Illustrator) Let us open our eyes and behold wondrous things from God's holy word.

### **A Moments Wisdom**

- When you reread the Bible, you do not see more in the Book than you did before; you see more of you than there was before.
- Eventually an evil doer's friends will abandon him to his evil. If you go long enough without a bath, even the fleas will let you alone.
- Rancor and prejudice are the outward expressions of a feeling of inferiority.
- You give little when you give of your possessions; it is when you give of yourself that you truly give.

### **Scripture Cake**

(Tip: use the KJV)

4½ cups of Exodus 29:40

1½ cups of Judges 5:25

2 cups of Jeremiah 6:20

2 cups of 1Samuel 30:12

2 cups of Nahum 3:12

2 cups of Numbers 17:8

½ cup of Judges 4:19

2 tbsp. of 1Samuel 14:25

2 tbsp. of Genesis 28:18

2 tsps. of Amos 4:5

1 tsp. of Exodus 30:24

½ tsp. of Leviticus 2:13

Add 2Chronicles 9:9 to taste

Place all ingredients in a large bowl and follow Solomon's Proverbs 23:14 instructions for raising a good son. Preheat oven to Genesis 9:28 degrees. Pour batter into a John 6:67 by 2Peter 2:5 cake pan coated with Proverbs 21:20 and dusted with 2Samuel 13:8. Bake for Deuteronomy 25:3 minutes. (Contributed by Dorothy Rowland. Tried and adapted by PRB on 12/13/14. The recipe works and tastes good.)

