
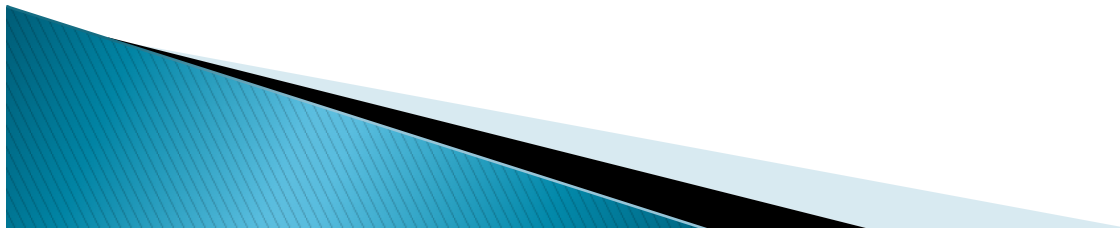


So the people answered and said: “Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods; ¹⁷ for the LORD our God *is* He who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, who did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way that we went and among all the people through whom we passed. ¹⁸ And the LORD drove out from before us all the people, including the Amorites who dwelt in the land. We also will serve the LORD, for He *is* our God.” ¹⁹ But Joshua said to the people, “You cannot serve the LORD, for He *is* a holy God. He *is* a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. ²⁰ If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then **He will turn and do you harm and consume you, after He has done you good.”**

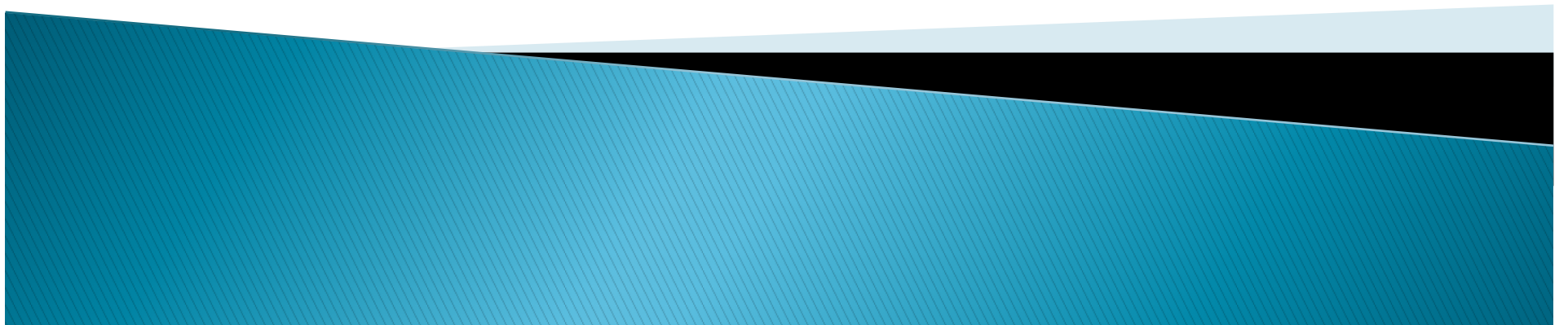


²¹ And the people said to Joshua, **“No, but we will serve the LORD!”** ²² So Joshua said to the people, “You *are* witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the LORD for yourselves, to serve Him.” And they said, “*We are* witnesses!” ²³ **“Now therefore,” he said, “put away the foreign gods which *are* among you, and incline your heart to the LORD God of Israel.”** ²⁴ And the people said to Joshua, “The LORD our God we will serve, and His voice we will obey!” ²⁵ So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made for them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. **Joshua 24:16-25**




ADDITION BY SUBTRACTION
Joshua 24:16–25

Woodland Park Church of Christ
14 August 2022

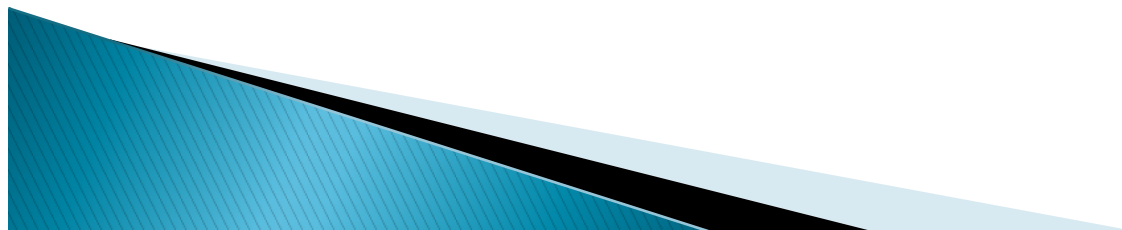



BACKDROP

- ▶ We encourage our members to live better and rise above the fray and filth of the world.
 - ▶ Sermons, lessons, and offerings are designed to encourage better living and experience a truly abundant life.
 - ▶ Make practical application of God's word.
 - ▶ We can add so much more to **ALL** aspects of our lives if we just rid ourselves of some people, attitudes, and habits that arrest our development, sabotage our efforts, strangle our growth, and frustrate our purposes/plans.
 - ▶ Can't get out of our own way because we are holding on to some things we should release.
- 


The book of Joshua records the culmination of God's centuries old commitment to bring Israel into The Promised Land [of Canaan], led by Joshua.

- ▶ . . . and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. **So they came to the land of Canaan.** ⁶ Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. **And the Canaanites *were* then in the land.** ⁷ Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, **“To your descendants I will give this land.”** And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. **Genesis 12:5b–7 [NKJV]**




- ▶ Joshua subdued the lands west of the Jordan River, conquering and overthrowing 31 kings (nations) in the process. **Joshua 12:7–24**
 - ▶ Highlights God’s faithfulness. So, we too can stand on the promises of God!
 - ▶ Joshua issues the challenge to Israel in **Joshua 24:15**. We know it well, as the verse ends with one of the most oft quoted scripture in all the Bible, **“Choose for yourselves this day whom you this day whom you will serve . . . But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord [God].”**
 - ▶ As Joshua is about to leave the scene and his earthly departure is nearing, he had a few more well-timed and choice words.
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“Now therefore,” *he said*, “put away the foreign gods which *are* among you, and incline your heart to the LORD God of Israel.” Joshua 24:23

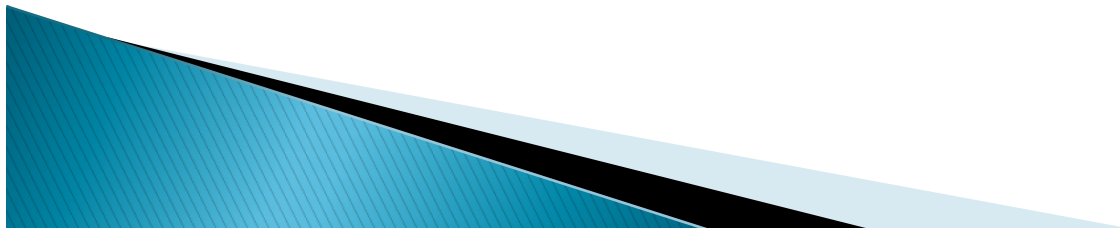
- ▶ Don't allow these foreigners and those who do not have an appreciation for or an affiliation with God (along with their practices, habits, customs, lifestyles, and fads) to **deter, distract, or discourage you from remaining faithful to God!**
 - ▶ We can add so much more to our lives and become more of who God wants us to be by removing some individuals and eliminating the riff-raff from our lives, shucking some habits and behaviors, removing beggarly elements (that work as stumbling blocks) from our path.
- 

Many of us can and will experience much better, more complete, and more wholesome lives if we would just rid ourselves of some stuff!

I realize that “MORE IS LESS” is a foreign concept in a country of mass consumerism, excessive consumption, and mega social media followings. **But have you ever considered --**

- ▶ Less spending = more money (financial freedom)
 - ▶ Less stuff = more space
 - ▶ Less clutter = greater clarity
 - ▶ Less anxiety = greater peace
 - ▶ Less doubt = greater faith and confidence
 - ▶ Less ungodliness = better standard of living (QOL)
- 

- ▶ Far too often we experience disaster, hardship, heartache, and adversity because we fail to disengage, disembark, and separate ourselves from things that hold us back.
- ▶ The wrong crowd, unproductive practices, and bad habits become albatrosses and millstones around your neck. They serve to sink and defeat you.
- ▶ If you find yourself spinning your wheels and appearing to be going nowhere fast or regressing – not growing spiritually, failing in school, relationships always crumbling – take inventory and then take action!
- ▶ Remove the elements that are doing you no good!



Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses [who by faith have testified to the truth of God's absolute faithfulness], **stripping off every unnecessary weight and the sin which so easily *and* cleverly entangles us**, let us run with endurance *and* active persistence the race that is set before us, ² **[looking away from all that will distract us** and] focusing our eyes on Jesus, who is the Author and Perfecter of faith [the first incentive for our belief and the One who brings our faith to maturity], who for the joy [of accomplishing the goal] set before Him endured the cross, disregarding the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. . . **Hebrews 12:1-2**

[AMP]




Recall God's plan concerning the Canaanites once Israel had finished its conquest –

“When the LORD your God brings you into the land where you are entering to take possession of it, and He drives away many nations from before you, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you, ² and when the LORD your God turns them over to you and you defeat them, *you shall utterly destroy them. You shall not make a covenant with them nor be gracious to them.* ³ Furthermore, *you shall not intermarry with them: you shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor shall you take their daughters for your sons.* ⁴ For they will turn your sons away from following Me, and they will serve other gods; then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you and He will quickly destroy you. ⁵ But this is what you shall do to them: you shall tear down their altars, smash their memorial stones, cut their Asherim to pieces, and burn their carved images in the fire. ⁶ **For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His personal possession** out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. **Deuteronomy 7:1–6 [NASB]; see also 1 Peter 2:9**


Solomon can provide a personal testimony –

But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites: ² Of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, **Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love.** ³ And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. ⁴ For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that **his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father.**



⁶ And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father. . .

⁹***And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel,*** which had appeared unto him twice, ¹⁰ And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded. ¹¹ Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, ***I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant.*** **I Kings 11:1-4, 6, 9-11 [KJV]**



I. Get Priorities Straight & Move Accordingly

- ▶ Determine who or what is most important to you and where you want to go.
- ▶ Studies show that people who have clear and decisive goals and know what they want are far less likely to become sidetracked and allow outside influences to get in their way.

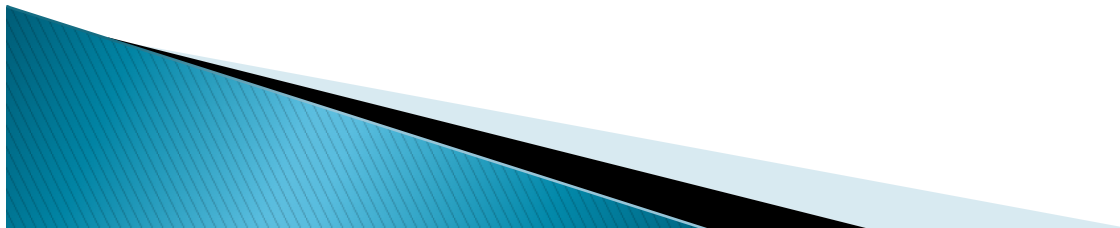
“No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.” **Luke 16:13**



II. Carefully Vet Your Inner Circle

- ▶ Know those you allow to get close to or influence you; know their game and habits.
- ▶ Individuals we allow into your hearts should be those who are moving in the same direction and/or have your interest at heart.

As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens [and influences] another [through discussion]. **Proverbs 27:17 [AMP]**



Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: “Behold, a sower went out to sow. ⁴ And as he sowed, some *seed* fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. ⁵ Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. ⁶ But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. ⁷ ***And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them.***”

Matthew 13:3-7



III. Be Determined not to Compromise Your Values or Standing

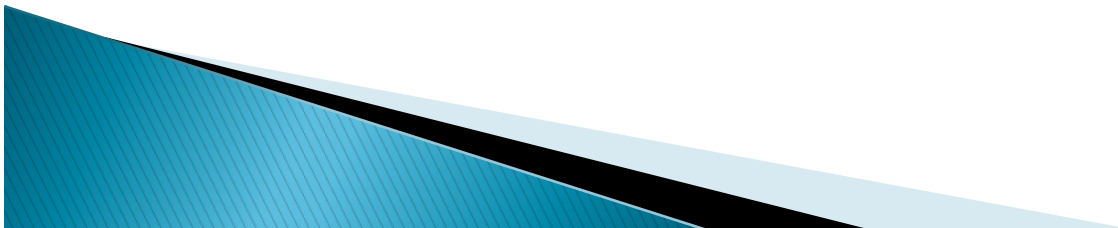
- ▶ Don't be tricked or deceived by the “eye candy” and the “smoke and mirrors.”
- ▶ Satan will always make it seem like you are missing something or you just cannot live without what he is pedaling; never mind that it will --
 - wreck your relationship with God;
 - frustrate your purpose(s);
 - lead you down a path of misery and lifelong regret.



Do not fret because of evildoers, **nor be envious of the workers of iniquity.** ² For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. ³ Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.

⁴ Delight yourself also in the LORD,
And He shall give you the desires of your heart.

Psalm 37:1-3 [NKJV]



Lord's Invitation Extended to All

- ▶ **Be added to the Lord's body**

Hear the gospel (Acts 15:7);

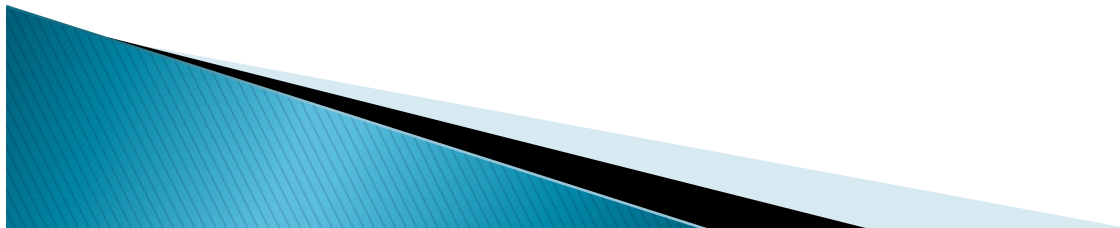
Believe the gospel (Acts 8:37, 15:7);

Repent of sins (Acts 2:38);

Confess Christ (Acts 8:37);

Be baptized for the remission
of sin (Acts 2:38);

or



Lord's Invitation (cont'd)

- ▶ **Be reconciled unto the Lord (1 John 1:8–9); or**
- ▶ **Desire prayer (James 5:16).**

