

How to Live Sensibly in a Godless Society

Titus 2:11-14 (New American Standard Bible)

*¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all people, ¹² instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to **live sensibly, righteously, and in a godly manner in the present age**, ¹³ looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, ¹⁴ who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to **purify for Himself a people for His own possession**, eager for good deeds.*

Introduction

Today's text shows us God's three-fold will for us. His will for us in the Past, Future, and Present. Redemption, Glorification, and Purification. All related to us. All revolves around our relationship with our Heavenly Father.

First, God revealed His will through Christ's First coming (Past). God sent Christ to bring salvation to all people. Christ suffered for our sins to bring us to God. Next, God will send Christ again (Future). This time, Christ will come with the glory of our great God, not for redemption but for judgment. Thirdly, in between times (Present), God wants us to live in a godly manner while we await Christ's coming. To assist us to live sensibly, God will purify us (sanctification).

Content

The Present Age: Let me read v. 12 to you one more time. *Live sensibly, righteously, and in a godly manner **in the present age**.* What kind of world we are living in the present age? I would call it, *a godless society*. Godless means 'not recognizing or obeying God.' Our society becomes more and more secular and godless than before. Here's one example.

E.g., The other day, I read an article about Ocean Grove, a small town in NJ. The Ocean Grove Camp Meeting Association broke ground in July to build a cross-shaped pier at their beach to replace the original pier that was destroyed by Sandy the Superstorm. By the way, *"The Camp Meeting Association owns all the land in Ocean Grove, including the beach, boardwalk and the area where the pier will be built. No government funding is required to rebuild the pier"* (August 27, 2022. NYpost.com). That plan generated some ire among its non-believing residents who don't want it to be in a cross-shape. *Be more inclusive and sensitive to non-Christians*, they clamored. Imagine that, folks! Ocean Grove was founded as a Methodist town in 1869. In 150 years, it appears so no more. Sooner or later, who knows? Some may even demand to remove the cross sign from the Great Auditorium itself! In the

name of inclusiveness and sensitivity to non-believers! By the way, it's been a while since 'cross' became offensive to people in America, hasn't it? We are no longer living in a Christian society.

Listen to a Pew Research survey: *The religious landscape of the United States continues to change at a rapid clip. In Pew Research Center telephone surveys conducted in 2018 and 2019, 65% of American adults describe themselves as Christians when asked about their religion, **down 12 percentage points over the past decade.** Meanwhile, the religiously unaffiliated share of the population, consisting of people who describe their religious identity as **atheist, agnostic or "nothing in particular," now stands at 26%, up from 17% in 2009.*** (<https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2019/10/17/in-u-s-decline-of-christianity-continues-at-rapid-pace/>)

Here's another ungodly sign of the present age in America. The Lord's Prayer is not allowed in most U.S. Public schools any more. A kid in Minnesota wrote the following NEW School Prayer:

Now I sit me down in school
Where praying is against the rule
For this great nation under God
Finds mention of Him very odd
If scripture now the class recites,
It violates the Bill of Rights.
And anytime my head I bow
Becomes a Federal matter now
Our hair can be purple, orange or green,
That's no offense; it's a freedom scene.
The law is specific, the law is precise.
Prayers spoken aloud are a serious vice
For praying in a public hall
Might offend someone with no faith at all.
In silence alone we must meditate,
God's name is prohibited by the State.
We're allowed to cuss and dress like freaks,
And pierce our noses, tongues, and cheeks.
They've outlawed guns, but FIRST the Bible.
To quote the Good Book makes me liable.
We can elect a pregnant Senior Queen,
And the 'unwed daddy,' our Senior King.
It's 'inappropriate' to teach right from wrong.
We're taught that such 'judgments' do not belong.
We can get our condoms and birth controls,
Study witchcraft, vampires, and totem poles.

*But the Ten Commandments are not allowed,
No word of God must reach this crowd.
It's scary here I must confess,
When chaos reigns, the school's a mess.
So, Lord, this silent plea I make:
Should I be shot; My soul please take!*

Many years ago, God spoke through the mouth of Prophet Isaiah about the signs of godless society: Woe to those who **call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!** (Isaiah 5:20). Tell me if this is not happening in our society, then I will stand corrected. *God help us!*

Should we ask God to take us out of this world, then? Well, that's not what God wants us to do. Even though we ask for it, God will not answer it affirmatively. He rather wants us to go into the world, stay and live in it, and shine our lights onto the world. Otherwise, why does God call us the light of the world? By the way, have you ever seen the light run away from the darkness? No. Furthermore, Jesus would not pray for us to be taken out of this world, either. Instead, He sends us into the world. Listen to His own prayer to His Father on behalf of His disciples.

John 17:13-19. ¹³ *But now I am coming to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves.* ¹⁴ *I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.* ¹⁵ **I am not asking You to take them out of the world, but to keep them away from the evil one.** ¹⁶ *They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.* ¹⁷ *Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.* ¹⁸ **Just as You sent Me into the world, I also sent them into the world.** ¹⁹ *And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, so that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.*

Deny Ungodliness and Worldly Desires (1 Peter 2:11) (Titus 2:12): As Jesus sends us into the world as sheep amid wolves, He commands us to “be as wary as serpents, and as innocent as doves” (Matthew 10:16). So, the real question is: how can we live in such a godless society? In fear? In timidity? Isolated? No way. Instead, fully engaged in the world as light, we ought to live with confidence and assurance that the Lord is with us.

Let us not forget that every single day, seated at the right hand of God, Jesus intercedes for us saying to His Father: *Protect them and keep them away from the evil one.* Remember: we are under God's protection. The devil cannot touch us. Therefore, we can live sensibly, righteously, and in a godly manner.

Beware of two things that stand in our way to live sensibly: ungodliness and worldly desires. We ought to deny them both because they defile us and make us unpresentable to the Lord.

Briefly, to deny **ungodliness** means to renounce any shape and form of ungodliness in our lifestyle---anything that is not in sync with God's commandments. Anything that keeps us from following the Lord. Anything that brings shame to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Stay away from them. Deny them. For instance, if we don't walk in integrity, and if our ways are devious, we are in fact despising the Lord. Using the name of the Lord in vain, that's another example. Be resolute to stay away from any type of ungodliness.

What about **worldly desires**? The desires that the world follows. They defile us of our flesh and spirit. John the Apostle points out: *For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world* (1 John 2:16). Stay away from them.

Paul the Apostle further identifies such as *sexual immorality, impurity, indecent behavior,* ²⁰ *idolatry, witchcraft, hostilities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions,* ²¹ *envy, drunkenness, carousing* (Galatians 5:19-20). Deny them all.

Now, once we renounce ungodliness and worldly desires, then we are ready to live sensibly, righteously, and in a godly manner.

Live sensibly, righteously, and in a godly manner: Sensibly. The Greek root carries the meaning of 'wise and sound judgment, right mind, self-control, and discipline.' So, to live sensibly means to do all the above in the eyes of the Lord. One person comes to my mind who just lived 'sensibly.' Her name was Thelma. She was a believer in Christ, modest, did everything in moderation, and loved the Lord and loved family and friends. She lived sensibly.

Consider now. Is your life pleasing to the Lord? Do you live sensibly, righteously, and in a godly manner before the Lord? Is there anything you need to change? God's help is available.

God Purifies Us for Himself for His Own Possession: God has elected us to be His treasured possession, His children, and heirs of His Kingdom. That election includes training. For us to stay qualified as His royal children, He puts us through the finest training courses in His Kingdom. Lifelong training and discipline. Under the direction of the Holy Spirit. In His school, He purifies our heart and mind. He cleanses our soul. He refines our character. Through circumstances. Through people. Through hardships and sometimes pain and suffering.

If you have many afflictions, then the Lord will rescue you out of them all (Psalm 34:19). He will transform you into His own image through training, hardship, and even

suffering. Don't forget that you are His treasured possession. God refines you, purifies you, and sanctifies you.

Eager for Good Deeds: Quickly, let's not forget how verse 14 ends: "*eager for good deeds.*" Here's an action point. How about doing one good thing a day for others? A phone call, text, or even a card. Say a nice thing or give a hug to your neighbor. You never know how God will touch the other person through your kindness. Who knows, some of them may come to know the Lord?

Conclusion

I am thinking of Noah. His time was not any better than ours. I believe it was worse than ours. So much so that God had to wipe mankind out of the surface of the land. Despite all the things discouraging around him, Noah still walked with God and found **favor** in the eyes of the Lord (Genesis 6:8). Folks, we too have God's favor with us. The same 'favor' is called 'grace' in the New Testament. Grace will lead us home safely and securely. Let us deny ungodliness and worldly desires, let us live sensibly, and let us be eager for good deeds! It will hasten the Day of the Lord. Amen.