

## ESCAPING THE CORRUPTION

Why do people do evil things? You read of the stories of evil every time you pick up a newspaper or you hear of evil every time you listen to the radio or watch television. People do bad things to other people! Why do humans want to hurt somebody? Have you wondered why there is so much evil in the world?

Hello I'm Larry Murdock. I preach for the Gandy church of Christ. Good morning and welcome to this program.

There is definitely a sin problem in the world. Males and females chase each other in order to engage in sexual immorality. There are impure, sensual people, idolatrous people. There is trickery, hatred, jealousy, and rivalries. There are fights, dissensions, and split-ups. There is drunkenness with alcohol or drugs, orgies, evil partying. And there are many people, who covet someone else's spouse, or they covet someone else's money, or perhaps they covet someone else's material goods. They even steal when they think they can get away with it. Some people will even go so far as to kill another human being. Can we ever escape the corruption that is in the world? Or, to ask again the question we started with: why do people practice evil things?

The Bible gives the answer to that question in one word. That one word is not "Satan." That's right! Yes, Satan is evil. He is also called "the Devil." And Satan is the great liar who deceives the population of the world. Yes, Satan is the great tempter. But Satan could not sell His evil if there were no buyers! What if there was no one interested in what the Devil has to sell? You see Friends, the world not only has a Satan problem, a seller of evil, a pusher of wickedness, but we also have a people problem, people who are willing to purchase what Satan sells, people with an addiction for evil!

Jesus' apostle Peter made this statement, recorded in 2 Peter 1:3 and 4: Peter praised God whose "divine power has granted to [Christians] everything that pertains to life and godliness." God has called out to the world and invited all the people of the world to become a part of "his own glory and excellency." God has invited the world to become partakers in His divine nature; but first we must

“escape the corruption that is in the world through lust.” Why is the world so corrupted with evil? Peter gave the answer in one word, **lust**. Corruption is in the world “through lust”, by means of lust. (2 Peter 1:4 KJV.)

Lust is desire; it is unlawful desire; lust is desire for evil things. Where do you find “lust”? You find it in human beings! That’s right! You find lust in the human spirit.

Jesus’ half-brother, James, wrote that when lust is conceived, it brings forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, brings death. (James 1:15 KJV.) Human lust is the source of all kinds of wickedness. There is lust for another human being. Jesus said that when a man looks upon a woman to “lust” after her, he has committed adultery with her already in his heart. (Matthew 5:28.) Lust is conceived in the human heart; that is where the sin begins. Paul wrote that “The men ... gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with [lust, KJV] for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.” (Rom 1:27 ESV.)

There is also a lust for dominance over other people. There are some who wish to rule over others. They have a lust for power. This gives birth to jealousy and envy, rivalry. Where there is rivalry between people for power, there are divisions, hatred, anger, and malice. Malice is the desire to hurt somebody. It is as Paul put it in Romans 1:29-32 (ESV) “They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, (30) slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, (31) foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. (32) Though they know God's decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.” It is said that “misery loves company.” Sinners love it when other sinners are doing the same evil that they are doing! Somehow we sooth our own conscience if we know that other people are just as wicked as we are!

The apostle John persuades Christians to “Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (16) 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. (17) And the world passes away, and the lust thereof: but he that does the will of God abides

forever.” (1 John 2:15-17 KJV.) The way to “escape the corruption that is in the world through lust” is to love God more than this world. John predicted that the world will pass away with all of its lust. But the person who loves God supremely and who will do the will of God will live forever. Do you want to outlive the world with its evil? Then you must flee the passions of your lustful heart and replace that evil with the love of God.

But that is the problem isn't it? Why should I love God more than the world? Didn't God make the world and then say that it was good? Yes, after creating the world the Bible says that “God saw that it was good.” (Genesis 1:25.) But world became corrupted through human lust. That's right! The pristine world that God created soon became corrupted with human sin; so much so that God destroyed every living being upon the earth with a flood, except for one righteous family. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord of heaven and earth. And so, God rescued mankind and a great number of animals from the waters of the great flood. We seem to forget that evil did this. Many people choose to overlook the numerous evidences of the great flood, and they choose not to believe that God once did this. The Bible says, “The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” (Genesis 6:5 ESV.) You see, it was the evil intention in the thoughts of humans that brought about the Creator's wrath. It was LUST! Human lust still produces sin; and sin still leads to death. However, God decided in His own heart that He would never again destroy the earth with water. Genesis 8:21-22 (ESV) says that, “the LORD said in his heart, “I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. (22) While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.”

The intentions of the heart, lust in the heart brings about evil in the world. In fact, this is the reason humans must physically die. Because of the lust and sin of our forebears, Adam and Eve, mankind was separated from the tree of life, and there immediately began the physical process of death.

Everything that lives must soon die. Sin is the reason, and lust produced that sin! Satan tempted our first mother to consider eating from the one tree that God had forbidden. The tree was called “the knowledge of good and evil.” The fruit of

that tree would immediately open the eyes to the burden of knowing the difference between good and evil. This is a heavy burden. Every child born into this world must come to the point where he must distinguish between good and evil. We must settle it in our own minds. It is up to us to learn God's standards of good and evil; we must learn the difference between good and evil. How grateful we should be for parents who will help us to understand God's standards of good and evil. Unfortunately, we must also learn the consequences when we choose evil over the good. The lust of our eyes, the lust of our flesh, and our pride come together to cause us to sin, and sin produces death.

James, the half-brother of Jesus, asked this question: "What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your [lusts, KJV] are at war within you? (2) You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. (3) You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your *own* [lusts]. (4) You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." (James 4:1-4 ESV.)

Yes friends, the evil that is in the world is here because of lust in the human heart. But you can be saved from this evil. The Love of God can revolutionize your heart. The Love of God can make a difference in your life. Will you choose to follow the love of God, or your own lusts? This is the crux of your life. This is the crucible where you will be tested. Who will you love, God or your own fleshly lusts?