

Hedonism

Definition: 1- the pursuit of pleasure; sensual self-indulgence. 2 - Philosophy: the theory that pleasure (in the sense of the satisfaction of desires) is the highest good and proper aim of human life.

The pleasures pursued could be those of the flesh (physical), of the eyes (mental) or of pride (ego). All of these are contrary to godliness, and all of them will pass away - 1 John 2:15-16.

Physical

Food - Deut. 8:3; Matthew 4:4

Gluttony - habitual greed or excess in eating. Satisfaction is sought in excessive eating.

Proverbs 23:20-21; Proverbs 28:7; Titus 1:12

(Feasting is proper - Gen. 19:3; Exod. 12:14; Leviticus 23 - the Feasts of Israel)

Epicurean - pursuit of pleasure in fancy foods, gourmet, etc. The pursuit here is the quality, not the quantity of food. It can also be related to trying to appear wealthy.

Proverbs 23:1-5, 6-8; Psalm 141:4; Daniel 1:8-10;

Eating Disorders - Eating habits become dangerous in the pursuit of something else.

Bulimia - purging after eating in order to not gain the weight. A form of gluttony compounded with vanity. Leads to serious gastro-intestinal problems.

Anorexia - A vanity disorder (irrational belief they are fat) resulting in insufficient and incorrect food intake usually coupled with over exercising. Can result in death.

Alcohol / Drug abuse - Used to celebrate - Ps. 104: 15. Used to lessen pain - Prov. 31:6.

While wine is beneficial and a blessing (Prov. 3:10), abuse of it is foolish (Prov. 20:1; 21:7; 23:20-21, 29-35).

Sexual - God has provided marriage for the proper expression of sexuality

Perversions - Anything harmful or defiling (Love is kind. The marriage bed is to be held in honor and undefiled - Heb. 13:4).

Fornication, Adultery & rape - Sexual activity with someone other than your spouse. Rape is forced sexual intercourse. Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22. Note that all of these subjected the perpetrators to the death penalty.

Abominations - anything in the list of Leviticus 18 including incest, consanguinity, homosexuality, bestiality.

Comfort - There is nothing wrong with being comfortable, but the pursuit of that as the source of satisfaction in life is a perversion.

Sensuality - usually associated with immorality - Romans 13:13; 2 Cor. 12:21; Gal. 5:19; The pursuit of it leads to other sins - Eph. 4:19; 1 Tim. 5:11; 2 Peter 2:18

Visual / Mental

“Eye Candy” & Pornography - Matthew 5:28; Job 31:31

Esthetics - Similar to sensuality. Having things pleasing to your sight is fine until that quest becomes dominate. This can easily result in materialism (Matthew 6:19-24)

Pride / Ego We are to subject ourselves to Christ as His slaves, we are to be humble - Proverbs 11:2; Matthew 18:4; Phil. 2; James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5-6
Vanity - Proverbs 12:11; 31:30; 1 Peter 1:24. It fades away.

Fame - Eccl. 1:11; 2:16. It is fleeting, you will not be remembered in the future

Power - Ultimately, it only comes from God who will hold you responsible for your use of it - Daniel 4:34-35; Romans 13:1.

Case Studies

We will be spending the majority of our time on the case studies below or any that you bring up. Read through all the situations below. Pick one and write out how you would respond to the situation and counsel those involved. Include in your answer what sin may be involved; relevant Bible verses that would expose that sin and encourage them to righteousness; the questions you might ask to uncover what might be going on in their Emotional; Volitional; Rational and Personal circles; and advice you would give on how to handle the situation being faced.

In these case studies, be prepared to share the Bible verses you find to help with the situation. Which verses would you have the person memorize. What passages would you want the counselee to read and meditate upon.

Stage 1: Identify presenting problem (The test)

Stage 2: Identify problem emotion (E)

Stage 3: Identify problem behavior (V)

Stage 4: Identify problem thinking (R)

Teach Biblical commands concerning problem areas (Correction of V, R & P)

Stage 5: Clarify Biblical thinking (R)

Stage 6: Secure volitional commitment (V)

Stage 7: Plan and carry out Biblical behavior (V)

Stage 8: Identify Spirit controlled emotions (E)

#1. In a conversation with a young man in your church you find out that he has been struggling with lustful thoughts. Further questioning reveals that he watches a lot of media, sees questionable movies and recently started viewing pornography on the internet. What can you do to help?

#2. You have developed a good friendship with a woman who is bordering on being morbidly obese. She has a wonderful personality and is fun to be with. You have noticed that when she eats, she can really pile it on. You have also noticed that she talks a lot about food. How can you help her?

#3. You have been called by a friend to help deal with his / her spouse who has been getting drunk every weekend for the last few months. The drinking problem is denied claiming that since Jesus turned the water into wine that it must be okay to enjoy it. How can you help?

#4. As you walk by the men's bathroom at church you hear agitated voices. You stop to find out what is going on and discover one man is asking the other to continue a homosexual relationship. The other indicates he thinks it is wrong, but the first man continues to plead for one more episode. What will you do?

#5. A person who has been part of your church for the last year asks you to come over and talk with him / her. You are told up front that he / she is considering finding another church and then proceeds to tell you about all the things he / she do not like about the church. He / she does not really care for the music; finds the service a bit too long; lists out several things deficient about the facilities; and complains that some candles and liturgy would to set a better mood for worship. You ask why he / she has been coming, and are told he / she is intrigued that the people at church seem to be so joyful about walking with the Lord. He / she professes to be a Christian, but does not really understand why the people at church could be so happy. You notice he / she is well dressed and has an immaculate home which is decorated very nicely by someone that obviously knows what to do. In answer to your questions you find out his / her church involvement consists of sporadic attendance at Sunday morning service only and their devotional life consists of reading *The Daily Bread*. Favorite past times include concerts, art museums and travel to nice hotels. What will you do to help him / her how to find joy in Christianity?