

This was the title of a 1985 book by Richard Foster which had the subtitle; 'The Challenge of the Disciplined Life'. Over the next messages we will be covering various aspects of each of those topics as they relate especially to the church. I was prompted to take this book down from my shelf in light of all the various ministry and church leader scandals being exposed in the past few years. However, as we will see, there is 'nothing new under the sun.' Money, sex and power have been sources of problems down through earliest history. Here is a quote from the introduction in Foster's book.

'A special concern has surrounded the writing of this book. To the popular mind, topics like prayer and worship carry an aura of spirituality, whereas the themes of money, sex and power sound terribly 'secular' at best. My longing throughout the writing has been to help people sense that as we come to these 'secular' issues, we are treading on holy ground. To live rightly with reference to money and sex and power is to live sacramentally. To misuse and abuse these is to desecrate the holy things of God.'

The Bible is a very practical book as it deals with the various issues of life. It reminds us of the God who created us, guides us and provides for our well being, not only in this life but into the far reaches of eternity. A faithful preacher of God's Word will not only prepare us to meet God in the afterlife, but also how to live faithfully and fruitfully for Him in this life. Far too many professed Christians do not take seriously the call to be disciples of Jesus. Disciples are called to live 'disciplined' lives. Christianity in this age of comfort and convenience has strayed from a life of dedication and sacrifice for the cause of God's kingdom. God warned us about this.

'But mark this: There will terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God'.

- 2 Timothy 3:1-4 NIV

'The crying need today is for people of faith to live faithfully. This is true in all spheres of human existence, but is particularly true with reference to money, sex and power. No issues touch us more profoundly or more universally. No themes are more inseparably intertwined. No topics cause more controversy. No human realities have greater power to bless or curse. No three things have been more sought after or are more in need of a Christian response. The issues of money, sex and power catapult us into the arena of moral choice. Jesus gave considerable attention to the themes of money, sex and power. Of the three, he spoke more about money and power than he did about sex, for the simple reason that sex was not the burning issue then that it has become today.' - Richard Foster

(the above underlined sentences are mine for emphasis - JB)

Satan has used the same tactic down through history. He takes the good things that God has given us and **distorts** them.

Money can be used to bless people but Satan turned it into **greed and carnal self-indulgence**

Sex is meant for unselfish love, procreation and pleasure but Satan turned it to **selfish lust.**

Power is meant for service and to bring freedom but Satan turned it to **pride and domination**

'Historically, it seems spiritual revivals have been accompanied by a clear, bold response to the issues of money, sex and power. When these revivals occur in a culture. there is a renewal of both devotional and ethical life.' - Richard Foster

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