

The Pleasure Gospel

By David Pierce

Marilyn Manson had played there the week before so I knew it wouldn't be an easy night.

"The only hand you will get from me is my fist in your face!" Screamed the punks at the front of the stage. At the same time our sound tech was fighting off one of the staff in the club that was trying to turn off my microphone to shut me up.

This was all happening while I was inviting people in the club to join hands with me and pray. Despite this, many pushed their way to the stage and prayed, including the band that played before us.

God broke through all the opposition we faced but I was tired and a little depressed. Everybody except me had their wife with him and I was missing my family.

After the concert, we drove to the promoter to get our housing for the week.

"We have a very nice room for you." said the promoter to our drummer and his wife and they were taken to a nice room with a television next to a nice bathroom.

"Oh and for you, we have a whole house!" he explained to another member of the band.

As everybody was getting their housing assigned to them, I assumed I was left to last because I was getting something special. After all, I was the leader of the band and needed my rest. I also had to speak the next day so obviously I had to be somewhere it would be decent.

"David, this is where you are going to sleep this week." the promoter said. He led me to the equipment room next to the drum kit. There on the floor was a mattress. Just a mattress, no blanket, no pillow, just a mattress.

When he left, I stared at my mattress and I was really upset. "I can't believe this!" I mumbled to myself. I am the leader of the band. I am the only one that doesn't have his wife with him and I have to sleep on a bare mattress. I have to speak tomorrow and this is how I get treated.

While I was grumbling and complaining to myself, I realized that I better pull it together and be "humble". So I started to get spiritual about it.

"I am willing to sleep on a bare mattress!" I thought to myself.

"I'm so humble I'm even willing to sleep on a mattress." I pondered.

"Other guys in my position would demand to sleep in a hotel but I'm so humble I'm willing to sleep on a mattress." I said to myself feeling better all the time.

"I'm kind of like Mother Theresa." I concluded.

As I was thinking about what a humble guy I was I felt God break into my hard heart.

"Do you understand what a privilege it is for you to be on this tour and go into these clubs!" I felt God say to me.

"Most people in the world are just trying to figure out where their next meal is coming from and you are not willing to sleep on a mattress!" I felt the Holy Spirit say.

"I was willing to be born in a barn and you're not willing to sleep on a mattress!!" I felt rebuked.

I fell to my knees by the drums and told Jesus that I was sorry and that I would gladly sleep on the mattress for Him.

There is a false gospel in the world today and if I'm not careful I can be seduced by it. It is called the Pleasure Gospel.

If I'm not careful this Pleasure Gospel will rob me of the great things God wants to do in my life.

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Can you imagine if you knew you were about to be executed and that you could write one last letter before you died? Obviously you would talk about things that mattered in that final letter.

That was the situation that Paul was in when he wrote II Timothy. This was his last letter before he died and it was a warning to Timothy.

He says in II Timothy 3: 1-5

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, LOVERS OF PLEASURE RATHER THAN LOVERS OF GOD, HAVING A FORM OF GODLINESS BUT DENYING ITS POWER. And from such people turn away!

Paul is saying to Timothy: "Be careful Timothy that you are not seduced by the Pleasure Gospel!"

My drummer Ken Green told me about some people in the States that volunteered to have a chip planted in their head and a "plug in" on their arm. Apparently this enabled them to close their eyes and see video inside their head. The ultimate virtual reality!

When you think about it that would be a great thing to have. If you were ever bored you could just close your eyes and watch a movie. (This would come in handy in some of the meetings I've had to attend.)

It is obvious I think that we live in a pleasure culture. Always looking for the next thrill or adrenaline rush. Now don't get me wrong. I'm not against pleasure. I enjoy life.

One of my favorite things to do is to go to some island somewhere and chase my wife around, but Paul is saying: "Be careful David that you are not seduced by the Pleasure Gospel."

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The Pleasure Gospel has several tenets:

LOVE MYSELF

I don't watch Oprah but I accidentally saw it once. Different women on the program were making their resolutions for the new millenium.

"I'm just going to look after myself this year." one woman explained. "I'm number one!" she continued. "Oh that's wonderful, Oprah cried, wiping the tears from her eyes.

Another woman stood up and said the same and the audience applauded wildly. This gospel of self doesn't believe in self-control, responsibility, commitment or loyalty.

What matters is my feelings, my needs, me. Like Sarah in Douglas Rushkoff's CYBERIA.

Sarah takes sexuality quite seriously. As several recording engineers carry equipment into Sarah's basement studio to mix the final tracks to her Bacchae record, she makes a startling admission: she'll probably perform with 'low energy' today because she had an abortion yesterday. For lack of anything better to say, one of the engineers asks her how it was.

' I took acid before I went in,' she says, 'because I really wanted to experience it. It was a purge.' (Page 218) CYBERIA by Douglas Rushkoff.

The second tenet of the Pleasure Gospel is:

NO SIN ONLY ADDICTIONS

I was speaking in a church about how God wants us to be pure in our thought lives. When I was finished speaking I invited people to come to the front of the church if they needed to make things right with God.

One of those who came forward started to pray "Dear God help me with my addiction to lust."

You see in the Pleasure Gospel there is no sin only addictions. The reason President Clinton has problem with women is because his mother and grandmother fought a lot when he was a child.

In the Pleasure Gospel nobody sins, we are all victims.

The third tenet of the Pleasure Gospel is:

HARD WORK/ BAIL PRINCIPLE

Unless it comes easily, the Pleasure Gospel isn't interested. Why?

Because sacrifice is not pleasurable.

THE PLEASURE GOSPEL REJECTS ABSOLUTE TRUTH

I was invited to speak at a big conference in Holland. It was being translated into five languages and it was my chance to make the "big time". Obviously I wanted to do a good job so they would invite me back so I really prayed hard that God would show me what I should speak about.

Finally, I got the idea that God wanted me to speak about Hell. So I worked really hard on my Hell talk. At the meeting following a cheerful worship service it was my turn to speak.

I got up and gave my Hell talk. I was really doing a good job I thought sweating and spitting, giving the best Hell talk of my life.

After I was finished speaking nobody would talk with me. Nobody. The organizer wouldn't talk to me, the other people on the stage wouldn't talk with me, nobody would talk to me. So finally I just walked out of the auditorium, got on a bus and went home. After that I was never asked back again to speak by that particular organization.

Now that was either the best or the worst talk I have ever given but one thing I know for sure is this: Jesus and celebrity don't go together. To follow Jesus is to go contrary to the popular culture. Jesus said beware when people speak highly of you!! The Pleasure Gospel rejects things like Hell because the Pleasure Gospel rejects absolute truth.

The Pleasure Gospel is ungrateful. Why? Because it's based on my rights. The question is not God how can I please you. It's God how can you please me.

The Pleasure Gospel is always driven by feelings. Always seeking after another "spiritual experience" but faith is a decision not an emotion. I have been involved in this work for 20 years now. During this time I have felt loneliness so heavy it's been like a physical pain. I've felt fear. Sometimes I've been sick with fear. I've felt apathy where I didn't care about anybody. I've felt joy. I've felt peace. I've felt turmoil but I have decided to follow Jesus.

It's like the song I learned in church when I was a kid. I've decided to follow Jesus and there is no turning back. The cross before me the world behind me, I have decided to follow Jesus. Though none go with me still I will follow. I have decided to follow Jesus and there is no turning back.

The Pleasure Gospel doesn't understand this because the Pleasure Gospel has no revolutionary spirit.

But if I'm honest I have to say that the most rewarding times in my walk with Jesus have also been some of the most difficult. Like when we were trying to drive from Amsterdam to Moscow on one of our evangelistic tours, before the fall of communism. Wondering if we would find fuel for our vehicles, pouring instant coffee into bottles of mineral water to try and stay awake.

Or crying out to God in Amsterdam trying to figure out how to reach the punks there. Sometimes it felt like I was hitting my head against a wall. It was difficult and hard but it was the best.

Or when I joined the Yugoslavian Army to tell the soldiers about Jesus. It was difficult, it was hard-core but it was the best.

Some researchers in America put an electrode into the brain of a rat so that every time the rat would push a button it would feel pleasure. Then they put the rat in a cage with good food and water and the pleasure button.

They wanted to see what the rat would do.

The rat went over to the pleasure button and pushed the pleasure button. Again the rat went over and pushed the pleasure button. David, I want to do so much in your life if you only seek me. I push the pleasure button. David, do you understand the passion I want to bring into your life? Push the pleasure button. David, do you understand the mighty life I could give you if you would only seek me? Push the pleasure button.

And the rat pushed the pleasure button until he starved himself to death.

I was not created to just live a selfish life or be a hedonistic lover of pleasure. I can enjoy life but I was created to be in the battle and so were you.

Paul warned Timothy that in the last days there would be people in the church that would be lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God having a form of godliness but denying its power.

SO the question I want to ask you is this: Do you love God more than you love pleasure? Because if you're not careful you can be seduced by a false gospel, the Pleasure Gospel. This false gospel will deny you of your spiritual inheritance and you will miss the destiny God has for you.

For this lost generation,

David Pierce
No Longer Music
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