

Some Very Bad Choices Are Pleasing to the Eyes

Matthew 4: 8-11

I. Jesus' third temptation is a visual experience (Matthew 4:8)

- A. What we see can stimulate our appetites and desires.
 - 1. This is true of food, drink, sex, materials goods.
 - (a) None of these things are necessarily evil.
 - (b) But God and wisdom both call for boundaries and limits.
 - (c) So, desire for these things is not necessarily wrong.
 - (d) But human desire can become distorted to lust.
 - 2. John 1:16 NASB refers to the "lust of the eyes."
 - (a) What we see sometimes stimulates sinful desire.
 - (b) But it's not just what we physically see.
 - (c) It is also about perception and belief.
 - (d) Paul writes about the "eyes of your heart" (Ephesians 1:17-18).
 - (e) He is talking about "seeing" in the sense of perception and understanding.
 - 3. So, the "eyes of your heart" can "see" who God is.
 - (a) But, similarly, we can also see, or perceive, things in a way that tempts us.
 - (b) It depends on what we believe we can get from what we see. Do we believe that that thing can give us life?
- B. The Living God is the only source of life, physical and spiritual.
 - 1. He alone is the ultimate thing.
 - (a) He is the source of ultimate fulfillment.
 - 2. He is set apart as the Source. He is Creator; self-existent.
 - (a) Here Are Your Gods; Christopher J.H. Wright; page 32.
 - (b) Therefore, he alone is worthy to be worshipped.
 - 3. Sometimes we look to the creation to be the ultimate thing.
 - (a) We look to the creation for life.
 - (b) When we do that, our desire gets corrupted to lust.

II. The objects of our lusts always lie to us.

- A. The real issue is idolatry.
 - 1. We see something we want, and we make it into a god.
 - (a) We believe it can give us what only God can give.
 - (b) We look to that thing for life and fullness.
 - 2. The Father gives us life. He provides, protects and, in the end, will even give us glory.
 - (a) Our gods promise the same things.
 - (b) But not in God's will, God's way, or God's timing.
 - (c) Like Satan, false gods never fulfill their promises.
 - (a) Here Are Your Gods; page 38, 42.

- B. Idolatry is worship of the creation, rather than the Creator.
 - 1. We even make idols of ourselves (creature) and our choices.
 - (a) As Eve gazed at the fruit, "You will be like God."
 - (b) "You will know good and evil" (moral autonomy).
 - (c) You can decide for yourself what is right and wrong.
 - (d) Here Are Your Gods; p. 34.
 - 2. A glaring example: abortion has been labeled "choice."
 - (a) People determining right from wrong apart from the revelation of God (Proverbs 16:25). It "seems" right.

II. The lust of the eyes is a twisted form of worship.

- A. Satan saw the connection between what he was showing Jesus and worship.
 - 1. He showed him the kingdoms of this world and their glory.
 - (a) "I'll give you all of this if you worship me."
 - 2. Jesus was already on the path to becoming King.
 - (a) The path required faithfulness.
 - (b) The path would go through the cross, not around it.
 - 3. Satan showed Jesus the glory (doxa) of the kingdoms.
 - (a) Not just the physical glory (opulent palaces/great armies)
 - (b) Probably the "glory" of adoring people, worshiping him.
 - (c) Jesus is on his way to that, too, but it must be God's way.
 - (d) He is enticing Jesus with false visions of glory.
- B. Satan promises Jesus what the Father will already give him.
 - 1. But it is not God's will (Jesus' mission is our redemption).
 - 2. It is not God's way (submission, obedience even unto death)
 - 3. It is not God's timing (Jesus is called to trust and wait).
- C. Satan is a liar, and the perception he suggests is not true.
 - 1. If Jesus falls for the deception, he falls into spiritual death.
 - 2. Rather than glory, he would become just another fallen one.
- D. The same thing happens with us.
 - 1. We see something and we perceive it to be a pathway to good.
 - 2. Desire morphs to lust as we falsely believe I need that, want that, absolutely have to have that, to experience life.
 - 3. At that moment we are tempted to bow down to a false god.
- E. Jesus showed us the way of escape, "It is written."
 - 1. The only way to combat lies and false perceptions is to embrace truth.
 - 2. Jesus was very specific. Find Scripture that addresses the lie specifically. Hang on to that. Trust it. Stand on it!
- F. If you know you are being attacked, you have authority.
 - 1. Jesus said, "Away from me, Satan!"
 - 2. You have authority to do the same in Jesus' Name!