

## Intoxicating Desires

*“Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” (1 Peter 5:6-8 NKJV)*

When we first come to a place of genuine surrender in our lives because “the pain of staying the same has become greater than the pain of changing” we experience a tremendous freedom in Christ knowing that He cares for us. After all we have cast our cares upon Him. The excitement of a newly converted or a newly surrendered believer is exhilarating to be around. Sometimes as mature or seasoned believers we feel the need to temper or tone down their excitement. While that is not always the best course of action there is some wisdom in doing so.

In helping people who have been living in life dominating sin to be freed from their past and their behavior, it would be easy to misapply the admonition to “be sober” to mean be abstinate from the use of intoxicating beverages or substances. But what the apostle is saying here is that in the joy of having our burdens lifted by Almighty God there is a certain caution that needs to be exercised.

While we are committed to refraining from substances that once held us captive, there are other things that can jeopardize our new found freedom. We can become intoxicated by desires of the flesh and misdirected passions, some of them being seemingly harmless or even productive. This is called positively programed flesh. They can come in the form of a relationship or an agenda driven by our emotions rather than our spirit.

*This then is what I mean. Let your lives be guided by the Spirit, and then you will certainly not indulge the cravings of your lower natures. For the cravings of the lower nature are opposed to those of the Spirit, and the cravings of the Spirit are opposed to those of the lower nature; because these are antagonistic to each other, so that you cannot do everything to which you are inclined. (Galatians 5:16-17 WNT)*

Our enemy is walking about seeking to devour us but often when attacks from without fail to derail us he uses our own affections to separate us from God and destroy our testimony.

*“Lord I confess that too often I am prone to be carried away and held captive by my own fleshly desires. Grant me the wisdom to discern the movement of your Spirit in my life from the desires that come from my fallen flesh. May I cling to you today fully cognizant that I have an enemy but that in reality he is a defeated foe. Amen”*

*Jim Freed*