

## LETTERS FROM GRANDPA

# 438

Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will deal with a Scripture that has had a profound influence upon my life and ministry. It was January 1975 and I was teaching a class at the River Park Church in South Bend, Indiana. I wanted everyone to be pure like Jesus and my primary approach, up to that time, was to give them "warnings". To encourage them to obtain "His divine nature" I quoted the following Scripture: **"According as his divine power has given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."** (2 Pet. 1:3-4 KJV) Suddenly I saw something in that passage I had never seen before. I explained to the class that I had just quoted that Scripture for "them", and wanted to quote it again for "myself". I did! On that day it dawned on me that escaping "lust" does not come from "warnings" but from "exceeding great and precious promises".

It now seems obvious! If I warn you "Don't think about lemon pie" you will probably start thinking about lemon pie. Yet, you were not thinking about lemon pie before I warned you not to think about it! Such warnings are counter productive regarding lust! Paul wrote to the Romans: **"I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said 'Do not covet.' But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetousness desire. For apart from the law, sin is dead."** (Rom. 7:7-8) Legalistic warnings do not help us to avoid lust! God put warnings in the law for a purpose. He did it to make us realize our sinfulness and thus our need of salvation (Rom. 3:19).

Yes! There is a place for warnings! Paul, for example, warned the Corinthians like a father warns his children (1 Cor. 4:14). Ignoring warnings can be fatal! The Titanic received 5 different warnings about icebergs before hitting an iceberg and sinking. This tragedy took place on April 15, 1912 and 1,512 people died. Not only did the captain ignore warnings, the passengers also did. After hitting the iceberg the Titanic stubbornly stayed afloat for 3 hours but finally sank at 2:20 a.m. Since this was the middle of the night most were comfortably asleep in their warm rooms. When crew members pounded on their door and warned them many merely rolled over and went back to sleep. They had been told that the Titanic was unsinkable. Sadly, they didn't even have enough life boats. Even if every lifeboat was filled to capacity they would only save 1,178 people. The first life boat that was lowered was designed to hold 65 people and it left with only 28 on board. Sadly only 705 people were saved. Hundreds of others could have been saved if only they had heeded the warnings!

We repeat! Yes! There is a place for warnings! **"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."** (Prov. 9:10) Sadly, those who have no fear of God are going to be condemned (Rom. 3:18). Our letter today, however, is about avoiding lust and warnings do not help in avoiding "lust"! The passions of youth make one vulnerable to a wide variety of traps that are set by Satan. Today's letter will focus on "promises" as one way escape those traps!

Jesus, as you know, fasted for 40 days and 40 nights (Matt. 4:2). It is almost impossible to imagine the powerful hunger he must have felt. If you decided to "partake of His divine nature" and also fast for 40 days, what kind of sermons would help you the most? Would you prefer 40 sermons

warning you against food or 40 sermons on his exceeding great and precious promises? A sermon against lemon pie would probably not be helpful in avoiding hunger!

The divine prescription for avoiding lust involves exceeding great and precious promises, and the Bible is filled with them. Here are just a few:

- **“Nothing is impossible with God” (Lk. 1:37)**
- In Christ you are a totally new creation (2 Cor. 5:17).
- God has given you a new heart and His Spirit will move you to follow his decrees (Ez. 36:26-27).
- In Christ you are more than a conqueror (Rom. 8:37).
- Jesus will never leave you or forsake you (Heb. 13:5).
- God will never allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able to bear (1 Cor. 10:13).
- You can do everything through Christ who strengthens you (Phil. 4:13).
- God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:19).
- Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength, soar like an eagle, run and not grow weary, and walk and not be faint (Is. 40:31).
- If you trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding He will guide your paths (Prov. 3:5-6).
- **“God is able to make all grace abound in you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.” (2 Cor. 9:8)**
- If you lack wisdom you can ask of God and He will give it (Ja. 1:5)
- **“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that hears my word, and believes on him that sent me, has everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” (Jn. 5:24)**
- These are just a few of the many exceeding great and precious promises in the Bible that will help you to partake of his divine nature!

We repeat! God has **“given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”**

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce