

# WORLDLY METHODS

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“What we win people with is what we win people to” – *Joe Crews*

**5T172** – The accession of members who have not been renewed in heart and reformed in life is a source of weakness to the church. This fact is often ignored. Some ministers and churches are so desirous of securing an increase of numbers that they do not bear faithful testimony against unchristian habits and practices. Those who accept the truth are not taught that they cannot safely be worldlings in conduct while they are Christians in name. Heretofore they were Satan's subjects; henceforth they are to be subjects of Christ. The life must testify to the change of leaders. Public opinion favors a profession of Christianity. Little self-denial or self-sacrifice is required in order to put on a form of godliness and to have one's name enrolled upon the church book. Hence many join the church without first becoming united to Christ. In this Satan triumphs. Such converts are his most efficient agents. They serve as decoys to other souls. They are false lights, luring the unwary to perdition. It is in vain that men seek to make the Christian's path broad and pleasant for worldlings. God has not smoothed or widened the rugged, narrow way. If we would enter into life, we must follow the same path which Jesus and His disciples trod--the path of humility, self-denial, and sacrifice.

**EV525** – “The divine commission needs no reform. Christ's way of presenting truth cannot be improved upon. The worker who tries to bring in methods that will attract the worldly minded, supposing that this will remove the objections that they feel to taking up the cross, lessens his influence. Preserve the simplicity of godliness.”- Letter 123, 1903.

**5T31, 32** – “If you lower the standard in order to secure popularity and an increase of numbers, and then make this increase a cause of rejoicing, you show great blindness. If numbers were evidence of success, Satan might claim the pre-eminence; for in this world his followers are largely in the majority. It is the degree of moral power pervading the college that is a test of its prosperity. It is the virtue, intelligence, and piety of the people composing our churches, not their numbers, that should be a source of joy and thankfulness.” (see also PK565, 566)

**PP607** - Many urge that by uniting with worldlings and conforming to their customs they might exert a stronger influence over the ungodly. But all who pursue this course thereby separate from the Source of their strength. Becoming the friends of the world, they are the enemies of God. For the sake of earthly distinction they sacrifice the unspeakable honor to which God has called them, of showing forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. 1 Peter 2:9.

**RH6/20/82** – The bondage of worldly habits and customs is so pleasing to the natural heart that it has become well-nigh universal. Few can be found who are willing to deny self that they may walk in the light of Heaven. It is because they know not Christ and obey not the truth, that professed Christians can accept as their portion the pleasures of sense and the changing fashions of a fickle world. Not one of those who have come out from the world, in obedience to the injunctions of Christ, can find pleasure in its amusements or its display. Many are saying by their course of action, that the line of demarcation between Christians and the world must not be too distinct. They conform to the customs and unite in the pursuits of the lovers of pleasure, in order to retain their friendship, and exert an influence to win them to the truth. The plea is not new. The same work has been often attempted since the opposing forces of good and evil first existed in the world. The result has ever been the same. Conformity to worldly customs converts the church to the world. It never converts the world to Christ. "The friendship of the world is enmity with God. Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." How can the loyal subjects of the Great King be in harmony with his bitterest foe? When the professed people of God choose the fellowship of the world, what marvel that the presence and blessing of Christ is shut out from the church?

**4T571** – In order to meet the real wants of the people, the stern motives of religious principle must be a controlling power. When Christians and worldlings are brought together, the Christian element is not to assimilate with the unsanctified. The contrast between the two must be kept sharp and positive. They are servants of two masters. One class strive to keep the humble path of obedience to God's requirements,--the path of simplicity, meekness, and humility,--imitating the Pattern, Christ Jesus. The other class are in every way the opposite of the first. They are servants of the world, eager and ambitious to follow its fashions in extravagant dress and in the gratification of appetite. This is the field in which Christ has given those connected with the sanitarium their appointed work. We are not to lessen the distance between us and worldlings by coming to their standard, stepping down from the high path cast up for the ransomed of the Lord to walk in. But the charms exhibited in the Christian's life--the principles carried out in our daily work, in holding appetite under the control of reason, maintaining simplicity in dress, and engaging in holy conversation--will be a light continually shining upon the pathway of those whose habits are false. There are weak and vain ones who have no depth of mind or power of principle, who are foolish enough to be influenced and corrupted from the simplicity of the gospel by the devotees of fashion. If they see that those who profess to be reformers are, as far as their circumstances will admit, indulging the appetite and dressing after the customs of the world, the slaves of self-indulgence will become confirmed in their perverse habits. They conclude that they are not so far out of the way after all, and that no great change need be made by them. The people of God should **firmly uphold the standard** of right and **exert an influence to correct** the wrong habits of those who have been worshiping at the shrine of fashion, and break the spell

which Satan has had over these poor souls. Worldlings should see a **marked contrast** between their own extravagance and the simplicity of reformers who are followers of Christ.

**GC508, 509** – Satan is continually seeking to overcome the people of God by breaking down the barriers which separate them from the world. Ancient Israel were enticed into sin when they ventured into forbidden association with the heathen. In a similar manner are modern Israel led astray. "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." [2 COR. 4:4.] All who are not decided followers of Christ are servants of Satan. In the unregenerate heart there is love of sin, and a disposition to cherish and excuse it. In the renewed heart there is hatred of sin, and determined resistance against it. When Christians choose the society of the ungodly and unbelieving, they expose themselves to temptation. Satan conceals himself from view, and stealthily draws his deceptive covering over their eyes. They cannot see that such company is calculated to do them harm; and while all the time assimilating to the world in character, words, and actions, they are becoming more and more blinded. Conformity to worldly customs converts the church to the world; it never converts the world to Christ. Familiarity with sin will inevitably cause it to appear less repulsive. He who chooses to associate with the servants of Satan, will soon cease to fear their master. When in the way of duty we are brought into trial, as was Daniel in the king's court, we may be sure that God will protect us; but if we place ourselves under temptation, we shall fall sooner or later.

**5T433** – "If the world hate you," said Christ, "ye know that it hated Me before it hated you." You have entertained the opinion that the reason why the world is so much opposed to us as a people is that we are too unsocial, too plain in our dress, and too strict in regard to amusements, withdrawing ourselves from them too much in practice as well as in precept. You have thought that if we would be less exclusive and would mingle more with the world, their opinions and impressions of us would be greatly modified. But no greater mistake could affect the human mind. Said Christ: "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for My name's sake, because they know not Him that sent Me."

**TM472-475** – As the people of God approach the perils of the last days, Satan holds earnest consultation with his angels as to the most successful plan of overthrowing their faith. He sees that the popular churches are already lulled to sleep by his deceptive power. By pleasing sophistry and lying wonders he can continue to hold them under his control. Therefore he directs his angels to lay their snares especially for those who are looking for the second advent of Christ

and endeavoring to keep all the commandments of God. Says the great deceiver: "We must watch those who are calling the attention of the people to the Sabbath of Jehovah; they will lead many to see the claims of the law of God; and the same light which reveals the true Sabbath reveals also the ministration of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, and shows that the last work for man's salvation is now going forward. Hold the minds of the people in darkness till that work is ended, and we shall secure the world and the church also. "The Sabbath is the great question which is to decide the destiny of souls. We must exalt the sabbath of our creating. We have caused it to be accepted by both worldlings and church members; now the church must be led to unite with the world in its support. We must work by signs and wonders to blind their eyes to the truth, and lead them to lay aside reason and the fear of God and follow custom and tradition. "I will influence popular ministers to turn the attention of their hearers from the commandments of God. That which the Scriptures declare to be a perfect law of liberty shall be represented as a yoke of bondage. The people accept their minister's explanations of Scripture and do not investigate for themselves. Therefore, by working through the ministers, I can control the people according to my will. "But our principal concern is to silence this sect of Sabbath keepers. We must excite popular indignation against them. We will enlist great men and worldly-wise men upon our side, and induce those in authority to carry out our purposes. Then the sabbath which I have set up shall be enforced by laws the most severe and exacting. Those who disregard them shall be driven out from the cities and villages, and made to suffer hunger and privation. When once we have the power, we will show what we can do with those who will not swerve from their allegiance to God. We led the Romish church to inflict imprisonment, torture, and death upon those who refused to yield to her decrees; and now that we are bringing the Protestant churches and the world into harmony with this right arm of our strength, we will finally have a law to exterminate all who will not submit to our authority. When death shall be made the penalty of violating our sabbath, then many who are now ranked with commandment keepers will come over to our side. "But before proceeding to these extreme measures, we must exert all our wisdom and subtlety do deceive and ensnare those who honor the true Sabbath. We can separate many from Christ by worldliness, lust, and pride. They may think themselves safe because they believe the truth, but indulgence of appetite or the lower passions, which will confuse judgment and destroy discrimination, will cause their fall. "Go, make the possessors of lands and money drunk with the cares of this life. Present the world before them in its most attractive light, that they may lay up their treasure here and fix their affections upon earthly things. We must do our utmost to prevent those who labor in God's cause from obtaining means to use against us. Keep the money in our own ranks. The more means they obtain, the more they will injure our kingdom by taking from us our subjects. Make them care more for money than for the upbuilding of Christ's kingdom and the spread of the truths we hate, and we need not fear their influence; for we know that every selfish, covetous person will fall under our power, and will finally be separated from God's people.

"Through those that have a form of godliness but know not the power, we can gain many who would otherwise do us harm. Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God will be our most effective helpers. Those of this class who are apt and intelligent will serve as decoys to draw others into our snares. Many will not fear their influence, because they profess the same faith. We will thus lead them to conclude that the requirements of Christ are less strict than they once believed, and that by conformity to the world they would exert a greater influence with worldlings. Thus they will separate from Christ; then they will have no strength to resist our power, and ere long they will be ready to ridicule their former zeal and devotion. "Until the great decisive blow shall be struck, our efforts against commandment keepers must be untiring. We must be present at all their gatherings. In their large meetings especially our cause will suffer much, and we must exercise great vigilance, and employ all our seductive arts to prevent souls from hearing the truth and becoming impressed by it. "I will have upon the ground, as my agents, men holding false doctrines mingled with just enough truth to deceive souls. I will also have unbelieving ones present who will express doubts in regard to the Lord's messages of warning to His church. Should the people read and believe these admonitions, we could have little hope of overcoming them. But if we can divert their attention from these warnings, they will remain ignorant of our power and cunning, and we shall secure them in our ranks at last. God will not permit His words to be slighted with impunity. If we can keep souls deceived for a time, God's mercy will be withdrawn, and He will give them up to our full control. "We must cause distraction and division. We must destroy their anxiety for their own souls, and lead them to criticize, to judge, and to accuse and condemn one another, and to cherish selfishness and enmity. For these sins, God banished us from His presence; and all who follow our example will meet a similar fate."

**RH4/8/80** – The people of God should not imitate the fashions of the world. All who do this will gradually lose that peculiar, holy character which should distinguish them as God's people. In these last days some of the fashions are shameful and immodest. If God's professed people had not greatly departed from him, there would now be a marked difference between their dress and that of the world. We are living in a time when earth's inhabitants are growing more and more corrupt, and the line of distinction must be more plain between them and the Israel of God, or the curse which falls upon worldlings will fall on God's professed people.

**RH1/9/94** – As the truth is brought into practical life, the standard is to be elevated higher and higher, to meet the requirements of the Bible. This will necessitate opposition to the fashions, customs, practices, and maxims of the world. Worldly influences, like the waves of the sea, beat against the followers of Christ to sweep them away from the true principles of the meekness and grace of Christ; but they are to stand as firm as a rock to principle. It will require moral courage to do this, and those whose souls are not riveted to the eternal Rock, will be swept away by the worldly current. We can stand firm only as our life is hid with Christ in God. Moral independence

will be wholly in place when opposing the world. By conforming entirely to the will of God, we shall be placed upon vantage-ground, and shall see the necessity of decided separation from the customs and practices of the world. We are not to elevate our standard just a little above the world's standard; but we are to make the line of demarcation decidedly apparent. There are many in the church who at heart belong to the world, but God calls upon those who claim to believe the advanced truth, to rise above the present attitude of the popular churches of today. Where is the self-denial, where is the cross-bearing that Christ has said should characterize his followers? The reason we have had so little influence upon unbelieving relatives and associates is that we have manifested little decided difference in our practices from those of the world. Parents need to awake, and purify their souls by practicing the truth in their home life. When we reach the standard that the Lord would have us reach, worldlings will regard Seventh-day Adventists as odd, singular, straight-laced extremists. "We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men."

**RH12/12/82** – "Many who imitate the customs and fashions of the world claim that they do this in order to have an influence with worldlings. But here they make a sad and fatal mistake. If they would have a true and saving influence, let them live out their profession, show their faith by their righteous works, and make wide the distinction between the Christian and the world. Our words, our dress, our actions, should tell for God. Then all will take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus. Unbelievers will see that the truth which we profess has a holy influence, that faith in Christ's coming affects our character. If any wish to have their influence sell in favor of the truth, let them live it out, and thus imitate the humble Pattern."

For further study read:

**GC39-48** – "Persecution in the First Centuries"

**GC461-478** – "Modern Revivals"