

Theme: Christians are called to a life of self-denial and bearing the cross in order to follow Jesus, but the iWorld encourages a life of indulgence and instant gratification.

## I. Intro – Orwell and Huxley’s Nightmare

- A. Orwell’s nightmare - 1984 - coercion by Big Brother
- B. Huxley’s nightmare - willing complicity through indulgence and entertainment
- C. I love both books and learned a LOT from each!
- D. Many are worried about Orwell’s nightmare
- E. But the iWorld embraces Huxley’s nightmare!
- F. Yet Jesus calls us to deny self, carry cross
- G. How do we do this in the indulgent iWorld?

## II. The Radical Call To Discipleship

- A. Jesus’ radical call for discipleship  
Then he said to them all: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.” Luke 9:23
  - 1. Phrase come after me - refers to being a disciple
  - 2. Radical nature of this call is still arresting - after 2,000 years!
  - 3. To whom does this call apply? What does it require?
- B. The radical nature of this call  
Then he said to them all: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.” Luke 9:23
  - 1. Scope - it includes everyone - all, anyone

- 2. Demand - must - not an option
- 3. Depth of requirements
  - a. Deny himself - willing to restrain ourselves
    - 1. Certainly includes denying our sinful passions
    - 2. Also includes restraining even good desires to they do not dominate
    - 3. We deny ourselves to give ourselves to Jesus and His kingdom
  - b. Take up cross - willing to die if necessary
    - 1. Not a nice religious symbol - an instrument of death!
    - 2. Follow Jesus - even if it kills our own plans and desires
  - c. Daily - not a one time thing - renewed daily!
- 4. Summarized - follow me!
  - a. Deny himself - Jesus denied Himself, emptied Himself for us
  - b. Take up cross - Jesus went to the cross - for us!
  - c. To follow Him means we must do the same  
“When Jesus calls a man He bids Him come and die.” - Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Cost of Discipleship*
    - 1. And for Bonhoeffer it meant literal death
    - 2. And for many of our brothers and sisters around the world today it means literal death
    - 3. And for all of us it means a radical death to our own desires and plans each day

### III. The Indulgent iWorld

- A. The very real danger of Huxley's nightmare  
"What Orwell feared was those who would ban books. What Huxley feared was that there would be no reason to ban a book, because there would be no one who wanted to read one. ... Orwell feared that the truth would be concealed from us. Huxley feared the truth would be drowned in a sea of irrelevance. Orwell feared we would become a captive culture. Huxley feared we would become a trivial culture. ... In short, Orwell feared that what we hate will ruin us. Huxley feared that what we love will ruin us." Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves To Death*
1. Huxley's nightmare is coming to pass
  2. As we have seen in this series, our technological tools have reshaped our hearts and minds, desires and habits
- B. The iWorld is the world that indulges our every desire through technology
1. Technology has harnessed nature so we can bend it to our needs - and this is good - to a point
  2. But this can engender the belief that our desires should always be indulged - and never denied or restrained
  3. "For the wise men of old the cardinal problem had been how to conform the soul to reality, and the solution had been knowledge, self-discipline, and virtue. For magic and applied science alike the problem is how to subdue reality to the wishes of men: the solution is a technique" - C.S. Lewis
  4. Ayn Rand hated Lewis with a passion; awful terms

for him in her marginal notes in *Abolition of Man*

5. Teknos + logos would have been unthinkable to the Greeks - you do not shape the logos - the inner reality - only some external things. But we think it frees us from the logos.
- C. The iWorld has enshrined our desires - they should never be "repressed"
1. Have it your way - Burger King (for fast food)
  2. Obey your thirst - Sprite (soft drink)
  3. All these express the philosophy that we should have what we desire
  4. This philosophy quickly moves from food and cosmetics - to anything we desire - OBEY YOUR THIRST
  5. And Jesus still calls - DENY YOURSELF - AND FIND FREEDOM AND LIFE
- D. The iWorld indulges our desires immediately - whenever we want
1. We live in the age of microwaves, internet searches
  2. We live in the age of iPods and DVR's
  3. We no longer have to wait for our desires - we want the world and we want it now!
  4. And Jesus still says "Deny yourself, take up your cross daily and follow Me!"
- E. The result - indulgence is now a virtue, and self-control a vice
1. Freedom is now misdefined as pure freedom to

fulfill my own desires - which is really slavery

2. My identity is now equal to my desires, and to say no is to repress myself
3. Whatever sexual urges we have must be indulged - and anyone who even says that is not good is a blight to humanity
4. Your body and genes might say you are a man, but if you FEEL like a woman, then that is what matters - and anyone who says differently is a hate-filled bigot
5. If you want that music or movie - steal it off the internet - what matters is your desire
6. If the relationship is not working, or some hot young thing comes along - end the marriage and move on
7. But this kind of freedom creates men without chests (Lewis) - those who can not rise above their own desires

#### F. The Gospel truth for the indulgent iWorld

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. <sup>12</sup> It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, <sup>13</sup>while we wait for the blessed hope — the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, <sup>14</sup>who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. Titus 2:11–14

1. This is a direct challenge to the indulgent iWorld
2. A disciple must learn to say no to disordered desires
3. A disciple learns to wait, to be purified from evil and to desire what is good

4. But all of this is done by grace - not our own efforts
5. The good news is not that everything we desire is ok, but rather that Jesus can give us strength to overcome and to give us good desires

## IV. Applying the Word in the iWorld

### A. Do I realize my need to deny self and take up the cross?

1. Our desires need to be under Christ's Lordship
2. A disciple is one willing to live a life of self-control
3. But the iWorld will not support this - and will often lash out at those trying
4. This is why we must bear the cross
5. Have my heart and mind been captivated by the indulgence philosophy of the iWorld?
6. Take your cue from God's Word - not the iWorld!

### B. Means of Grace - restraining practices for life in the indulgent iWorld

1. Scripture - to inform our mind of whether our desires are ordered or disordered
2. Prayer - receiving strength from God for our struggle
3. Fasting - one of God's means of graces/spiritual disciplines
  - a. Helps us to chasten our appetites
  - b. God uses this to spiritually strengthen us as well
4. Fellowship - to encourage us, and to correct when

needed

5. The Lord's Table - examining ourselves, and receiving grace for the struggle

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, <sup>24</sup> and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." <sup>25</sup> In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." <sup>26</sup> For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

<sup>27</sup> Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.

<sup>28</sup> A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. <sup>29</sup> For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. <sup>30</sup> That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. <sup>31</sup> But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. <sup>32</sup> When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world. 1 Corinthians 11:23–32

## Restrained In An Indulgent World

Luke 9:23

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Communion

2 Thessalonians 3:5

Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.  
Luke 9:23

May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance. 2 Thessalonians 3:5