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## Demas' Decision: To Go Back Into the World

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*Do your best to come to me soon. For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. (2 Timothy 4:9-10)*

What a sad statement found here in the closing comments of the last letter written by Paul! Why did Demas decide to desert this apostle of Christ? No one really knows.

He might have feared for his own life. Paul had written, "the time of my departure is at hand" (v. 6), and perhaps Demas feared that he, too, would be executed if he stayed in close contact. His decision to depart to Thessalonica might have been based on nothing more than cowardice!

Demas might have been allured by the temptations of sin. The word "world" is used in this sense in 1 John 2:15–17 where "all that is in the world" is described as "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." In this sense of the word, friendship with the world is to become an enemy of God (James 4:4). There have been many in our own generation who once stood valiantly for the truth, but have fallen away from the Lord by the decision to commit fornication or some other act of ungodliness. Demas, too, might not have resisted the temptations of evil and thereby became an enemy of righteousness (1 Cor 9:27).

But Demas might have been neither a coward nor immoral. He might have made his decision to desert Paul simply because of confused values! He may have chosen things that appeared to him to be good and wholesome—respectable—by putting them first at that point in time was to "desert" Paul.

Respectable worldliness is perhaps the most deceptive kind and, therefore, is difficult to identify. Before we know it, we can be so caught up in morally good activities that we no longer "have time" to study, meditate and pray daily. In fact, we are sometimes so tired from the activities of Saturday that our worship on the Lord's day is in bodily presence only.

Jesus said, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it" (Luke 9:23–24). Are those empty words to you? What does it mean to lose your life? The trouble with many is that we want heaven to be on earth, thus we have become so enamored with the heaping up of material stockpiles that we have lost any commitment to the Lord which may involve self-denial of temporal pleasures.

We mean no harm; in fact, we say that we love the Lord. But our lives demonstrate a misplaced affection. The blessings of this great nation have become a curse to the spirituality of many Christians. Take a look at ourselves. We drive several miles to attend a ball game, but cannot go across town to attend a gospel meeting. We hardly blink an eye at the debt we assume in order to buy a new car or TV, but we would suggest a psychiatrist for the man would make the same debt preaching in a needy area. We have no time for in-depth study of the Bible, and many audiences prefer a "sermonette" during the time that is set aside for teaching. ("Sermonettes" preached by "preacherettes" only convert "Christianettes"!)

*Respectable worldliness* has given us a ho-hum attitude to its own evil because it seems good. We all know the drunkard, adulterer, liar, etc. is going to hell, and we will “amen” the preacher who steps on their toes! But who believes a person will be lost because he worked too many hours making an “honest living”? Or will be condemned for attending ball games? Or relaxing with family or friends? Or for buying a new TV or car?

The answer to these questions is found in the parable Jesus taught in Luke 14:16–24. The people who were forbidden to taste of the great supper did not commit any overt act of sin. They were lost over

1. A piece of land;
2. Five yoke of oxen;
3. A new wife!

The lesson is simple: put God first! “For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?” (Matthew 16:26)

We do not know exactly why Demas forsook Paul, but whatever the reason, it was not worthy. Let us consider ourselves lest we make a decision to forsake the Lord because of cowardice, wickedness, or the respectable worldliness of misplaced values (cf. Hebrews 3:12–14).

## Mysteries of Life

Once when I was going to Columbus, Ohio, I stopped to eat in a restaurant and ordered a slice of watermelon. I took the seeds home with me to plant in my garden.

That night a thought came to my mind. How many watermelon seeds would it take to make a pound? The next day I weighed them and found that it would take about 5,000 dried seeds.

A few weeks later I planted just one of the little seeds. Under the influence of sunshine and shower, that little seed had taken off its coat and gone to work. It had gathered from somewhere two hundred thousand times its own weight and forced that enormous weight through a tiny stem and built a watermelon. On the outside it has a covering of green and within that a rind of white and within that a core of red; and then it had scattered through the red many little seeds, each one capable of doing the same work over again.

What architect drew the plan? Where did the little watermelon seed get its strength? Where did it find its flavoring extract, and its coloring matter? How did it build a watermelon?

Until you can explain a watermelon, do not be too sure that you can set limits to the power of the Almighty. The most learned men in the world cannot explain the watermelon, but the most ignorant man can eat a watermelon and enjoy it. God has given us the knowledge necessary to use these things, and the truth that he has revealed to us is infinitely more important for our welfare than it would be to understand the mysteries that he has seen fit to conceal from our faltering view.

*For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, Romans 1:20-*

by William Jennings Bryan