

Distracted Much? How Our Crazy Culture Is Stealing Our Souls

No generation in history has had so many distractions to deal with. No generation in history has had so many temptations. No generation in history has had so much entertainment and defilement available right at our fingertips (quite literally). That means that it is much harder to live consecrated, undistracted lives for the Lord, lives that are free from the contamination of sin and the saturation of the world.

To say it bluntly, we are in the midst of a fierce war for our souls, yet many of us are living as if we were on vacation. We must wake up! The enemy of our souls is out for our souls. Make no mistake about it.

This is not to minimize the terrible suffering endured for the faith by our brothers and sisters in heavily persecuted countries. They are paying the ultimate price for their convictions, right until this day. But in this context, I'm simply speaking of the temptations of sin and the distractions of the world. We are facing these in unique and unprecedented ways, because of which many more are falling away from the Lord. This is a simple observation rather than rocket science.

So, in addition to the objections of the new atheists and the agnostic professors, in addition to the impact of LGBTQ-plus activism, in addition to the problem of suffering, in addition to the many church scandals, in addition to the challenge of religious exclusivism, there is now one more great obstacle to our relationship with the Lord: lots and lots of opportunities to sin. Some things just never change.

There's an old saying that either sin will keep you from the

Bible, or the Bible will keep you from sin. The same can be said about prayer. Either sin will keep you from prayer, or prayer will keep you from sin. In both cases, the more that sin is present, the more that devotion to God will be absent. It's a simple spiritual principle.

It's also true that distractions will keep us from maturing in the Lord. Jesus addressed this in the Parable of the Sower, which spoke about a man sowing seed on different types of ground. (The man in the parable represented Jesus, and the seed represented God's Word.) The seed that fell on thorny soil grew into a plant, but the thorns choked it, and so it could not come to maturity and bear fruit.

What did these thorns represent? As Jesus explained, they represented the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, the pleasures of life and the desires for other things that enter in and choke the Word, and it proves unfruitful. (See Matt. 13:22, Mark 4:19, Luke 8:14). We live in a very thorny world!

That's why John wrote 1 John 2:15–17 (ESV): “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.” In our day, it has become increasingly difficult to keep our hearts free from the love of the world.

Think back to the days before we had cable TV, let alone streaming services online. We had four or five channels to choose from, and some of them stopped broadcasting at midnight. And, for many years, our home TVs were black and white, often with poor reception. Before that, there was radio only, and before that, only books and table games and the like.

Contrast that way of life with today's way of life, when you can watch breaking news on your cell phone or view an endless number of movies or a multitude of live sporting events—almost wherever you are in the world, and right in the palm of your hands. And let's not forget the constant distraction of endless texts, messages, emails and social media posts. Our brains are becoming rewired for constant digital stimulation, to the point that it's becoming increasingly difficult to focus for long. This, too, is destructive to our spiritual life. It is so much easier to be shallow and scattered than to be deep and focused.

Devotion to the Lord requires discipline, and if we can't control our physical appetites, it's unlikely that we will master the other areas of our lives.

(Excerpted from my newest book, *Why So Many Christians Have Left the Faith: Responding to the Deconstructionist Movement with Unshakable Timeless Truth*. To read a free chapter, go to .)

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