

FACING THE CHALLENGES OF THE 21ST CENTURY

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Life is full of challenges. Some are easy to handle and some are difficult to handle. Some are very difficult to overcome. What ever the case may be, challenges are part and parcel of human life, and they make man stronger and mature. Every generation and civilization has its own challenges.

The challenges of the 20th century are not the same with the challenges of the 21st century. As knowledge increases, so values and principles change; and this brings new challenges as living standards and lifestyles change. As cultures, fashion, civilization change so also the way of life of people. As technology improves and increases so also the lifestyle of the people. And this also creates new challenges as people are exposed to good and bad information that are readily available through the communication system of the modern world. An example is the internet.

Some of the things that were regarded as taboos in many cultures of the world are now being permitted and practiced freely by many with no one questioning them or bringing them to order. Decent dressing is giving way to indecent dressing. So many unthinkable things are happening in our society today. Things that people dare not try in previous centuries are now being practiced in the 21st century. Ripley's "Believe it or not" television show showed a wedding that was conducted with the couple and wedding guests all completely naked. No one in that occasion wore any clothing or underwear. I also saw that there is an internet news station where the news casters strip naked completely while reading the news. It is called "Naked News". We now have nude beaches, night clubs and theatres in many cities of the world. Pornography is taking over the life of many because it is easily available in magazines, cable, TV, VCDs and DVDs, and sold in the open market without fear of arrest for no one is making effort to arrest the producers and marketers. The internet is filled with pornography sites, some free and some commercial. Many are being corrupted by it around the world, especially young people.

Just notice these from xxxchurch.com and one from awake:

- ▶ Number of pornographic web sites: 280 Million.
- ▶ People who regularly visit Internet porn web sites daily: 40 million.
- ▶ US porn revenue exceeds the combined revenues of ABC, CBS, and NBC at \$6.2 billion per annum.
- ▶ 70% of children said their parents knew "very little or nothing" about their online activities. 30% of 9 to 10 year-olds said that they visited private and adults-only chat rooms. The problem gets worse with 58% of 11 to 12 year-olds, 70% of 13 to 14 years-old, and 72% of 15 to 17 years-old reporting such activity (Awake, Moll from Phi Delta Kappan, 2005).

The challenges of the 21st century for singles are great and must be overcome by the child of God. It will take a comprehensive knowledge of these challenges to have victory. For you cannot fight and overcome what you don't know.

It is appalling to know that many singles today do not care about what they copy from the world and the dangers of joining the crowd to do what is in vogue. The problem is that many do not give attention to the consequences of getting involved with the modern day revolution. Many have lost their zeal to follow and serve the Lord because of the influence of the world on their lives.

MAJOR 21ST CENTURY CHALLENGES:

1. Corruption through the internet.
 - Internet pornography.
 - Internet fraud.
 - Flirting on the internet.
 - Preoccupation with internet chatting.
2. Women liberation thinking and influence.
3. Improper dressing.
 - Sex appeal type of dressing.
 - Very revealing dresses
 - Nudity and modeling.
4. Immorality
 - Fornication
 - Masturbation
 - Lesbianism
 - Homosexuality
 - Pornography
 - Incest – sex with close relation.
 - Bestiality – sex with an animal.
 - Rape
 - Anal sex
 - Oral sex
 - Pedophilia – sex with a child.
 - Sex toys – instruments for self-sex.
 - Many other forms of ungodly sex acts.
5. Atheistic teachings from books and academic lecturers. E.g. Evolution and Dinosaur theories.
6. Pursuit of career at the expense of one's relationship with Christ.
7. Love of money leading to many evils like fraud, stealing, banditry, using sex to obtain favour, promotion, contracts and money, prostitution and insincerity.
8. Rejection of sound doctrine as a result of unwillingness to correct the ills in one's life.

Ex 23:2

2 "Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong. When you give testimony in a lawsuit, do not pervert justice by siding with the crowd,

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It takes a committed and determined Christian single to face and overcome challenges such as above. It will take intimate knowledge of God and a resolve not to corrupt oneself with the world to keep away from these evils that are poised to capture the entire human race.

Dan 11:32

32 With flattery he will corrupt those who have violated the covenant, but the people who know their God will firmly resist him.

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Isa 1:19-20

19 If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land; 20 but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword." For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

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REQUIREMENTS FOR FACING THE CHALLENGES OF THE 21ST CENTURY

- 1. Make a full submission of your life to Jesus Christ with a resolve to follow him intimately and obey him in all things at all times.**
- 2. Give time to studying and meditating on the word of God and renewing your mind with the word of God.**
 - Let the word of God define the parameters within which you will live your life.
 - Drop what ever your teachers, professors, books, parents, guardians and friends taught you that the word of God contradicts.
 - Give up and destroy out of your life every wrong conclusion you have reached from your experiences in life and the experiences of others you know as you discover the truth from God's word from the Bible.
 - Determine to hold no other opinion except that which God's word declares.
 - Give yourself to constant meditating on the word of God and destroy old and wrong mindset and take on a new mental attitude to life and all things based on the life of Jesus Christ you have received and the word of God.
- 3. Be ready to face rejection from non-believers and uncommitted Christians who will not appreciate your "hard stand" on many issues of life.**
 - You must not compromise your stand for friendship with any one no matter who that person is to you or in the society.
 - You must be ready to stand alone if the need be. Accept the tongue lashing, bashing and calling of names for the sake of your relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Stand and do not give in no matter what.
 - Be God's friend rather a man's friend. God's friendship will pay you more than any human relationship will. Always remember, friendship with the world is enmity with God.

James 4:4-10

4 You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. 5 Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely? 6 But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says:

*"God opposes the proud
but gives grace to the humble."*

7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

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- God wants you to stand firm and live by the truth and not the lies of the Devil.

John 4:23-24

23 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. 24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

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Eph 6:10-18

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

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- 4. Keep company with people of like passion for Jesus so you can be encouraged and motivated to continue to serve the Lord with fervency of spirit.**

- Not everybody who claims to be a Christian has passion for righteous living and determined to follow the footsteps of Jesus Christ as we are called to.
- Look out for those with a passion for holiness and determination to please God and stand out from the crowd.
- Separation from corrupt people is both an Old Testament and New Testament principle.

Lev 11:43-45

43 Do not defile yourselves by any of these creatures. Do not make yourselves unclean by means of them or be made unclean by them. 44 I am the LORD your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy. Do not make yourselves unclean by any creature that moves about on the ground. 45 I am the LORD who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy.

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Ps 101

I will sing of your love and justice; to you, O LORD, I will sing praise. 2 I will be careful to lead a blameless life--when will you come to me? I will walk in my house with blameless heart. 3 I will set before my eyes no vile thing. The deeds of faithless men I hate; they will not cling to me. 4 Men of perverse heart shall be far from me; I will have nothing to do with evil. 5 Whoever slanders his neighbor in secret, him will I put to silence; whoever has haughty eyes and a proud heart, him will I not endure. 6 My eyes will be on the faithful in the land, that they may dwell with me; he whose walk is blameless will minister to me. 7 No one who practices deceit will dwell in my house; no one who speaks falsely will stand in my presence. 8 Every morning I will put to silence all the wicked in the land; I will cut off every evildoer from the city of the LORD.

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2 Cor 6:14-18

14 Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? 15 What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? 16 What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."

17 "Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you." 18 "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.

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1 Cor 15:33

*33 Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character."
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5. Determine not to corrupt yourself with the rottenness in this modern world.

- Determination is firmness of purpose. It is resolution. Determination is persistence. Determination is to make up one's mind firmly on what he wants to become or achieve in life.
- All achievers are determined people. Without determination there can be no success or accomplishment. No one ever makes it in life without a strong determination to make it. People, whose minds are not made up about what they want, don't get anything and anywhere. Until you firmly resolve within yourself about what you want to achieve in life within a given time frame, you will live a wasted, fruitless and disappointing life.
- Determined people are achievers. Determined people never give up until they see their heart desire come true. Nobody ever made it without determination. Even our God couldn't have succeeded in winning anybody back to himself without determination. It was his determination to reconcile man back to himself that made him to sacrifice his only begotten Son Jesus Christ our Lord.
- Life is full of challenges, obstacles and problems capable of cutting one's destiny short if yielded to. It is only those who are determined that face the challenges with boldness and confidence, and win. Determination will turn you into a winner.
- Determined people never quit. They don't take no for an answer because they are resolute about what they want, they will stop at nothing until they achieve their goals, obstacles and challenges notwithstanding.
- Be determined not to be corrupted by the internet and the sexual revolution that the enemy has launched on mankind.
- Be determined not to allow love of money to rise and take root within you. Be a tither and giver and never be greedy or covetous.
- Be determined not to allow yourself to be drawn into indecent and almost nude dressing of the 21st century wayward men and women.
- Do not allow the spirits of Sodom and Gomorrah to enter you – the spirits of pride, rebellion and immorality.
- Be determined to model your life after the word of God and the Lord Jesus Christ who left an example that we should follow in His steps.
- Be determined not to masturbate, become homosexual or lesbian no matter the urge.
- Be determined not to have sex except within marriage no matter the temptation and internal pressure.
- Be determined to keep your thoughts pure because what you think you will manifest. Every emotion is a manifestation of your thoughts. Every desire is a manifestation of your thoughts. Every word is a product of your thoughts. Every action is by product of your thoughts. Every decision is the outcome of your mental assessment and judgement. Your life is a reflection of your thoughts.

- Be determined to marry as a virgin if you are still a virgin. Do not defile yourself like others have done. There is great reward in keeping yourself chaste.

Rev 14:1-5

14:1 Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads. 2 And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. 3 They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. 4 These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. 5 And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.

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- Be determined not to join the crowd to do evil and live wickedly.

Ex 23:2

2 "Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong. When you give testimony in a lawsuit, do not pervert justice by siding with the crowd,

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- Be determined to live by the word of God in all things and at all times.

6. Be excited about Jesus always. Keep your enthusiasm for Jesus satisfies.

Mark 12:29-30

29 "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'

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- Love the Lord with all your heart (spirit), your soul (mind, emotions and will) and all strength.
- Think often about God.
- Be emotionally involved with God.
- Willingly serve and obey God at all times. Do not allow Him to pressure you to do something or anything He wants. Willingly obey God at all times.
- Love Him with all your strength – your talents, gifts, skills, training, physical muscles and energy and financial power. Use your connections and everything you are and have to serve Him. Be so excited about Him and the salvation He has given you to give Him your all.