

23-1224p Transcript

23-1224p - 6-America - Addicted and Soft, Dependent and Lost, Scott Reynolds

Bible Reader: Scott Reynolds

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6-America - Addicted and Soft, Dependent and Lost

Transcript (0:03 - 23:43)

Scripture Reading

Bible Reader: Scott Reynolds

Ephesians 5:15-21,

(0:03) Okay, the scripture reading is from the book of Ephesians, chapter 5, verses 15 through 21. (0:12) Ephesians 5, 15 through 21.

(0:16) Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise, but as wise, making the best use of the time, (0:24) because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord (0:31) is. And do not get drunk with wine, for it is debauchery. Be filled with the Spirit, (0:39) addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in (0:45) your heart to the Lord. Giving thanks always for everything to God the Father in the name of our (0:53) Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. And that concludes our (1:00) reading. (1:01)

Transcript

Preacher: Scott Reynolds

(1:02) We have been bringing to you sessions of a webinar series entitled Seven Threats of Our (1:09) Time by Dr. Del Tackett, the author of the Truth Project and the Engagement Project.

And tonight (1:17) we will cover the sixth session of the Seven Threats. I'm going to change it up a bit and read (1:23) the sixth article on which the sixth lesson of the webinar is based, entitled America Addicted (1:32) and Soft, Dependent and Lost. This is really a continuation of what we were doing this morning (1:40) and in this webinar.

This article actually picks up with where we were going to, where we were at (1:48) the end of this morning's lesson. So he starts by saying, this is a little bit of a review, (1:55) when someone is hit with any kind of disease or virus, the most significant factor in whether they (2:02) will survive or

not is their current mental and physical health. Are they strong and hardy, (2:10) or are they weak and lacking the will to fight? It is no different when one is assessing (2:15) the threats to a culture.

Are the people strong in character? Are they resilient and alert? Are (2:23) they capable of withstanding the storm, or are they weak and ready to give up and give in? Are (2:30) they unified by a noble and high cultural vision? The scripture rightly says, where there is no (2:38) vision, the people perish, or they are unrestrained, Proverbs 29, 18. In fact, in my (2:48) Bible app, all the translations I looked at, all of them said there, instead of the people perish, (2:56) which I only found in the King James Version, all of them said, (3:00) or the people are unrestrained when there is no vision. So there are many, many ways to assess (3:08) the health of a culture.

We have already looked at several for generations now. We have consistently (3:14) sowed the message. It's all about me.

People have come to expect it. We have descended into (3:21) some self-deceptive meology of homo deus, where even a child is now given the right (3:29) of divine proclamation in what sex they would like to be. Defying these divine assertions (3:37) is considered blasphemy and subject to being purged.

This self-obsession is practically (3:44) indiscernible from the state of Rome before it fell. There are four characteristics that paint (3:54) an ominous picture of our inability to withstand the perfect storm raging around us. Addicted, (4:03) number one characteristic.

Addiction in general, in a general sense, is defined as the compulsion (4:13) to repetitively involve oneself with a substance or activity that is overall unhealthy. (4:22) If one considers substance addictions, the statistics are not good. Conservative numbers (4:31) indicate that one in 16 adults have an alcohol use disorder.

We used to call that alcoholism. (4:41) When one considers the impact of those addicted, that those addicted have on family members and (4:48) friends, it is not hard to think that half of our nation is negatively affected by this addiction. (4:57) Consider college students.

One in three use marijuana. That's 32.6 percent. One in eight (5:06) use cocaine.

One in eight elusive syngens. And one in 10 use MDMA or ecstasy. (5:16) Many argue that the U.S. is in the midst of an opioid crisis.

2019 saw nearly 50,000 people die (5:27) of opioid overdose. 19 states have made marijuana use fully legal, with 25 states close behind. (5:38) My state, Colorado, though, was second to legalize marijuana.

It was sold to voters (5:46) because it would bring financial gain to the state. In reality, the cost to taxpayers (5:53) is now \$5 for every \$1 gained in tax revenue. This is in addition to the expense of covering (6:02) things like marijuana-related DUIs that cost the state \$25 million in 2016.

(6:10) It is nothing compared to the loss of productivity and the reduced energy that comes from its use. (6:17) The National Institute on Drug Abuse states that marijuana is the most used drug, (6:24) and its long-term effects are damaging us. This includes infertility, increased testosterone in (6:32) women, decreased testosterone in men, and a psychological dependence that demands an (6:38) ever-increasing use of the drug.

This is why marijuana is considered a gateway to harder (6:45) drugs like heroin and cocaine. If you remember this morning, Wendell was making the point (6:54) about God's modus operandi that he empowers his creatures to be fruitful, (7:02) and it's the fruitfulness of his creation that brings glory to God. You can see here, (7:09) even with marijuana, that it's damaging to that.

It takes away our fruitfulness (7:15) and increases infertility. It lowers our dopamine levels and thus our motivation to do anything, (7:28) so it makes us stupor and not active, so it robs us of our fruitfulness, (7:35) and that robs God of his glory from his creation, his creation he had made to be fruitful, (7:43) to glorify him. On the sweeter side, many consider that Americans are addicted to sugar (7:49) in all of its forms.

We crave it. We are eating. We have eating addictions on both sides, (7:57) too little or too much, but the larger concern is with the addictions that are increasingly part of (8:04) our daily routines, and these deal not with substance addictions but addictions to activities (8:10) like video games, social media, music and entertainment, pornography, etc.

Teenagers (8:17) spend nine hours a day consuming screen entertainment. Adults, six hours per day. (8:26) It is not too far of a stretch to say that we are even obsessed with these things and would suffer (8:33) withdrawal symptoms if they were taken away.

The implications for one's life, though, is striking. (8:40) Not only are we dealing with the possible physical disorders that arise from our addictions, (8:46) but one must consider the loss of fruitfulness that comes from the sheer amount of time (8:53) and the percentage of one's life that is being lost. It wouldn't be a bad exercise for each of (9:01) us to take a week and make a personal log of how we spend our time, how much of it is being (9:08) fruitful and how much of it is basically for our own pleasure, and if you're going to throw away (9:14) six hours a day or nine hours a day, you don't have much time to do anything else.

(9:23) The second characteristic is America is soft, and when I say this, I'm thinking about the toughness (9:30) that built this nation. I think of the pioneer woman who buried her child by the side of the (9:36) trail, mourned, and then climbed up into a covered wagon, grabbed the rings, and pressed on. (9:43) We are now debilitated and require counseling if someone fails to use our personal pronoun.

(9:52) I think of the couple and family who cleared their land and fought the elements and hardships (9:57) required to make a go of a small farm, working sunup to sundown, and now we demand paid vacations (10:06) and sick time, maternal and paternal leave, shorter work days, etc., or we sit home and (10:13) take unemployment and don't work at all. I think of the founding generations whose day was spent (10:19) filled with simply working to provide the means of life, growing food, fetching water, making clothes, (10:28) maintaining their shelter, and yet they found time to read and worship and visit neighbors, (10:36) helping them when the need arose. Now we spend hours and hours a day consuming entertainment (10:44) and complain if the line at the fast food restaurant is too long.

We don't know our (10:50) neighbors and don't really want to. I think of those who went to war for the cause of freedom (10:56) and the many who gave their lives for the benefit of others. Now it is hard to find someone who is (11:03) willing to risk their Facebook numbers by speaking out against the insanity of our times or to speak (11:11) with any patriotic zeal.

We used to say, sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will (11:19) never hurt me. Now the wrong words will put us in an emotional tailspin that requires psychological (11:26) therapy. And if we use the wrong words, it can get us canceled or purged with the underlying (11:33) perspective that it is all about me.

If the world doesn't follow my script, I become incapacitated (11:42) or engorged with the power now granted to the offended and call upon the system to punish the (11:50) offender, make restitution to me. Since compassion, malevolent, has become our primary ethic, (11:59) anything that gets in the way of one's personal desires will be seen as the new evil. (12:07) If we were to be completely honest with ourselves, we are pampered, coddled, overindulged, (12:16) overweight, weak-willed, and easy pickings for an overthrow.

America is dependent. Dependency (12:26) is a means to become soft, but it also strips us of our incentive to be fruitful, such as what happens (12:36) when the state pays people to not work. Jobs will go unfulfilled, and the fruit of a nation will be (12:44) diminished.

Over half of Americans receive dependency payments from the federal government. (12:51) Becoming dependent on substances such as alcohol or drugs can prevent us from dealing with the (12:57) bumps in our life, using the substance to falsely remove us from the troubles. That, too, leads to (13:05) weakness and softness, in which we are unable to face difficulties and would rather run away (13:12) than confront them, even if they are enemies of what is right.

Becoming dependent upon (13:21) entertainment and pleasure or other forms of escape can also diminish our fruitfulness, (13:27) and the downstream life that is meant to come from that fruit. Spiritual dependency comes when (13:34) religious institutions become the substitute for our own spiritual responsibilities. I can come to (13:42) believe that the Church has the primary responsibility for the spiritual growth of my (13:48) children, of my spiritual growth, of my own ministerial responsibilities, replacing the (13:56) command to love my neighbor with participation in Church programs.

Dependencies are the result of (14:07) conceding control of my life and responsibility to someone or something that will in return (14:15) supposedly care for me in my slothfulness. This, too, is delivered to us through malevolent (14:24) compassion, for in the end it will destroy us and our culture. America is lost.

When people (14:34) lose sight of the larger story of God, it becomes all about their story. When this happens, we lose (14:42) the source of true significance. Significance is one of the greatest, if not the greatest, drives of (14:49) the human soul.

Totalitarian regimes exert enormous power by entering a home at night, (14:59) removing the non-compliant, never to be seen or heard of again. He disappeared into a nothingness (15:06) hole. He became insignificant.

This consequence of becoming nothing was the single most powerful tool (15:15) of the tyrant. Losing all significance is repugnant to the human soul, for we were made to find our (15:25) significance in our Creator. When we lose sight of who we truly are and whose we truly are, (15:35) we enter into a desperate struggle to find significance from somewhere, anywhere.

Some (15:42) try to find it in their beauty and form, some in their humor and charisma, some in their intellect, (15:49) some in their power and control over others. Some sense they gain

significance by taking it from (15:56) others, thinking that by belittling or mocking or cutting down, they have somehow become more (16:03) significant by elevating themselves. When you become cognizant of this, you will see it played (16:09) out all around us.

Some are so afraid of losing any significance that they will not take any risks (16:16) in relationships or interactions in which they might be embarrassed. It is now part of our culture (16:23) that significance comes from being labeled as part of an oppressed class. Being offended now brings (16:32) its own warped sense of significance, and people actually long for someone to offend them.

(16:42) When a people lose sight of the larger story of God, they become rootless and swayed by whatever (16:50) emotional wind is currently blowing. They are tossed to and fro by things that go viral, (16:57) by headlines or tweets or YouTube videos, by entertainment stars who speak as if they're (17:03) the culture's clerics. The primary ethic of compassion, malevolent, moves us to embrace (17:10) what is vile.

The noble male and the virtuous female are no longer heroes to which we strive. (17:19) Our striving is now for things vain and empty. The words of Solomon are ever more relevant to us (17:27) He sought for meaning and gained knowledge, but found it to be meaningless.

We have the world's (17:34) knowledge at our Google fingertips, and in the midst of this overwhelming mass of knowledge, (17:40) we find it ultimately unfulfilling. And after hours of suffering ourselves with it, we end up (17:52) empty. Solomon sought for significance and pleasure and drink.

He sought for it in surrounding (17:59) himself with slaves who would cater to his every whim, like asking Alexa for the weather or for (18:06) a pizza to be delivered or a pair of new shoes as per my special order delivered by Coachman tomorrow. (18:14) And yet, when my whims are met, I feel more alone and hollow than before. Solomon denied himself (18:22) nothing his eyes desired, like putting on earbuds and listening to any music he wanted, (18:31) or watching dancers or actors perform in any genre of movie one could desire.

He surrounded himself (18:38) with comfort and pleasure, and in the end, it was all meaningless, void of significance. (18:47) Such is our culture, wealthy with pleasures and things beyond the dreams of any king in the past, (18:55) yet desperate to be significant, vainly seeking it from the things of the world. (19:07) I do not intend for all this to be depressing.

On the contrary, this is the necessary reality (19:14) that the people of God need in order that we might understand the times in which we live, (19:22) so that we might know what we should do. What will overcome this dismal state of our culture (19:30) and the moaning and groaning we see all around us? I know of only one thing, and that is the (19:37) transformed lives of individual men and women. And that can only come through the diligent prayers (19:47) of God's people and the deep relationships that he has called us to form with those providentially (19:58) around us, those who are addicted and soft, dependent, and lost.

Resist the pull of our (20:07) culture into addictions and obsessions, into becoming soft and desiring pleasures and acceptance (20:14) more than telling the truth, into becoming dependent upon anything that destroys your (20:20) incentive to be fruitful, into getting caught up in your own small

story and losing your place (20:29) in the metanarrative of God. So, dear remnant, be strong and courageous. This is our day.

(20:39) This is our time, all for the glory of the Lord. Let us not grow weary of doing good, (20:46) for in due season we will reap if we do not give up. Galatians 6, 9. For whatever was written in (20:53) former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement (21:00) of the scriptures, we might have hope.

And so, we are going to be a people. Yes, we have become (21:08) a remnant in the land, but we are a people of hope. And as a remnant, and we are going to see (21:16) this next time, that I think there are a lot of things we can take great hope in, even with what (21:23) is happening in our culture around us.

So, I'm going to close with a prayer that Bill spoke (21:36) in his webinar, and it goes this way. Father, there are a lot of issues that we've looked at (21:46) tonight, that we've brushed over, and yet the reality is that just one person who is consumed (21:53) by an addiction can wreak havoc upon a marriage, upon children, upon families and friends. And so, (22:01) Father, we don't want to just skip over that and treat it lightly.

We do not. We understand there (22:08) is a great deal of weeping and groaning in our culture, just to think of the people who find (22:14) themselves feeling insignificant in a world that doesn't seem to really care about them, (22:20) grasping at anything they can to show themselves significant. And the loneliness and depression (22:28) that comes by not being able to control the world.

Father, all of this is around us, and we pray (22:36) that you would give us ears to hear, eyes to see, that you would fill us with the love and compassion (22:43) that is bridled by truth and wisdom and righteousness, that we might walk appropriately (22:51) in this world, and that, Father, we might not lose hope. We might not be like those who wring (22:59) their hands in fear and tremble, whose knees knock, whose hearts are melting, but that we would be a (23:06) people, Father, who understand the reality of who we are and whose we are. And so, I pray that that (23:16) might be true for all your people.

Encourage them, strengthen them, be their rock and Lord, (23:24) that we might glorify you in all that we do. In Jesus' name, amen. (23:36) The invitation is being extended.

Is there anyone who is in need of it? Let's stand and sing. (23:43)