



The
PROPHETIC
CONDITIONS
Series



A GENERATION OF
**PLEASURE
SEEKERS**



ABOUT THE COVER

For many today, the pursuit of pleasure has actually become a life-defining endeavor. And, at every turn, there are almost innumerable ways in which this craving is catered to and fed. But God's Word shows that, while there is nothing wrong with pleasure and fun, there is much more to the human experience.

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Why the PROPHETIC CONDITIONS Series?

Knowledge and technology are exploding, yet the world is drowning in a sea of problems! *Alcohol abuse* is on the rise. Vast regions of farmland are “dying of thirst” due to droughts and erratic *weather* patterns. The allure of *drugs* is fast seducing a younger generation that no longer knows how to be kids. *Crime* is more violent, more entrenched, more widespread than ever. *Immorality* is robbing families and youth of their innocence by “entertaining” sick, perverted, carnal desires. And the earth is choking in the *polluted* filth produced by humanity.

WHY?

The *Prophetic Trends and Conditions Series* will report global trends and problems. It explains why humanity is deluged with such overwhelming—and insoluble—problems.

And points to mankind's *only solution!*

Condition reports in the Series:

The ALCOHOL EPIDEMIC

EARTHQUAKES and VOLCANOES in Prophecy

The Tragedy of DRUG ABUSE

What's Wrong With THE WEATHER?

The Worldwide CRIME WAVE

This POLLUTED EARTH

WITCHES, WIZARDS and SPIRITS: Grave and Growing Danger

The IMMORALITY EXPLOSION!

Out of the Ashes: THE RISE OF EUROPE

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A GENERATION OF PLEASURE SEEKERS

PART ONE: An Addiction to “Fun”

PART TWO: A Desperate Need to Escape

THERE IS an old saying, “All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.” Seemingly, this has been replaced today by “Work hard, but play harder.” Although the first half of the current saying (working hard) is sound advice, most do not foresee the potential *imbalance* that this saying implies—that working hard also permits one to “play” harder.

What about time for family, rest and other things? Are these lumped under “play”? Unfortunately, that is unlikely. Most would agree that the pace in Western societies permits little time to “stop and smell the roses.” There are seemingly only enough hours in each day to work, “play” and perhaps sleep.

But is this healthy? Is this wise?

The Basic Premise

This is all driven by one thing—today’s world is extremely adept at making people feel as if they *need* more. This is the premise on which man and all his systems currently operate.

These “needs” include: “I just *need* that bigger television”—so one is conned into a “no-payments-and-no-interest-until-next-year” purchase from the local electronics store; “I just *need* that latest car model”—so one trades in an otherwise perfectly good vehicle; or, “I just *need* to see that latest movie, or wear that latest fashion”—so one spends endless dollars and time keeping “up-to-date” and “in-the-loop.” In other words, some people are driven by

For most, life is fast-paced and stressful. As this age draws to a close and life gets increasingly stressful, fearful and seemingly out of control, most feel a need to escape. To do so, they seek various physical pleasures. What are the consequences of this—and what will be the final result?

this mentality, and seem to live solely to satisfy their desire for physical possessions and sense of completion. Even those who have the financial means to do this ultimately find that happiness is still elusive.

This endless cycle—in which the lives of many remain empty and meaningless—creates a desperate need to escape. Typical of human nature, this void or this need to escape is often filled with something “easy,” “pleasant” and “readily available.”

While not necessarily wrong of and by themselves, just consider some of the almost endless pleasures at our beck and call: Satellite dishes and the Internet bringing images from around the world into our homes; restaurants serving up every kind of food; bars and liquor stores packed with alcohol of every flavor; shopping malls and stores as far as the eye can see—and easy money with which to buy it all. These are among what is considered “tame”—not to mention drugs, gambling, pornography and prostitution, satisfying every illicit and perverted sexual desire.

Tourist Traps

Have you recently visited any of North America’s (formerly) beautiful cities, whether on holidays or business? What has happened to places like Niagara Falls, Pigeon Forge and Daytona Beach? Gone are the days of simply enjoying nature—the majesty of God’s creation in these areas. They have instead become havens of bright flashing lights, screaming casinos, tall skyscrapers for hotels, lurid museums and exhibits, shops selling the latest and hottest trends, and restaurants that provide much more than just good food service. All of it is presented in a way to be pleasurable and, at the same time, to so quickly and easily extract money from your pockets.

The “main drags” provide an endless stream of overwhelming, money-spending “fun.” And it all constantly changes so fast. What was “in” and exciting at one time has to be updated in a few short years. These tourist traps promote the latest and greatest attractions. Of course, they still also promote their natural beauty, but under-

neath that façade lies the bright flashing lights and screaming casinos.

Once there, most tourists spend little time visiting the natural beauty, preferring instead the more exciting, man-made pleasures. The natural wonders themselves simply do not satisfy most anymore. One can just picture the children saying, “I’m bored”—but they are not bored with lurid museums and exhibits or with hundreds of shops selling the latest fashion craze.

All tourist traps have crammed so much into so little space, and the advertising promotes the fact that you are just minutes away from this or that—with “thousands of attractions” from which to choose! Their idea is to create a “mad rush” for pleasure, with one’s mind and wallet a little looser.

This addictive pleasure-seeking is driven by three things: The modern “play harder” mentality, the vacuum created by a meaningless life, and the creation of a desperate need to escape. These are all the result of *greed*—living the way of GET.

Tremendous Blessings Squandered

Most in the U.S., Britain, Canada, and most of the western European countries, are oblivious to the fact that the riches we enjoy today are a result of the blessings God promised to the descendants of the patriarch Abraham. In fact, they are even unaware that they *are* his descendants. (This is detailed in our book *AMERICA AND BRITAIN IN BIBLE PROPHECY*.) These blessings were unconditional; yet, generations of having lived the opposite of *God’s Way*—the way of GIVE—have led to a society in which most people cannot manage these riches properly.

The Bureau of Economic Analysis (part of the U.S. Department of Commerce) shows how disposable income (defined as: Personal income less personal tax and non-tax payments) per capita has dramatically increased since World War II (see chart). Note particularly the per capita amounts; note also the drastic drop in personal savings as a percentage of disposable personal income from 1981 to 2001.



It is a commonly held economic theory that as disposable income rises, so does spending on eating out, entertainment and recreation. The same source shows how this disposable income is spent and indicates that as a percentage of the total, recreation has increased from 2.5% in 1981 to 3.9% in 2001.

Also, little thought is given to the economic consequences of living the way of GET. Consider for a moment that most corporate companies are encouraged by their boards and stockholders to “make more money.” One method is to procure goods of lower cost and quality, and then seductively promote these goods, creating an artificial need in consumers’ minds. One effective television advertisement for an electronics superstore screams a theme song of “I want more!” This fuels sales of more big-screen televisions, VCRs, DVD players, stereo systems and home theater systems—all to feed the need to play harder, escape and fill that empty feeling.

The reliance of the U.S. economy (and most other western nations) on a citizenry addicted to seeking pleasure became so obvious during the weeks and months that followed the September 11 tragedy.

What was the government’s rallying cry to the U.S. consumer?: “Continue to spend. Go out with the family to

dinner and a movie. Plan a vacation to see the country.” Spend, spend, spend. Escape, escape, escape.

The economic keywords since that fateful date have been “consumer confidence.” The U.S. economy, and the nation, will not survive without the consumption of goods and services—without the addiction to the seeking of pleasures.

Unfortunately, the adage that “the only lesson learned from history is that no one learns from history” is also true in this case. Prior great civilizations fell not long after their citizens turned from building great nations to seeking pleasures. Whether it is the luxuries of the English Victorian age or the materialism of Rome during the third century, both immediately preceded the fall of those great empires. It would appear that the United States is headed in the same direction.

Addiction Begins Early

Tired parents quickly depend on “quick and easy” forms of keeping their children occupied, thus beginning this addiction at an early age. This includes an excess of television viewing, eventually leading to countless hours of movies and video games. Seemingly gone are the days of family walks, picnics, pursuing hobbies, daily chores and developing skills. (For

more information on childrearing in this troubled age, read our booklet *Train Up Your CHILDREN.*)

From childhood, people are programmed to demand and expect instant gratification. Need entertainment? Turn on the television and watch whatever you want, *now*. No time to cook? Stop by any number of fast-food drive-thrus and eat, *now*. Need to surf the Internet? Start up your high-speed connection and see whatever you want to, *now*.

Gone are the days of learning patience. We need it now, we want it now, and we get it now—PLEASURE!

Once people become bored with whatever was pleasing them, they may seek something more intense or extreme. As if to accommodate this, each new movie or television season becomes increasingly more explicit. If there is not “a little more skin,” or “a little more sex,” then it is nothing more than “last season.” Just scanning television channels during prime time demonstrates this point.

This trend in television is not limited to sitcoms and movies—news programs also “must” show more graphic images than they once did. The visual content slightly increases over time—what caught our attention last year is now seen as old and tired, so producers crank it up another notch. Our minds grow accustomed and calloused to such graphic scenes, and so, what was titillating at one point is no longer.

Movies that were rated “X” a couple of decades ago are now “R.” Those once rated “R” are now “PG-13” or “PG”—and so society’s downward spiral continues. What was shocking and immoral for a previous generation is common fare today.

If it is not the graphic content that makes movies popular, it is the latest and most incredible special effects. For example, filmmakers can create underwater worlds that were never possible before—exciting and usually pleasurable places to let one escape life’s pressures for a *little* while.

And *who* primarily watches TV and movies? Young children and teenagers. They are able to see movies today that were simply unheard of a

generation or two ago—all in the name of seeking pleasure. However, as children become adults, what effect will such pleasure-seeking have on them?

In its “2002 U.S. Movie Attendance Study,” the Motion Picture Association indicated that the number of moviegoers increased 6% in 2002, to 165.9 million, and that “frequent” and “occasional” moviegoers make up 63% of the total U.S. population and account for 99% of all ticket sales. Those aged 12-24 comprise 29% of moviegoers, while those aged 25-39 comprise 30%. Like other corporate giants, Hollywood continues to feed the “need,” and the nation continues to squander its blessings.

“Eat, Drink and Be Merry”

In addition to increased television and movie viewing, notice another growing trend. A 1994-95 study by the Food Surveys Research Group (a subsidiary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture) found:

■ The number of Americans who eat at least one food or beverage obtained away from home in the course of a day is 33% higher than in 1977-78.

■ Fast food establishments have surpassed restaurants as the most frequent source of outside food.

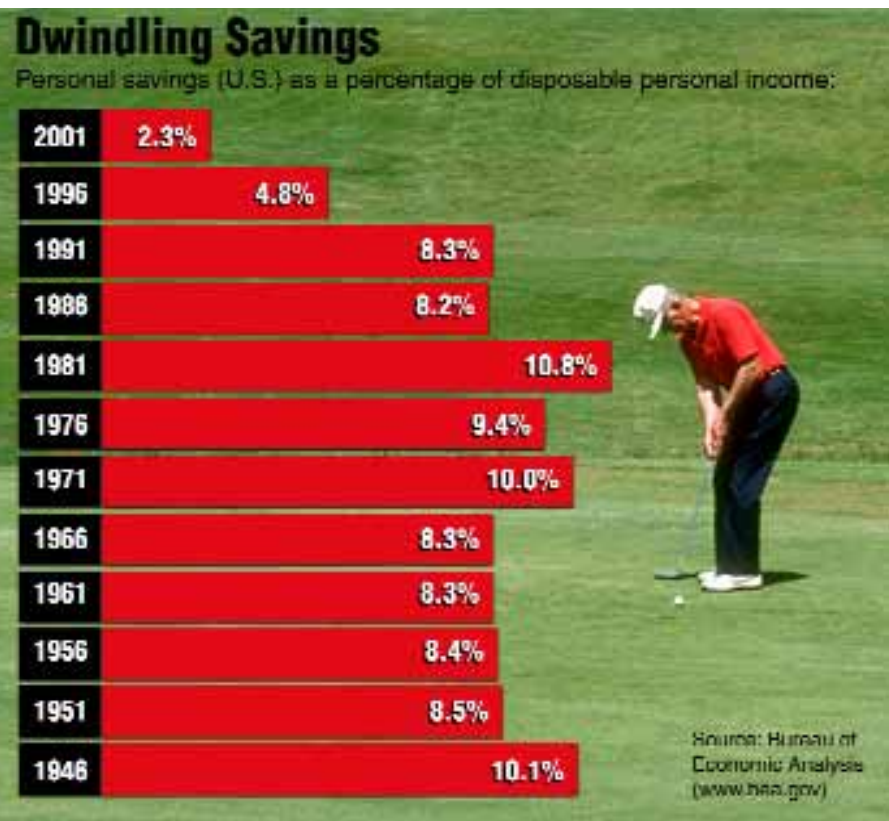
■ American households have spent nearly 40% of their food dollar on food away from home since the mid-1980s, compared with only 20% in the early 1970s.

While it is not wrong to go to dinner with family or friends, many go out for a meal or to have a few drinks as an excuse to get “dressed up” and appeal to their sense of vanity, seeking the attention of others. Going out almost becomes secondary, as sexual promiscuity becomes the pleasure of the day. King Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, wrote, “Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant” (Prov. 9:17), and “He that loves pleasure shall be a poor man: he that loves wine and oil shall not be rich” (Prov. 21:17).

A Time Long Past

Even just a few generations ago, people did not pursue pleasure as they do today. The focus was on family and building strong relationships. Not only did families share meals together—life revolved around the family unit.

Following World War II, Western



nations understood how pleasurable the family could be. Even *working* together around the house was considered a joy, not the burden that many view it as today. The tragedy of war made many realize how important their family was, even if that meant merely having meals together or even doing housework.



“pleasure” is seemingly the main impetus for each day. People “work for their weekends,” which are often filled with parties, drinking and sexual exploits.

The spirit of tolerance is a main theme, and many are taking it to an extreme. All forms of “pleasure” are not only tolerated, but actually encouraged.

That was then and this is now. Many have become complacent in times of prosperity and peace. Growing bored of the simple pleasures of life, they have begun to look for anything to give them greater pleasure and tantalize the senses.

But with the serious problems plaguing the world, you would think people would return to those core values—and to the truly important things in life.

The world has moved into the Information Age. Everything operates at lightning speed. People have no time to stop and consider. They have become so consumed with their own lives, that even war, terrorism and the threats of weapons of mass destruction are not enough to change their focus. There is just “not enough time” to spend together as a family and even to rest.

The human body was designed so that it needs to rest, to recharge one’s internal “batteries.” Studies show that the human body quickly deteriorates when it does not receive enough sleep—something commonly overlooked in this fast-paced society.

This rest is so important to our happiness and well-being that, from the time of creation, God instituted a weekly day of *rest*: “If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day; and call the Sabbath a *delight*, the holy of the LORD, honorable; and shall honor Him, not doing you own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words: Then shall

you *delight* yourself in the LORD; and I will cause you to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father: for the mouth of the LORD has spoken it” (Isa. 58:13-14).

Notice the rewards of keeping the Sabbath day. These could easily be described as pleasures. Yet man does not rest or consider as he should, and cities are full of people attempting to “recharge” in other ways. They live their lives *their* way—not the way God intended. God inspired Solomon to write, “There is a way which *seems right* unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Prov. 14:12).

The fruits of those ways are evident: Breakdown of the family, adultery, partying, gluttony, etc. These conditions were foretold millennia ago: “For as in the days that were before the flood they were *eating* and *drinking*, marrying and giving in marriage [Adam Clarke’s Commentary: “That is, they spent their time in rapine, luxury, and riot”]...so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Matt. 24:38-39).

Two ancient cities parallel our modern age and actually show where society is headed.

Modern-Day Sodom and Gomorrah

For extreme examples of carnal pleasures, look no farther than the average North American city. Strip clubs and porn shops are essentially a “dime a dozen.” Cities like New York and San Francisco are no less than a modern-day Sodom and Gomorrah, where

aged. With all this pleasure-seeking, one would think that there would be joy and happiness. Yet people’s lives are filled with problems of every shape and form.

Hoping that pleasure will bring happiness, people live “in *pleasure* on the earth, and been *wanton*” (Jms. 5:5). They have lost sight of what would truly make them happy.

However, there is a solution for the thousands groping for fulfillment and *true* pleasure. Like happiness, there is a cause for the problems so many experience. Changing the CAUSE will create a different and fulfilling EFFECT. Many are “...foolish, disobedient, *deceived*, serving *diverse lusts and pleasures*...” (Titus 3:3).

There is a connection between being “deceived” and “serving diverse lusts and pleasures.” But the question arises: Who is doing the deceiving?

Notice: “And the great dragon was cast out...called the Devil...which deceives the whole world” (Rev. 12:9). Could it be that simple? Could it really be that the devil is the source of these lustful pleasures and that man pursues them because he is deceived?

That is what your Bible says!

People have turned from the Source of true happiness—God—and followed another god (II Cor. 4:4). And the “god of this world” has programmed people to look out for themselves: “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be *lovers of their own selves*...*lovers of pleasures* [Clarke: “i.e. pleasure, sensual gratification, is

their god; and this they love and serve”] *more than lovers of God*” (II Tim. 3:1-2, 4).

Even humanly speaking, there is a better way to create self-fulfillment. When you look on your own matters, focusing only on yourself, only *one* person is looking out for you—YOU!

Conversely, if everyone would look out for others—God’s GIVE way—then hundreds or even thousands of people would be looking out for you. In blindness, mankind has chosen a way that, even humanly speaking, is illogical!

God’s Irony

As the Creator of the universe and mankind, God knows what would make people happy. He understands the proper route to pleasure. But choosing its *own* way, mankind has sought pleasure and, in the end, become “wanton.”

It was not meant to be this way. All people *should* experience a happy and eventful life. God *wants* man to experience the finer things in life: “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

But because they do not live God’s Way, people feel empty.

They were designed to be fulfilled. Lacking that fulfillment, their lives feel void of meaning. They use physical things to attempt to fill that void. As you look around you, it should be obvious that this is not working. How sad that in choosing its own way to happiness, mankind has found war, famine, broken families, addiction, etc., instead of truly happy and fulfilling lives.

If man would simply look to God, all the physical needs and pleasures in life would be given to him. He would not have to grope and grab for new things. There would be no need to fight his way up the corporate ladder to experi-

ence the finer things. God wants to give these to people—all that He requires is that we seek “first the kingdom of God...and *all these things* shall be added” (Matt. 6:33)—all of them!

The answer is so simple, yet this world remains blind to it. It will take the Return of Christ to teach the entire world what true, real pleasure entails. At that time, emptiness will cease, and happiness and fulfillment will literally “break out” around the world!

People will no longer be addicted to self-gratifying “fun” and empty “pleasures.” They will finally understand and be “addicted” to *true* HAPPINESS.

The Great Escape

As we have seen, there is a void in people’s lives. Since they are unaware of their potential, this ever present vacuum leaves them constantly feeling in need. They attempt to fill this need with “pleasures”—but that only works for a short time.

The vacuum and the reality of the failing world returns, and people again turn to “fun” as a solution to their problems. Man wants—almost needs—to escape from this reality.



WITH THE THREAT of terrorism, a struggling economy, increasing national debt, viruses and syndromes, child pornography, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the twenty-first century is certainly a frightful age to live in. Not to mention the more personal issues, such as unhappy relationships, debt, unemployment, taxes, and the unpleasant conditions in which most live each day. Therefore, it is no wonder that most people seek pleasure to escape.

The world has many “pleasures” to offer. Unfortunately, most of them are truly immoral and completely wrong. Even those pleasures that are not wrong in and of themselves are often used to *excess*—and therefore incorrectly.

As we have seen, one of the primary reasons why mankind seeks endless pleasures, why it desperately “needs” an avenue of escape—is the overall emptiness and lack of fulfillment in most people’s lives. This is primarily the case among the people living in the most blessed nations today. It has eroded the strength of their nations—their work ethic and family values—and it is a clear sign of their decline.

As we continue, we will address fear—another primary reason why people seek to escape. We will identify the consequences of continually seeking pleasures. We will



also address a terrible time just ahead, when the most vile of pleasures will abound—and then a time just beyond that, when the need to escape will disappear altogether. At that time, *true* pleasures will prevail, along with correct instruction, understanding and priorities.

Great Paradoxes

We are truly living in awesome times. They are also times of great paradoxes. While information abounds, and technology seemingly advances daily with great leaps, most in the Western World (particularly those in the English-speaking countries) live with a feeling of insecurity. Since September 11, the threat of terrorism has become an almost daily factor in our lives. The great “Fortress America” was no longer untouchable. For the first time in several decades, Americans were actually frightened for their national and individual lives.

Continuing from that event, there was quite suddenly the flaring up of world religious strife—Christianity vs. Islam. And then a war in Iraq, followed by almost daily killings of the liberating forces. Others fear the seemingly indiscriminate proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Europeans and Americans alike are concerned with countries like Iran and North Korea possessing nuclear weapons. And yet, most people seemingly refuse to admit how truly frightening these times are. Unfortunately, most do not even concern themselves with these “big” problems.

Fear of the unknown, and even of the little-known, will drive most to seek an escape, to find something more pleasurable than the cares and concerns of daily life, hoping that their problems will simply go away. But they do not—and this usually leads to



“For the first time in several decades, Americans were actually frightened for their national and individual lives.”

much bigger problems. In fact, what is commonplace among *individuals* typically extends to a *regional society* and then to a *nation* as a whole. Could anyone honestly believe that if most citizens do not deal with *their* problems that their nation will deal with *its* own problems?

On another point of paradox, we are so far removed from the last great world calamity (World War II) that very few understand and appreciate the realities of the violence and hatred that occurred then, and the similarities today. Yet at the same time, we all experienced, in explicit detail, large airplanes crashing into skyscrapers, and a modern army overrunning two countries within a matter of weeks.

But how much did these recent events really change your daily life? While, for some, there is increased reason to be fearful, for most, there is also increased desensitization, callousness, and preoccupation with the self. Both, however, often lead one to seek “something more comforting”—to endlessly seek those pleasures and escape.

Despite experiencing life with so much instant and graphic information, we are simply unable to properly describe, to make real, the incredible immensity of events and their implications in our time. While most find the frightening aspects of today’s world “unacceptable,” the inability to understand them leads many to hope—even believe—that things could not be that bad. And so, most go about their daily lives, largely concerned only about themselves and their problems, and seeking pleasures to escape them.

The Downward Spiral

The level at which most seek and escape into these pleasures is of and by itself rather disturbing. The increased greed in society has not only removed most from the true pleasures of life—such as time with family, preparing and enjoying good food, or experiencing God’s beautiful creation—it has also created a need to have more—to never be satisfied. The little bit of pleasure that was fun yesterday quickly becomes tiring and unexciting, and so the search quickly begins for something “new,” something a little more stimulating. This is typically how one or two drinks lead to several, how experimenting with a drug often leads to heavier drug use, and how the addiction to sports can lead to an addiction to “extreme” sports.

And so the spiral continues downward, with a never-ending seeking of greater thrills and spills. Yet the feeling of emptiness and lack of fulfillment remain. So does the fear (and the reality) of personal problems, and the world's larger problems. In fact, the emptiness and difficulties more than likely increased during, and as a consequence of, the continual escape! The pleasure, and the escape it brought, was only *very* temporary. No one really can avoid the realities of life. They simply must always be dealt with eventually.

Tragically, some deal with the extreme of their desperation with the ultimate method of escape—suicide. The inability to cope with life quickly diminishes any sense of purpose and hope and, at that point, some see taking their own life as their only option. Suicide statistics are quite telling, particularly among young men in most English-speaking nations:

A 1999 study by the Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention showed that the suicide rate among males rose significantly from 1964 to 1997, particularly in the

age groups of 15-24 years and 25-34 (*Australian suicide trends 1964-1997: Youth and Beyond?*).

A similar study from the New Zealand Health Information Service showed that the male suicide rate increased by 72% from 1978 to 1997, with the highest number of male suicides occurring among 25-29 year-olds (New Zealand Ministry of Health, *Suicide Trends in New Zealand 1978-98*).

In the United States, from information compiled by the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (a subsidiary of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention), suicide is overall the 11th leading cause of death for all Americans. However, it is the third leading cause for those ages 15-24. Just fewer than 30,000 Americans took their own lives in 2000, which is 1.7 times the number of homicides.

The descent into complete misery, however, most often does not end in suicide. The vast majority continue with their pleasure-seeking escapism. Whether it be through drugs and alcohol, illicit and improper sex, endless movies and television, or constant

socializing and partying, most are ignorantly content remaining addicted to their vice.

Most young people will imitate adults with their own form of “sex, drugs, and rock n’ roll.” At the same time, they also rebel against the futility of the world around them. This protesting is of and by itself a form of escape, a yearning for a more stable present and a brighter future.

The Last Attempt to Escape

Fortunately, a brighter future is just beyond the horizon. However, it is not visible to most, and will only come after a far more terrifying period that is now fast approaching, referred to in the Bible as the Great Tribulation (Matt. 24:21). Mankind has been living his own way, in rebellion to God, for the last 6,000 years, and his time is just about up. Since Adam and Eve chose to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, a fruit that was “...good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes...” (Gen. 3:6), mankind has rejected God. They have instead insisted on doing things their own way, exposing themselves to



the influence of Satan the devil, who deceives the whole world (Rev. 12:9).

By doing things his way for 6,000 years, man has experienced great destruction, evil and misery—as evidenced by his now insatiable need to seek pleasures and escape. God has allowed man this choice, and will further allow it to culminate in the very near future, during a short but horrendous time of trouble.

The prophet Ezekiel spoke of this time and, in fact, warned the modern-day descendents of ancient Israel of this soon-coming time of calamity. Notice how Ezekiel even spoke of the modern game of “let’s pretend,” and how he prophesied that our leaders would in fact encourage it: “Then said He unto me, Son of man, these are the men [the “spiritual” leaders of the nation] that devise mischief, and give wicked counsel in this city: Which say, It is not near [the impending destruction]; let us build houses...” (Ezek. 11:2-3).

Does this sound familiar to the post-September 11th rally cry?

Our entire system is based on greed. The vast majority of advertising today is promoting, in one form or another, pleasures and escapism: “Build a new house, buy a new car, get a boat, look ‘beautiful’ with this gimmick or cosmetic, relieve that ailment with this pill and, while you’re at it, have another drink.”

Most do not understand the purpose of life—and they live in fear. They fear a war between Christianity and Islam, another major terrorist attack, and weapons of mass destruction in the hands of dictators.

Despite how most feel, there is, as Sir Winston Churchill once said, “...a purpose being worked out here below.” The Great God and Creator of the entire universe did not create man to live a futile and fearful life. There is much more to our physical existence than meets the eye!

Your Awesome Potential

From the very beginning, God intended every human to eventually be a part of His DIVINE FAMILY. That means to be like Him, to be a son of God—to be a great, powerful, SPIRIT BEING with absolutely perfect, holy, righteous

character. He most certainly did not intend for us to be aimlessly living, with little or no sense of purpose, continually seeking pleasures to escape from the inexplicable and fearsome realities of our lives.

This great Plan, however, has been hidden for most of mankind’s existence. In fact, a counterfeit was devised by Satan thousands of years ago, and has been implemented and assured support by his servants ever since. During the 6,000 years that God has allowed man to live his own way, this counterfeit has dominated the world, causing mass confusion, despair and destruction.

It has confused, for example, most people’s belief regarding creation, the authority of the Bible, the nature of God, His purpose for mankind, His Great Plan, humanity’s inability to solve its problems, the history and identity of God’s true Church, the concepts of conversion, faith and salvation, what happens after death, and how world peace, happiness and prosperity will finally come.

The Abundant Life

You can even live a joyful, abundant life right now. This is what God intended! Many spend countless hours seeking pleasures and some sort of happiness, but, unfortunately, they are often looking in all the wrong places. Living God’s Way (instead of your own), by His laws, can and *will* bring you happiness, joy, and an abundant life now. In such a condition, this life can be forerunner, in a very small way, of what eternal life in the God Family will be like. Notice what Jesus Christ said: “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

Christ’s followers, true Christians, do indeed have life more abundantly. But you may be asking, “Why don’t I have an abundant life? And what are true Christians anyway?” Notice Romans 8:9: “But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” True Christians have the Spirit of God. Many believe in Christ, yet do not have God’s Holy Spirit, and

therefore are not Christians at all. The physical carnal mind is, in fact, *hostile* to God and His Way (Rom. 8:7).

The Christian life in today’s world, however, is not as some would have you believe, some sort of happy-go-lucky, easy-as-pie fairy tale. It involves hard work! God’s servants are busy overcoming and conquering sin. We are preparing now to be a part of the God Family when Christ returns to this earth. By putting God first in our lives, we can have proper priorities, seeking His will, and then be able to perform it. One way in which God’s will is done is through His Work—producing magazines such as this—providing the REAL TRUTH about the gospel of the kingdom of God to the entire world.

Living God’s Way helps you to appreciate and be thankful for what you already have, and will lead you to be more concerned about others. It provides knowledge and vision of God’s Plan. Gone is the fear of this present world and its near future. Gone is the void created by a lack of understanding about our great purpose. There is no need to endlessly seek pleasures—there is simply no longer a need to escape one’s daily life.

You can live the abundant life NOW—simply stop rejecting God in your life, admit that man’s way, your way, is wrong. Notice I John 1:3-4: “...truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your *joy* may be full.” (For more details, read our article “*You Can Live the ABUNDANT LIFE!*”)

A Wonderful World to Come

The soon-coming Great Tribulation will be mankind’s final lesson in a history of living his own way apart from God. It will be the end of this age—the end of this period of time in man’s or the earth’s existence. Fortunately, the Tribulation will be cut short: “...but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened” (Matt. 24:22). Christ will return to this earth as “King of kings and Lord of lords” (Rev. 19:16) to establish God’s government. His government is, of course, the basis or foundation of His

Way. It will, in fact, be the driving force behind great change on earth.

The peoples and nations of the world will at first resist Christ. He will have to destroy that world-dominating seventh and final Holy Roman Empire, and free the modern-day descendants of ancient Israel to return to their homeland (Jer. 30:7-10). As an example to the rest of the world, they will be the first to experience living under God's government, being taught how to live happy, healthy, prosperous and abundant lives.

Other peoples and nations will then see and want to learn about and live the same way, but some will still rebel and attack and have to be *forced* to live the right way. God's government will spread across and rule the entire earth (Dan. 2:44; 7:14). Christ will be King, and He will rule with His saints—those humans who had been called as “firstfruits,” and had successfully completed their training to become perfect, righteous God-beings at Christ's Return.

The new world government will include one world religion. All peoples will be taught the correct understanding of God, His Way and His Plan. Mankind will understand his purpose, and the concept of “cause

and effect”—the great blessings that come as a result of living God's Way (Isa. 11:6-9). This government will also include one system of education. It will be a *combination* of FAMILY, CHURCH and STATE. Parents will teach and train their children to be happy, industrious and obedient. The Church will teach everyone on God's weekly Holy Sabbath and during the annual Holy Days, about the right way to live, about God, and about His Great Plan. And schools will teach everyone the truth about God's creation and mankind's history—in fact, schools will teach the truth about *every* subject.

People in this wonderful world to come will be truly happy and fulfilled. There will be no need to endlessly seek pleasures. There will be no need to escape. Fear of the present and future will be abolished. The void of meaningless existence will be filled with a proper, correct sense of purpose. Gone will be the spirit of competition that drives commercials to scream and make you scream, “I want more!” Gone will be drug abuse and the immoral excesses of alcohol, and the improper—perverted—use of sex. Movies and television will depict correct, educational examples of life.

Sports will be noncompetitive, non-aggressive and truly entertaining. Family vacations will be a time to draw closer together and closer to God and His Creation. All will be done in moderation, in decency and in good order. (If you wish to learn more about this exciting time just ahead, read our book *TOMORROW'S WONDERFUL WORLD – An Inside View!*)

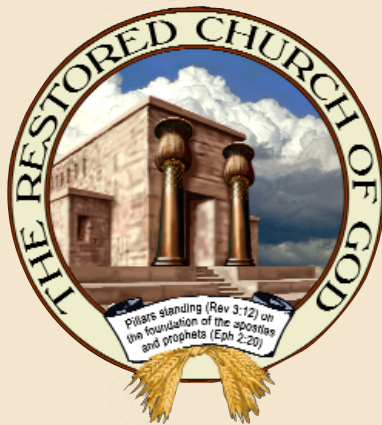
Your Choice

The world to come is indeed an exciting time to consider. As just a part of God's Great Plan, it is truly magnificent. Those of us who understand and are working toward that time live without fear of the present or future. We live purposeful lives, with a sense of security, confidence and faith.

You may be tired of endlessly seeking pleasures and trying to escape. You may be tired of living in fear and filling a seemingly endless void in your life. If this is the case and if you want to know more about the abundant life that you can start living *today*, and about God's Plan, be sure to read the literature offered in this trend report.

It is your choice. It may be time you finally stopped trying to escape. It may be time you faced reality head-on. □





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