**ALL THAT GLITTERS IS NOT GOLD**

**by *Dee Bowman***

(**Rick’s Note**: Many have written the past few weeks about how brother Dee Bowman impacted their life. He had a powerful influence on literally thousands of people, both from his preaching as well as from his writing. Especially his writing. He has been gone less than a month and I still feel his absence intensely. I have read almost everything he ever wrote and it made a huge difference in my life. I wanted to share just one of his thousands of articles he wrote over a full life of serving his Lord. May you get just a taste of what I have enjoyed from his incredible pen. – RL)

Many years ago, my brothers and I went to New York City. We arrived very early in the morning. We could not wait to get our bags into our room and get our first look at Times Square. I shan't soon forget the sight. It was as if we were immersed in a sea of lights. There were lights that cascaded like waterfalls, lights that sparkled like Christmas, lights that wrote messages, lights that twinkled. There were pulsating lights, performing lights, lights that made little paths around huge pictures of people. The scene seemed to take you along with it, whether you wanted to go or not. It was as if you were in a current the strength of which was so overpowering you had no resistance.

Society is like those lights. It has a strong attraction. It pulls people with great subtlety. You're caught up in the flow of it before you know it; and when you're in the flow, it takes great power--more than most of us have--to dislodge yourself.

With its various methods of seduction, society invites us into the slime pit of sin. It accomplishes this by making sin attractive. If sin were left to its own, nobody would get involved in it. It promises things; it holds out a certain satisfaction. Sin is never presented to you in its bare form. It's always dressed up in something. And the trappings are well thought out. The Devil is a master of disguises. He conjures up all manner of packages in which to place this most deadly enemy of mankind. When he has it just right he presents it with deadly skill. You can be in it before you know it.

How do we fight this kind of attraction? What can we do? Get to know yourself. Each of us is different. Each has his own vulnerabilities, his own weaknesses. Only when you get to know yourself can you prevent the hypnotic spell. Paul said, “*Examine yourself*...'' (I Cor. 13:5). Such an introspection is private; no one can do it for you.

**It takes an amount of courage**, a sort of “push yourself'' attitude. The Devil would like you to just “go with the flow,'' and “not fight against the feeling.'' But when you know yourself, you're able to guard against getting into trouble before you know it.

**Decide what's important**. The Devil wins lots of folks simply because he convinces them, ever so subtly, that it's OK to major in minors. How often we dedicate ourselves to that which is of so little value. How does he do that? Well, he just dresses it up so that you can't see it for what it really is. How many people have been deluded into thinking that life consists of the abundance of the things possessed? (Cf. Lk. 12:15) How many times have fame and material things blinded the vision of some unsuspecting person? After all, success is important, isn't it? Sure it is; but only if it's real success--the kind that relates to the eternal.

**Store up the message**. The word of God is the key to overcoming the Devil. Jesus proved that when He was tempted by Satan (Matt. 4). His answer still works today. But if you've not stored up the information, you can't use it when the moment of disaster is near. “*It is written*'' cannot be used by him who doesn't know that it's written. Store up the information and be ready. It's a war, folks. And we can't fight it without the armaments necessary for the conflict (Eph. 6:11-18).

**Take control of your own life**. It's amazing how easy it is to surrender yourself. Almost without thinking you can surrender yourself to some hobby, to some project, to some dominant personality, to some movement of some sort. That's how the Devil's process works. It's like those lights--you're mesmerized before you know it. Paul told the Romans, “*Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are whom ye obey*?'' (Rom. 6:17). It's your choice. You don't have to surrender to anybody. You choose the one you serve. Be careful.

**Follow through**. Follow-through is important whether it's a good tennis stroke, a good golf swing, or a disciple's obedience. Intention without follow-through--a most sagacious ploy. He doesn't have to get you to decide not to do what's right if he can just get you to put if off. Oh, you intend to, you just haven't gotten around to it. And intention -- isn't that something which is commendable, something good? Sure it is. But only if you follow through. James said, “*to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin*” (4:17).

After we had seen the lights in the black of night we went back to the hotel with visions of brightness still burning in our minds. The next morning, we went to the same area of and saw Times Square in God's light. What a difference! Litter, last night's confetti, drunks in the doorways, alleys filled with filth.

Things aren't always what they seem.

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