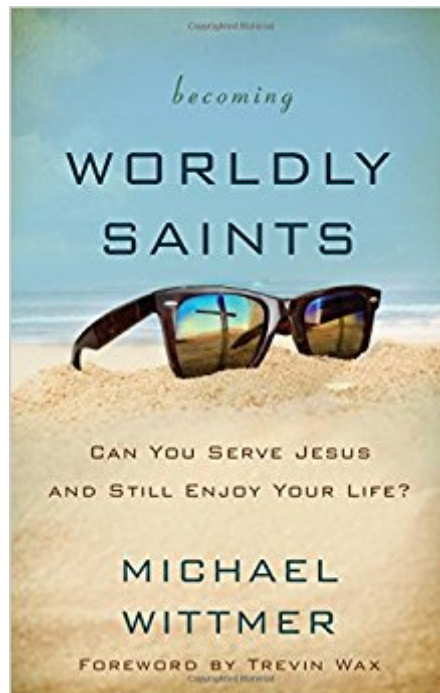




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Becoming Worldly Saints: Can You Serve Jesus And Still Enjoy Your Life?



Synopsis

Do you feel the tension between the pleasures of earth and the purpose of heaven? You want to enjoy life in this world--the beauty of God's creation and the rich love of deep relationships with others--yet you wonder if you were made for more. You long to be radically committed to Jesus, but you're not sure what that means for your everyday life. Michael Wittmer explains how to bring your human and Christian lives together. When you grasp God's story, you'll understand that not only is it possible to serve Jesus and still enjoy your life, but it's the only way you can. Written in a devotional style that is theologically rich and biblically accurate, *Becoming Worldly Saints* helps you understand who you are and why you are here. You can live with joy--free from false guilt--in a not-yet-redeemed world. "It made me laugh out loud. This is popular theology at its best."--Al Wolters

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Customer Reviews

I found Michael Wittmer's book an absolute delight. It is well-written, it is easy to understand, and it sometimes made me laugh out loud. But more importantly, it is wise, balanced, thoroughly biblical, passionate for Christ and the gospel, and outlines a broad, liberating, and life-affirming perspective that is badly needed in the world today. Furthermore, it is rooted in sound scholarship and wide reading. This is popular theology at its best. I recommend it enthusiastically. --Al Wolters, Professor Emeritus of Religion and Theology at Redeemer University College

Michael Wittmer has written a very fine book. In this book, Mike is practical. In this book, Mike is funny. In this book, Mike is

biblical. In this book, Mike is intelligent. In this book, Mike is wise. In this book, Mike is down-to-earth (literally). In this book, Mike is spiritual (literally). In this book, Mike is controversial; but the so-called "bottom line" is this: "In this book Michael is helpful to the body of Christ. How many stars can I give this book of Mike's? I will give it five! And that's too low. --David Naugle, Distinguished Professor, Dallas Baptist University

In typical Mike Wittmer style, this book brings clever and readable relief to those of us who desire to live a godly life yet detest the thought of becoming a stodgy, droopy hermit Christian. With theological precision, Mike takes us on a journey toward a biblically balanced life. With tons of practical advice, this book is just what you need to live a vibrant and joyful existence in the midst of a fallen world. And no one is better to write this than Mike. I know him personally, and he is the poster child for an authentic "worldly saint"! --Joe Stowell, President, Cornerstone Univ.

Committed Christians struggle with how they should balance Christ's redemptive mandate to go into the entire world and make disciples while still enjoying God-given pleasures of life. Mike Wittmer equips Christians to see life through a crystal-clear worldview in order to be appropriately balanced in their commitments. Wittmer shows in a winsome and engaging style how a proper understanding of biblical theology equips us to wisely make day-to-day decisions: whether considering a call to missions or going to the symphony.--Chris Brauns, author of *Unpacking Forgiveness; Bound Together*.

In typical Mike Wittmer style, this book brings clever and readable relief to those of us who desire to live a godly life yet detest the thought of becoming a stodgy droopy hermit Christian. With theological precision, Mike takes us on a journey toward a Biblically balanced life. With tons of practical advice, this book is just what you need to live a vibrant and joyful existence in the midst of a fallen world. And no one is better to write this than Mike. I know him personally and he is the poster child for an authentic "worldly saint"! -- Dr. Joseph Stowell, President of Cornerstone University

The author stays on topic in addressing the question in the subtitle and does answer it by the end, providing helpful diagnostic questions in the last chapter to help the reader live in the tension between giving attention to this world (creation) and giving attention to spiritual matters (redemption). Creation and redemption are inter-connected and if you err on one side or the other, you either fall into Platonic dualism (spiritual good, physical bad) or worldliness (concerns of this world are all that matter). I would have given the book 5 stars but I think the author could have said what he needed to say in about half the number of pages.

With all the historical emphasis on Heaven, Dr. Wittmer, reminds Christians that the new Earth will be our 'forever' home, in the presence of Jesus Christ!. Heaven is temporary housing. For a believer in Christ, to die is to be present with the Lord and the saints who have preceded us and that's glory enough. Heaven is indeed our home while we await Satan being put in his place and the new Earth is readied for our habitation. This new earth will have a restored garden and animal kingdom, and will have an urban aspect, a metropolis with a prepared dwelling for each and every believer. Jesus not only put on human flesh to die for us, his bride, but also to physically dwell with us for all eternity on the new Earth. Dr. Wittmer assures us we can look forward to that! Yet the book goes beyond that! Today, while we await the new Earth, we can enjoy our current dwelling place, the world, even if tainted by the fall! This is the major content of the book and well worth the reading!

You hear it all the time, but in this case it is true: EVERY Christian should read this book (non-Christians too for that matter). Wittmer is charming, funny, and easy to read, but his book is packed with robust theology, plenty of Scriptural support, and joyful application. The loss of the resurrection of the physical body as a prized central doctrine has been detrimental to Christian theology and practice far too long. I am hoping this book helps get it back.

Eye opening book. I especially liked chapter 7, "Rightly Divide the Word," which is an exposition of some of the verses that are often used to combat the notion that we should enjoy things in this world. The book really hinges on this chapter, and I found most of the arguments and exposition compelling. Great companion to another book on this subject, The Things of Earth by Rigney. My only complaint is that it would have a better treatment of issues like idolatry and overindulgence. More practical examples would be helpful too.

I wondered about the provocative title at first, but it got my attention and Mr. Wittmer's writing is authentic, relevant, and scripturally sound.

The pushback against the radical Christian life is in full swing. It was inevitable, I think, and healthy. Books like Radical and Don't Waste Your Life were meant to battle Christian complacency, but in some ways they over-corrected, giving less than a holistic and realistic view of the Christian life. And now authors like Michael Wittmer are attempting to recover some balance. In

his new book *Becoming Worldly Saints*, Wittmer means to answer this question: Can you serve Jesus and still enjoy your life? Is it possible for you to be fully committed to the Lord and still find time to enjoy life's pleasures? Or, as some seem to feel, do we need to live lives of utter frugality, sending all our money to the mission field? Are we responsible to share the gospel with absolutely every person we encounter? Should we really feel that constant low-grade guilt that accuses us that we are not doing enough for the Lord? In short, how do we resolve the tension between the pleasures of earth and the purpose of heaven? Wittmer's answers are as compelling as any I've read. His concern is that in all the good things we do for the Lord, we forget the importance of being human and enjoying God's good creation. "Our lives will shrivel if we allow our passion for redemption to smother the pleasures of creation. Being a Christian must not become an obstacle to being human. But the problem is even worse in reverse: When we eliminate our earthly pleasures, we inevitably limit the reach of our heavenly purpose. If we want to attract people to Jesus, our lives must be attractive. "We, of all people, ought to enjoy this world and display our love of life. Our temptation is to make a harsh distinction between loving the Lord and loving the world he has made. However, "Our love for Jesus and his world is not a zero sum game. Attention given to creation is not stolen from its Creator. The more we enjoy God's gifts for their own sake, the more we can appreciate him. And thank him for, and love with him. | Thank God for the privilege of being human and of being here. Then go have some fun. "God and have some fun and trust that God enjoys your fun as much as you do. Wittmer structures the book around the story of Scripture the great work God is doing in this world, which proceeds under the familiar headings of Creation, Fall, and Redemption. He shows that God created this world so we could enjoy it and that he still expects that we will find enjoyment in it. He corrects those people who live only for tomorrow, as if the pleasures of this world are meaningless. He shows that our responsibility in this world is to love God, serve our neighbor, cultivate the earth, and rest, and that we need to maintain a balance between these. He shows that the tension we feel is an inevitable result of man's fall into sin, and he attempts to bring peace between the urgency of the gospel and the demands of being human. In every case he succeeds well. Can you serve Jesus and still enjoy life? "It starts with your call and ends with it too. Do whatever God is calling you to do, no more and no less. Do it with all your might; then go to bed. Your life will count for eternity, and you'll probably even like it. "Becoming Worldly Saints was a joy and a relief to read. Grounded firmly in Scripture and in the best of Christian tradition, it offers a powerful and compelling vision of the

Christian life that is equally exciting and attainable. This isn't settling for a lesser vision of the Christian life – this is living out what the Bible says.

He makes an interesting point about embracing this life and this world that God has created because it is not going away. It will be restored. But I do look forward to an existence without pain, grief, and sorrow which currently comes with the fallen world in which we live. Provocative book, good read.

Excellent treatment of the tension between being IN the world but not OF the world. What a blessing this was.

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