

Negative lifestyle trends

The world today (and also South Africa) is displaying an increasing tendency towards a hedonistic lifestyle, which means we want *satisfaction here and now*. We don't want to wait, and consequences are not important – we are not interested in seeing beyond the moment.

1. *This means we have casual sex* – this is what the Afrikaans and English soaps teach us. Relationships are for our own satisfaction and not necessarily long-term. Sex before marriage is not wrong, it is a personal choice of a particular lifestyle and no one must judge us for that. *Pray that the eyes of the people will be opened to the truth and that they will make conclusive changes in their lives so that they can live holy lives.*
2. *Freedom of speech and choice* is important. We are free to say what we want. *My opinion* is just as important as that of anybody else. We choose what we wish to believe and how we want to believe it. And we make what we believe fit in with our views, so that what we believe suits us and justifies our lifestyle. As a result we are convinced that our lifestyle has no consequences and that there is no such thing as absolute truth. *Pray that people will once again start taking into consideration the feelings and needs of others and not live for themselves only. Ask that the absolute in God's Word and character will come up anew in hearts.*
3. We have a *consumer's attitude/mentality*. We use what we want, as much as we want and when we have finished with it, we throw it away. Irrespective of whether it is people and relationships or possessions. If a relationship doesn't work out, we get rid of the other person, if the job doesn't suit us, we find ourselves another one. Loyalty is optional. *Pray that people will recognise selfishness and egotism in their lives and start changing their lifestyle drastically. Ask for greater willingness in people to change themselves, to help others and to be good stewards of things and time.*
4. *There is increasing scepticism about God*, and every yoke that forbids us to do certain things is discarded. We don't want anyone to 'judge' us because of our behaviour, and so we *make* ourselves a lifestyle where God is not needed, where there is no room for God. In this way many people become moral atheists: I am an atheist because it suits my lifestyle, but when I need God, He must be there for me. *Pray that people will become aware of areas in their lives where they shut God out, yet at the same time blame Him that He is uninvolved. Ask that a need to live holy and honest lives will be reawakened in hearts.*
5. *There are so many questions*: So many people say they don't believe in God or in the punishment of sin or that anything is sinful. Now the question is: What then *do* we believe? Is what we believe enough to live on, does it satisfy us? Is what I do really without consequences or is there a place where I will be held accountable for what I have done? Is there something like a guideline, a standard, independent truth that stands firm and unshakable above the opinions of others or our own? Is there a God that has a plan with our lives or can we just do with our lives as we please? Is there really a heaven and hell? *Pray that people will ask themselves these questions more and more often and that God will accompany each one through His Holy Spirit, so that they will get to the truth amidst a world full of answers that don't work.*
6. *As Christians we say*: There is a God, there is a place where we will have to account for what we have done. Each of us has the right to choose, but our choices do have consequences. There is something like truth that is independent of our own views. Christians say there is only one path and all the other paths are the wrong ones. The Bible is the only place/source where we can learn what is right and what is wrong. We believe that there is only one truth and just one true God (but many idols). We believe that Jesus is the only Saviour. We believe that there is a heaven *and* that hell is real. *Pray that God will touch people's hearts afresh to give their lives to Him, to trust Him, to trust His guidance, especially when they ask questions that are difficult to answer.*

7. In this sense Christianity is an intolerant religion; we are left no room to choose what we feel is true, *no menu-lifestyle and way of thinking* where we can pick and choose and decide what we will enjoy and what suits us. There is no room in a Christian's life for gambling (Lotto and all its variants), casual sex and immorality, prostitution and homosexuality, an 'anything goes' attitude, a life without consequences. There is no room for racial hatred, bribery or any form of unethical conduct and exploitation of other people. There is no room for condemnation, an unwillingness to love and forgive. *Pray for the fear of God to return to the hearts of people, especially Christians. That they will take a good look at their own lives again, confess where they are in the wrong and restore their personal relationship with God and also other individuals, as the Holy Spirit leads them.*