

Keeping Ourselves Unspotted from the World

(Lesson 5)

Introduction:

1. According to James 1:27, "keeping ourselves unspotted from the world" is an important part of *"pure and undefiled religion before God."*
2. One key to keeping ourselves unspotted from the world is "controlling covetousness."
3. As a basis for our lesson, let us consider the warning that Jesus gave in Luke 12:15.

Discussion:

- I. LET US FIRST DEFINE "COVETOUSNESS"
 - A. "Covetousness" may be defined as:
 1. a greedy desire for more and more of what the world has to offer
 2. the love of money or possessions.
 - B. To help us better understand what "covetousness" is, the Lord gave an illustration of it in His "parable of the rich fool" (Luke 12:16-21).
 - C. Now that we know what "covetousness" is, we need to understand that . . .
- II. THE SCRIPTURES CLEARLY TEACH CHRISTIANS TO AVOID "COVETOUSNESS"
 - A. (Ephesians 5:3) "Covetousness" is a sin that is not to be once named among God's people.
 - B. (Colossians 3:5) "Covetousness" is a sin that is to be mortified.
 - C. (Hebrews 13:5) *"Let your conversation be without covetousness."*
 - D. In addition to teaching us to avoid "covetousness," . . .
- III. THE SCRIPTURES TEACH US WHY "COVETOUSNESS" MUST BE AVOIDED (Let us consider 3 reasons)
 - A. First, "covetousness" will keep a person out of God's kingdom.
 1. (1 Corinthians 6:9-10) Covetous people will be among those who do not inherit the kingdom of God.
 2. (Ephesians 5:5) A covetous person will have no inheritance in the Lord's kingdom.
 3. The rich young ruler shows how "covetousness" will keep a person out of God's kingdom (Luke 18:18-25).
 - B. Second, "covetousness" leads to evil.
 1. (1 Timothy 6:10) *"The love of money"* is the "root" [cause] of all kinds of evil [stealing, physical abuse, killing, etc.].
 - a. "Covetousness" has caused some:
 - 1) to err from the faith
 - 2) to pierce themselves through with many sorrows.
 - b. Judas Iscariot provided a vivid illustration of this point (Matthew 26:14-16; 27:3-5).
 2. "Covetousness" can lead to other forms of evil that may not be quite so drastic.
 - a. "Covetousness" can lead a person to neglect his health by overworking himself.
 - b. "Covetousness" can lead a person to neglect his family [working excessively instead of being a father].
 - c. "Covetousness" can lead a person to neglect the Lord [working so much that there is no time to give to His service -- Matthew 6:32a].
 - C. Third, the Lord wants us to learn "contentment" (1 Timothy 6:6; Philippians 4:11).