

Keeping Ourselves Unspotted from the World
(Lesson 8)

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 overcoming the issue mentioned in Deuteronomy 1:21: "discouragement."
3. In our lesson we are examining several great Bible characters who faced discouragement.
4. As we do so, we are emphasizing what they did to overcome their discouragement.

Discussion:

I. ELIJAH

- A. Elijah was a great man and a great prophet.
 1. He served God as a prophet during a very difficult time.
 - a. Ahab and Jezebel were king and queen of Israel.
 - b. Because of their influence many Israelites were worshipping idols.
 2. Elijah won a great victory on behalf of the Lord when he challenged and defeated the 450 prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel (1 Kings 18).
- B. Even though Elijah was a great man and a great prophet, he became discouraged.
 1. (1 Kings 19:2) Jezebel threatened to take Elijah's life.
 2. (1 Kings 19:3-4) Elijah fled into the wilderness and wanted to die.
 3. It seems from 1 Kings 19:9-10 that Elijah thought that God had forsaken him.
- C. Elijah overcame his discouragement.
 1. God sustained Elijah, and God talked to Elijah.
 2. Elijah learned that things were not as bad as he thought (1 Kings 19:18).
 3. Elijah held on through this difficult period, he continued serving God faithfully, and he was eventually taken up into heaven by a whirlwind.

II. JOB

- A. (Job 1-2) Job is introduced as a righteous man, but he suffered greatly.
- B. Even though Job was a righteous man, he became discouraged.
 1. To his credit, Job did not curse God.
 2. However, he eventually expressed how he felt (Job 3:1-6).
- C. Job overcame his discouragement.
 1. Job never found out why he suffered as he did.
 2. Job eventually realized that God had not forsaken him (Job 42:1-3).
 3. Job held on through his trials, and God blessed him (Job 42:12-13, 16).

III. DAVID

- A. Many passages help us understand why David was known as "a man after God's own heart" (see Psalm 21:1-2; Psalm 23:1).
- B. The same man who wrote these verses also wrote Psalm 22:1-2.
 1. When a man talks like this, he is discouraged.
 2. Saul's treatment of David helps us understand why he made these comments.
- C. David overcame his discouragement.
 1. David remembered how God had demonstrated His goodness in the past (Psalm 22:3-5).
 2. David's confidence in God was restored (Psalm 22:11, 19, 24).

IV. JESUS

- A. Psalm 22 is also a prophecy of the Lord's crucifixion.
 1. Contrast Psalm 22:1, 7-8, 18 with Matthew 27:35, 39-43, 46.
 2. When someone questions whether God has forsaken him, he is discouraged.
- B. Jesus overcame His discouragement.
 1. Jesus said something else (Matthew 27:50; Luke 23:46).
 2. Jesus committed the care of His spirit into the hands of the Father, and He died in peace.