

Keeping Ourselves Unspotted from the World
(Lesson 21)

Introduction:

1. We learn from James 1:27 that "pure and undefiled religion before God" includes "keeping ourselves unspotted from the world."
2. "Temperance" is a specific issue that the Bible addresses in relation to keeping ourselves unspotted from the world.
3. As we study this subject, let us first point out that . . .

Discussion:

- I. "TEMPERANCE" IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF CHRISTIANITY
 - A. This point is made very clearly in Acts 24:24-25.
 1. On this occasion Paul was in custody, but Felix the governor wanted Paul to tell him about "the faith in Christ" (vs.24).
 2. (vs.25a) As Paul talked with Felix, he "reasoned" with the governor.
 3. Paul dealt with 3 subjects as he reasoned with Felix: "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come."
 4. We conclude that "temperance" is an essential part of "the faith in Christ."
 5. Unfortunately, Felix was not willing to practice "temperance," and he put off doing what he knew he should do.
 - B. Christians must practice "temperance" to go to heaven (1 Corinthians 9:24-27).
 1. In these verses, Christians are compared to athletes who compete in a race.
 - a. To be successful, an athlete practices temperance.
 - b. An athlete practices temperance so he can win "a corruptible crown."
 2. This illustrates why is it necessary for a Christian to practice "temperance."
 - a. A Christian practices "temperance" so he can receive "an incorruptible" crown.
 - b. (vs.27b) A Christian also practices "temperance" so his influence will be effective.
 - C. "Temperance" is part of "the fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22-23).
 1. We must understand that:
 - a. there is a negative side to "temperance" (Galatians 5:24)
 - b. there is a positive side to "temperance" (Galatians 5:25).
 2. We must sow correctly because we will be rewarded accordingly (Galatians 6:7-8).
 - D. "Temperance" is one of "the Christian graces" (2 Peter 1:5-7).
 1. Those who lack these graces do not please God (vs.9).
 2. Those who strive diligently to develop these graces will be blessed (vs.8, 10).
 - E. These verses clearly show that "temperance" is an essential part of Christianity.
 - F. To help us understand how "temperance" will help in keeping ourselves unspotted from the world, let us examine . . .
- II. HOW BIBLE CHARACTERS WERE AFFECTED BY TEMPERANCE AND THE LACK OF IT
 - A. The Scriptures tell us about a number of people who failed to practice "temperance."
 1. (2 Samuel 11) David committed adultery with Bathsheba, and he paid a high price for a few moments of pleasure.
 2. Solomon got caught up in self-indulgence (Ecclesiastes 2:10), but he later realized that everything he had pursued was "vanity and vexation of spirit" (vs.11).
 3. These 2 men knew God's will, but they chose not to obey it.
 - B. The Scriptures also tell us about a number of people who practiced "temperance."
 1. Joseph refused to commit adultery with Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39:7-12).
 2. Daniel refused to defile himself by eating the king's food and drinking the king's wine (Daniel 1:5, 8).
 3. Jesus refused to give in to Satan's temptations (Matthew 4:1-11).
 4. Joseph, Daniel, and Jesus knew God's will, and they chose to obey it -- this is the key to practicing "temperance" (Psalm 119:11; Romans 12:1-2).