

Keeping Ourselves Unspotted from the World
(Lesson 24)

Introduction:

1. "Keeping ourselves unspotted from the world" is an important part of "pure and undefiled religion before God" (James 1:27).
2. The Bible addresses many issues that will help us to remain unspotted from the world.
3. In this lesson we are concentrating on "unity among brethren."
4. To dwell together in unity, so we can keep ourselves unspotted from the world,:
 - a. we must avoid things that prevent unity
 - b. we must pursue things that promote unity.

Discussion:

- I. LET US DETERMINE HOW THE LORD FEELS ABOUT UNITY AMONG BRETHREN
 - A. Let us examine Psalm 133.
 1. (vs.1) Brethren dwelling together in unity is "good" and "pleasant."
 2. (vs.2) It is "precious" [compared to the ointment placed on Aaron -- Exodus 30].
 3. (vs.3) It is a blessing from God [compared to the dew that comes from above].
 - B. Let us examine Proverbs 6:16-19.
 1. These verses tell us about 7 things that are detestable to God.
 2. We are especially concerned with #7 (vs.19b).
 - C. Let us examine John 17.
 1. (vs.11) Jesus prayed that His apostles would be one.
 2. (vs.20-21) Jesus also prayed that all of His followers would be one.
 3. (vs.21b) This kind of unity will have a positive impact upon others.
 - D. Let us examine the New Testament letters (Romans 15:5-6; Philippians 1:27).
 - E. Now that we understand how the Lord feels about unity, let us turn our attention to . . .
- II. AREAS IN WHICH THE LORD WANTS HIS FOLLOWERS TO BE UNITED
 - A. The Lord wants His followers to be united in doctrine.
 1. To be the Lord's true disciples we must "continue" [abide] in His Word (John 8:31-32).
 2. To achieve doctrinal unity we must "rightly divide" the Scriptures (2 Timothy 2:15).
 - B. The Lord wants His followers to be united in other matters.
 1. This is made clear in 1 Corinthians 1:10.
 2. To accomplish this we must follow the instructions given in Romans 12:16; 14:19; Ephesians 4:1-3.
 - C. For our last point let us consider a few . . .
- III. SPECIFIC HINDRANCES TO UNITY AMONG BRETHREN
 - A. Exalting people over Christ
 1. This was done in the church in Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:11-12).
 2. This resulted in strife and division (1 Corinthians 3:3-4).
 3. We learn from 1 Corinthians 4:6 how to avoid this problem.
 - B. Murmuring
 1. The church in Jerusalem enjoyed a beautiful spirit of unity (Acts 2:44, 46).
 2. Later, murmuring threatened to destroy that congregation's unity (Acts 6:1).
 3. We learn from Philippians 2:14 how to avoid this problem.
 - C. Loving to have preeminence
 1. This problem is mentioned in 3 John 9-10.
 2. To have unity, we must:
 - a. remember that Christ has all preeminence in the church (Colossians 1:18)
 - b. follow the instructions given in Philippians 2:3-4.

Conclusion:

1. To remain unspotted from the world the Lord's followers are to dwell together in unity.
2. Let us avoid things that prevent unity and pursue things that promote unity.