

Keeping Ourselves Unspotted from the World
(Lesson 25)

Introduction:

1. In order to practice "pure and undefiled religion before God" we must "keep ourselves unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).
2. Thankfully, the Bible addresses many specific issues that will help us to remain unspotted from the world.
3. In this lesson we are concentrating on the subject mentioned in 1 Corinthians 10:8 -- "fornication" [sexual immorality].
4. According to the New Testament, it was necessary for the early church to know God's will on this subject, and it is necessary for us to know it, as well.

Discussion:

- I. LET US FIRST DEFINE "FORNICATION"
 - A. "Fornication" is a general term that includes all types of unlawful sexual activity.
 - B. To be more specific, "fornication" includes "sex outside of marriage," "adultery," "homosexuality," "incest," "prostitution," etc.
 - C. Let us exercise caution -- sometimes, but not always, the Bible uses the term "fornication" in a figurative sense to refer to "idolatry" (2 Chronicles 21:11-15).
- II. LET US DETERMINE WHY "FORNICATION" MUST BE AVOIDED
 - A. We must avoid "fornication" because the Bible teaches us to do so.
 1. (1 Corinthians 6:18a) "Flee fornication."
 2. Ephesians 5:3
 3. Colossians 3:5
 4. 1 Thessalonians 4:3
 - B. We must avoid "fornication" because of its consequences.
 1. Consider what "fornication" did for people in the Old Testament.
 - a. (Romans 1:29) "Fornication" was one of the sins that caused God to give up on the Gentiles.
 - b. (1 Corinthians 10:8; Numbers 25) "Fornication" caused 23,000 Israelites to fall in one day.
 - c. (Jude 7; Genesis 19) "Fornication" caused God to pour out His wrath upon Sodom and Gomorrah.
 2. Consider what "fornication" will do for people today.
 - a. (1 Corinthians 6:9-10) "Fornicators" will not inherit God's kingdom [this point is also made in Galatians 5:19-21].
 - b. (Hebrews 13:4) God approves of the marriage relationship, "but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."
 - C. These passages clearly show us why "fornication" must be avoided.
- III. LET US DETERMINE HOW "FORNICATION" IS OVERCOME
 - A. Let us first point out how a person guilty of "fornication" receives forgiveness.
 1. The good news is that anyone, including "fornicators," can be washed, sanctified, and justified (1 Corinthians 6:11; Acts 18:8).
 2. A child of God who commits "fornication" can also be forgiven (1 John 1:9; Acts 8:22).
 - B. Keys to avoiding "fornication" include:
 1. having a pure heart (Mark 7:21-23; Proverbs 4:23)
 2. avoiding "fornicators" (1 Corinthians 5:9-13)
 3. following God's plan for marriage and sexual intimacy (Genesis 2:24; Ephesians 5:31).