

Keeping Ourselves Unspotted from the World
(Lesson 35)

Introduction:

1. In order to practice "pure and undefiled religion before God" we must "keep ourselves unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).
2. Remaining unspotted from the world has a positive and a negative side.
 - a. On the negative side, we must avoid things that displease God.
 - b. On the positive side, we must do things that please God.
3. In this lesson we are concentrating on an important activity mentioned in Hebrews 3:13.
 - a. God's people are to "exhort one another":
 - 1) "daily" [on a regular basis]
 - 2) "To day" [while opportunities are present].
 - b. "Exhortation" may prevent someone from being "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" that leads to spots from the world.
 - c. "Exhortation" may help someone to remain steadfast (Hebrews 10:23-25).

Discussion:

- I. TO EXHORT ONE ANOTHER, WE MUST ELIMINATE AND AVOID THINGS THAT CAUSE DISCOURAGEMENT SUCH AS:
 - A. "pessimism" (illustrated by the 10 spies -- Deuteronomy 1:26-28)
 - B. giving "foolish advice" (illustrated by Eliphaz -- Job 4:8 and Zophar -- Job 11:6)
 1. Job needed some encouragement, but his friends did not help him.
 2. He called his friends "miserable comforters" (Job 16:2).
 - C. "provoking others to anger" (Colossians 3:21).
- II. TO EXHORT ONE ANOTHER, LET US LEARN FROM OTHERS WHO HAVE BEEN EFFECTIVE EXHORTERS
 - A. Two of Judah's best kings, Hezekiah and Josiah, were exhorters.
 1. (2 Chronicles 31:4) Hezekiah gave a command for the benefit of the priests and the Levites "that they might be encouraged in the law of the Lord."
 2. (2 Chronicles 35:2) Concerning the priests, Josiah "encouraged them to the service of the house of the Lord."
 - B. One of the greatest exhorters of all was a man named Barnabas.
 1. He encouraged the needy through his generosity (Acts 4:36-37).
 2. He encouraged Saul by speaking up for him (Acts 9:26-27).
 3. He encouraged the church in Antioch (Acts 11:22-24).
 4. He encouraged John Mark.
 - a. (Acts 13:1-5) Mark accompanied Barnabas and Saul on their missionary journey.
 - b. (Acts 13:13) For some reason Mark returned to Jerusalem.
 - c. (Acts 15:36-40) Barnabas insisted on giving Mark another opportunity.
 - C. Let us learn from these great exhorters and follow their examples.
- III. LET US CONSIDER SOME SPECIFIC WAYS WE CAN EXHORT ONE ANOTHER
 - A. Those who are older can exhort the young -- God told Moses to encourage Joshua (Deuteronomy 1:38; 31:7-8).
 - B. We can exhort others by letting them know that we are praying for them (Luke 22:31-32).
 - C. We can exhort others through good deeds like Dorcas (Acts 9:36, 39; Matthew 5:16).
 - D. We can exhort others through words (Acts 11:23; Proverbs 25:11), including written words.
 - E. We can exhort others through visits (Matthew 25:36b).

Conclusion:

1. Receiving "exhortation" [encouragement] will help us to keep ourselves unspotted from the world.
2. Giving "exhortation" will help others to avoid being spotted by the world.