

Keeping Ourselves Unspotted from the World
(Lesson 42)

Introduction:

1. According to James 1:27, "pure and undefiled religion before God" includes "keeping ourselves unspotted from the world."
2. In this lesson we are concentrating on 2 characteristics addressed in Proverbs 22:1 that will help us remain free from the world's spots:
 - a. "a good name" [a person's reputation or character]
 - b. "loving favor" [receiving the approval of someone else].

Discussion:

I. "A GOOD NAME"

- A. The fact that "a good name" is specified implies that a person's name may be good or bad.
 1. Keep in mind that the "name" under consideration is a person's reputation or character.
 2. Quite often we associate a person's reputation with his/her name.
 - a. Negative illustrations:
 - 1) Delilah -- deceit
 - 2) Jezebel -- wickedness
 - 3) Judas -- betrayal.
 - b. Positive illustrations:
 - 1) Ruth -- friend
 - 2) Barnabas -- "the son of consolation" (Acts 4:36)
 - 3) Jesus -- Savior (Matthew 1:21).
 3. A person can have a good reputation, regardless of the actual name he wears, as illustrated by Timothy (Acts 16:1-2) and Demetrius (3 John 12).
- B. Let us determine the value of "a good name."
 1. Solomon indicated that "a good name" is more valuable than:
 - a. "great riches" (Proverbs 22:1)
 - b. "precious ointment" (Ecclesiastes 7:1).
 2. A person may not have much money, but he has something valuable if he has a good reputation or character.
- C. Having "a good name" is something that must be "chosen."
 1. A person does not have "a good name" by accident -- a deliberate choice is involved.
 2. Information in Isaiah 7:14-16 helps us understand how a person chooses to have "a good name."
 - a. (vs.14) A special name is mentioned -- "Immanuel" ["God with us" -- Matthew 1:23].
 - b. (vs.15-16) 2 activities relate to having "a good name":
 - 1) "refuse the evil"
 - 2) "choose the good."
 - c. These are the keys to having "a good name."

II. "LOVING FAVOR"

- A. The fact that Solomon mentioned "loving favor" implies that another kind exists that must be avoided.
 1. Keep in mind that the "favor" under consideration has to do with receiving the approval of someone else.
 2. We need to be like Jesus who increased "in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52).
- B. Solomon indicated that "loving favor" is more valuable than "silver and gold."
- C. The Scriptures teach us how to have this "loving favor" with God and men.
 1. (Proverbs 11:27) We must diligently seek good and avoid mischief.
 2. A more detailed explanation is given in Proverbs 3:1-4.
 - a. We must always remember God's law and keep it.
 - b. We must pursue mercy and truth with all our hearts.

Conclusion: Choosing a good name and loving favor will help us to remain unspotted from the world.