

Keeping Ourselves Unspotted from the World
(Lesson 43)

Introduction:

1. In order to practice "pure and undefiled religion before God" we must "keep ourselves unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).
2. In this lesson we are concentrating on an activity addressed in Proverbs 3:5-6 that will help us remain free from the world's spots -- "the Lord must direct our paths."
3. The Lord will direct our paths if we follow the guidelines that are given:
 - a. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart."
 - b. "Lean not unto thine own understanding."
 - c. "In all thy ways acknowledge Him."

Discussion:

- I. IN ORDER FOR THE LORD TO DIRECT OUR PATHS, WE MUST NOT LEAN UNTO OUR OWN UNDERSTANDING
 - A. The Bible deals with this principle many times (Proverbs 3:7a; Romans 12:16b).
 - B. The Bible also tells us why we must not lean unto our own understanding:
 1. because man's ways result in death (Proverbs 14:12)
 2. because what seems right to us may not please the Lord (Proverbs 16:2; 21:2)
 3. because it is foolish to trust in our own hearts (Proverbs 28:26)
 4. because man cannot direct his own steps (Jeremiah 10:23)
 5. because to do so is sin (James 4:13-17).
 - C. The Scriptures teach us:
 1. that we must not lean unto our own understanding
 2. why we must not lean unto our own understanding.
- II. THE SCRIPTURES GIVE AN ALTERNATIVE
 - A. Rather than lean unto our own understanding, the Bible says:
 1. "trust in the Lord with all thine heart"
 2. "in all thy ways acknowledge Him."
 - B. In other words, we are to depend completely upon God.
 1. When we make any plans, when we make any decisions, and when we endeavor to do anything, we must seek counsel from God.
 2. This involves:
 - a. searching His word to see what it has to say (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
 - b. talking to God through prayer, asking Him for wisdom (James 1:5).
 3. The Lord will direct our paths if we follow these instructions.
- III. THESE PRINCIPLES ARE ILLUSTRATED IN THE BIBLE
 - A. Naaman shows us how dangerous it is to lean unto our own understanding (2 Kings 5:1-14).
 - B. Abraham and Paul allowed the Lord to direct their paths.
 1. Abraham
 - a. Although the instructions given in Proverbs 3 were written many years after Abraham lived, he applied these principles, and God directed his paths (Hebrews 11:8-10).
 - b. There were some rough places along the way, but Abraham continued to allow God to direct his paths (Hebrews 11:17-19).
 2. Paul
 - a. (Acts 16:6-12) Instead of following his own desires, Paul followed the directions revealed to him [Lydia was converted with her household].
 - b. (Acts 16:22-24) There were some unpleasant things that occurred, but Paul continued to allow God to direct his paths [the jailer was converted with his household].
 - C. Jesus provides the greatest example of allowing God to direct His paths (John 12:23, 27-28).

Conclusion:

1. Let us diligently follow these guidelines.
2. The Lord will direct our paths and help us to keep ourselves unspotted from the world.