**Do Not Envy the World**

*Proverbs 23:17-18*

**Introduction**

1. Christians are called to be an abstinent people – ***“Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul” (1 Peter 2:11).***
   1. **Abstain** – *apechomai*; **to hold oneself off, i.e. refrain**: — abstain. (Strong)
   2. The word implies a desire to partake of, or partake in, with the subsequent total self-denial.
   3. ***“I say then: Walk in the spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16).***
   4. There is a desire, but we must not fulfill it. WE MUST NOT EVEN HAVE THE STRONG DESIRE TO FULFILL IT. (*Desire to fulfill our desire – we should desire to achieve abstinence.*) 🡪
2. **Envy** – *kaw-naw'*; to be (causatively make) zealous, that is, (in a bad sense) jealous or envious.
   1. We must not have a zeal for what ***“sinners,”*** or the world are indulging in, and the pleasure they receive from such indulgence.
   2. Also, many times the wicked prosper despite their indulgence in sin. **WE MUST NOT ENVY THEIR PROSPERITY.**
3. As we follow God, we must understand the dissipation that is worldliness, and instead of envying ***“sinners,”*** direct such strong desire toward serving God.
4. Do Not Envy the World
5. Do not envy the world.
   1. **Proverbs 3:31-35** – The Lord’s command that we abstain from worldliness is a safeguard from a bitter end!
      1. DO NOT ENVY THEM! WHY?
      2. **God will not reward them, but punish them!**
   2. **Proverbs 24:19-20** – There is a temptation put in our way by the adversary to grow hot with jealous anger toward the prosperous wicked.
      1. We must not allow ourselves to ***“fret”*** because of sinners.
      2. **Fret** – khaw-raw'; to glow or grow warm; figuratively (usually) to blaze up, of anger, zeal, jealousy.
      3. **(v. 20)** – We must understand their seemingly glorious life is temporary.
      4. **The anger aroused toward the ungodly because of the seeming prosperity in their lives as they pleasure in sin will lead us down a terrible path! 🡪**
   3. **Psalm 73:1-9** – The envy of the ungodly will cause us to stumble **(v. 2).**
      1. **Their prosperity is only for a while.**
      2. We must understand there is a future 🡪
6. For surely there is a hereafter.
   1. **Proverbs 23:18** – Remember, there is a hereafter – something the world does not keep in mind.
      1. **Hereafter** – *akh-ar-eeth'*; the last or end, **hence the future**.
      2. Their prosperity is in the present, but does not extend to the end, or future.
   2. ***“The light of the righteous rejoices, but the lamp of the wicked will be put out” (Proverbs 13:9).***
      1. How long does the ***“lamp”*** (seeming glory) of the wicked last?
      2. **On this side of eternity, it burns bright, but it is extinguished in the end.**
   3. **2 Peter 1:8-9** – We must not become shortsighted!
      1. **VV. 5-7** contains the command to grow in the ***“divine nature”*** by adding to our initial ***“faith.”***
      2. A Christian must continually grow in the Lord.
      3. **To envy the world is to neglect our growth, and shows a shortsightedness.**
      4. **Shortsighted** – only seeing those things that are near, but neglecting the things that are far off.
      5. **I.e. those who do not seek to grow in the *“divine nature,”* but envy the world are only seeing the NOW and not the FUTURE that WILL COME!**
   4. **We must understand the folly of living for this life, fulfilling all pleasure, and prepare for the next life by living for the Lord! 🡪**
7. Be Zealous for the Fear of the Lord
8. Be zealous for the fear of the Lord.
   1. **Proverbs 23:17** – Our strong desire should be for the service of God, not the way of sinners.
      1. ***“be zealous”*** – This is supplied by the translators. The text implies that ***“envy,”*** or zeal, should not be for ***“sinners,”*** but for the Lord.
      2. **Instead of wishing we could indulge in sin like the world, and prosper as they prosper now, our immense desire should be to SEE and TAKE ADVANTAGE OF every opportunity to serve the Lord.**
   2. ***“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man’s all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).***
      1. Our entire purpose is to obey God – we should be ZEALOUS for those opportunities – ***“[Jesus] gave Himself for us…[to] purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works” (Titus 2:14).***
      2. *We should not be seeking pleasure in this life, but seeking justification before God in the judgment to ensure eternal reward!*
   3. **2 Peter 3:10-14** – The world and all it offers will be burned up, and we will be judged for how we lived our lives while on earth.
      1. (v. 11) – This should cause us to live holy lives.
      2. **(v. 14)** – Because we know these things are coming, we should not be envying the world, but instead be ZEALOUS for justification before God.
   4. **1 John 2:15-17** – We must understand the world, and those who indulge in it will pass away.
      1. We are promised continuance of glory in abiding with God.
      2. **We have a hope that will be realized 🡪**
9. And your hope will not be cut off.
   1. **Psalm 37:37-38** – The wicked have no hope for a continuing and prosperous future, but the righteous do.
   2. **Psalm 1** – This Psalm illustrates exactly why we should not envy the ungodly, but should be zealous for the fear of the Lord.
      1. **Blessed** – supremely happy.
      2. **(vv. 4-5)** – The ungodly will be cut off, and perish.
      3. **(v. 6)** – The one who is zealous for the fear of the Lord will be known by Him in the end.
   3. **Romans 8:18, 24-25, 28-29** – We have the hope for eternal glory in Christ Jesus our Lord, and that hope ***“will not be cut off.”***
      1. **(v. 18)** – We suffer for Christ, but must understand the FUTURE GLORY outweighs the suffering. (**DON’T ENVY THE PROSPEROUS UNGODLY!)**
      2. **(vv. 24-25)** – It is called ***“hope”*** because we don’t have it yet. ***Therefore, our ZEAL should be for the fear of the Lord, because we are “eagerly” waiting for the reward!***
      3. **(vv. 28-29)** – Everything we do in service for God will be rewarded – we will be ***“glorified.”***
         1. In our service to God we suffer, but the good outweighs the suffering.
         2. **He predestined us, called us, justified us, and we continue to live for Him knowing what comes next – *“and whom He justified, these He also glorified.”***

**Conclusion**

1. In our life lived for God we will have the temptation to be envious of the world.
2. **We must never lose perspective, knowing that the world has its reward now, and ours comes later.**
3. Not only this, but our reward is far greater than any other.
4. **For this reason, our strong desire – our zeal – should not be directed toward envy of the world, but toward the *“fear of the Lord.”***