



Sunday School Lesson

INTRODUCTION

A group of rich and fashionable ladies once made arrangements to visit a coal mine. When they arrived for the tour, one of the women was wearing an expensive white dress. The guide spoke to her, suggesting it might not be a good idea to wear such a dress into the mine. The woman responded quite haughtily to the man's suggestion: "My good man, I will wear what I choose without any advice from you. You can't prevent me from wearing it down there if I choose to." "No, ma'am," replied the guide. "I can't prevent you from wearing that white dress in, but I can assure you that there are many things down there to prevent your wearing it back out."

Living the Christian life is quite like that. Some argue that a Christian has the right to go any place he wants, and in a sense that is true. But there are some places that a Christian cannot go without running the risk of moral contamination. James' warning is still valid. "Friendship of the world is enmity with God."

In verses 1-3 James has established that their strife came because of their selfish desires. Now he turns to sharp rebuke and admonition.

(James 4:4) Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

The masculine term adulterers is not found in the better manuscripts, only the feminine adulteress. James uses a figure that his Jewish readers would understand. In the Old Testament God's relationship to the Israelites was sometimes depicted as a marriage. Israel's unfaithful to God was then described as adultery. Jehovah God is a jealous God who will tolerate no rivals. The world, in this case not the physical world but the evil, sensual aspects of the world, represent the false lover who is God's rival for our affections. Jesus stated the situation quite clearly: "No man can serve two masters," (Matt. 6:14).

"Do ye think that the Scripture saith in vain, The Spirit dwelleth in us, lest he envy? But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

James seems to be asking, does the spirit that God placed in you as you became united with Christ urge you to seek the things of this world? Does the spirit impel you to fight and lust and kill as you are doing? The implied answer is a definite "no!"

In the words of verses 6, James is quoting from Proverbs 3:34, a Greek translation of the Old Testament with which his readers would be familiar. Some, however, in their pride refuse to accept this grace. Those who arrogantly oppose Him find Him unyielding, for God will not accept the haughty. Only those with a contrite heart can come to Him. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise," Psalms 51:17.

While God resists the proud, He gives grace that is, He shows favor, to the humble. The humble receive this favor because they feel their need and place themselves in a position to receive God's blessings.

I read of a man who about once a month took a bus to the downtown shopping area of a large city. He would spend the day visiting several department stores but he never bought anything. Finally someone asked him about his unusual practice. "Well," he said, "I like to visit all the stores and see all the things that I am perfectly happy without."

We may be tempted to laugh at such behavior; but before we do, we ought to examine our own thinking and ask why we deem such behavior eccentric. It may be that in terms of God's standards, as expressed in the fourth chapter of James, we are the eccentric.

On occasion our society has been called the "acquisitive society." Modern advertising is geared to produce in us an obsession to acquire things. We fill our homes with labor-saving devices and then have to spend the extra time we saved working to pay for them. We have closets full of clothes that we can't wear out in a lifetime, but the advertisers convince us that we cannot wear anything but the latest fashions. They have made status symbols of alligators on our sweaters and even on our socks.

The disturbing thing about all this is that Christians have fallen victim to this acquisition fever just like everyone else. Indeed, if this were the only basis for judging, we might be hard pressed to distinguish between a Christian and a non-Christian.



Mrs. Jane D. Wilson
.....Surprised honoree

Mrs. Wilson Honored As "Mother Of Year"

Morning service at First United Presbyterian Church brought a pleasant surprise to Jane D. Wilson. She was honored as the "Mother of the Year" by the men of the church.

A corsage was pinned on the honoree by Helen Holsley, "Mother of the Year" for 1983. Following the presentation of a plaque by William M. Jordan, president of First United Men, the service continued with an inspirational reading by Roy Henderson and a solo by Harry Ezell.

William Jordan presented the "Mother of the Year" as "One who is faithful in attending church services and other activities of the church. A cheerful giver of her time, talent and treasure to the church she loves. A proud mother, grandmother and the wife who encourages excellence and Christian liv-

ing by her words and example, her friendly smile and warm personality continue to inspire those who know and love her."

Mrs. Wilson has served faithfully as a Deacon, a member of Circle III, the Senior Choir, and pianist (until she was unable to continue because of physical disability). She is a retired teacher of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System. She and her husband, Pinckney, have four children and eight grandchildren.

Her daughter, Mollie C. Tillman, of Arverne, N.Y., her son, Andrew Carter, and husband attended the service. Other family members from Rock Hill, S.C., friends and former students also joined in greeting the "Mother of the Year" at a reception in the new fellowship hall of the church.

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