



VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

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STUDY 12: THE TEST OF CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE AND CHARACTER

James 1:18-21

Jesus did warn that "Not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven..." (Matthew 7:21). In these last days where there are many "professors" and few "possessors" of the life of Christ (Titus 1:16) believers ought to "give diligence to make your calling and election sure" (II Peter 1:10) through working "out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12). The sad state of Christianity in the present world is highlighted in Charles Stanley's 1992 book thus:

"The divorce rate for Christian adults isn't far behind that of the rest of the world. The percentage of Christian adolescents who are involved in pre-marital sex rivals the statistics for those kids who say they have no strong religious beliefs.... Statistically and observationally, there seems to be little difference between the lifestyles of the saints and the sinners.... That being the case, it is no wonder that so many non-Christians want nothing to do with Christ or His church. They know too many Christians...."

(At the time of writing the book around 1992, Charles Stanley was a pastor of a church with over 13,000 members in USA)

Our text, not only give the reason for this sad state of affairs but also the solution. Through a genuineness of salvation experience and consistency in Christian living every believer can become a true salt of the earth and light of the world (Matthew 5:13-16).

GENUINENESS OF SALVATION EXPERIENCE James 1:18,19-21.

Genuine salvation experience is the only means through which a sinner can be begotten of God - to be "a kind of first fruits of his creatures" (James 1:18). This experience comes through repentance from sin and believe in the gospel (Mark 1:15). This involves a dramatic change that is variously presented in the scriptures as leaving the broad-way and entering the narrow gate (Matthew 7:13,14); coming out of darkness into the marvelous light of God (I Peter 2:9; Ephesians 5:8; Acts 26:18); being delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of his dear son - Jesus Christ (Colosians 1:13) and being born again (John 3:3). In modern evangelical preachings, the emphasise is on receiving Christ rather than on repentance. Thus we find today, many who have supposedly received Christ but are still living in the flesh and still manifesting works of the flesh - adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, revelings and such like (Galatians 5:19-21).

As essential process to the ultimate salvation of the soul (vs. 21), James warned his audience to first desist from talkativeness, wrath, filthiness and naughtiness (vs. 19,21) before challenging them to receive the word of God with meekness (vs. 21). A vessel full of self and sin has no room to receive Christ in (Luke 2:7; Revelation 3:20). We must first empty ourselves of everything that defiles and thereby create room for Christ to come in. Being truly born of God is the foundation to consistent Christian living. And if the foundation be destroyed, what can the

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righteous do? (Psalms 11:3).

CONSISTENCY IN CHRISTIAN LIVING James 1:19-21.

Talkativeness, wrath, filthiness and naughtiness are not consistent with the Christian life. "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin" (Proverbs 10:19). Besides, every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment (Matthew 12:36). Generally, a talkative is a sinner (James 1:26). In terms of wrath and anger, there are people who can be:

- (a) easily angered and easily pacified.
- (b) easily angered and difficult to appease.
- (c) not easily angered and easily appeased.
- (d) not easily angered and difficult to appease.

Whatever category we find ourselves in, we must refrain from anger and wrath (Ephesians 4:26). James emphatically stated that **the wrath of man cannot work the righteousness that God.** Moral filthiness, impure and unholy affections, baseness, vileness, depravity as well as abundance of naughtiness are not befitting for vessels of honour (II Timothy 2:19-26). Once these are eradicated, then meekness, a godly virtue, should characterise the Christian's attitude, comportment and response to the word of God (James 3:13; I Peter 3:15). **It is impossible to live right, grow spiritually and gain heaven without meekness** (Matthew 18:3,4). Despite persecutions, problems and other responsibilities James still found time to write to other believers with the aim of perfecting them in Christ (Ephesians 4:11-16). This should be a challenge to all Christians worth their salt to do something towards the improvement of the present decadent state of Christianity (II Timothy 4:1-5; Matthew 5:13-16). The propagation of the gospel is a divine mandate to all saints, and we cannot achieve consistent Christian living without a commitment to the great commission (Matthew 28:18-20).