



# VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

Weekly Bible Study - 08:07:2009

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## **STUDY 23: GOD'S STANDARD FOR THE CHURCH**

James 2:5-13

It became necessary for James to stress God's standard for the Church because the brethren did not see in the same perspective with God. Their views were totally contrary to their faith - hence their conduct and lifestyles did not match their profession as Christians. It is important that believers of every age 'look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward' (II John 8). Our human heart is prone to deviating from the standard of God for the Church. The pressures from the world are ever so real and exert such tremendous pressures on everyone that the temptation to adapt worldly practices, philosophies and lifestyles are all too alluring. We must not forget that we are called to walk in a narrow way, and that any form of compromise leads into the broad way - the end of which is destruction. We should however be grateful to God, who keeps sending His Word to us so that we can examine our steps, make necessary changes, and if applicable restitutions, so as to keep within the narrow path to heaven. Our attitude to the Word should therefore be 'speak Lord, for thy servant heareth' (I Samuel 3:9).

### **DIVINE PRINCIPLES OF LIFE**

James 2:5-8.

**(a) The Worldly Rich Who Are Spiritually Poor** Revelation 3:14-20; Luke. 12:16-21; Matthew 19:16-23; Daniel 4:30-32, 5:27.

Riches can be viewed in different ways. It is a state of life governed by self sufficiency, self-management, self-satisfaction and pride. Any material thing of this world can act as riches upon which a person rests all his / her confidence and trust. The 'rich' therefore hardly take correction, but proudly proceed to do whatever self dictates. Riches or worldly fullness does not allow a person to accept the whole word (Matthew 19:21-22). To many a believer, 'riches' hinder total dependence on God therefore paralyses the desire for prayer, the fellowship of believers, God's Word and Christian experiences. It brings lack of interest for spiritual things but love for those of the world. Believers who are endowed with material wealth must be humble and abide in the totality of God's Word (Hebrews 11:24-27).

**(b) The Worldly Poor Who Are Spiritually Rich** Revelation 2:9; Daniel 1:8, 12-17; Luke 16:25; Genesis 13:12-18, 14:22-23; Matthew 5:2, 11:5; Acts 3:6; 1 Kings 21:1-14. This is the footprint of our Lord Jesus Christ (II Corinthians 8:9). To be rich toward God is placed above worldly riches. It is sad to say that the devil deceives many believers with the glories of this world to the point of seeking perishable things at the expense of spiritual riches (Matthew 26:15-16, Luke 4:5-8). Luther G. Presley captured this clearly in a song when he penned:

"Men strive for the wealth of this wide, wicked world,  
They seek after honour and fame (worldly fame);

**Your Spiritual Welfare Is Our Concern**

So lavishly sporting their diamonds and pearls,  
They put their dear Saviour to shame.

Chorus: I'd rather live in the bright city  
Than to own all earth's silver and gold,  
I'd rather have Jesus my Saviour,  
Than the diamonds of a palace to hold;  
I'd rather be a beggar, Live in a little shack by the road  
Than here to own, All of earth's treasures  
With no title to a future above,  
(By Luther G. Presley).

The following questions and others, if sincerely answered can reveal whether we are rich in Christ or not.

1. How many hours do you spend in personal prayer?
2. Do you seriously care about real holiness and fullness of the Holy Ghost?
3. Are your approaches to things free from sentimentality, carnality and vanity?
4. Does your heart desire to dwell in the house of the Lord, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to enquire in His holy temple?
5. When last did you obey the Great Commission, to witness to people?
6. Do you desire the coming of Christ today or wish that He delays a bit more for you to pursue some worldly riches?
7. Do you love reading, studying and meditating on the Word of God and memorising scripture verses?

### **THE CALL OF GOD**

James 2:5-6; I Corinthians 1:26-29; Amos 1:1; I Samuel 16:6-7, 11-12; I Samuel 15:17; Judges 6:15-16; Matthew 4:18-22; Ruth 1:14-17 with Matthew 1:5. It is possible to be rich materially and in the faith but most materially rich people are not Christians, while some of those who proclaim to be, are not sound in the faith. They measure the Word of God by their intellect and do not generally agree with the standard of God for the Church. It is equally possible to be materially and spiritually poor. God has chosen the poor in spirit (Matthew 5:3) who are rich in faith.

### **PRINCIPLE FOR JUDGEMENT**

James 2:8-13.

Partiality makes judges of evil thoughts (vs 4). In God's standard, the least of sin will debar from heaven (Hebrews 12:14; Matthew 5:8; Revelation 21:27). This is why we need to spend time on our knees in prayer until a deeper work of grace is done in our hearts.

James referred to the word of God, as the standard for judgement (vs. 8,12).