

Avoiding Pollution

TEXT: 2 Timothy 2:19-26; Psalm 15:1-5

KEY VERSE: Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

— Philippians 4:8

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Ephesians 5:27; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; 1 Peter 1:22,23

In our world today, we hear of air pollution, noise pollution, water pollution, etc. The contamination of our environment is an important concern, but of far more serious nature is the onslaught of moral, physical, and spiritual pollution which is attaching itself to the human race at an increasingly rapid rate. These forms of pollution, if the Christian allows them to be attached to his life, will have a devastating effect—the eternal loss of his soul.

1. Our spiritual foundation, as stated in 1 Corinthians 3:11, is Jesus Christ. According to our text, what are the two sayings on the seal of the foundation?

2. If you are a born-again Christian, you are a part of Christ's church in the world today. In reference to Ephesians 5:27, what characteristics is Christ looking for in His church? What does this mean in terms of the kind of life we live?

3. In our introduction, we are warned to beware of physical pollution. What are some of the things in our world which would contaminate a person physically? What must we do to avoid these pollutions?

RESPONSES

1. The two sayings are: "The Lord knoweth them that are his," and, "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." Discuss with the students the importance of this first verse of our text, in light of the three verses prior to the text. The Apostle Paul brings out that, regardless of what others might say or how much their minds might be polluted by things that are untrue, it is possible for each individual to be secure on God's foundation. Words alone do not create this relationship, but deeds and actions, as well as faith in God. It is comforting to the individual that the Lord knows them that are His. We read, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:16). Ask the students what the text says the Christian is to do if he desires to remain on the true foundation.

2. Ephesians 5:27 brings out that the Church of Christ is "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle," and that it is holy and without blemish. This indicates that a Christian can be kept free from contamination or pollution by any impurity of the world. Discuss with your class the fact that although we are in the world and surrounded by evil on every hand, we can remain free from these ungodly elements through the power of God. See John 17:16.

3. As your students discuss this question, they will probably mention such things as drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, etc. We know that these are harmful to the physical body, which is the temple of God. See 1 Corinthians 3:16,17. In considering how to avoid these pollutions, your students should see the necessity of choosing the right friends, avoiding, whenever possible, the places where evil influences are prevalent, resisting the temptation to "try it once," etc.

4. The vessels of honor indicate those who are serving the Lord faithfully. The vessels of dishonor represent any who are not living according to God's Word. Our text admonishes a man to purge himself from being a vessel of dishonor, and he will become a vessel of honor, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use. Ask the students how much moral, physical, or spiritual pollution God allows in His vessels of honor. The vessels of gold and silver in God's great house are free from those things that defile. Jesus Christ cleanses from sin, but it is the duty of the individual to keep himself unspotted from the

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

4. What do you think are the meanings of the expressions, “vessels of honor” and “vessels of dishonor”? How can one change from being a vessel of dishonor to a vessel of honor?

5. A definition of *lust* is “overmastering desire.” This could include a lust for power, fame, or money, as well as unlawful sexual gratification. According to our text, what is the antidote for youthful lusts? Why are lusts harmful? See 1 Peter 2:11.

6. James 3:16 discusses two pollutants that can assail the Christian. What are these, and how can they be avoided?

7. What does the Bible say is the root of all evil (1 Timothy 6:10)? Why is this pollutant so subtle?

8. Listed in our text in Psalm 15 are eleven qualifications for heavenly citizenship. Make a list of all the conditions you can find.

world.

5. The text admonishes us to flee youthful lusts, and to follow righteousness, faith, charity, and peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. The Apostle Peter warns that fleshly lusts war against the soul, showing the danger of this sort of pollution. What does the Spirit say, through the Apostle James, about lusts (James 1:14,15)? He said that one is tempted to evil through his own lust, and that when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin, and sin when it is finished brings forth death. Have the class present their considerations on how this type of moral and spiritual contamination can best be avoided. Additional Scriptures to clarify this point can be found in Romans 6:12,13; 13:14; Galatians 5:24; Ephesians 4:22-24; 1 Timothy 6:9 and Titus 2:12.

6. The two pollutants mentioned in this verse are envying and strife. Class discussion should bring out that both of these come from earthly wisdom. Self-promotion, jealousy, a contentious spirit, and pride are their basis. James 3:16,17 draws a sharp contrast between earthly wisdom and the beautiful qualities of the wisdom from Above. Seek and receive the wisdom from Above, which “is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.” In other words, if we keep our hearts filled with the things of God, the things of the world will not enter in to contaminate.

7. The love of money is the root of all evil. This pollutant is very subtle in that it promises so much satisfaction, yet in itself it cannot fulfill the need of the human heart. Ask someone in the class to read 1 Timothy 6:9, then have the class rehearse the steps into defilement of those who would be rich. First they fall into temptation and a snare, then into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. Ask the class to point out a better way of life. Perhaps somebody will mention Jesus’ promise that if a man seeks first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, all the necessary things of life will be added. Another might mention, “godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come” (1 Timothy 4:8). Remember the words of the song: “God’s way is the best way; God’s way is the right way; I’ll trust in Him away.”

YOUR WRAP-UP

8. Discuss with the class that it is easy to see that the conditions listed are not moral or spiritual defilements, but are positive actions which are exemplified by the person who is living a Christian life. Doing the opposite of any of these qualifications would pollute the soul of the doer. Summarize the lesson by discussing the importance of a Christian’s living according to God’s Word, and not allowing any sort of moral, physical, or spiritual pollution to attach itself to his life.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

Name some pastimes and places a Christian should stay away from, for the good of his own soul.

What pollutes a soul?

If you want to avoid the pollution of sin, what must you do?

What are some of the things that could pollute you?

In our ANSWER story, what was the first thing the devil suggested that Christian do?

How might the friends you choose be a key factor in whether or not you are polluted by the world?

Name the pointers the devil suggested to Christian to help him change the way he lived.

THINGS TO DO

Bring a tape recorder and camera to class. Discuss their uses. Bring out the point that they have one thing in common—they are all designed to capture sounds or images to be kept and reviewed in the future. Make a parallel of this to our minds. Like the recorder and camera, our minds record what we hear and see. If we expose ourselves to evil things, and don't try to avoid them, our mind will record and replay these sights and sounds. Before we know it, we could be destroyed spiritually.

Bring a bowl of water mixed with mud, or a small plastic bag of garbage. Ask the students if they would choose either of these for a meal. Naturally, they would say no. Explain that they should react the same way to evil and corrupt things which will hurt them spiritually.

Bring to class two large hearts. One should have pictures of things that would pollute a child's heart, the other pure and white. The pictures could be cut out of a magazine or drawn. Discuss with your class how both hearts may have

the same temptations, but one of the hearts yields to the temptations while the other is able to resist. Explain how the pure heart resists temptation.

Bring to class pictures or news clippings of things that pollute young people. Pass them around to be read or explained by the class. Show how things that pollute the mind or body may also pollute the soul.

Answers for ANSWER


We Can Win

Victory over the devil! That's what we want. Jesus has given us a way to have this victory. To find out what it is, cross out all the letters in the box at the bottom of the page that are also printed in the verse box. Begin with the first letter, T. There will be eight letters left over. Circle these, then unscramble them and place them in the right order in the Victory box (two words). This is what gives us victory over the devil. If you need a clue read Revelation 12:11.

VERSE

The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom.

II Timothy 4:18



VICTORY!
H I S B L O O D

A grid of letters for a word search puzzle. The letters are arranged in a roughly rectangular shape. Some letters are circled: H, B, L, S, I, O, O, D. The rest of the letters are X's.