

## The Trap

2 Tim. 2:20-35 VCC 01/08/06

### I. Dan Byler shows his traps and snares

#### II. 2 Timothy 2:20 - 2 Tim. 3:5

**A. 2 Timothy 2:24-26**, ...who are in opposition...and escape the **snare** [entrapment] of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.”

1. **Snare** - (Gk) *pagis*, a snare, trap, noose in which birds and animals are entangled and caught, implies unexpected, suddenly, because birds and animals are caught unawares.
2. **who are taken captive** -- *zogreo*, to catch or take alive, capture
3. **at his will** -- (Gk) *thelma*, who one wishes or determines shall be done, desire, pleasure.

**B. 2 Timothy 3:2-5** - "People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God-- having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them." , **NIV**.

1. Paul was talking about those **within the church**... many are wounded, hurt, and bitter... offended, but don't realize that they have been trapped by the enemy.
2. All offended people fall into two categories:
  - a) 1. Those who have been treated unjustly
  - b) 2. Those who *believe* that they have been treated unjustly.
    - (1) They believe with all their hearts they have been wronged, often their conclusions are drawn from inaccurate information, or information is accurate, but conclusion distorted. They judge by assumption, appearance, and hearsay.
  - c) They way the enemy keeps a person in a trap is to hide the offense
    - (1) Hid often in pride... cannot admit their true condition.

### III. Different Traps of the Enemy

#### A. Our Words

1. Mt 22:15-18 Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to **trap** him in his words.

a) Pr 20:25 It is a **trap** for a man to dedicate something rashly and only later to consider his vows.

**(1) Trap of not considering our words, making commitments we cannot keep.**

b) Lu 20:26 They were unable to **trap** him in what he had said there in public.

And astonished by his answer, they became silent.

**(1) Trap of uttering words that are not right**

2. "A fool's mouth is his undoing, and his lips are a snare to his soul." **Proverbs 18:7**

a) "if you have been trapped by what you said, ensnared by the words of your mouth," Proverbs 6:2, NIV.

#### 3. James 3:1-12, Taming of the tongues

a) Gossip

(1) Three preachers, from the same town but different churches, went out on a fishing trip together and as they got out into the middle of the lake they started to confess their sins to one another. The first preacher started talking. "You know what my big sin is? My big sin is drinking. I go once a month into a neighboring town where nobody knows me and I get drunk. I know that it is wrong but I still do it." The second preacher stated taking. "My big sin is gambling. I went to Las Vegas last year and lost a large sum of money." The third preacher started talking. "Guys I guess that I should have gone first." The other two preachers looked puzzled and asked why. "My big sin is gossiping."

- b) The Tongue needs to be controlled
  - c) The tongue is powerful
  - d) The tongue should bring forth good fruit not mixed.
    - (1) the multitude out of Egypt was a mixed multitude.
    - (2) Think before you speak
      - (a) T--Is it true?
      - (b) H--Is it helpful?
      - (c) I--Is it inspiring?
      - (d) N--Is it necessary?
      - (e) K--Is it kind?
  - e) Keep your words sweet you may have to eat them
  - f) Be gracious to those who say things you don't like
4. Problem is really LOVE.
- a) "Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold,"  
**Matthew 24:12, NIV.**
    - (1) **Love**, Gk, "agape", which is self-sacrificing love for others.
    - (2) This morning, maybe you have said something about someone that needs to be corrected, ask God's forgiveness and go and make amends. Maybe you have been hurt by the word of another, ask for God's help and move on. This morning let us strive to live in such a way that our words bring glory and honor to the Kingdom of Jesus.
- 5. TAMING OUR TONGUES.** (Practical guidelines from James)
- a) **BE QUICK TO LISTEN, SLOW TO SPEAK (1:19).**
    - (1) It is better to remain silent and be thought a fool, than to open your mouth and remove all doubt" (Abraham Lincoln).
    - (2) "I have never been hurt by anything I did not say" (Calvin Coolidge).
    - (3) "When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise" (Prov. 10:19).
  - b) **KEEP A TIGHT REIN ON YOUR TONGUE (1:26).**
    - (1) The tongue must be bridled constantly!
    - (2) "He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity" (Prov. 21:23).
  - c) **REFUSE TO TEAR OTHER PEOPLE DOWN (4:11; 5:9).**
  - d) **SPEAK ONLY WHAT IS TRUE (5:12).**
  - e) **PRAY FOR GOD'S HELP IN TAMING THE TONGUE (3:8).**
    - (1) "No man can tame the tongue!"
    - (2) We need God's help!

#### IV. Legalism -- the outside matters more than the heart.

1. Joh 8:6 They were using this question as a **trap**, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger.

##### A. Introduction

1. In Florida, a woman may be fined for falling asleep under a hair dryer.
2. In Indiana, citizens are not allowed to attend a movie house or ride in a public streetcar within four hours after eating garlic. That seems like a good law.
3. In Eureka, IL, a man with a mustache may not kiss a woman.
4. In Moline, IL ice-skating at the Riverside pond during the months of June and August is strictly prohibited.
5. In Normal, IL it's against the law to make a face at a dog.
6. Wisconsin, the Dairy State...in an effort to help the sale of butter, margarine was considered illegal, especially when smuggled in by the "flat-landers" of Illinois.
7. Nicholas County, West Virginia because no member of the clergy there is allowed to tell jokes or humorous stories from the pulpit

##### B. Observations:

1. We tend to think others are legalistic, but that we are not (we all tend to judge others by our own standards of what is acceptable)
2. Legalism is highly contagious. It can spread through a congregation like the flu in public school.
3. Legalism can make vibrant faith dull and lifeless.
4. Legalism produces self-righteousness, judgmentalism and condemnation. It majors in handing out guilt and short-circuits the work of grace.
5. Legalism makes us narrow and divisive. It insists that we make others live up to the standard we have adopted and think others need to be like me.
6. Legalism makes others miss Jesus, and see a list of rules and regulations instead.

##### C. Examples

1. **Mt. 16:6-12**... beware the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.
  - a) 1Co 5:6 Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough?
  - b) Mt 9:11 When the **Pharisees** saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?"
  - c) Mt 9:14\* Then John's disciples came and asked him, "How is it that we and the **Pharisees** fast, but your disciples do not fast?"
  - d) Mt 9:34 But the **Pharisees** said, "It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons."
  - e) Mt 12:2 When the **Pharisees** saw this, they said to him, "Look! Your disciples are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath."
2. **Mt. 15:1-20**, Pharisees were offended by Jesus' teaching that what really mattered was the heart, not the outward action.
3. **Mt. 23:1-29**, They lived for how it looked to others, not what God saw.
  - a) Loved to put burdens on others, but not practice it themselves
  - b) Loved to do things for others to see
  - c) Loved to have titles and public honor and recognition
  - d) Go to great lengths to win someone to themselves
  - e) Make rules with little key phrases or words that are all right, but heart wrong.
  - f) Keep the smallest of details and ignore the more important things.
  - g) Look good on the outside, but inside is rotten, full of greed and self.
  - h) Lift themselves above others in the past and present
4. **Luke 6**
  - a) Lu 6:2 Some of the **Pharisees** asked, "Why are you doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?"
  - b) Lu 6:7 The **Pharisees** and the teachers of the law were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal on the Sabbath.
5. **David** was a man after God's own heart, even though he broke the religious mold.
  - a) Unclean shepherd boy

- b) Ate the holy bread when fleeing Saul
    - (1) "But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him; How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests?" Matthew 12:3, 4, KJV. (1Sa 21:4)
  - c) Took the ark to his own house to worship before the ark whenever he pleased.
    - (1) " They brought the ark of the LORD and set it in its place inside the tent that David had pitched for it, and David sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings before the LORD." **2 Samuel 6:17**, NIV.
6. Cures for Legalism (Col. 2:16-23)
- a) Refuse to judge by externals (2:16-17)
    - (1) therefore... looks to food restrictions, special diets, observance of ceremonies and holy days, religious festivals, monthly New Moon celebrations, and Sabbath weekly.
    - (2) It is relatively easy to judge by externals... but we must not evaluate by what we or others are doing... but our hearts.
  - b) Reject False Authority (2:18-19)
    - (1) disqualify - to declare unworthy of a prize, like an umpire who is calling you out because you have not obeyed the rules. These people are described by Paul in 4 ways
      - (a) false humility
      - (b) worship angels... focus is on spiritual things but not Christ
      - (c) Have seen visions... have the latest "word of the Lord"
      - (d) Puffed up with idle notions... "inner secrets" give a big head, not a burning heart.
  - c) Refuse Religious Rules (2:20-23)
    - (1) Don't submit to "touch not, taste not, do not handle" this sounds good on the surface because we all agree we need discipline in our lives. But these were teaching that these things were necessary for fellowship with God.
    - (2) Christianity is not about what you DO, but about what has been DONE by Christ for you.
7. Stand For Liberty! (Gal. 5:1)
- a) There is a fight for Christian liberty against legalism.
    - (1) Liberty -- motivation is LOVE
    - (2) Legalism -- motivation is guilt and fear.
  - b) Gal. 5:7 -- "You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth?"
  - c) Gal. 3:1 -- "You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified."
  - d) Gal. 1:6 -- I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel...
8. Watch out for the traps
- a) Legalism micromanages, Liberty is generally general
    - (1) Which version of the Bible KJV, etc.
    - (2) What is long hair, short hair
  - b) Judging the actions of others instead of yourself.

## V. Offenses.

A. God's word and promises will always come to pass as long as you don't get offended.

### 1. Genesis 50:15-21, Joseph

a) Psalm 105:16-17, God sent Joseph. We need to see that God is in control and may even use the deeds, even misdeeds of our brothers to propel us to our goal... if we don't get offended.

(1) The only person who can move you out of God's will is YOU and you do this most often by being OFFENDED.

### 2. Balaam (Num. 22)

a) Jude 11 - rushed for prophet into Balaam's error

b) Rev. 2:14 - hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin.

(1) ENTICE = **skandalon** (Gk), which is the bait stick of a trap.

c) Balaam was offended at the Lord, felt the Lord was cheating him out of a paycheck. Because of an offense, he infected Balak with a word of how to entice, Israel to sin.

## B. Luke 17

### 1. 17:5 -- "Increase our faith"

a) This is later part of Jesus Ministry, they have seen dead raised, blind eyes open, 5000 fed with loaves, yet none of those miracles caused them to cry out like this. What was this that made them cry out.

(1) After Jesus' statement they cried out, in desperation, not just a one time prayer.

### 2. 17:4 - If he sins against you 7 times in one day...

### 3. 17:1 - It is impossible that no **offenses** should come

a) GK, skandalon = the bait stick of a trap to catch small animals. That which the bait was put on. So the offenses is the bait of Satan to pull you into his captivity.

b) 2 Tim. 2:24-26, ... that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by the devil to do his will.

(1) The scary thing is that most people in the trap don't even know it... they must come to their senses. Most people who are offended don't even realize that they are offended.

(2) A hunter has to lay a smart trap, it can't be obvious. It must be laid cunningly. Satan knows an obvious trap won't work... the bait is offense

## C. Mt. 24

1. Jesus is speaking of the last days. The Apostles were looking for the signs or evidence of the Second Coming, and the Lord laid out signs.

2. Many (polus - much, many, great), a very large amount of people, will be offended

3. will betray one another (an offense not taken care of will lead to betray, and eventually hatred)

a) Prov. 18:19 - a brother offended is harder to win than a strong city.

(1) Walls are to protect you, from those who you think will hurt you.

(2) 2 Cor. 10:3-5, in the NT we call these walls "strongholds." We do not war according to the flesh, weapons can pull down strongholds... (Eph. 6 = demonic), but these are imagination (every reasoning), which is in the mind, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge (mind) and every thought (mind) captive to the obedience of Christ.

(3) So strongholds are thought process contrary to the will of God.

4. God is LOVE.

a) The love of God always seeks to give, give, give. When we are first born again and filled with HS, we laugh, sing, and love everyone. You even love your mother-in-law.

(1) "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." Luke 6:38, NIV.

b) Then someone does something that is not kind, or says something even hurtful, they gossip, speak against you. Not a sinner, but someone in the church

(1) The person who can hurt you the most is the person closest because our expectation is higher of them. If they don't meet our expectations, we are hurt.

(2) Ps. 55:12-14, If an enemy reproached me I could bear it... but it was someone I went to the house of God.

- (3) Example: Expectation of world = 0, saved = 3, husband or wife = 5, pastor = 8 So if the world does 4, you feel blessed, but if someone performs below your expectations you are offended.
5. When walls are UP, we don't seek to give, give, give, we focus on protecting. (Like dead sea).
- a) Freely you have received, freely give. Offended people act to protect, not give.
  - b) Thought patterns are mechanisms to keep them from being hurt again, so we respond differently.
  - c) Someone offended
    - (1) Betrayal is when I seek my protection and benefit at the expense of the one that I have a relationship with. The ultimate abandonment of a relationship.
    - (2) If push comes to shove I protect myself.
    - (3) Prov. 18:1 -- a man who isolates himself... will betray to protect.
    - (4) EVIDENCE OF OFFENSE
      - (a) OFTEN COMES OUT IN OUR WORDS!
      - (b) OUR ATTITUDES!
      - (c) MANIPULATION
  - d) Betrayal leads to hatred
    - (1) **1 John 3:14,15** -- hating your brother (not sinners) is a murderer (not like one), an dyou know no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.
    - (2) Hatred is not necessarily rage and anger. Absalom hated David, but spoke neither good nor evil to him.
      - (a) hatred = to loves less, to have no love.
      - (b) **1 Cor. 13:4-8** - meditate on love of God.
      - (c) Hatred can be very well disguised. It is often people we ignore.
    - (3) Jesus is coming back to a church with the extravagant love of God.
6. Then... after massive offense, where much has become betrayal or even hatred (ignoring)
- a) MANY false prophets will rise up and deceive many. After offense comes deception.
  - b) The first thing... be careful no one deceives you.
    - (1) An offended person deceives himself. The person really things he is right, but he is wrong.
    - (2) Offense is the breeding ground for deception.
    - (3) **Mt. 7:15** - false prophets are wolves in sheep's clothing. (not shepherd's clothing)
    - (4) Wolves and hyena's travel in packs, their goal is to isolate the sheep from the flock, then they are meat for the wolves. Isolation is not necessarily outward, but begins in the heart, where you shut people off.
  - c) **v.12** - love of many grows cold.
    - (1) It is the Gk, word - AGAPE, this is the love that the world does not have, it is the love that only God's people have access to. It is within the church. The LOVE of many will wax cold. The fiery passionate heart for God grows cold.
    - (2) When the love of God grows cold, it is not noticed, it is very gradual.
    - (3) This is massive in the last days.

#### D. Mt. 13:54-57

1. JESUS came to his home town and because they knew him they took offense at him.
  - a) We TAKE offense.
    - (1) Prov. 26:21-22 - A quarrelsome person starts fights as easily as hot embers light charcoal or fire lights wood. what dainty morsels rumors are--but they sink deep into ones heart."
  - b) We give Forgiveness and grace to others.
    - (1) ""And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. "But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."" Mark 11:25, 26, NKJV.

#### E. David kept his heart free of offense. (1 Sam. 26:7-11)

1. Abishai said that they Lord had delivered his enemy in to David's hand.
2. Saul had done things that would have offended many
  - a) He had spoken against David

- b) He tried to turn everyone against David
- c) He had killed 8500 priests for one priest helping David
- d) He had taken 3000 of his best troops and did his best to kill David.
- e) He continued to be king when the anointing for King had been taken and given to David.

**F. Questions.**

1. What would you have done if you were David?
2. How is your relationship with your parents, and other authorities in your life?
3. How are your relationships with members and/or leadership of previous church(es)?
4. What about friends that were sometime close, and something happened? Are you withholding love and kindness from them? (Love of many will wax cold).

## VI. Trap of Hanging on to security

### A. Intro:

1. Traps keep us from getting where we need to go... they hinder us from moving ahead. Sometimes a trap does not kill, but we are not getting ahead.
2. Story of business man who went to Liberia and the VP of the country fame and ask for a demonstration of the power of your God.
3. **Php 3:3-7** "Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you. Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh. For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh-- though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless. But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ." Philippians 3:1-7, NIV.

### B. David Counts the men (1 Chron 21:1ff)

1. Trust in numbers... bank, years with company, children, etc.
2. Sending \$400 to HMI.

### C. Disciples

1. LUke 9:3 -- Don't take a staff, bag, money... why?
  - a) So that they would be forced to depend on him and get in situations where they were helpless and totally dependant on a miracle.
2. Luke 9:10-15 - 5000 sit down
  - a) Mt. 14:15-21 -- disciples could not do it.

### D. OT Examples

1. 1 Kings 17:9 -- Woman making the last meal
  - a) Why not send Elijah earlier?
  - b) Why not have the brook dry up before?
  - c) Why not have the ravens stop sending food?
  - d) Why not speak to Elijah before the situation is so critical?
2. Do you feel like the woman?... lost all hope and looks like all your hopes are ready to die?

### E. 2 ingd 4:1-7 -- husband is dead, now in debt, bills overdue, with no way to pay.

1. Why did God wait so long.

### F. We need God to balance TRUST and BLESSING.

## G. Pride

## H. Fear of Man

1. "Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe." **Proverbs 29:25**, NIV.

## I. Sex and sensuality

1. **Ec 7:26** I find more bitter than death the woman who is a snare, whose heart is a **trap** and whose hands are chains. The man who pleases God will escape her, but the sinner she will ensnare.

### a) Trap of sensuality, using others for personal gratification

## J. Love of Money and Worldly desires

1. **Lu 21:34** "Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a **trap**.  
a) Trap of the cares of this life
2. **1Ti 6:9** People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a **trap** and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction.
3. "The images of their gods you are to burn in the fire. Do not covet the silver and gold on them, and do not take it for yourselves, or you will be **ensnared** by it, for it is detestable to the LORD your God." Deuteronomy 7:25, NIV.  
a) ensnared, (Gk. *yaqosh*) - to be caught by a bait, lured and ensnared or entrapped.
4. **Lu 12:15** Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."
5. **Lu 16:14** The **Pharisees**, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus.

## K. Luke 17:1 - It is impossible that no **offenses** should come.

1. **Offenses**, (Gk) skandalon. -- originally referred to the part of the trap to which the bait was attached. Thus it refers to laying a trap in someone's way.  
a) In the NT, often refers an entrapment used by the enemy. Offenses is a tool of the devil to bring people into captivity.
2. We often act shocked, surprised, when it should be expected.  
a) "For *it is* not an enemy *who* reproaches me; Then I could bear *it*. Nor *is it* one *who* hates me who has exalted *himself* against me; Then I could hide from him. But *it was* you, a man my equal, My companion and my acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, *And* walked to the house of God in the throng." **Psalms 55:12-14**, NKJV.

## VII. The Cure (Rev. 3:14-20)

### A. Stay in the Word.

1. How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word." **Psalms 119:9**, NIV.

### B. Choose to Obey the Lord, no matter what the cost.

1. "I find more bitter than death the woman who is a **snare**, whose heart is a trap and whose hands are chains. The man who pleases God will escape her, but the sinner she will ensnare." Ecclesiastes 7:26, NIV.
2. "The evil deeds of a wicked man ensnare him; the cords of his sin hold him fast." **Proverbs 5:22**, NIV.

### C. Encourage one another in the Lord.

1. "But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be **hardened by sin's deceitfulness**." Hebrews 3:13, NIV.

### D. Choose Right Companions

1. "Do not make friends with a hot-tempered man, do not associate with one easily angered, or you may learn his ways and get yourself ensnared." **Proverbs 22:24, 25**, NIV.
2. "The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life, turning a man from the snares of death." **Proverbs 13:14**, NIV.

### E. Fear the Lord

1. "The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, turning a man from the **snares** of death." Proverbs 14:27, NIV.

- F. The enemy always fights you hardest when God is ready to do something... shake off the victim mentality and be a warrior, know how to endure hardships, if knocked down, get back up. God is waiting on you (Isa. 60:1 - Arise from the depression your circumstances have you in.)
1. God wants to bring you out better than you were before!
  2. Isa 54:17 **no weapon** forged **against** you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and this is their vindication from me," declares the LORD.
  3. All things are working together for your good, so you can't feel bad, everyone is HELPING you!
    - a) Mt 22:18 But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, "You hypocrites, why are you trying to **trap** me?"
    - b) Pr 28:10 He who leads the upright along an evil path will fall into his own **trap**, but the blameless will receive a good inheritance.

c)

**d) The Envy Trap**

e)

f)

g) [1 Timothy 6:6-6:10](#) (NIV, NIRV, TNIV, KJV)

h)

i) TEXT: 1 Timothy 6:3-10 TITLE: The Envy Trap

j) OPEN: How many of you have heard of the tooth fairy? (The question met with a little laughter as everyone raised their hands). I read a story not so long ago about a woman whose 2nd grader had collected a fair amount of money from the "tooth fairy." Every time her daughter Rachel lost a tooth, they'd put it in a small envelope and put it under her daughter's pillow, and behold, in the morning, the tooth was gone and its place was \$2. That was just great. Two dollars is a lot of money for a 2nd grader. At least it was until, one day Rachel visited a friend of hers. Her friend was telling how she had put her tooth under her pillow and found \$10 the next morning. Rachel then asked her friend's mother, 'Mrs. Kraft, would you mind doing me a big favor? Would you please call my mom and tell her which tooth fairy you use?'"

k) APPLY: Paul writes that godliness with contentment is great gain.

l) But this little girl had lost her contentedness. Why? Because she had fallen prey to one of the most devious thieves known to man. A thief that robs more Christians of their joy and satisfaction in life than many things I know of. It's one of the traps that Paul hints at when he says "People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap" (1 Timothy 6:9)

m) I. What is this "trap" that can rob us of contentment? I call it the "envy" trap

n) Notice, that the little girl had gotten \$2 a tooth. A 2nd grader with \$2 in their pocket should be literally in heaven. That's a lot of money for a child. But suddenly, that wasn't enough... why?

o) Because her friend got \$10 for her tooth. NOW \$2 was no longer quite enough.

p) ILLUS: I recently read about South West Airlines. After the tragedy of September 11th, South West has been THE only big carrier to still be making money (although they are still making about ? what they had last year). All the other airlines are swimming in red ink and have either declared bankruptcy or are thinking about it – in order to try to avoid their creditors. So, in an atmosphere where most airlines are struggling to survive, SW's employees have relative job security. And yet, some of the workers in one of its unions is threatening to strike for higher wages. Why? Because comparable employees in one of those other airlines (that's failing) make more per hour than they do.

q) Does anybody besides me sense the insanity of that? These union workers were not content, because somebody else (in a failing and potentially bankrupt airline) was getting more than they did.

r) Solomon wrote: "And I saw that all labor and all achievement spring from man's envy of his neighbor. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind" Ecclesiastes 4:4

- s) Apparently, envy is a driving force in the lives of many people. It pushes them to be competitive, hard working and successful. So, you would expect that such a motivation would be a "good thing." But it's not...
- t) Jesus said: "What comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean.' For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.'" (Mark 7:20-23)
- u) James wrote: if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. (James 3:14-17)
- v) And Paul warned: The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:19-21)
- w) In other words, envy can make us unclean, unspiritual & even rob us of our salvation. It is not a desirable trait to have in our lives.
- x) II. What lies at the heart of envy?
- y) The heart of envy is the belief that we deserve better than we've got.
- z) ILLUS: Jesus told a parable that went like this:
  - aa) Matthew 20:1-16 "For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire men to work in his vineyard.
  - ab) He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard. "About the third hour he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. He told them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went. "He went out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour and did the same thing.
  - ac) About the eleventh hour he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, 'Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?' "Because no one has hired us,' they answered. "He said to them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard.'
  - ad) "When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.' "The workers who were hired about the eleventh hour came and each received a denarius.
  - ae) So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner.
  - af) 'These men who were hired last worked only one hour,' they said, 'and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.'
  - ag) "But he answered one of them, 'Friend, I am not being unfair to you. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius?'
  - ah) Take your pay and go. I want to give the man who was hired last the same as I gave you. Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?' "So the last will be first, and the first will be last."
  - ai) Did you catch what made the workers so mad? It wasn't FAIR that people who worked less than they did got the same amount of money that they did.
  - aj) It didn't matter that they got what they had been promised.
  - ak) It didn't matter that the money was the landowner's to spend however he

- pleased
- a) Somehow, they DESERVED better, because the other workers had worked less than they had.
  - am) ILLUS: I recently attended a seminar on Estate Planning where they talked about “Revocable Living Trusts.” They’re kind of like a will but with some significant advantages.
    - an) The lawyer who presented the seminar told of an instance where a couple of sisters had come to his office to challenge the fact that their brother had received the family farm in their parents’ trust. The lawyer had seen this type of thing before, but he was still troubled by their greed.
      - ao) “Do you know why your parents left the farm to your brother?” he asked
      - ap) “Yes,” they replied. “He had taken care of them in their old age, and had worked the farm for them.”
      - aq) “Had you ever helped with the farm?” he asked.
        - ar) “No.”
        - as) “Had you ever helped your brother to take care of your parents?”
        - at) “No.”
        - au) “So, why do you think that you share in the farm that your parents wanted to leave to him?”
        - av) “Because it’s the family farm, and we believe we deserve it.”
      - aw) The lawyer smiled sadly and then said: “You have every right to contest this trust, but you have to realize that this trust has a clause in it. That clause warns that should this trust ever be contested and that challenge be lost, those who contest the trust will lose whatever inheritance they might have had. In other words, if you contest this trust and lose – your share of the inheritance will be given to your brother.
    - ax) Those ladies left his office and he never from them again.
    - ay) Now, my point is this: when we suffer from envy – we often don’t realize it. We THINK that we DESERVE, and therefore, whatever we have to do to get what we DESERVE is somehow justified - whether it ends up destroying our friendships, our jobs, or our families. Because its only fair that we get our fair share.
    - az) Envy is one of those terrible sins that sneaks up on you and you sometimes don’t even know you’ve fallen prey to it.
    - ba) III. So... how do you and I know if we’ve fallen INTO the “envy” trap?
    - bb) Well, you’re in luck this morning, because I’m going to let you in on THE way to determine if you have the potential of falling prey to this trap of envy. It may not be that you are completely controlled by an envious heart, but if the trait we discuss this morning is not in your life, you might easily become a victim of this sinful behavior.
    - bc) Proverbs tells us: “A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.” (Prov. 14:30)
    - bd) In other words: if you’re NOT CONTENT – it’s a sign of envy. You might not be envious of what a neighbor or friend has. It may be something that’s on the store shelves. Or something you’ve seen on a TV advertisement or heard about on the radio. Advertisers are most successful if they can create within you a dissatisfaction with what you have or a great desire to have more than you have. They are most successful when they have convinced you that what you have is not enough.
    - be) But if you’re not satisfied with what you have, it is a strong mark of the dangers of envy. Remember, envy arises from comparing what we have with what

others have. And the end result of that type of comparing is always going to be dissatisfaction.

- bf) ILLUS: According to US News and World Report (in 1999),
- bg) For Americans with household incomes under \$25,000, it would take \$54,000 a year to fulfill the American Dream.
- bh) Those who make \$100,000+ crave an average of \$192,000 to live as they want.
- bi) - In other words, the American Dream usually lies nearly twice the distance away.
  
- bj) So... if you compare your possessions and financial status with your neighbor – sooner or later, envy will rob you of happiness. You'll ALWAYS WANT MORE than what you have. You will not be content.
  
- bk) So... how content are you? How thankful are you for what you have?
  - bl) 1. your job
  - bm) 2. your home
  - bn) 3. your family
  - bo) 4. ???
  
- bp) Now, if you say, “yes I’m thankful for my home...BUT...”
- bq) Or, I’m thankful for my husband/ wife... BUT
- br) Or, I’m thankful for my children... BUT
- bs) That’s a mark of not being content with what God has given you. Until you get all of those "Buts" out of your thinking, you'll always be a little dissatisfied with what you have. You'll never be truly content.
  
- bt) Paul wrote in I Timothy 6:6-8: “Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.”
  
- bu) What does Paul say we should be content with? (food & clothing). And we should be thankful we’ve got that. If that was all we’d have, that would be sufficient. But in America we’ve got WAY MORE than that.
  
- bv) ILLUS: William Boice once wrote:
- bw) "-- Dear Lord, I have been re-reading the record of the rich young ruler and his obviously wrong choice. But it has set me thinking. No matter how much wealth he had, he could not -
  - bx) ride in a car,
  - by) have any surgery,
  - bz) turn on a light,
  - ca) buy penicillin,
  - cb) hear a pipe organ,
  - cc) watch TV,
  - cd) wash dishes in running water,
  - ce) type a letter,
  - cf) mow a lawn,
  - cg) fly in an airplane,
  - ch) sleep on an innerspring mattress,
  - ci) or talk on the phone.
  - cj) if he was rich, then what am I?
  
- ck) The only type of comparison a Christian should do is comparing how our lives would be like if we didn't have what we have what God had supplied to you NOW.

- c) So, how content are you?
- cm) CLOSE: Dear Abby received this letter a few years back
- cn) Dear Abby, Happiness is knowing that your parents won't almost kill you if you come home a little late. Happiness is having your own bedroom. Happiness is having parents that trust you. Happiness is getting the telephone call you've been praying for. Happiness is getting good grades and making your parents who don't fight. Happiness is knowing that you're well dressed as anybody. Happiness is something I don't have. - 15 and Unhappy
- co) A few days later the Dear Abby newspaper column carried this response to the above letter from a 13 year old girl:
- cp) Dear Abby, Happiness is being able to walk. Happiness is being able to talk. Happiness is being able to see. Happiness is being able to hear. Unhappiness is reading a letter from a 15 year old girl who can do all these things and still says she isn't happy. I can talk, I can see, I can hear, but I can't walk. - Thirteen and Happy.
- cq) Americans have one day a year that they dedicate to being thankful. But for Christians, every day should be a day of thanksgiving, if only because we have more to be thankful for than anyone else in the world. For God loved us so much that He sent His only Son to die for our sins.
- cr) SERMONS IN THIS SERIES
- cs) The Money Trap - 1 Timothy 6:6-6:19
- ct) The Envy Trap - 1 Timothy 6:6-6:10
- cu) Debtor's Prison - Luke 15:11-15:24
- cv) We've Got A Secret - Philippians 4:4-4:19

cw) Falling Prey to the Popularity Trip  
cx) Ecclesiastes 2:14-16

- cy) 14 The wise man's eyes are in his head, but the fool walks in darkness. And yet I know that one fate befalls them both. 15 Then I said to myself, "As is the fate of the fool, it will also befall me. Why then have I been extremely wise?" So I said to myself, "This too is vanity." 16 For there is no lasting remembrance of the wise man as with the fool, inasmuch as in the coming days all will be forgotten. And how the wise man and the fool alike die!
- cz) I'll admit it if you will—I like people to like me. I'll even go further if you will—it bothers me when they don't.
- da) Don't get me wrong. I don't consider myself a people pleaser—someone who will do anything to please others, but deep down inside, I want you to like me. I don't suppose there is anything wrong with wanting to be popular, but it is easy to get snared in the popularity trap.
- db) There is a difference between a normal desire to be liked and an unhealthy compulsion to do anything to please others. Those caught in the popularity trap believe the myth: "I will be a worthy person if I am popular." When you really believe you can please everyone and that by doing so they will like you, you're in the trap.
- dc) • Do you find yourself always doing "favors" for others?
- dd) • Do people seem to take you for granted?
- de) • Have you never learned to say no to anyone?
- df) Wanting others to like you so you can like yourself has some serious drawbacks. The very desire promotes unhealthy relationships and unhealthy responses. In the name of popularity, more than one person has done self-destructive things to please others. Things like promiscuous behavior, drugs, etc. Those caught in the trap may respond to others by:
- dg) • Getting Angry toward those who take them for granted.
- dh) • Comply with any desire of the "right" people.
- di) • Avoid people fearing they will reject them.
- dj) • Reject other people before they can reject them.
- dk) • Control or dominate other people so they cannot reject them.
- dl) • Become Depressed because "no one likes them."
- dm) The reality is that you cannot please everyone. Some people are going to like you or not like you no matter what you do. The key question is, who should you try to please?
- dn) Certainly we should please God. Paul wrote, Galatians 1:10 For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.
- do) Is Paul recommending that we not work on our relationships? No, but he does give perspective to the issue. Ultimately we must please God. If doing God's will causes some people not to like you, then forget about pleasing them and please God.
- dp) Let me ask the question another way. When does pleasing others please God?
- dq) Certainly God is not pleased when we've fallen into the popularity trap and devote ourselves to indiscriminately trying to please everyone. Then who deserves our attention?
- dr) Take a moment to look at the graphic in your sermon guide. Notice that the spectrum on the top shows your degree of popularity and the spectrum on the side plots the purity of motives.
- ds) In the bottom right hand corner are the people that like you for the right reasons. Their motives are good. They don't like you so they can get something from you—they know you well and like you for who you are. These

are the best relationships we'll ever have. They deserve as much attention as we can give them.

- dt) In the top right hand corner are the people that like you for the wrong reasons. Their motives are poor. Perhaps they like you because of a position you hold or because they perceive that being your friend will advance their agenda or that they can get something from you. Maybe you are part of their "network." These people never really try to get to know you or appreciate you as a person, they are "users," who will like you, but want something in return. These relationships deserve little attention.
- du) Look at the top left hand corner. These are the people that don't like you for the wrong reasons. You may never be able to figure out why, but they never really gave you a chance. Perhaps you remind them of someone they didn't like, or you have a personality clash. Maybe they are the manipulative, controlling type of person that don't like anyone with their own mind. Regardless, they don't like you and you probably will never be able to change their opinion.
- dv) These type of people are ones you don't really need to worry about. Our natural tendency is to put effort into the relationship of those that don't like us for the wrong reason, but really, our time is better spent nurturing other relationships.
- dw) However, the people represented by the shaded box, those in the bottom, left hand corner are people that need our attention. These are the people that don't like us for the right reason. Perhaps we hurt them, or lost our temper with them. Maybe we sinned against them. Whatever the problem, we need to get it right.
- dx) Our response is not to do anything to please them or become a doormat in their presence, rather, we should repent of our wrongdoings and ask for their forgiveness.
- dy) Jesus said, Matthew 5:23-24 NASB "If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, [24] leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.
- dz) Personal reconciliation is a priority. Jesus is describing the people in the shaded area—those who don't like you for the right reasons. Do you know someone you need to reconcile with?
- ea) Real reconciliation can only occur when both parties want it.
- eb) The legal system of the United States recognizes that there is a time for forgiveness and restoration. A district court ruled that a company had mistreated and employee by firing him for alcohol-related misbehavior that took place before he received treatment. The judge decided that the man should have been forgiven for the wrong he had committed before he got help and that holding pretreatment transgressions against him violated the spirit of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. (Copied)
- ec) There is another rehabilitation act, we might call it The "Rehabilitation Act of A.D. 30" It calls for even more mercy. Because Jesus died on the cross for the sins of mankind, God offers complete forgiveness to repentant sinners. According to Col. 3:13 NASB bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.
- ed) Do you know someone who needs your forgiveness?
- ee) Then offer it freely. Forgive them as the Lord forgave you.
- ef) What relationships deserve our best efforts? Those born out of correct motives.

eg)  
eh)

## VIII. The Money Trap

IX.

X.

XI. [1 Timothy 6:6-6:19](#) (NIV, NIRV, TNIV, KJV)

XII.

XIII. OPEN: Many years ago a Chicago radio station, WKOX, offered \$10,000 to the individual who could devise the most outlandish way to get the money. More than 6,000 people responded to the challenge.

XIV. The eventual winner was Jay Gwaltney of Zionsville, Indiana, who consumed an 11-foot birch sapling - leaves, roots, bark and all. For the event he wore a tuxedo and dined at a table eloquently set with fine china, sterling silverware, candles and a rose vase.

XV. Armed with pruning sheers, the Indiana State University sophomore began chomping - starting from the top of the tree - and working his way down, branch by branch, to the roots. The only extra flavoring he used was some French dressing for a massive birch-leaf salad.

XVI. Consuming the tree took 18 hours over a period of three days. When it was all over, Gwaltney complained of an upset stomach.

XVII. APPLY: Paul writes: People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. (I Timothy 6:9-10)

XVIII. Now eating a tree sapling might seem to be foolish, but there are people who would apparently do even more than that to get money!

XIX. ILLUS: In their book, *The Day America Told the Truth*, authors James Patterson and Peter Kim revealed some shocking statistics on how far people in this country would be willing to go for money. When asked what they'd do for \$10 million dollars:

XX. (25%) Would abandon their entire family

XXI. (23%) Would become prostitutes for a week or more

XXII. (16%) Would give up their American citizenship

XXIII. (16%) Would leave their spouses

XXIV. (10%) Would withhold testimony and let a murderer go free

XXV. (7%) Would kill a stranger

XXVI. (3%) Would put their children up for adoption

XXVII. ILLUS: As one cynic put it: "everyone has their price." As the above survey indicates, some people will sell just about anything to gain financial security.

XXVIII. I. But, certainly not Christians.

XXIX. Christians wouldn't act like that. Christians wouldn't have "a price" for which they'd sell themselves for, would they?

XXX. Well (Paul tells Timothy) yes they might... and (in fact) yes, some had...

XXXI. "Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs." (I Timothy 6:10)

XXXII. ILLUS: My 8 year old son was reading over my sermon and came to that passage and asked me "Daddy, what's 'griefs?'"

XXXIII. I explained that "grief" was something people experience when they've lost someone or something that is very precious to them. And now that that "something" is gone, they feel a deep hurt and sadness.

XXXIV. What Paul was saying was, some Christians had walked away from their faith, their salvation, their relationship with God - to pursue financial gain. And in the end they would realize what they had lost.

- XXXV. It's a terrible thing. Why would Christians even consider casting away their faith for the sake of earthly riches? What mysterious power does money have, that it could cause someone to do a thing so foolish?
- XXXVI. II. First we need to understand... there's nothing wrong with money.
- XXXVII. I like money. You and I need money. We need money to cover our bills, pay our mortgages, maintain our vehicles, feed and cloth our families. We need money to support this church, pay the staff, underwrite missionaries and Bible colleges.
- XXXVIII. ILLUS: Every Sunday morning we pass an offering plate up and down the aisles. What do you put into the offering plate? Money! (pause...) At least I hope you do.
- XXXIX. There's not a thing wrong with money. It can be a useful tool to take care of our families, and meet our responsibilities and build up the Kingdom of God. Money can be a wonderful thing. One man (Alexander Bloch) commented: "Money is a wonderful thing... but it is possible to pay too high a price for it. (repeat)
- XL. Money is nothing more than paper and coin, and yet, Jesus warns us that we can get a little too attached to money and what it can buy:
- XLI. Luke 12:15 "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."
- XLII. Matthew 6:19-21 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. "
- XLIII. Matthew 6:24 "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot (you cannot, you cannot) serve both God and Money."
- XLIV. Paul tells us pretty much the same thing here in I Timothy. It's the "love of money," the "eagerness for money," the "desire to get rich" that can cause even good Christians to wander away from their God. Why? Because you cannot "serve two masters... you cannot serve both God and money."
- XLV. It has the power to become a trap and a snare for our feet.
- XLVI. (1 Timothy 6:9) Paul writes: People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction.
- XLVII. III. So, how do I avoid being caught up in this "money trap?"
- XLVIII. (I Timothy 6:11-16) Paul writes:
- XLIX. "But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in his own time— God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen."
- L. When I first read through this passage I thought it was odd that Paul would put that long passage right in the middle of his comments on money and what rich people should do with their riches.
- LI. Then I began to realize that this was deliberate. This seemingly irrelevant bit of writing was stressing exactly what Christians need to do to avoid falling into the "money trap."
- LII. We need to focus on God and focus on the things that God considers precious.

- LIII. Paul's saying (that as a Christian) we need to think differently than the rest of the world does.
- LIV. We need to focus on the things God hold's precious:
- LV. "...pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness." (vs. 11)
- LVI. and "take hold of the eternal life to which you were called" (vs. 12)
- LVII. Nothing that money can buy can equal the value of these valuable gifts from God
- LVIII. And we need to focus on God Himself "who gives life to everything" (vs. 13)
- LIX. And who is "the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever."
- LX. Paul is saying: Change your focus – don't look to money for your security. FOCUS instead on God and the things that please Him.
- LXI. That's exactly what Jesus said: "seek first His kingdom and His righteousness. He said:
- LXII. "...do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." (Matthew 6:31-33)
- LXIII. IV. You see, the trap of money (riches), is the belief that – if I have enough of this money, these riches - I can take care of all my wants and needs.
- LXIV. If I have enough money I won't have to worry, I can enjoy life, I can do the things I've always wanted to do.
- LXV. Have you ever felt that way? So have I.
- LXVI. ILLUS: As Spike Milligan once said: "All I ask is the chance to prove that money can't make me happy."
- LXVII. And the congregation said: Amen!
- LXVIII. But Jesus said we shouldn't think like that:
- LXIX. "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal." (Matthew 6:19-20)
- LXX. ILLUS: I have a beautiful 1991 Chevy Caprice. You know what happened to it this week? It got in an accident. It needs \$1600 worth of repairs. You know what that proved to me? Everything in this world breaks, gets damaged, rusts, gets lost, falls apart, gets stolen. There is nothing in this world that is going to last.
- LXXI. ILLUS: How many of you had money in the stock market? What happened to the stock market? It fell! What did that prove to us? It proved that there is nothing in this world that will last forever. Nothing that is certain. Money cannot provide ultimate security. Only God can provide ultimate certainty and security.
- LXXII. Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 6:17 Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.
- LXXIII. ILLUS: In the book Money Madness the authors made this observation:
- LXXIV. "... (when people) devote themselves to money... money seems to eat them away, inside out. Inside they lose their joy and spontaneity and generosity of impulse. Outside, they seem to wither, to become pale and drawn and fragile looking. It is difficult, of course, to decide how much of this is because of the aging process. But certainly not all old men look as ravaged as Howard Hughes did or as desiccated as Mellon or J. Paul Getty. These men all complained of fatigue, sleepless nights and digestive ailments. They all appeared wispy and mummified."

- LXXV. In other words, even if we could reach that level of prosperity these men enjoyed it still would give you and I NO security, no SURE satisfaction.
- LXXVI. V. You see - if we let it - money can run our lives
- LXXVII. And money can be a cruel task master robbing us of the very pleasure and security it promises but rarely supplies.
- LXXVIII. ILLUS: Ray Stedman once told of the time when he was in Hollywood, Florida, on the so-called "gold coast" of Florida. "Every morning I taught the Scriptures to a crowd of five hundred or more. These people, I was told, represented well over a billion dollars' worth of accumulated wealth. I had the opportunity to talk with many of them individually. I found that most of these, by their own testimony, though they had all the money to buy anything they wanted, had arrived at the place where they were suffering from what someone has so aptly called 'destination sickness' - the malady of having everything that you want, but not wanting anything you have, and being sick and empty and lonely and miserable because you can do anything you want to do."
- LXXIX. VI. What's the answer then?
- LXXX. What can I do to avoid the money trap?
- LXXXI. First I can focus on God and what He thinks is the most valuable things in life. But there is one more thing I can do.
- LXXXII. Paul says – learn to give money away.
- LXXXIII. Look at I Timothy 6:17-19 "Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life."
- LXXXIV. Oh, well (you might say) that's just a command for the rich.... No, it's a command for ANYONE who finds themselves controlled by desire for money
- LXXXV. Consider this command from Ephesians 4:28 "He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need."
- LXXXVI. Why must the thief stop stealing and go to work? So that he can make money to share with others. Why does the thief steal? Because he is controlled by the desire to have money – your money. How does he cure himself of this desire? He gets a job and he learns to give money away.
- LXXXVII. A good clue that you are in danger of the "money trap" is if you find it hard to give it away.
- LXXXVIII. Close: The very first person to reach the status of billionaire was a man who knew how to set goals and follow through. At the age of 23, he had become a millionaire, by the age of 50 a billionaire. Every decision, attitude, and relationship was tailored to create his personal power and wealth. But three years later at the age of 53 he became ill.
- LXXXIX. His entire body became racked with pain and he lost all the hair on his head. In complete agony, the world's only billionaire could buy anything he wanted, but he could only digest milk and crackers. An associate wrote, "He could not sleep, would not smile & nothing in life meant any-thing to him." His personal, highly skilled physicians predicted he would die within a year.
- XC. That year passed agonizingly slow. As he approached death he awoke one morning with the vague remembrances of a dream. He could barely recall the dream but knew it had something to do with not being able to take any of his successes with him into the next world. The man who could control the business world suddenly realized he was not in control of his own life. He was left with a choice.
- XCI. He called his attorneys, accountants, and managers and announced that he wanted to channel his assets to hospitals, research, and mission work. On that day John D. Rockefeller established his

foundation. This new direction eventually led to the discovery of penicillin, cures for current strains of malaria, tuberculosis and diphtheria. The list of discoveries resulting from his choice is enormous.

XCII. But perhaps the most amazing part of Rockefeller's story is that the moment he began to give back a portion of all that he had earned, his body's chemistry was altered so significantly that he got better. It looked as if he would die at 53 but he lived to be 98.

XCIII. You see God knows us. He created us. He built us to be giving, loving creatures. That's why He set us the example of what it meant to give things away. You see, God is the most powerful being in all the universe. He owns everything. And yet, He loved us so much... that He gave... His only begotten son, so that we might have eternal life.

#### XCIV. SERMONS IN THIS SERIES

XCV. The Money Trap - 1 Timothy 6:6-6:19

XCVI. The Envy Trap - 1 Timothy 6:6-6:10

XCVII. Debtor's Prison - Luke 15:11-15:24

XCVIII. We've Got A Secret - Philippians 4:4-4:19

## XCIX. ESCAPING THE TRAP

C. Mark 12:13-27

### CI. INTRO:

CII. Pitch the hamster – feeling trapped. A hum-drum existence, punctuated by brief moments of excitement. Eat the food. Run on the wheel. Over and over again. Not able to be all a hamster could be. You could tell it was getting to her – more urgent climbing and chewing. Desperate for a break out. Well, it finally happened. More than a week ago, pitch escaped her trap.

CIII. Ever feel trapped? Not going anywhere? A treadmill? Frustrated by lack of accomplishment, purpose, meaning?

CIV. Trapped by a job? Relationship? Obligations? Life? Religion?

CV. Some of us feel this way. Others don't. Others of us need to know about traps – that they are out there. Pitch the hamster is free now, apparently running amok in our unfinished storage room. But what Pitch doesn't know is that there are mouse traps in there...

CVI. If you're not careful, you'll get trapped.

### CVII. PREV:

CVIII. How do we escape the traps of life, religion, etc? How do we get out, how do we keep out? Today we will discover the keys as we see some religious leaders try to trap Jesus.

CIX. Let's watch the 1st trap get set as we read vv. 13-15a.

CX. A. They try to trap Jesus with a question of allegiance

CXI. Pharisees & Herodians – strange allies: Republicans and Democrats. Broncos and Chiefs fans.

CXII. "Catch" = to trap an animal; they wanted to snare him.

CXIII. Question carefully devised to discredit or imperil Jesus.

CXIV. They tried to close off any path of evasion to this difficult and painful question.

CXV. Question surrounds the payment of the annual tax to Rome, started in 6 AD.

CXVI. Highly emotional issue – people resented it greatly.

CXVII. They wanted to force him into a compromising position:

CXVIII. "Yes" would discredit him in the eyes of the people

CXIX. "No" would incur the retribution of Rome.

CXX. How will Jesus respond? Cornered, how will he react? Let's see his answer as I read vv. 15b-16.

CXXI. B. Jesus answers the question of allegiance

CXXII. Jesus sees through them: "Why are you trying to trap me?"

CXXIII. Jesus calls for a denarius –Roman coin used to pay tax.

CXXIV. "Whose portrait?" – The emperor's, Caesar Tiberius.

CXXV. "Whose inscription?" – "Tiberius Caesar Augustus, Son of the Divine Augustus on one side. "Pontifex Maximus" (chief priest) on the other...

CXXVI. These are a reflection of the "imperial cult" and were a claim to divine honors.

CXXVII. So what did Jesus say? Let's read v. 17.

CXXVIII. Give to Caesar what is Caesar's.

CXXIX. What is Caesar's?

CXXX. The coin, stamped with Caesar's image.

CXXXI. Since the coin belonged to him, it was right to give it back to him – he had legal claim to it.

CXXXII. We have a moral obligation to obey authority (Ro. 13:1-7)

CXXXIII. We must give proper allegiance to civil authorities.

CXXXIV. Give to God what is God's.

CXXXV. What is God's?

CXXXVI. Illus: 3 men who had their own way of deciding what belonged to God. Drew a circle: whatever landed inside was God's; whatever landed outside was God's; whatever stayed up in the air was God's...

CXXXVII. We're not going to answer it that way.

CXXXVIII. What belongs to God?

CXXXIX. If the coin, bearing Caesar's image belongs to him,

- CXL. What bears God's image? We do!
- CXLI. We should completely give ourselves to God.
- CXLII. We should not give to man what is due only to God (as Caesar wanted)
- CXLIII. We must give complete allegiance to God.
- CXLIV. It turns out these guys were trapped because their allegiance was misplaced. One group worshiped the state; the other worshiped their religious system.
- CXLV. When you give your allegiance to something besides God, you are trapped!
- CXLVI. Who are you pledging allegiance to?
- CXLVII. • A belief system, worldview?
- CXLVIII. • A habit
- CXLIX. • A pleasure – the Broncos? - worship
- CL. • A lifestyle, way of life - time
- CLI. • A job –sense of worth. Your boss has the right to your effort, hard work, commitment, but not to your soul.
- CLII. • A relationship - intimacy
- CLIII. We feel trapped because these things can't deliver in accordance to what we put into them.
- CLIV. That's what a trap is – something that looks good but doesn't deliver; something that keeps us from everything God has for us.
- CLV. This is our first step, our first safeguard to avoiding the religion trap. We will avoid the trap of religion if we
- CLVI. I. GIVE COMPLETE ALLEGIANCE TO GOD
- CLVII. Give it all to God! Give God what belongs to him – all of you!
- CLVIII. Experience the goodness that comes when you give it all to him.
- CLIX. Who or what wants from you what only God should get?
- CLX. Transition: The end of v. 17 says they were amazed at him. They were amazed because he avoided the trap, and was not himself trapped by a mere religion. But his opponents weren't done with him. Another party of leaders, represented on the Sanhedrin approaches Jesus with their own question, their own trap. Let's look at it as I read vv. 18-23.
- CLXI. Mark gives us some important background on this group. They are experts in Scripture interpretation, but they did not believe in resurrection, in afterlife, in heaven. They also only considered the Torah as Scripture.
- CLXII. So the point of their question is to ridicule Jesus for believing in such things.
- CLXIII. Illus: Like someone who sneeringly asks you who Cain's wife was. Or like the soap commercial I saw this week that actually referred to "all that Adam and Eve nonsense."
- CLXIV. In other words, smart, educated, intelligent people don't believe this nonsense. But since you do, tell us...
- CLXV. They refer to Levirate marriage – prescribed in Dt. 25:5-10.
- CLXVI. If a man dies without a male heir, his brother was to marry his widow. Their first son was considered the dead man's son, and so the family name and inheritance remained.
- CLXVII. These guys make up a wild story, to point out the absurdity.
- CLXVIII. How do you think Jesus will respond to that? In his response, Jesus will actually give us the next to steps, safeguards to avoiding the religion trap, because he will point out their problems. As I read v. 24, notice what Jesus says their errors are.
- CLXIX. A. They were in error because they did not know the Scriptures.
- CLXX. First Jesus makes it clear that they are wrong, dead wrong.
- CLXXI. One reason for their error is their failure to know Scripture.
- CLXXII. Now, this would be like telling a judge he doesn't know the law, or a professor that he doesn't know his subject.
- CLXXIII. Illus: I corrected Dr. Etue once in a history class.
- CLXXIV. Let's read the rest of vv. 25-27 to hear Jesus point out how they were wrong.
- CLXXV. They had the whole resurrection thing wrong, because they were thinking in human terms.
- CLXXVI. Jesus corrects their impression of heaven (and ours!)

- CLXXVII. It won't simply be an extension of this life. It will be comparable to the angel's: it will center on worshipping God
- CLXXVIII. Sometimes people ask me about the emphasis we put on worship – in our services, budget, etc. This is why: we're practicing for heaven! Throughout the Bible, what do angels in heaven do? They worship God!
- CLXXIX. So when people don't like it, I tell them "Then you're not going to like heaven much, either."
- CLXXX. The Sadducees only held the Torah as authoritative, and didn't think Torah taught resurrection. Jesus shows them otherwise, from Exodus 3:1-6, the burning bush account.
- CLXXXI. 2 things happening here:
- CLXXXII. He emphatically still is the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob.
- CLXXXIII. "God of ..." = helper, savior, protector, provider of redemption.
- CLXXXIV. He is not the helper, protector of the dead, but of living.
- CLXXXV. God's faithfulness implies resurrection.
- CLXXXVI. What's the point of protecting Abe, Isaac, Jacob during the course of their life, but failing to deliver them from death?
- CLXXXVII. They were badly mistaken!
- CLXXXVIII. B. We must know the Scriptures to avoid the same error.
- CLXXXIX. Obviously, we need to know the Scripture if we are going to avoid the same mistake they made.
- CXC. We're not talking about basic ignorance – the Sadducees probably had the entire Torah memorized.
- CXCI. We're talking about understanding.
- CXCII. They were so committed to their presuppositions, that they misread the Scriptures.
- CXCIII. They assumed there was no supernatural, etc. This impacted their reading.
- CXCIV. We do the same. We get trapped by our religion when we become so committed to an ideology, a method, a pet topic, what someone important to us said, that we misread.
- CXCV. Illus: Recognizing the need for this in my own life, I have set out to study certain things this year.
- CXCVI. If we are going to avoid being trapped by our religion, we must
- CXCVII. II. KNOW THE SCRIPTURES
- CXCVIII. Reading them is the first step. You simply cannot know them if you don't read them. If you don't have a Bible, you can have one of ours. Seriously. Or come up to me afterward...
- CXCIX. The next step is studying. Jesus' answer to these guys was not right on the surface. It required thinking. The Scriptures are such that God rewards those who diligently look into them. Make use of opportunities such as small groups.
- CC. Transition: Jesus said they made two errors, didn't he? What was their other error? It leads us to our third step, safeguard.
- CCI. A. They were in error because they did not know the power of God.
- CCII. Jesus said they didn't know the power of God.
- CCIII. In regards to resurrection, they didn't know God's power. They didn't recognize the fact that God has the kind of power necessary to raise people from the dead.
- CCIV. But this says more about their religion: It was about knowledge, facts, men. It was without power. Their God was perhaps a cultural icon, but he had no power. That's religion, and that will trap you.
- CCV. B. We must know the power of God to avoid the same error.
- CCVI. If we don't want to be like them (and we don't!), we have to know the power of God. What does this mean?
- CCVII. Partly it means having an understanding, a concept of God that includes this kind of power.
- CCVIII. The Bible has a lot to say about God's power:
- CCIX. Displayed in creation – Rom. 1:20
- CCX. Demonstrated in the resurrection – 1 Cor. 6:14
- CCXI. Changes us – Phil. 3:21
- CCXII. Is in us as believers – Eph. 1:18-20
- CCXIII. Results in us knowing Christ's love and seeing incredible things happen
- CCXIV. Results in us accomplishing every good deed and desire of God – 2 Thess. 1:11
- CCXV. Results in ability to patiently endure everything with
- CCXVI. joy – Col. 1:11

CCXVII. Results in overcoming fear – 2 Tim. 1:7

CCXVIII. Results in us not being ashamed of Jesus, able to endure suffering – 2 Tim. 1:8

CCXIX. Do you know the power of God?

CCXX. Illus: My friend Patty: God showed her their house ahead of time.

CCXXI. Can your God do this?

CCXXII. When you hear a story like this, can you believe it? Or do you automatically rationalize it away, assume there is some other explanation to it?

CCXXIII. But we can't leave this in the intellectual realm, it isn't just about intellectually believing that God has power.

CCXXIV. Jesus said they didn't "know" God's power, and he was speaking to people with a thoroughly Jewish understanding of "to know" – which has more to do with experience than intellect.

CCXXV. You do not know the power of God, you have never experienced his life changing power simply because you have never opened yourself to it. Is that possible?

CCXXVI. In order to avoid the trap of religion, we must

CCXXVII. III. KNOW THE POWER OF GOD

CCXXVIII.

CCXXIX.

CCXXX.

## CCXXXI. The Trap of Carnality

CCXXXII.

CCXXXIII.

CCXXXIV. [1 John 2:15-2:17](#) ([NIV](#), [NIRV](#), [TNIV](#), [KJV](#))

CCXXXV.

CCXXXVI. Nine Marks of Worldliness - I John 2:15,16 (Preoccupations that are wrong, pride, pleasures, possessions, popularity, power obsession, position oriented, people pleasing, and privilege for selfish reasons)

CCXXXVII. Illustration: That evening, the assassin John Wilks Booth stopped in a saloon near the Ford Theatre and used alcohol to nerve himself for what was to be his date with history. One drink, two drinks, three drinks and on...

CCXXXVIII. Later that night Lincoln's bodyguard John F. Parker was distracted while the president and party were comfortably enjoying the performance of "Our American Cousin" in the Ford Theatre. Charles Forbes (Lincoln's footman) and Francis P. Burke (Lincoln's coachman) left the Ford theatre with Parker for a drink at presumably the same saloon as John Wilks Booth had just left. While Parker was distracted in the saloon the door to the presidential box was left unguarded. John Wilks Booth went on the attack and slipped into the presidential box during the performance and shot Lincoln.

CCXXXIX. Those two saloon visits just could be the most costly drinks in American history!

CCXL. It's just like the enemy to distract us from our duties and then take advantage of the situation to wreck havoc. Happens to me all the time. Just when I am comfortable in a situation along comes Satan to mix things up. It could be relationships, ministry events or my marriage. His plan is to distract and attack.

CCXLI. Quote: "Too many people forget that Satan desires to sift us like wheat so he can steal, slaughter, kill and destroy us and everything that is good. Worldliness opens to the door to all forms of evil in our personal life, relationships and ministries."

CCXLII. Definition of Worldliness: Worldliness is the lust of the flesh (a passion for sensual satisfaction), the lust of the eyes (an inordinate desire for the finer things of life), and the pride of life (self-satisfaction in who we are, what we have, and what we have done). Worldliness, then, is a preoccupation with ease and affluence. It elevates creature comfort to the point of idolatry; large salaries and comfortable life-styles become necessities of life.

CCXLIII. Worldliness is not just about reading certain magazines of people who live hedonistic lives and spend too much money on themselves and but secretly wanting to be like them. But more importantly, worldliness is simply pride and selfishness in disguise. It's being resentful when someone snubs us or patronizes us or shows off. It means smarting under every slight, challenging every word spoken against us, cringing when another is preferred before us. Worldliness is harboring grudges, nursing grievance, and wallowing in self-pity. These are the some of the ways in which we evidence a love for the world.

CCXLIV. Dave Roper, *The Strength of a Man*, quoted in *Family Survival in the American Jungle*, Steve Farrar, 1991, Multnomah Press, p. 68.

CCXLV. "Stop loving this evil world and all that it offers you, for when you love the world, you show that you

do not have the love of the Father in you. For the world offers only the lust for physical pleasure, the lust for everything we see and the pride of our possessions. These are not from the Father. They are from this evil world." (1 John 2:15,16)

CCXLVI. Too many people think that worldliness is something limited to external behavior. Other think worldliness is hanging out with the wrong kinds of people. Worldliness is a wrong attitude of the heart that indicates a lack of a totally consuming love for the Lord God.

CCXLVII. It is important to remember that the Lord hates sin. God's wrath is directed toward all forms of the sins of worldliness. Those who fail to commit themselves to the Lord Jesus will not only miss God's blessings but experience God's displeasure. There are many ways that worldliness dilutes, pollutes and distorts the thinking of billions to their own detriment.

CCXLVIII. The following are nine characteristics that indicate if a person is falling into the trap of worldliness. Let us focus on loving the Lord with all our heart, soul, strength and mind so we can avoid any speck of the love of this world and have to suffer the consequences.

CCXLIX. Be open to letting the Spirit of God help you evaluate, expose and eradicate any traces of worldliness in your life. Be careful that you may not be evidencing the love of the Father in all areas of their life, relationships and activities.

CCL. 1. PREOCCUPATIONS WITH EARTHLY CONCERNS. Americans are busy people. We like to stay active but are tempted to get preoccupied with things that distract us from Christ and His kingdom priorities. Things things preoccupy our minds so there is little room left over for what is best. Paul wrote, "Set your thoughts on things above, not on earthly things. For you died and your life is now hidden with Christ in God." (Col. 3:1-3)

CCLI. Illustration: Addressing a national seminar of Southern Baptist leaders, George Gallup said, "We find there is very little difference in ethical behavior between churchgoers and those who are not active religiously...The levels of lying, cheating, and stealing are remarkable similar in both groups. Eight out of ten Americans consider themselves Christians, Gallup said, yet only about half of them could identify the person who gave the Sermon on the Mount, and fewer still could recall five of the Ten Commandments. Only two in ten said they would be willing to suffer for their faith.

CCLII. Erwin Lutzer, Pastor to Pastor, p. 76.

CCLIII. 2. PRIDE. The one for pride is alazonia which means a boasting of one's importance to the point of it becoming vain glory. It is pitiful to see someone who thinks they are something special when they are not. Proudful people are setting themselves up for a major disappointment.

CCLIV. Definition: Pride is a overbearing opinion about oneself, one's worth or one's indispensableness. Paul wrote to the proudful Corinthians, "If anyone thinks he stand, let him take heed lest he falls. Peter warns, "God humbles the proud, but gives grace to the humble." (1 Pet. 5:5,6)

CCLV. 3. PLEASURES. Too often human desires incline our hearts toward things that will please our old sinful nature instead of God. Paul wrote, "The mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace." (Rom. 8:6-8)

CCLVI. Example: A recent Barna.org poll revealed that 28% of the Pastors in the USA admitted to some type of sexual sin. With the proliferation of pornography on the internet and the indiscriminate flaunting of sexual innuendos on television many people have allowed their pleasures to choke out the fruitfulness in their lives.

CCLVII. Example: As a result, more and more Americans get angry when they do not get their way in traffic that road rage has become a serious problems on our roads. Nearly one-third of Americans are obese because of the problems of over-eating. These are delicate subjects, but need to be overcome if we are not to suffer from self-destructive pleasure seeking practices.

CCLVIII. 4. POSSESSIONS. Do not let the cravings to accumulate things overcome your commitment to lay up for yourself treasures in heaven instead of on the earth. Jesus said, "Do not lay up for yourself treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. For where your treasure is there will your heart be also." (Matt 6:24)

CCLIX. Illustration: The course of rebellion against God may be very gradual, but it increases in rapidity as you progress in it; and if you begin to run down the hill, the ever-increasing impetus will send you down faster and faster to destruction. You Christians ought to watch against the beginning of worldly conformity. I do believe that the growth of worldliness is like strife, which is as the letting out of water. Once you begin, there is no knowing where you will stop. I sometimes get this question put to me, concerning certain worldly amusements, "May I do so-and-so?" I am very sorry whenever anyone asks me that question, because it shows that there is something wrong, or it would not be raised at all. If a person's conscience lets him say, "Well, I can go to A," he will very soon go on to B, C, D, E, and through all the letters of the alphabet. . .

CCLX. Example: When Satan cannot catch us with a big sin, he will try a little one. It does not matter to him as long as he catches his fish, what bait he uses. Beware of the beginning of evil, for many, who bade fair to go right, have turned aside and perished amongst the dark mountains in the wide field of sin.

CCLXI. C.H. Spurgeon.

CCLXII. 5. POPULARITY. Some people are so fixated on how they appear to other people that they gravitate only to those leaders who are popular at the time. As a result these individuals are mercurial in who they follow and who they are influenced by. Paul wrote, "Am I now trying to win the approval of men or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ." (Gal. 1:10)

CCLXIII. Quote: The world's smiles are more dangerous than its frowns.

CCLXIV. 6. POWER OBSESSION. Some people are obsessed with being in control. They are not happy until they sense that they have dominance in every situation or with every discussion. Paul learned how to be content in every situation he said, "As pressed down but not crushed. As perplexed but not in despair. As persecuted but not abandoned. As put down but not defeated. Always bearing in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." (2 Cor. 4:4-7)

CCLXV. Illustration: "If I had a brother who had been murdered, what would you think of me if I ...daily consorted with the assassin who drove the dagger into my brother's heart; surely I too must be an accomplice in the crime. Sin murdered Christ; will you be a friend to it? Sin pierced the heart of the Incarnate God; can you love it?"

CCLXVI. C.H. Spurgeon.

CCLXVII. 7. POSITION ORIENTATION. We live in a very competitive society. From the time we are young there is an emphasis put on being the best, getting to the top of the class or seeking to be elected to the office of class president. When we become adults it is often difficult for us to be stuck in a job where we have not enjoyed a promotion to a higher position for many years.

CCLXVIII. Example: It is important to remember what God told Jeremiah, "Do you seek great things for yourself? Seek them not for behold I will bring evil upon all flesh." The love of the world is often seen by those who are envious of those who have higher positions of power, influence or prestige.

CCLXIX. Example: Paul wrote to the jealous minded Corinthians on this problem once, "You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men? For when one says, 'I follow Paul and another, I follow Apollos, are you not mere men? What, after all is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe- as the Lord has assigned to each his task.'" (1 Cor. 3:1-5)

- CCLXX. Example: Immature people are often divisive people who argue over who gets to take the positions of power, prominence and prestige. Godly people do not mind being placed in positions of service because they know that the Lord is the one who knows the best position, task and responsibility that is most suitable for each one.
- CCLXXI. Application: Stop resisting His will or you will fall into the worldly trap of the Corinthians and devour one another with envy, jealousy and bitterness.
- CCLXXII. 8. PEOPLE PLEASING. We all enjoy being around people who appreciate us. Worldly people live in a constant state of anxiety because they are afraid important people might not like what they are doing. Performance driven people are secretly insecure because they have not completely trusted in the Lord to get their affirmation.
- CCLXXIII. Example: Paul wrote, "I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me." (I Cor. 4:3,4)
- CCLXXIV. Application: Realize that people are fickle but God's love for us is constant. Do you work as unto the Lord and not to men knowing that from the Lord we will receive the reward of our inheritance. It is the Lord Jesus Christ whom we serve and not men. (Col. 3:23,24)
- CCLXXV. 9. PRIVILEGES SEEN AS SELF-CENTERED RIGHTS. When we first got our drivers license we all learned that driving was a privilege and not a right. Yet some of us have witness how difficult it is for an elderly person to give up their drivers license because that important lesson has been forgotten. In the same way, we have to remember that every good thing we have is a gift from God. The Lord gives and the Lord takes away, as Job learned. Let us also say like Job, Blessed be the name of the Lord."
- CCLXXVI. Application: Let us not begrudge the Lord for taking away things, possessions or privileges that we have assumed are our rights. Yield all of your rights and privileges to the Lord. David wrote, "He satisfies the longing soul and fills the hungry soul with what is good." (Psa 107:9)
- CCLXXVII. Conclusion:
- CCLXXVIII. Example: Some years ago, musicians noted that errand boys in a certain part of London all whistled out of tune as they went about their work. It was talked about and someone suggested that it was because the bells of Westminster were slightly out of tune. Something had gone wrong with the chimes and they were discordant. The boys did not know there was anything wrong with the peals, and quite unconsciously they had copied their pitch.
- CCLXXIX. So we tend to copy the people with whom we associate; we borrow thoughts from the books we read and the programs to which we listen, almost without knowing it.
- CCLXXX. Application: God has given us His Word which is the absolute pitch of life and living. If we learn to sing by it, we shall easily detect the false in all of the tunes of the world.
- CCLXXXI. Donald Grey Barnhouse.
- CCLXXXII. If you have never really accepted Jesus as your personal Savior, would you do it right now? Do not delay or put it off. If you would like to receive Christ by faith, pray this simple prayer in your heart:
- CCLXXXIII. Dear Lord, I acknowledge that I am a sinner. I believe Jesus died for my sins on the cross, and rose again the third day. I repent of my sins. By faith I receive the Lord Jesus as my Savior. You promised to save me, and I believe You, because You are God and cannot lie. I believe right now that the Lord Jesus is my personal Savior, and that all my sins are forgiven through His precious blood. I thank You, dear Lord, for saving me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

CCLXXXIV. If you prayed that prayer, God heard you and saved you. I personally want to welcome you to the family of God

CCLXXXV. II Chronicles 7:14 says our total objective should be to preserve the Judeo-Christian principles of America that formed and safeguarded this nation: "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

XXXVI.

CCLXXXVII.

CCLXXXVIII. =