

# Mistakes To Avoid

No. 89

## Introduction.

I. Once James penned these words,

**<sup>13</sup>Who is wise and understanding among you? let him show by his good life his works in meekness of wisdom.**

**<sup>14</sup>But if ye have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, glory not and lie not against the truth. <sup>15</sup>This wisdom is not a wisdom that cometh down from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. <sup>16</sup>For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed. <sup>17</sup>But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy. <sup>18</sup>And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for them that make peace. ASV**

II. This is one of many scriptures that teach us about wisdom and exhort us to be wise.

A. There are many characteristics of a wise man.

B. One mark of a wise man is to profit from the mistakes other people have made. I would like for us to make a study of some mistakes several men and women made in the Bible.

C. The purpose is not to criticize, but to learn. I am hopeful that by discussing these mistakes we can avoid them.

## I. Elijah

A. In 1 Kings the 19<sup>th</sup> chapter we read of Elijah's triumph at Mt. Carmel and his defeat of the prophets of Baal. (1 Kgs. 19:1-10).

1. One would think that Elijah would be full of faith and confidence, but he was very discouraged. He was discouraged because Jezebel was seeking to kill him and over the spiritual condition of the Israelites. Things were really bad in Israel and he thought he was the only person who was serving God. His discouragement cast him down and nearly destroyed him.

2. God later revealed to him that there were still seven thousand who had not bowed their knees to Baal. The situation was not nearly as bad as he had imagined. (1 Kgs. 19:18).

B. **Discouragement is a mistake we should avoid in life.** We cannot avoid it altogether, but we must not let it overwhelm us.

1. It is one of Satan's favorite weapons to destroy us.

a. **There is a fable told of Satan putting up all of his diabolical tools for sale.** On the day of the sale all of his tools were put on display with the price marked on each one. Among the tools for sale were hatred, envy, jealousy, deceit and pride. Laid apart from the rest was a harmless looking tool, well-worn, and priced very high. One of the purchasers asked, "What is the name of this tool?" The devil replied, "That is discouragement." "Why have you priced it so high?" The devil replied, "Because it is more useful to me than all the others. I can get inside a man's heart with that, when I cannot get near him with the other tools. Once I get inside, I can make him do what I choose. It is badly worn because I use it on almost everyone, since few people know it belongs to me."

- b. There is much truth in this fable. Discouragement is indeed a very effective tool of Satan. Satan is constantly trying to discourage us and destroy our morale. He knows that when he gets us discouraged that we are useless to ourselves, to others, and to God.
2. Realizing the detrimental power of discouragement, it is important that we try to overcome it.
    - a. We can do this by **counting our blessings** and looking at the bright side of every situation. Seldom, if ever, are things as bad as we imagine.
    - b. Furthermore, **work** will go a long way in helping overcome discouragement. It helps us get our minds off the cause of our discouragement and do something constructive to make the situation better.
    - c. It is vital that we put our absolute trust in God. (Psa. 46:1; Heb. 13:5).

## II. The Rich Young Ruler

- A. In Matthew the 19<sup>th</sup> chapter there is a story of a young ruler who came to Christ. (Matt. 19:16-24).
  1. This ruler made the mistake of loving his riches too much. He loved them more than God. When a choice had to be made between God and his riches, he chose his riches.
  2. This is the reason Jesus said it would be very hard for a rich man to be saved. The rich usually place their affections on their wealth instead of God.
- B. We must avoid this mistake.
  1. It is not sinful to have material things. It is sinful to love them more than God. God must be first.
  2. Furthermore, we should be more interested in laying up treasures in heaven than on earth. (Matt. 6:19-21).

## III. The Five Foolish Maidens - In Matthew the 25<sup>th</sup> chapter we read of a parable of ten maidens. (Matt. 25:1-13). These maidens made several tragic mistakes.

- A. The first mistake they made was to fail to make **adequate preparation for the Lord's comings**.
  1. They had made some preparation, but they had not made enough preparation. When the bridegroom came, they had to go into the city to buy oil.
  2. There are many today like these maidens. They had made some preparation for the Lord's coming, but they neglect to fully prepare themselves for His advent. They are not making Jesus Ruler of their lives. They are not trusting in the blood of the Lamb. They cannot pray, "O, Lord, come today."
- B. The second mistake they made was to think they could **borrow some of the preparation the other five maidens had made**.
  1. When Christ comes we will not be able to borrow preparation from others. We cannot depend on the preparation of our mother or father, brother or sister, husband or wife, son or daughter.
  2. Each of us will be judged according to the things we have done. (2 Cor. 5:10).
- C. The third mistake they made was to think they would **be given a second chance**.
  1. They knocked on the door say, "Lord, Lord, open to us." They thought that Christ would open the door, but he said, "I know you not."

2. We will not be given a second chance when Christ comes again. We must make preparation now. We must live for God and Christ now. We must be filled with the fruit of the Spirit now.

IV. **The One Talent Servant** - Following this story of the maidens, Christ told a story of a man who called his servants together. (Matt. 25:14-30).

- A. This one talent servant made a great mistake. He thought doing nothing was a safe, sure, infallible course to follow. He thought his master would commend him, but his master called a “wicked” and “slothful” servant.
- B. There are many today who are making this same mistake.
  1. They think it is safe to merely warm a pew. They think it is safe to bury their talents. They think it is safe to do little or nothing in the service of the Lord.
  2. This sin will damn a man’s soul.
- C. Someone has written this poem called, “Which Are You?” that every member should seriously consider.

<p>Are you an active member, The kind that would be missed, Or are you just contented that Your name is on the list?</p> <p>Do you attend the meetings, and mingle with the flock, Or do you stay at home And criticize and knock?</p> <p>Do you take an active part To help the work along, Or are you satisfied To say you “just belong”?</p> <p>Do you ever go to visit A member who is sick, Or leave the work to just a few, And talk about the clique?</p>	<p>There’s quite a program scheduled That I’m sure you’ve heard about, And we’ll appreciate it if you, too Will come and help us out.</p> <p>So let’s be up and doing— Now the time to start! Don’t be “just a member” But take an active part!</p> <p>Think this over, member You know right from wrong; Are you an active member, Or do you just belong?</p>
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V. **Martha** - In the closing part of Luke the 10<sup>th</sup> chapter we read the story of Mary and Martha. (Lk. 10:38-42).

- A. Martha made the mistake of being too troubled with household duties. Household duties are important, but she was so busy with them that she did not have time to sit at the Lord’s feet and hear His precious words.
- B. Many women today are following in the steps of Martha.
  1. They are so busy with their household duties that they do not have time to read God’s word. They do not have time to visit a lost soul or a person in need of comfort. They do not even have time to sit down and read their children stories about Jesus. I have often wondered in how many homes Jesus would say to the woman of the house, “Martha, Martha, thou are anxious and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful.”
  2. Marge Green in her book, **Martha, Martha** tells the story of a young mother who had had a very busy week. She had attended various meetings all week in addition to her household duties. When Friday came she was very tired and nervous. It seemed that everything was going wrong and she began to take her feelings out on the family. After her husband had gone to work, she noticed a sheet of paper and on it was

her husband's writing. Just two words were written on the paper "Martha, Martha." At first she could not comprehend the meaning of the note. Her name was not Martha. Then she noticed that her husband had written, "Read Luke 10:38-42." On the table laid the Bible she used to read before she became so busy. She read the passage. When she finished, tears came to her eyes. She knew she had become "troubled about many things" and had neglected her family and God. She prayed that God would help her choose the good part.

### **Conclusion.**

- I. In Acts the 24<sup>th</sup> chapter we read of Paul preaching to governor Felix. He preached to him on righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come. When Felix heard Paul's soul-searching message, he was terrified. He knew he should turn from his sins. He knew he should become a Christian. He said, however, "Go thy way for this time; and when I have a convenient season, I will call thee unto me." He put off becoming a Christian to a more convenient season. That convenient season did not come for him. He went to his grave lost without Christ.
- II. I pray you will not make the mistake this foolish governor did. He had the opportunity to be saved, but let it pass him by. Don't let your opportunity pass. Give your life to the Lord as we sing the hymn of invitation.