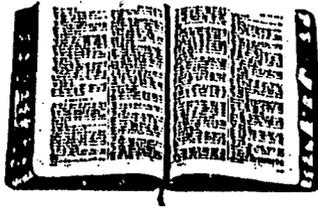


THE INSTRUCTOR



"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." (2 Timothy 3:16)

Volume 39

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Number 1

"AND FEW THERE BE THAT FIND IT"

In Mt. 7:13-14 Jesus said: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." (Emphasis mine - ed.)

It is obvious from this passage that Jesus taught that the "many" will be *destroyed* and only a "few" will receive "life". The truth that Jesus held and taught is not believed by the "masses" of humanity. They (by their *human reasoning*) cannot bring themselves to accept the *fact* that (relatively speaking) only a "few" will receive eternal life.

We learn from Rom. 15:4 that "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning..." In 1 Cor. 10:11 we are told that some things that happened to God's people in OT times "happened unto them for our ensamples: and they are written for our admonition..." Reflect on some.

ONLY EIGHT SOULS SAVED IN THE ARK

Out of all the people living (probably millions or maybe even billions) in the days of Noah *only eight people were saved from the destruction of the waters of the*

flood that God sent upon the face of the earth. (See Gen. 6:5- 8:13; 1 Pet. 3:20; 2 Pet. 2:4-5.) The reason there were only eight people who were saved in the ark is simple. Only eight entered the ark of safety. Not another single person would enter therein. Their wickedness brought the destruction upon them. (Read Gen. 5:6 - 8:17). *Few saved in the ark!*

ONLY TWO ENTERED THE PROMISED LAND

Just prior to the Israelites leaving Egypt, there were about 600,000 men "on foot" according to Exo. 12:37. When the men (twenty years old and upward who were able to go to war) were numbered, the number was 630,550. (See Num. 1:45-46).

God led the Israelites 40 years in the wilderness to *humble* and *prove* them. (See Dt. 8:2). Out of over 600,000 people only *two* (*Joshua* and *Caleb*) entered the promised land. They entered because they had "wholly followed the Lord." (Num. 32:10-13). All of them were God's children but *only two entered the promised land! Only two!*

QUESTION FOR YOU

Will you be among the *few* that will receive *eternal life*? "For many are called but *few* are chosen." (Mt. 22:14)
Read carefully Mt. 7:21-23. (CRS)

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Editorial...

SOME SINS OFTEN OVERLOOKED (NO. 8)

Many of God's children often overlook many sins. It may be because of ignorance due to a lack of study of the Scriptures or it may be because the seriousness of such is not realized or it may be for other reasons. Let us continue our study of some sins often overlooked.

XXVIII. THE SIN OF EVIL SURMISING IS OFTEN OVERLOOKED. In 1 Tim. 6 in describing a man that would not consent to and teach wholesome words (the words of our Lord Jesus Christ) Paul declared in verse 4 that "**He is proud, knowing nothing, but dot-ing about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings**" etc. Referring to these people (in verse 5) he said to Timothy: "**...From such withdraw thyself.**" NOTE: This shows the seriousness of these sins. One of these sins mentioned is *evil surmisings*.

The word "*surmise*" (verb) means to "*imagine or infer on slight grounds: guess*" according to Webster. A "*surmise*" (noun) is "*a thought or idea based on scanty*

evidence." The words *judge, suppose* and *conjecture* are some synonyms. The idea of suspicion and *insinuation* seem to be involved also.

Instead of "*evil surmisings*", the NKJV, NASV and TEV have "*evil suspicions*".

It certainly is not necessarily sinful for a person to judge, suppose, conjecture or surmise. However, when it is *evil* judging, *evil* supposing, *evil* conjecturing or *evil* surmising, *it is sinful!* When we draw unwarranted conclusions that accuse others of wrong doing or put others in a bad light, we are guilty of *evil surmisings*. These actions will harm others, destroy peace and harmony among the people of God and will eventually destroy unless we are penitent.

Suppose a person sees another person wearing fine, expensive clothes and surmises that he (or she) is spending (and no doubt putting it on a charge card) far more than he can afford and is thus doing wrong. NOTE: That is **evil surmising!** It may be that the person purchased the clothing at a "thrift store" or at a yard sale. Or perhaps someone gave the clothing to that person.

Suppose a child of God sees another Christian who is married talking with someone of the opposite sex and surmises that they are having "an affair". NOTE: That is **evil surmising!** There are many reasons why that such a situation may occur.

Suppose someone tells a person that he heard that a certain person has divorced his wife and this person immediately surmises that the divorce had been granted and that it was an *unscriptural* divorce. NOTE: This would be **evil surmising!** It may merely be gossip that is being spread or if the divorce had taken place it may have been

for the cause of fornication as Mt. 19:9 teaches. Without sufficient evidence we have no right to believe and pass along to others information that may not be true. If we have sufficient information to know the truth we should be sure we have proper motives when we tell others.

Suppose, as you were driving down a street, you were to see a person come out of a "beer joint" and you began to tell others that that person drinks liquor. NOTE: That would be **evil surmising!** Is it not possible that the person had gone into the "beer joint" for another reason? Perhaps he had been robbed and the robbers had told him to run up an alley and had threatened to kill him if he looked back and the "beer joint" was the first place he came to where he could leave the alley. Suppose he had ducked into the "beer joint" through the back door and had called the police and he was leaving the "beer joint" when you saw him. NOTE: This was an unusual situation but it occurred. *No, I do not recommend nor do I think it wise* for Christians generally to go into such places! However, we have no right to engage in *evil surmisings*. We should conclude there is evil when there is sufficient evidence to prove such! Surely we do not want others to judge us on *scanty* evidence. Neither should we judge them on such evidence!

Should we *surmise* that a person drinks beer just because we saw some beer cans in his trash can? Of course not! Isn't it possible that someone threw the cans in his yard and he is merely disposing of them?

Should we *surmise* that a person who is seen coming out of a restaurant that sells liquor or a store that sells lottery tickets is guilty of drinking liquor and gambling? Of

course not! NOTE: Personally I prefer not to patronize such businesses when there are other businesses nearby that do not sell such things. However, I cannot "bind" my preference on others.

It is certainly not wrong for us to "*judge*" others, but it is sinful for us to engage in **evil surmisings**.

Let each of us keep in mind that Jesus said, "**Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.**" (John 7:24).

Since the sin of *evil surmising* is often overlooked, we should examine our hearts and make sure that *we are not guilty of it!*

XXIX. THE SIN OF SLOTHFULNESS IS OFTEN OVERLOOKED. In Mt. 25:14-30 we read of the lord of some servants which were given five talents, two talents and one talent, each according to his ability. He praised the servant that was given five talents and the one that was given two talents. But when the servant that was given one talent (and had failed to use it according to his ability) came and returned it to his lord, he was told, "...Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury (interest-fn) ...And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Mt. 25:26-30). NOTE: This indicates that a person who is slothful is considered wicked and will be lost eternally if he dies in that condition.

A number of the proverbs (which contain general truths) give us some insight into *slothful* men. Here are some examples.

1. Proverbs 19:24- "**A slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom, and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again.**" (Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

2. Proverbs 21:25-26- **"The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour. He coveteth greedily all the day long..."**

3. Proverbs 22:13- **"The slothful man saith, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets."**

4. Proverbs 12:27- **"The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting; but the substance of a diligent man is precious."**

5. Proverbs 18:9- **"He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster."**

6. Proverbs 19:15- **"Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger."**

In Eccl. 10:18 Solomon also said: **"By much slothfulness the building decayeth; and through idleness of hands the house droppeth through."**

NOTE: Those who are slothful in spiritual activities are the same in principle as those who are slothful in physical activities and material things. *It is*

wrong to be slothful in both physical (or material) and spiritual activities.

We are taught in the NT not to be slothful. The Hebrew writer said: **"That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."** (6:12). In Rom. 12:11 Paul said, **"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord."**

"Slothful" means *disinclined to action or labor*. It means *indolent or lazy*. It is the opposite of being *fervent, zealous, diligent* and *steadfast*. As a result of slothfulness one becomes lukewarm or cold, unproductive and unfruitful.

The sin of slothfulness is prevalent even among the people of God. This ought not so to be!

Let us make sure that we do not overlook the sin of slothfulness!

(CRS) (To be continued)

"And be ye kind one to another..."

SENTENCE SERMONS

Kindness can be understood by people who speak different languages.

* * * * *

If we set our sails in the right direction, God will provide the wind.

* * * * *

He who is godly can live in true contentment.

* * * * *

We should have enough faith to make us hopeful - not hopeless!

* * * * *

The *"strait and narrow way"* never needs "reconstruction" because it never wears out.

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