

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Stealing Our Hearts Away

(Jerry Fite)

One of the first lessons we learn when we buy something valuable is that we probably need to secure our prized possession from being stolen. Whether we are talking about a chain lock for our new bicycle or a sounding alarm system for our new car, we understand that our valuable assets can be stolen away from us. We must proceed with wisdom to keep them.

Once we become Christians, the Devil does not stop trying to accomplish our ruin. Peter, in writing to Christians, says the Devil is “*your adversary*.” He is walking about seeking whom he may “*devour*” (1 Peter 5:8). Just because we are now children of God, does not mean we cannot become children of the Devil in falling away (1 Timothy 4:1). We should pay attention to things that can steal our hearts away from God.

Pride causes us to no longer listen to God’s instructions. We become our own “lord” and no longer come to God. Israel did this in Jeremiah’s day. Jehovah searched why Israel no longer heeded God. He sees His people saying, “*We are broken loose, we will come no more unto thee*” (Jeremiah 2:31). Their

minds are separated! Their hearts are stolen! Pride had moved them to think their connection to God was holding them back. Therefore, they are breaking loose from God’s constraints, and will do what they want and come no more to God. Later Jeremiah says, “*But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret for your pride, and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because Jehovah’s flock is taken captive* (Jeremiah 13:17).

Prosperity can steal our hearts away from God. Ezekiel saw this among God’s people in his day. They were doing worse than their “*sister, Sodom*” who was guilty of “*pride*,” when they had “*fullness of bread, and prosperous ease...*” (Ezekiel 16:49). God had warned his people in Moses’ day of the prosperous times when “*...thy heart be lifted up, and thou forget Jehovah thy God...*” (Deuteronomy 8: 14). Times of prosperity elevates us to think we alone are the reason behind our good fortune, and not God. So, we focus on ourselves and forget God. The Giver of every perfect gift sees our hearts being stolen from Him.

Prosperity and possessions are echoed in the New Testament as potential heart stealers (Mark

4:19, Colossians 3:5). But false doctrine can also carry us away. Paul offers the antidote of growing up in the Lord. “*that we be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error...*” (Ephesians 4:14). We must demand that only the doctrine of Christ be preached (2 John 9). Anchored in the truth revealed to us by Christ through His apostles, we can combat a potential heart stealer. Anchored in the love for Truth, even plausible theories couched in eloquent speech fail in moving us away from God into divisive error. (Romans 16:17-18).

“Peer pressure” can steal our hearts and move us away from God. Peter quit eating with the Gentiles after caving under the pressure of the presence of Judaizing teachers. Sadly, peer pressure enabled by hypocrisy stole the hearts of other Jews, including Barnabas. They were “*carried away*” by the dissimulation of others (Galatians 2:12-13).

Brethren, follow God even when the pressure is strong to please others. A humble spirit, a knowledgeable mind and a godly heart will guard us from being carried away.