

GLAD TIDINGS

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

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FOCUSING ON OUR SECRETS

Jerry Fite

We may hide our secrets from other people, but never do we hide them from God. Every creature is not only seen by God, but “*all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do*” (Hebrews 4:13). Mankind will give answer to God, “*in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, according to my gospel, by Jesus Christ*” (Romans 2:16). Since we are not hiding any secrets from God, and these secrets will be exposed in judgment before the eyes of the Almighty, it is wise now to focus on our secrets.

What we do in secret has much to say about our true character. D.L. Moody once described “character” as “what a man is in the dark”. Others have hit on the same vein of thought by describing character as “what you do when no one else is looking”. Nathaniel may have thought he was all alone when under a fig tree, and only accompanied by his inner thoughts. But Jesus saw him, and saw through him. Jesus describes Nathaniel as “*an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!*” (John 1:47). Jesus sees Nathaniel as a man living up to

the name “Israel”, as one “ruled by God”. In this man was no “guile” or deceit. What he was on the outside was consistent with his secret thoughts on the inside.

Our secret thoughts on the inside should occupy our first focus. Jesus exhorted the hypocrites among the Jewish leaders to “*cleanse first the inside of the cup and of the platter, that the outside thereof may become clean also*” (Matthew 23:26). When we focus on improving the character of our secret thoughts, improved actions will follow. Those who live the life of the hypocrite need to heed Jesus’ exhortation. In reality, hypocrisy starts from within. Jesus, commenting on the hypocrites of His day says, “*Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but inwardly ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity*” (Matthew 23:28). If one is determined to not allow a secret place for hypocrisy to exist inwardly, he will not be carrying out the farce in public.

We should always keep our secrets pure. Remember, Jesus says “*cleanse*” the inside of the cup and platter. All sexual impurity begins with evil thoughts. Je-

sus explains as to what truly defiles the man: “*for from within, out of the heart of men evil thoughts proceed, fornication... adulteries...and all these evil things proceed from within, and defile the man*” (Mark 7:21-22). The lustful look of a man upon a woman, when one fantasizes in secret of the sexual relationship with that woman, not only defiles with adultery occurring in the heart, but fuels the fire that leads to adultery and fornication in the flesh.

Our secrets should also be true and in accordance with God. Paul could call upon God as the witness as to what he was truly thinking. “*God is witness*” that Paul was not disguising covetousness (*1 Thessalonians 1:5*). Paul’s inward “*longings of tenderness*” was that to which Paul could appeal to God “*as my witness*” (*Philippians 1:8*). Any hypocrite can appeal to God as a witness. To make such an appeal knowing what is being proclaimed as truth is exactly how God sees it, is significant. Improve the character of your secrets, and you will improve the character of your life.