

GLAD TIDINGS

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

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Things That Steal Our Hearts Away

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One of the first lessons we learn when we buy a new possession, is the necessity to secure or protect the new property from being stolen from us. Whether we are talking of a chain lock for our new bicycle, or a sounding alarm system for our new car, we understand that our possessions can be stolen away from us and must act with wisdom in keeping them.

Once we become Christians, the Devil does not stop trying to effect our ruin. Peter, in writing to Christians, says the Devil is “*your adversary*” 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 by falling away (1 Peter 2:10, 1 John 3:9-10, 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 searches why Israel would no longer heed to God. He

sees his people saying, “*We are Lords, we will come no more unto thee*” (Jeremiah 2:31). Literally, they are saying “*we are broken loose*”. Pride had moved them to think their connection to God was holding them back. They are therefore 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 also 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 that prosperity could turn the hearts of his people away from him. “*...then thy heart be lifted up, and thou forget Jehovah thy God...*” (Deuteronomy 8:14). Times of prosperity lead us to thinking proudly that we alone are the reason behind our good fortune, and not God. So we focus on ourselves, and forget God.

God 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 there are other things that can turn us from God. False doctrine is one of those things that can 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 Jn.9). Anchored in the truth revealed to us by Christ through his apostles, we can combat a potential heart stealer (Romans 16:17-18).

We can also be carried away by “peer pressure” as Peter succumbed to among his fellow Jews, and Barnabas and others experienced when they were “*carried away*” by the dissimulation of others (Galatians 2:12-13). 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.