

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
First Quarter 2018: *Stewardship: Motives of the Heart*
Lesson 1 “The Influence of Materialism”

Read for this week’s study

1 John 2:16, 17; Luke 14:26–33; 12:15–21; Deuteronomy 8:10–14; 1 Timothy 6:10; John 15:5; Galatians 2:20.

Memory Text

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:2, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The God of This World
- III. Filling the Barns
- IV. The Allure of Materialism
- V. Love of Self
- VI. The Ultimate Futility of Materialism
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. How would you define the word “stewardship?” Since this word has fallen out of use in many circles, can you come up with a more up-to-date English word for that? How would you define the word “materialism?” (General Introduction)
2. Read Romans 12:2. Why does Paul use the word “conformed” in relation to the world and “transformed” for the work God is doing in our lives? (Sabbath afternoon)
3. Read 1 John 2:16-17. What are some different options for understanding the term “world” in the Bible? How is it used here? How does this passage describe what really matters in life as well as some of the other options that people choose? Read Luke 14:26-33. How does Jesus portray what really matters in life and how to achieve it? How can we know if the things we own, even if not many, own us as well? (Sunday’s lesson)
4. Read Luke 12:15-21. What is the primary principle Jesus is illustrating here? Could the same principle apply to someone who is not rich? Read Deuteronomy 8:10-14.

How does this description apply to the developed world today? How can one avoid this syndrome? (Monday's lesson)

5. Read Matthew 6:22-24. What does the eye represent? What does it mean by an unhealthy eye? How should Christians react when they see images that tempt them to buy things, use things or otherwise act out in ways that are not consistent with God's will or even their own best image of themselves? What strategies do advertisers use to get our attention and get us to act? Read Galatians 5:16. We tend to associate lust with sexuality. What other kinds of lusts are there? (Tuesday's lesson)
6. Read Romans 12:3. How is faith related to an accurate assessment of oneself? What is it that drives us to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think? Read 1 Timothy 6:6-10. What does Paul call the root of all evil? What is Paul's cure for the love of money? Read Philippians 2:3. How does this verse help us understand why materialism is so contrary to the Christian ideal? (Wednesday's lesson)
7. Read Deuteronomy 7:6, 1 Peter 2:9, John 15:5 and Galatians 2:20. What does it mean to be God's possession? Where do we find our true identity? If all our possessions were suddenly taken away, would we feel that we have lost our identity? (Thursday's lesson)
8. Is there any message in this lesson for the poor, or is it primarily directed toward those who have more than enough? (Friday's lesson)
9. Everyone needs some money in order to live. How can we keep money, and our need for money, in the right biblical perspective? (Friday's lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

"Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind," so look after it, please, "that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

What I like about this is, the kind of worship God desires is described as rational, intelligent, spiritual worship; not mechanical, not ritualistic, not ceremonial. But we worship an intelligent God. He wants us to worship him in spirit and in truth, Jesus said. So to do something mechanical, learned by rote, is a terrible misrepresentation of the truth about God. Remember Isaiah? "Your worship of me is but the commandments of men learned by rote." You come into the temple, but your hearts aren't in it. Remember the Sabbath-keepers in Amos? All that kind of unthinking obedience suggests an unthinking God.

So Romans 12: 1, 2 is a magnificent passage. The kind of worship God wants is worship that is appropriate to the kind of God that he is. And I think that really affects the way we worship.

You know when we go through an hour of worship—you remember the things we all do in the right and proper order.

We have a song service, and get the books out, and we sing, and have you ever sung a song through and hardly noticed the words? Have you ever repeated the Lord's Prayer and come to the Amen, and you can't remember saying anything in between? Well, you hope God enjoyed it, anyway. Or, you hold that last note long and high, which is fun at times, but why do we do it? Or if we repeat things over and over, and over and over and over, as some do, does God kind of like that? It may not make sense to us, he rather likes it? If you were God, how would you want to be worshipped? The way we worship God? If you were God, would you want people to meet for an hour and do the things we sometimes do for the hour? We sometimes worship God as if he were less intelligent than we are.

I love Paul's comment here. He wants intelligent, rational, spiritual worship. Or do you have "worship of heart and mind" in your version? Do you have that in yours? The worship of heart and mind? It's intelligent worship, because he's that kind of a God. I believe if God is the kind of a God we are convinced he is from going through the sixty-six, it will greatly affect the way we worship, the way we pray, certainly the way we treat each other. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in all 66 – Romans*, recorded May, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:* [http://pkp.cc/61MMPOGIA66 \(Part 1\)](http://pkp.cc/61MMPOGIA66) [http://pkp.cc/62MMPOGIA66 \(Part 2\)](http://pkp.cc/62MMPOGIA66)

Further Study with Ellen White

God's promise is, "Ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart." Jeremiah 29:13. {SC 43.1}

The whole heart must be yielded to God, or the change can never be wrought in us by which we are to be restored to His likeness. By nature we are alienated from God. The Holy Spirit describes our condition in such words as these: "Dead in trespasses and sins;" "the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint;" "no soundness in it." We are held fast in the snare of Satan, "taken captive by him at his will." Ephesians 2:1; Isaiah 1:5, 6; 2 Timothy 2:26. God desires to heal us, to set us free. But since this requires an entire transformation, a renewing of our whole nature, we must yield ourselves wholly to Him. {SC 43.2}

The government of God is not, as Satan would make it appear, founded upon a blind submission, an unreasoning control. It appeals to the intellect and the conscience. "Come now, and let us reason together" is the Creator's invitation to the beings He has made. Isaiah 1:18. God does not force the will of His creatures. He cannot accept an homage that is not willingly and intelligently given. A mere forced submission would prevent all real development of mind or character; it would make man a mere automaton. Such is not the purpose of the Creator. He

desires that man, the crowning work of His creative power, shall reach the highest possible development. He sets before us the height of blessing to which He desires to bring us through His grace. He invites us to give ourselves to Him, that He may work His will in us. It remains for us to choose whether we will be set free from the bondage of sin, to share the glorious liberty of the sons of God. {SC 43.4}

Will men and women consider how God regards the creatures He has made? He formed man's mind. We do not think one noble thought that does not come from Him. He knows all the mysterious workings of human mind; for did He not make it? God sees that sin has debased and degraded man, but He looks upon him with pity and compassion; for He sees that Satan has him in his power. {SD 105.2}

So long as the people of God preserve their fidelity to Him, so long as they cling by living faith to Jesus, they are under the protection of heavenly angels, and Satan will not be permitted to exercise his hellish arts upon them to their destruction. {OHC 92.5}

It is the greatest joy of the angels of heaven to spread the shield of their tender love over souls who turn to God. {OHC 92.6}

A character formed according to the divine likeness is the only treasure that we can take from this world to the next. Those who are under the instruction of Christ in this world will take every divine attainment with them to the heavenly mansions. And in heaven we are continually to improve. How important, then, is the development of character in this life. {COL 332.3}

As the will of man co-operates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent. Whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings. {COL 333.1}

The entrance of God's word is the application of divine truth to the heart, purifying and refining the soul through the agency of the Holy Spirit. The faculties devoted unreservedly to God, under the guidance of the divine Spirit, develop steadily and harmoniously. Devotion and piety establish so close a relation between Jesus and His disciples that the Christian becomes like Him. Through the power of God, his weak, vacillating character becomes changed to one of strength and steadfastness. He becomes a person of sound principle, clear perception, and reliable, well-balanced judgment. Having a connection with God, the source of light and understanding, his views, unbiased by his own preconceived opinions, become broader, his discernment more penetrative and farseeing. The knowledge of God, the understanding of His revealed will, as far as human minds can grasp it, will, when received into the character, make efficient men. {CT 37.3}

By looking constantly to Jesus with the eye of faith, we shall be strengthened. God will make the most precious revelations to His hungering, thirsting people. They will find that Christ is a personal Saviour. As they feed upon His word, they find that it is spirit and life. The word

destroys the natural, earthly nature, and imparts a new life in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit comes to the soul as a Comforter. By the transforming agency of His grace, the image of God is reproduced in the disciple; he becomes a new creature. Love takes the place of hatred, and the heart receives the divine similitude. This is what it means to live “by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” This is eating the Bread that comes down from heaven. {DA 391.1}

When Christ took human nature upon Him, He bound humanity to Himself by a tie of love that can never be broken by any power save the choice of man himself. Satan will constantly present allurements to induce us to break this tie—to choose to separate ourselves from Christ. Here is where we need to watch, to strive, to pray, that nothing may entice us to choose another master; for we are always free to do this. But let us keep our eyes fixed upon Christ, and He will preserve us. Looking unto Jesus, we are safe. Nothing can pluck us out of His hand. In constantly beholding Him, we “are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” 2 Corinthians 3:18. {SC 72.1}

God designed that those to whom He entrusted talents of means, ability, and gifts of grace, should be good stewards of His beneficence, and not seek to reap all the advantages for themselves. God does not estimate man by the amount of wealth, talent, or education that he may have. He values man in proportion as he becomes a good steward of His mercy and love. {SW 37.1}

It is the love of money that the word of God denounces as the root of all evil. Money itself is the gift of God to men, to be used with fidelity in His service. God blessed Abraham, and made him rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. And the Bible states, as an evidence of divine favor, that God gave David, Solomon, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, very much riches and honor. {CS 139.1}

Satan has nets and snares, like the snares of the fowler, all prepared to entrap souls. It is his studied purpose that men shall employ their God-given powers for selfish ends rather than yield them to glorify God. God would have men engage in a work that will bring them peace and joy, and will render them eternal profit; but Satan wants us to concentrate our efforts for that which profiteth not, for the things that perish with the using. {OHC 200.2}