

## SETTING OUR AFFECTION ON THINGS ABOVE – LESSON FIVE

### COL. 3:1-3; 1 TIMOTHY 6:6-11

***“FIVE MINUTES INSIDE OF ETERNITY I BELIEVE EVERYONE OF US WILL WISH THAT WE HAD SACRIFICED MORE, PRAYED MORE, LOVED MORE, SWEATED MORE, WEPT MORE ...”***

***-LEONARD RAVENHILL***

### **Review:**

Over the past few weeks we have emphasized the importance of “setting our affection on things above,” on living here on this earth “in light of eternity.” We have said, over and over again that one of the great – if not the greatest – tragedy in the churches today, is our lack of an eternal perspective. The twenty-first century churches, especially those in the West (the United States, Canada and Europe) have lost the concept of eternity and the capability and desire to live in light of eternity. In his book *Whatever Happened to Heaven* Dave Hunt writes:

*Unfortunately, too many persons—even dedicated Christians—find such a topic (eternity) of only minor interest because they consider it to be largely irrelevant to the challenges of this present life. ... **Nothing is more important** in shaping how life on earth is lived and what is accomplished both for time and **eternity** than a person’s attitude about **the life to come**.*

Hunt is right, “**Nothing is more important** in shaping how life on earth is lived and what is accomplished both for time and **eternity** than a person’s attitude about **the life to come**.” Hunt continues with these words:

*What Jesus had to say about this present life and **the life to come**, and the particular promises he made about **heaven**, gave the early church a **hope** unknown to the followers of any other religion. That hope ... is so unreal to the average Christian today that it has lost its transforming power. ... One cannot read the New Testament without seeing its **heavenly** orientation. **Heaven** was continually on the heart of our Lord and was the context for everything He taught His disciples. He made it clear that He was calling them to turn their **attention** and **affection** and interest from this world to **heaven** ...*

This is what we call, “living in the light of eternity” or having an eternal perspective in life. The various commands to “*love not the world*” (**1 John 2:15**); to not be a friend of the world (James 4:4); and to “*be not conformed to this world*,” make very little sense unless we understand that this world is not our home, and in all reality is at enmity with God (**James 4:4**). Matthew Henry comments on 1 Peter 2:11, by stating: “*They are strangers and pilgrims, and should not impede their passage by giving in to the lusts of the country through which they pass.*”

### **This week’s lesson:**

When we see our life through the eyes of eternity, when we set our affection on things above, our attitude towards prosperity and possessions will change drastically. Nothing—I repeat nothing—will hinder our spiritual condition more than this matter of a wrong perspective towards prosperity and possessions.

### **There are so many examples in the Scripture of this principle:**

- In Genesis 13, we see a family feud developing over grazing land between Abraham and Lot's servants.
- In Numbers 22, we see the tragic decline and fall of a good prophet because of prosperity.  
It has often been said that the downfall of a man of God will be females, fame or finances
- In Numbers 32, two tribes refused to cross into the land of Canaan because of their "great multitude of cattle."
- In Deuteronomy chapters 6-8, God warns His people of the great danger of prosperity and forgetting and forsaking Him
- In Joshua 7, we find Achan losing his testimony, his life and the life of his family because of covetousness
- In 2 Kings, we find the sad story of a servant who went after Naaman for a financial gift which the prophet Elisha had already refused, which resulted in God cursing him with leprosy.
- The rich young ruler left Christ broken-hearted, unwilling and unconverted because of his wealth.
- Judas sold Jesus for thirty pieces of silver
- Ananias and Sapphira lied, holding back a part of their offering – and both lost their lives because of it.

### **Prosperity and possessions often have tragic results:**

- It keeps lost people from being saved
- It keeps saved people from being surrendered
- It keeps God's purpose from being accomplished

### **What this passage teaches:**

**1. God expects us to live godly lives, regardless of what our economic status is (1 Tim. 6:6)**

**2. We need to be content with what God has provided for us (1 Timothy 6:6, 8)**

**3. We cannot take any riches with us but we can send them ahead (1 Timothy 6:7; Matthew 6:20)**

**4. The desire to be rich has caused many lives to be destroyed (1 Timothy 6:9-10)**

**5. We should not follow after riches, we should follow after righteousness (1 Timothy 6:11).**