



METRO NEW YORK WORLD MINISTRY
ADULT SABBATH SCHOOL CONTRIBUTING NOTES
For the week of November 29 – December 5, 2014
Lesson #10: **The Book of James, Lesson 10**

James 5:1-6 Weep and Howl!

Verse 1

“rich men”

The book of James has focused on church members through chapter four, but in this verse the application seems to have a wider audience. Those who acquire great riches but leave God out of their plans will “weep and howl.” By leaving God out of the picture they have failed to help the poor. And in some cases, they have defrauded those that have worked for them.

These words of James are very strong. Are we looking at a serious transgression of one of the commandments? Indeed we are—it is the eighth commandment, which reads, “Thou shalt not steal.” Exodus 20:15

Sister White wrote, “Both public and private sins are included in this prohibition. The eighth commandment condemns manstealing and slave dealing, and forbids wars of conquest. It condemns theft and robbery. It demands strict integrity in the minutest details of the affairs of life. It forbids overreaching in trade, and requires the payment of just debts or wages. It declares that every attempt to advantage oneself by the ignorance, weakness, or misfortune of another is registered as fraud in the books of heaven.” {PP 309.1}

What does this commandment forbid?

There are at least two things that James focused on in these verses, namely, (1) dishonesty in the payment of wages, and (2) the neglect of helping those in need. But there are other things that this commandment forbids.

Slave trade. In the beginning God gave man dominion over the fish of the sea, the animals that roam the earth, and the birds that fly, but man was never given dominion over his fellow man.

Wars of conquest. If a nation invades another nation to acquire its resources, then this is a war of conquest and Jesus hates it.

Theft and robbery

Overreaching in trade

Taking advantage of someone’s ignorance, weakness, or misfortune



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What does the commandment teach us about what is holy, just, and good?

Treating others with respect

Respecting the property and possessions of others

Meeting one another's needs

Fair trade

Paying of just debts and wages

Never taking advantage of another person's weaknesses.

General Thoughts on the Eighth Commandment

The Right to Property

Inherent in this commandment is the right to own. This is not just the right to own pots and pans, but property itself.

The patriarchs owned property as did each tribe when they reached Canaan.

At the end of each Jubilee, all Hebrew slaves were to be freed (v 10), and the land was to return to its original owner. See Leviticus 25:24-28. God's original plan was for everyone to own a small piece of land in the country.

All belongs to God

Because God owns all things (See Genesis 14:19; Exodus 19:5; Psalms 24:1), then the right to personal ownership comes from God. As such we are tenants and stewards of God's property.

Tithe

Tithing is the outward evidence that we truly believe that God is the owner of the heavens and the earth. See Genesis 14:18-20; Malachi 3:7-14.

How serious is dishonesty?

According to 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10, no "thieves, . . . extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."



Forms of Violating the Eighth Commandment

Theft

Theft is seldom the sin of ignorance. Usually some devious planning is involved. Theft is the unlawful taking of another person's goods without their consent or knowledge.

The Hebrew word for "steal," means "to take by stealth," or "secretly."

Robbery

Robbery differs from theft in that it often involves force or violence.

Embezzlement

This refers to taking for example money for one's own use when it was placed in your trust. It is the breaking of trust or the breach of trust.

Gambling

Gambling is based on chance. A person could gamble away the families' finances and as such steal it away from its proper use. The person who takes another's life savings on a game of cards is no less a thief. The money is unearned in the game of chance. Poverty has come to the loser, who has stolen from his own family, and the winner has taken from him the sustenance for the support of that family. Both are thieves.

Extortion

Extortion is when someone abuses their official position for money, property, or privileges. It would also include exorbitant or excessive charges. See Ezekiel 22:12; Matthew 23:25; Leviticus 25:14.

Lying Advertisement

This happens when products are said to do more than they can. Generally lying advertising is based on a false pretense.

Employers

Stealing includes the underpaying of laborers or the withholding of their wages. See Deuteronomy 24:14, 15; Leviticus 19:13; Jeremiah 22:13; James 5:4.

It is not only wrong to withhold wages; it is also wrong to delay payment beyond the time agreed upon.

The eighth commandment forbids overworking and underpaying. It demands a fair deal. "A fair wage for a fair day's work."

Employee

On the other hand, the employee must do a fair day's work and give in service the equivalent of that which he receives in wages, or he, too, is a thief. See 2 Thessalonians 3:10; Proverbs 24:30-34.



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Unjust Weights or Fraudulent Dealings

This is when a person pays for three pounds of flour, but your unjust weights only gives them two pounds.

Thieves of Reputations

Through gossip or slander a person can be robbed of his good name. The slanderer is a thief.

Thieves of Hope

It is wrong to plant doubts that will rob people of their hope of eternal salvation, or the hope of achieving something.

Restitution

We are to return what we have wrongfully taken. We are to pay back our debts. See Ezekiel 33:15, 16; Luke 19:8, 9.

Closing Verses: The work of the prophets

“He that oppreseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoreth him hath mercy on the poor.”
Proverbs 14:31.

“Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassions every man to his brother: and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart.” Zechariah 7:9, 10.

Verses 2, 3

“your riches are corrupted....garments motheaten....gold and silver is cankered.”

Consider the following counsel by Sister White on James 5:1-3

“God in His providence has moved upon the hearts of some of those who have riches, and has converted them to the truth, that they with their substance may assist to keep His work moving. And if those who are wealthy will not do this, if they do not fulfill the purpose of God, He will pass them by, and raise up others to fill their place who will fulfill His purpose, and with their possessions gladly distribute to meet the necessities of the cause of God. In this they will be first. God will have those in His cause who will do this. {1T 174.1}

“He could send means from heaven to carry on His work; but this is out of His order. He has ordained that men should be His instruments, that as a great sacrifice was made to redeem them, they should act a part in this work of salvation, by making a sacrifice for one another, and by thus doing show how highly they prize the sacrifice that has been made for them. {1T 174.2}



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"I was directed to James 5:1-3: "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days." {1T 174.3}

"I saw that these fearful words apply particularly to the wealthy who profess to believe the present truth. The Lord calls them to use their means to advance His cause. Opportunities are presented to them, but they shut their eyes to the wants of the cause, and cling fast to their earthly treasure. Their love for the world is greater than their love for the truth, their love for their fellow men, or their love for God. He calls for their substance, but they selfishly, covetously, retain what they have. They give a little now and then to ease their conscience, but have not overcome their love for this world. They do not sacrifice for God. The Lord has raised up others that prize eternal life, and that can feel and realize something of the value of the soul, and they have freely bestowed their means to advance the cause of God. The work is closing; and soon the means of those who have kept their riches, their large farms, their cattle, etc., will not be wanted. I saw the Lord turn to such in anger, in wrath, and repeat these words: "Go to now, ye rich men." He has called, but you would not hear. Love of this world has drowned His voice. Now He has no use for you, and lets you go, bidding you: "Go to now, ye rich men." {1T 174.4}

"Oh, I saw it was an awful thing to be thus forsaken by the Lord--a fearful thing to hold onto a perishable substance here, when He has said that if we will sell and give alms, we can lay up treasure in heaven. I was shown that as the work is closing up, and the truth is going forth in mighty power, these rich men will bring their means and lay it at the feet of the servants of God, begging them to accept it. The answer from the servants of God will be: "Go to now, ye rich men. Your means is not needed. Ye withheld it when ye could do good with it in advancing the cause of God. The needy have suffered; they have not been blessed by your means. God will not accept your riches now. Go to now, ye rich men." {1T 175.1}

"Then I was directed to these words: "Behold, the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth." I saw that God is not in all the riches that are obtained. Satan often has much more to do with acquiring property than God. Much of it is obtained by oppressing the hireling in his wages. The naturally covetous rich man obtains his riches by grinding down the hireling, and taking advantage of individuals wherever he can, thereby adding to a treasure that will eat his flesh as it were fire. {1T 175.2}

"A strictly honest, honorable course has not been taken by some. Such must take a very different course and work fast to redeem the time. Many Sabbathkeepers are at fault here. Advantage is taken even of their poor brethren, and those who have an abundance exact more than the real worth of things, more than they would pay for the same things, while these same brethren are embarrassed and distressed for want of means. God knows all these things. Every selfish act, every covetous extortion, will bring its reward. {1T 176.1}

"I saw that it is cruel and unjust to have no consideration for a brother's situation. If he is distressed, or poor, yet doing the best he can, allowance should be made for him, and even the full value of things he may purchase of



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the wealthy should not be exacted; but they should have bowels of compassion for him. God will approve of such kindly acts, and the doer will not lose his reward. But a fearful account stands against many Sabbathkeepers for close, covetous acts. {1T 176.2}

“I was pointed back to a time when there were but few who listened to and embraced the truth. They had not much of this world's goods. The wants of the cause were divided among a very few. Then it was necessary for some to sell their houses and lands, and obtain cheaper to serve them as a shelter, or home, while their means were freely and generously lent to the Lord, to publish the truth, and to otherwise aid in advancing the cause of God. As I beheld these self-sacrificing ones, I saw that they had endured privation for the benefit of the cause. I saw an angel standing by them, pointing them upward, and saying: "Ye have bags in heaven! Ye have bags in heaven that wax not old! Endure unto the end, and great will be your reward." {1T 176.3}

“God has been moving upon many hearts. The truth for which a few sacrificed so much, in order to get it before others, has triumphed, and multitudes have laid hold of it. God in His providence has moved upon those who have means, and has brought them into the truth, that as His work increases, the wants of the cause may be met. Much means has been brought into the ranks of Sabbathkeepers, and I saw that at present God does not call for the houses His people need to live in, unless expensive houses are exchanged for cheaper ones. But if those who have an abundance do not hear His voice, cut loose from the world, and dispose of a portion of their property and lands, and sacrifice for God, He will pass them by, and call for those who are willing to do anything for Jesus, even to sell their homes to meet the wants of the cause. God will have freewill offerings. Those who give must esteem it a privilege to do so. {1T 176.4}

“Some give of their abundance, but yet they feel no lack. They do not particularly deny themselves of anything for the cause of Christ. They still have all that heart can wish. They give liberally and heartily. God regards it, and the action and motive are known and strictly marked by Him. They will not lose their reward. You who cannot bestow so liberally must not excuse yourselves because you cannot do as much as some others. Do what you can. Deny yourselves of some article that you can get along without, and sacrifice for the cause of God. Like the widow, cast in your two mites. You will actually give more than all those who give of their abundance; and you will know how sweet it is to deny self, to give to the needy, to sacrifice for the truth, and to lay up treasure in heaven. {1T 177.1}

“I was shown that the young, especially young men, who profess the truth, have yet a lesson of self-denial to learn. If these made more sacrifice for the truth, they would esteem it more highly. It would affect their hearts, and purify their lives, and they would hold it more dear and sacred.

“The young do not take the burden of the cause of God, or feel any responsibility in regard to it. Is it because God has excused them? Oh, no; they excuse themselves! They are eased, and others are burdened. They do not realize that they are not their own. Their strength, their time, is not their own. They are bought with a price. A dear sacrifice was made for them, and unless they possess the spirit of self-denial and sacrifice, they can never possess the immortal inheritance. {1T 178}



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Verse 4

“kept back by fraud”

God warns those that keep by the wages of laborers as a serious charge. Those that have earned their wages should be paid in a timely manner. Often people needed that daily pay to buy food for that day. When the wealthy take advantage of the laborer it is particularly grievous unto God.

Verse 5

If a person lives for the luxuries of today and fails to prepare for eternity, they are like a lamb being fattened for the slaughter.

Verse 6

Often the pursuit of worldly wealth is at the expense of others. Many have been treated like slaves. The backs of many have filled the pockets of a few. This disproportionate distribution of wealth is not the work of God. In the Day of Judgment, God will make all things right.

Let us close with these words from the SOP on James 5:1-6.

“Look at the life of many who claim to be Christians. The Lord has endowed them with capabilities, and power, and influence; He has entrusted them with money, that they may be co-workers with Him in the great redemption. All His gifts are to be used in blessing humanity, in relieving the suffering and the needy. We are to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to care for the widow and the fatherless, to minister to the distressed and downtrodden. God never meant that the widespread misery in the world should exist. He never meant that one man should have an abundance of the luxuries of life, while the children of others should cry for bread. The means over and above the actual necessities of life are entrusted to man to do good, to bless humanity. The Lord says, "Sell that ye have, and give alms." Luke 12:33. Be "ready to distribute, willing to communicate." 1 Timothy 6:18. "When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind." Luke 14:13. "Loose the bands of wickedness," "undo the heavy burdens," "let the oppressed go free," "break every yoke." "Deal thy bread to the hungry," "bring the poor that are cast out to thy house." "When thou seest the naked, . . . cover him." "Satisfy the afflicted soul." Isaiah 58:6, 7, 10. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark 16:15. These are the Lord's commands. Are the great body of professed Christians doing this work? {COL 370.1}

“Alas, how many are appropriating to themselves the gifts of God! How many are adding house to house and land to land. How many are spending their money for pleasure, for the gratification of appetite, for extravagant houses, furniture, and dress. Their fellow beings are left to misery and crime, to disease and death. Multitudes are perishing without one pitying look, one word or deed of sympathy. {COL 371.1}

“Men are guilty of robbery toward God. Their selfish use of means robs the Lord of the glory that should be reflected back to Him in the relief of suffering humanity and the salvation of souls. They are embezzling His entrusted goods. The Lord declares, "I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against . . .



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those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right." "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse; for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation." Malachi 3:5, 8, 9. "Go to now, ye rich men, . . . your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten. Your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you. . . . Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days." "Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton." "Behold, the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth." James 5:1-3, 5, 4. {COL 371.2}

"Everyone will be required to render up his entrusted gifts. In the day of final judgment men's hoarded wealth will be worthless to them. They have nothing they can call their own. {COL 372.1}

"Those who spend their lives in laying up worldly treasure show less wisdom, less thought and care for their eternal well-being, than did the unjust steward for his earthly support. Less wise than the children of this world in their generation are these professed children of the light. These are they of whom the prophet declared, in his vision of the great judgment day, "A man shall cast the idols of his silver, and the idols of his gold [margin]; which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats; to go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth." Isaiah 2:20, 21.

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