**Overcoming Bad Traits**

**Introduction:**

Are we developing the mind of Christ? Are we putting into practice the attributes which He showed on earth? Our goal is to become more like Him every day of our lives. Let’s do our best to bring that about!

**Text:** Luke 12

**Body:**

1. **Having the Right Kind of Fear to Overcome Bad Traits** Luke 12:4-7 “And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him! Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.” NKJV All of us have different fears – of people, of events… The background of this passage is the instruction He gave His apostles as they went out into the world to teach and preach the gospel. Don’t be afraid of men who have no power but to take life from your mortal bodies. (Matthew 10:16-22) 22“And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.” Your soul is beyond their reach. The only way your soul can be punished eternally is if you allow it. Your physical body will cease to exist one day, anyhow. Now He tells us who to fear. Fear God Himself for He has made and designed a place we call hell, the everlasting torment for those who know not God and do not obey the gospel. (II Thessalonians 1:7-9) “and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,” (II Corinthians 5:11) “Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.”

(Psalm 119:120) “My flesh trembles for fear of You, And I am afraid of Your judgments.” NKJV Those who are outside Christ and do not know Him have much to fear. They need “to quake, to tremble,” to be frightened. This type of fear can be appealed to in order to induce obedience. (Hebrews 10:31) “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” NKJV For those who are in Christ, who are faithful to Him and the Word, they need not tremble at the thought of hell and its torments, for they are secure and safe. (I John 2:24-25) “Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that He has promised us – eternal life.” (I John 4:18) “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.” NKJV We still need to show a great reverence for God. (Hebrews 12:28) “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.” NKJV We must give Him the honor due to the One Who has such awesome power.

1. **Having the Willingness to Confess Christ to Overcome Bad Traits**  Luke 12:8-9 “Also I say to you, whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God. But he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God.” NKJV Confess means literally to say the same thing, to say the same thing as Christ. We must agree with His teachings. When we say, “Jesus Christ is the Son of God,” we must accept the fact that He now has “all authority in heaven and on earth.” We must continue to live every day having Him as our Lord and King. We must yield to Him and the Word and do only those things He has authorized. (Colossians 3:17) “And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” NKJV

To confess Christ means we make a strong commitment to our promise that we will do all in our power to uphold the greatest cause the world has ever seen. “Many in and out of the Lord’s church have tried to accept Jesus as Saviour without accepting Him as Lord.” T. Pierce Brown Recall the words of Matthew 7:23. “And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’ ” NKJV It is not sufficient to merely say the words, “Lord, Lord.” But the rewards of truly confessing Christ are unequaled. (Revelation 3:5) “He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.” NKJV

1. **Using Fear and Confession to Rid Oneself of Covetousness** Luke 12:13-15 “Then one from the crowd said to Him, ‘Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.’ But He said to him, ‘Man, who made Me a judge or an arbitrator over you?’ And He said to them, ‘Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.’ ” NKJV What is it? Covetousness is greedily desiring something or someone. The thing that is wrong with it is that it is idolatry. (Colossians 3:5) “Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.” NKJV “Subjection to an alien power.” Paul did not even want it to be named among the saints at Ephesus. (Ephesians 5:3) “But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints;” NKJV He also told the church at Corinth not to even eat with a brother who is covetous. (I Corinthians 5:11) “But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner – not even to eat with such a person.” NKJV Covetousness is such a serious matter that Jesus gave a parable about it so His followers would always be reminded of its consequences.

Read Luke 12:16-21. “Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: ‘The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully.’ And he thought within himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?’ So he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods.’ And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.’ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’ So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.” NKJV Can we be covetous today? Certainly! How?

1. By removing God from our heart and replacing Him with something else It could be anything: money, power, influence, a job, society, TV. The rich young ruler is an example. (Luke 18:22-23) “So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, ‘You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.’ But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich.” NKJV He had not totally placed God first.
2. By believing our material possessions are a measure of our spirituality Example: Putting someone in as an elder just because he is wealthy or influential, that is very wrong. Some of the most spiritually-minded people I know have few material possessions. However, financial poverty is no indication that someone is bound for heaven. Our possessions are not a gauge.
3. By putting physical above spiritual Our priority should be on providing food for the soul, not food for the body. (John 6:27) “Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.” NKJV Both are necessary. One is much more important. Place more emphasis and put forth more effort for development of the spirit.

(II Peter 1:5-11) “But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” NKJV Application – most of us would sell our possessions to provide for our families’ physical need. Would we do the same for their spiritual needs? How much effort do we expend in insuring that they are fed a strong spiritual diet? It is a serious matter!

1. By pursuing what the world calls “the good life” Many of us find the money necessary to buy what we really want: “new car, new home, recreation. . .” These are not bad things. There is nothing wrong with them. But have we reached the point where we desire the “easy” life more than the Christian life? That’s the real question.

**Invitation:**

Are you in Christ so that you need not fear the judgment? Are you calling Jesus Lord but not obeying His voice? Have you been guilty of covetousness so that you need to publicly confess?

Bobby Stafford November 22, 2015 [Evening]