

Avoidance of this type of hedonism does not mean that the Christian should go to the opposite extreme and say, "I will possess nothing." What matters is the attitude of the heart. Are we seeking personal possessions and personal gain? Are we seeking to be able to say, "See, this is mine!" This is an attitude into which it is very easy to fall. God makes us stewards of the property that He gives us. Sometimes He calls upon a man to give up everything he has and simply go out with nothing to serve Him. But this is not the normal life of the Christian. We should not seek to have possessions as an end in themselves. Our primary objectives should be to glorify God, to witness for Christ, and to lead others into the knowledge of salvation. We should acquire such possessions as we can use for the sake of Christ rather than for our own pleasure. Like the desires of the flesh these desires are to have their proper place, but it must be a secondary place. Jesus Christ and His testimony must be the primary objective of anyone who truly loves Him.

Luke tells us that Jesus Christ faced a third temptation. Satan took Him up to the pinnacle of the temple and said, "Throw yourself down. God has promised that the angels will hold you up in their hands. You will not be injured. Just do this and everyone will marvel. Think how it will advance your mission." Jesus replied, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." He refused Satan's temptation. This was the third type of desire. It is elsewhere called "the pride of life." In some ways it is the most subtle temptation of the three. Many a man who has neglected the desires of the flesh and has passed over many opportunities to acquire worldly goods is overcome by this temptation. It is the desire to be well thought of. It may be considered a more refined type, and yet it is a definite type of hedonism. Actually it is the strongest temptation that most Christian workers face.

Pride is one of the most subtle and yet one of the most dangerous of all sins. It was pride that led to Satan's fall. It was pride that led to Eve's fall. Satan said to her, "You will be like gods."

After all, it is foolish for us to feel that we are better than others. The apostle said: "What hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory?" (1 Corinthians 4:7).

Each of us has inherited many qualities from his parents and grandparents. Some are much stronger physically than others. Some have more acute minds. Some have better looks. There is no reason to be proud of what has merely been passed on to us from our ancestors.