

There would be thousands above us in each line, and thousands below us. Whether we are a little better or a little poorer than those in our immediate vicinity is really very unimportant. Yet how easy it is for people to become disturbed about whether they are better or poorer in some regard than the individuals with whom they happen to come in contact. How silly are the feelings of pride or of embarrassment that occupy so large a place in the unconscious attitudes of most people.

God wants us to avoid the pride of life; He also desires us to avoid the opposite extreme of thinking our abilities to be less than they are and thus failing to realize their full potential for His service. Many a man fails to accomplish what he could because of lack of confidence. God wants us to step out with trust, looking to Him to enable us to do our very best and thus fulfill His will.

Thus the three temptations of Christ illustrate three principle areas of hedonism. In each of these areas we must avoid the sin that hedonism represents, but we must also be careful not to fall into the opposite error.

#### Effects on Society

Thus far we have been looking at the effect of hedonism on individuals and have not said much specifically about its effect on a society. Actually, the individual is more important than any particular group or nation. Most nations or governmental systems last a few centuries at most. Since God has created each individual soul as an entity that will last forever, the importance of an individual is far greater than the importance of a nation.

Yet it is vital that we specifically note the effect of hedonism on a society. As the satisfaction of selfish desires becomes the principal objective of more and more people, strife and corruption become widespread and society is apt to disintegrate. Situations inevitably develop in which few can have much pleasure.

There are individuals who are ready to sacrifice their own personal pleasures and desires in order to do what they think will help society, taking as their slogan, "the greatest good for the greatest number." Yet one must ask whether sinful man is capable of making such plans for society as will really attain this goal. Is it, after all, merely an application of the philosophy of hedonism to society as a whole?