

THE BEREAN

"...EXAMINING THE SCRIPTURES DAILY..." (Acts 17:11)

DELICATE LIVING

*A STUDY OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES
PART FIFTY FIVE OF SIXTY FOUR*

While James was speaking specifically to those who had gained wealth fraudulently and lived luxuriously, how many of us "have lived delicately on the earth"? (James 5:5). Even though our wealth was earned righteously, how many of us have used it selfishly? We have spent most of what we have gained to assure ourselves a life of ease and comfort. Truly we have lived delicately. We have taken our pleasure in indulgent living. We have pampered ourselves as unconsciously as a hog fattens himself for slaughter.

Unrestrained, man's desire for material possessions outstrips his ability to acquire. Seldom does he feel, "I have enough." Few can keep their lives simple and their desires at a minimum. More wealth simply leads to the inventing of new ways of self-indulgence. Today's luxury is tomorrow's necessity. As love for pleasure, for accumulation, for display grow; love for Christ wanes. Christians in America, the richest country in the world's history, have forgotten the terrible dangers of wealth. It deceives, then destroys.

With wealth we have so many devices, demands, and adult "toys".

We can afford a boat for summer, skitrips in winter, and a camper for year around vacations. Thus we simply must take off every long weekend in addition to our regular two or three weeks vacation. We may worship at another church, or we may not. If we do, it is often like stopping at a fast food establishment - in and out as quickly as possible in order to get back to our own thing. Just the thought of not being able to hop in the car and take off scares us into a cold sweat.

Our homes are filled with an excess of entertainment devices while Bible reading is left out. We spend more time and effort to have a beautiful lawn than we do on the Lord's work. Season tickets to the concerts and the ball games would support a preacher in India or Africa, but we have lived delicately so long we cannot stay at home or entertain ourselves, much less spend a night visiting the sick, encouraging the fallen, or teaching the alien.

When judgment comes, our sentence may be short: "Ye lived delicately on the earth." Such being the case, we shall not live in heaven. Our comfort will have passed "on earth."
(B. G. Echols)

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