

As we continue to read through this amazing book by John Bunyan, it’s astounding to see that although it was written over 400 years ago, the message mirrors all that is in our culture and churches today! The richness of the characters and their names in this chapter clearly depict the same mind-set which prevails nowadays. This word will cut to the quick of your heart. Today we meet By-Ends. He is a religious man who has ulterior or mysterious motives. His external devoutness or holiness conceals internal duplicity, deception, dishonesty and unfaithfulness. He says he’s a pilgrim (a Christian) yet has hidden and secret motives in his heart for ‘saying’ he is one.

Here’s a quick overview of By-ends who is from the town of Fair-speech; he’s an eloquent smooth-talker but inside is full of self-serving indulgences; he’s ashamed of his name; prefers the rich culture and disassociates himself with pilgrims who may be living in poverty and who are suffering; revels in being a socialite with upper-class friends; believes that going to church is for worldly profit but does not listen to the voice of prophet; he’s proud of his relationship with his relative Rev.Two-tounges who is deceptive; his religion matches his cultural status; he believes that church must be comfortable, pleasurable, popular, ornate, admirable, entertaining; he will not go against the wind and tide; he loves religion that parades or flaunts itself in silver slippers! He believes a minister/pastor as well as a tradesperson can use religion for secular gain.

After Christian and Hopeful realize that he’s nothing but a scoundrel, they separate themselves from him and we three other men come up from behind and they introduce themselves. All four of these alleged ‘pilgrims’ grew up together in the Town of Love-gain in Coveting County.

	Mr. Hold-the-World	Mr. Money-love	Mr. Save-all
Characteristics	-he glories in human self-government, material achievement, sensual pleasure of human individuality	-he delights in cut-throat entrepreneurial schemes, investment scams, self-made success	-resists all claims for aid
	-endorses only prosperous religion	-supports reasonable religion	-favors synthetic religion
	-has a mishmash of perverted reasonings and worldly proverbs	-rationalizes scripture for self-advancement	-his god is his belly which is sensual pleasure
	-twists scriptures for his worldly gain		

It’s interesting to see the conversation that transpires about the minister/pastor and the tradesperson. All four of these men believe that they can use religion for secular gain and that a pastor is well justified in seeking a more prosperous church for his personal increase and achievement. To justify this, he can adjust his preaching and principles to gain acceptance and can be bribed. He can call black to be white and dishonorable to be honorable. He can cleverly follow his own devious ambitions and machinations or plots.

Likewise, a tradesperson can become religious for personal prosperity. We already see that these four believe that they can use whatever it takes to gain prosperity, but now religion or the church falls into the same category – it can be used. This tradesperson can hobnob with the church members for good deals, self-advancement or even find a virtuous wife! He can do whatever it takes to get whatever he wants! He can secretly justify all of his actions for his personal gain. These four disguised pilgrims have no comprehension of the holy Word of God! They treat the church like they do any business deal to get what they want so they can live like they want to come and go as they wish for their own pleasures! My goodness! How deceived they are!! I’d like to quote the three points that Mr. Money-love justified himself with. *“1. It is virtuous to become religious, by whatever means a man may use. 2. It is not unlawful to marry a rich wife, and by this means increase trade profitability. 3. Besides, the man who gets these advantages by becoming religious, obtains that which is good through a good means so that he himself becomes good; as a result a good wife is obtained, and good*

customers, and good profit, and all of these through becoming religious, which is in itself is good. Therefore to become religious to get all of these is a good and profitable pursuit.”

Relishing in their power huddle after pumping each other up with their self-justifications, they believe they can take out Christian and Hopeful in a clever debate. They didn't realize that the Holy Spirit in both of these strong Christian men would refute all lies and bring the light of truth in to dispel the utter darkness they were walking in. They were so stunned that they staggered away! Christian likens them to the heathen, hypocrites, devils and witches. I Timothy 4:1 says in the Amplified Bible; “[Apostasy] But the [Holy] Spirit explicitly and unmistakably declares that in latter times some will turn away from the faith, paying attention instead to deceitful and seductive spirits and **doctrines of demons.**”

- a) The heathen – he tells the story of Hamor and Shechem in the book of Genesis. They used religion as a charade to obtain what they coveted. It ended in their death.
- b) The hypocrites – referring to the Pharisees who used their religion to defraud widows.
- c) Devils – sighting Judas Iscariot who betrayed Jesus and who laundered from the disciples money bag. He feigned true discipleship with Jesus but was a thief. As it says in the story; “*he became religious because of his worldly designs; then he was willing to sell his religion and his Master for the same reason.*”
- d) Witches – making note of Simon the sorcerer or witch. He wanted to buy the Holy Spirit so he could make merchandise of him. The thought of having a profitable ‘signs and wonders’ ministry was enticing.

In this admonition, Christian warns that if they don't heed to the truth of God's word, greater judgment would come on them. Not only would they not reach the Celestial City, but they would be eternally condemned to hell and eternal separation from God!

Titus 1:10-11 says in the Amplified Bible, “*For there are many rebellious men who are empty talkers [just windbags] and deceivers; especially those of the circumcision [those Jews who insist that Gentiles believers must be circumcised and keep the Law in order to be saved]. They must be silenced, because they are upsetting whole families by teaching things they should not teach for **the purpose of dishonest financial gain.***”

So, where is your treasure? Are these attitudes and characteristics in your heart? Do you use your church relationships for financial gain or looking to get deals from Christians? Do you believe God's reward and increase to you can be exponentially greater than any earthly conniving and finagling? Do you shun persecution and seek only the easy Christian walk? Has your name changed from what you were in the past to a new name written in the Lamb's Book of Life?

I believe these are valuable questions and we need to seek the Lord to show us our heart motive regarding this teaching. If you identify with anything in this chapter, forgiveness is available through Jesus Christ. He will change your heart and your motives and like Christian, turning from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light – which is Jesus' kingdom!

Here are some scriptures for you to read and meditate on.

[Luke 9:57-62](#), [Ephesians 5:5](#), [Luke 12:16-21](#), [Matthew 23:25](#), [Romans 1:18-25](#), [II Corinthians 2:17](#), [John 3:19](#), [John 6:26-27](#), [Luke 20:46-47](#), [John 12:4-6](#), [Acts 8:14-24](#), [Revelation 20:10-15](#).