## Precious Stones

There was a story of two men traveling across a foreign country. Because of the intense heat, the men decided to travel at night. They soon came across an old dried-up creek bed. As they were crossing it, a bright light appeared unto them, followed by a loud voice saying, “reach out and grab the stones in the creek bed and place them in your pockets, for tomorrow you will be both glad and sad.” They didn't know what to think or do except to follow the voice because they were frightened. They hurried up and continued along their journey. Their long journey began to make them increasingly tired, especially being loaded down with all the stones they had. Before long, they found themselves tossing out the stones to lessen their burden. The next morning, they finally reached their destination. They immediately found a place to rest and freshened up. One of the men reached into his pocket and to his amazement, pulled out one of the largest rubies ever discovered! He was so excited but soon his laughter turned into sadness. He once had his pockets filled with precious stones, only to toss them away carelessly.

This story has great meaning. Things of value, such as precious stones, are usually cared for and protected, never being tossed away carelessly. People on the other hand, often do not value what they have. The greatest treasure a man can have is his family.

A family holds value, just as precious stones, each one different in size, each one of great value. Too many times one may take their family members for granted or may be tempted to covet something they see more precious. Sin or divorce can rob people from their most prized possessions—their family. Satan comes as a thief in the night to steal, kill and destroy. A thief never steals something unless it is very precious! Too many times people leave their valued possessions unguarded or neglected, leaving them as prime targets for Satan. Those who think the “grass is greener on the other side of the fence” often wake up and discover what a treasure they once had and now is too late to reconcile. Others may take their spouses for granted, only waking up discovering someone else is now paying them more attention and is jeopardy of loosing the very one they love.

Marriages and families are valuable and precious, especially to ministers. Satan would like nothing better than to destroy a minister's home and by doing so, destroying the God's work in that community as well as destroying the confidence among church members. One has to safeguard their marriage each day. No one else is responsible for your marriage, except for you. If you don't give your spouse and family attention, someone else will!!!

Every minister needs to develop and place priorities around their family. Please learn one of the most important principles: God comes first , family comes second, and the church comes third ! Learn to take time off as a family rather than centering vacations around church activities. Develop, nurture and protect what is most precious to you before it is too late. If you need help with your marriage, get it before it is too late! Remember, ministers are not immune of having family problems. As a minister, many people you counsel with never get second chances, neither will you. Don't allow your time be spent for everyone else except for your family. Don't allow Satan take away your prize possessions.