

Where Holiness Begins

April 30, 2017

Holiness in the Christian is one of the delicate balances of Biblical Truth, positioned between God's free, unmerited grace and God's absolute, uncompromised purity.

2 Corinthians 6:17-18 ESV

17 Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you,

18 and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty."

2 Corinthians 6:1 NASB

1 And working together with Him, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain--

Hebrews 10:19-22 NASB

19 Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus,

20 by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh,

21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God,

22 let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

- *We are not saved by works but we cannot be saved without works.*
- *We can never earn our way into God's presence, but we can't remain in His presence with unrepented sin.*
- *We are not holy before we can enter God's presence, we are becoming holy because we've been in God's presence.*
- *We will not be held accountable for making ourselves holy, but for our surrender to His cleansing and sanctifying work.*

Acts 5:3-5 NASB

3 But Peter said, "Ananias, **why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit** and to keep back some of the price of the land?

4 "While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? **You have not lied to men but to God.**"

5 And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came over all who heard of it.

Hebrews 12:14 ESV

14 **Strive** (*diōkō - pursue, to run swiftly to catch, press on*) **for peace with everyone, and for the holiness** (*hagiasmos - purity, consecration, holiness, sanctification of heart and life*) without which no one will see the Lord.

Hebrews 12:14 NLT

"...work at living a holy life, for those who are not holy will not see the Lord."

2 Corinthians 7:1 ESV

1 Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness (*hagiōsynē* - purity) to completion in the fear of God.

HOLINESS STARTS IN THE MOTIVES OF THE HEART...

...before it ever manifests in speech or actions.

- *Motives and attitudes are the bedrock foundation of our life and choices. They are the WHY to what we say and do.*
- *Shallow spiritual immaturity (and legalism) is the result of trying to change surface behaviors without the heart of motives and attitudes being transformed first.*
- *God targets our motives and He exposes them for our good and purity.*
- *Motives and attitudes can be difficult to discern and talk about, being more intangible than speech or actions.*

Hebrews 4:12 NASB

12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

1. **FEAR GOD NOT MAN.**

As humans we are obsessed with pleasing and impressing each other, driven by fear of what others think, whether they will accept or reject us. We must live our lives for the Audience of One. We must live every moment for that one moment of judgment.

Galatians 1:10 NASB

10 For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.

Acts 5:27-29 NASB

27 When they had brought them, they stood them before the Council. The high priest questioned them, 28 saying, "We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name, and yet, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and intend to bring this man's blood upon us."

29 But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men."

1 Thessalonians 2:4 NASB

4 but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who examines our hearts.

2 Corinthians 5:9-11 NASB

9 Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

11 Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences.

2. DO ALL THINGS FOR GOD'S GLORY.

When we strive to please and impress man, we do all things to bring attention and glory to ourselves, instead of to God. We must do so to earn the approval and favor of men.

Isaiah 43:21 NASB

21 "The people whom I formed for Myself will declare My praise."

1 Peter 2:9 NASB

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."

John 3:26-30 NASB

26 And they [John's disciples] came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified, behold, He is baptizing and all are coming to Him."

27 John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given him from heaven."

28 "You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent ahead of Him.'"

29 "He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. So this joy of mine has been made full.

30 "He must increase, but I must decrease."

Isaiah 42:8 NASB

8 "I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, Nor My praise to graven images."

Acts 12:21-23 NASB

21 On an appointed day Herod, having put on his royal apparel, took his seat on the rostrum and began delivering an address to them.

22 The people kept crying out, "The voice of a god and not of a man!"

23 And immediately an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and died.

Daniel 4:28 NASB

28 "All this happened to Nebuchadnezzar the king.

29 "Twelve months later he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon.

30 "The king reflected and said, 'Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?'"

31 "While the word was in the king's mouth, a voice came from heaven, saying, 'King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: sovereignty has been removed from you,
32 and you will be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place will be with the beasts of the field. You will be given grass to eat like cattle, and seven periods of time will pass over you until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes.'"

33 "Immediately the word concerning Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled; and he was driven away from mankind and began eating grass like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws."

34 "But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever; For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom endures from generation to generation."

35 "All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What have You done?'"

36 "At that time my reason returned to me. And my majesty and splendor were restored to me for the glory of my kingdom, and my counselors and my nobles began seeking me out; so I was reestablished in my sovereignty, and surpassing greatness was added to me."

37 "Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride."

"Vacate the throne room of your heart and enthrone Jesus there. Set Him in the focus of your heart's attention and stop wanting to be a hero. Make Him your all in all and try yourself to become less and less. Dedicate your entire life from self to God. Let the reason back of your daily conduct be Christ and His glory, nor yourself, nor your family, nor your country, nor your church. In all things let Him have the preeminence." -- A.W. Tozer, Born After Midnight, "Sanctifying the Ordinary"

3. DO ALL THINGS AS UNTO THE LORD.

When we are not living to please and glorify God, then we do all things for ourselves, for self-promotion, self-advancement and self-gratification. How can I out-strategize others and defeat my competitors? How can I prove my significance and worth?

Colossians 3:17 NASB

17 Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

1 Corinthians 10:31 NASB

31 Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Colossians 3:22-24 NASB

22 Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

23 Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men,

24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

"A Christian poet of a bygone generation wrote a rather long hymn around a single idea: You can, by three little words, turn every common act of your life into an offering acceptable to God. The words are 'For Thy sake.'"

"'For Thy sake' will rescue the little, empty things from vanity and give them eternal meaning. The lowly paths of routine living will by these words be elevated to the level of a bright highway. The humdrum of our daily lives will take on the quality of a worship service and the thousand irksome duties we must perform will become offerings and sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." --A.W. Tozer, Born After Midnight

Ephesians 6:5-8 NASB

5 Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ;

6 not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.

7 With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men,

8 knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.

4. KNOW WHO OWNS YOU.

We conduct ourselves as though we legally own and possess our lives and bodies. We do not recognize the reality of the cross of Calvary, purchased by the blood of Jesus, having no legal authority to do what we choose, please or deem right.

Romans 12:1 NASB

1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NASB

19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?

20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

1 Peter 1:15-19 NASB

15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior;

16 because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

17 If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth;

18 knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers,

19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.