

Sunday, August 21, 2022 am

## **CLOSER TO GOD (25)** **Pursuing Holiness (9)** **A Godly Disposition**

Last week, in our study of pursuing holiness we addressed some godly attitudes that promote holiness. We talked about: Determination, reverence, love, contentment, humility, gratitude, kindness, peaceableness, and impartiality. Today, I want to continue to address the Christian's disposition by noting some other foundational qualities we need to pursue holiness.

We began our last lesson by defining attitude. Here we speak of one's disposition. By disposition I am addressing who we are. The word disposition is defined<sup>1</sup>: "1. a) A prevailing tendency, mood, or inclination. b) temperamental makeup, c) the tendency of something to act in a certain manner under given circumstances."<sup>2</sup> While related to attitudes (as you will see, these qualities INVOLVE attitudes), our disposition is who we are overall. For example, as noted last week in Galatians 5:22-23, the "fruit of the Spirit" consisted of all the qualities that followed. It is a singular fruit with many characteristics. Similarly, our disposition will determine and shape our attitude(s). So today, let's talk about our disposition. In the qualities I will address, it ought to be clear that if these are properly developed, they will lead to the holiness God desires in us.

### **I. Integrity –**

- a. Defined as "1) Steadfast adherence to a strict moral or ethical code. 2) The state of being unimpaired; soundness. 3) The quality or condition of being whole or undivided; completeness."<sup>2</sup>
- b. Integrity is about living a life of consistency, BASED UPON God's word. Integrity means that we are not fractured, divided or conflicted.
  - i. For many they live double lives and these different lives are constantly fighting to gain control of the same mind and body.
  - ii. The one who is living with integrity will remain steadfast and not "fall apart" when challenges arise. Consider the "integrity" of an aircraft. It is built in such a way, that when it is flying it will not fall apart. Even though the atmosphere changes and puts incredible pressure on the fuselage, it maintains its shape because of its design. That is how our lives need to be.
- c. The Bible and integrity.
  - i. Job was a man of integrity – Job 2:3 finds the LORD speaking to Satan after he has lost all his possessions and still worships God.
  - ii. The Pharisees were NOT – Matthew 23:1-4. They sat in a place of judgment and passed edicts, but they would not follow them themselves. Matthew 15:7-9 again exposes their hypocritical conduct – they honored God with their lips, but their heart was far from Him.
  - iii. 2 Peter 1:5, I associated "virtue" with integrity. Virtue is moral excellence. It is at the FOUNDATION of building our faith toward perfection AND holiness.
  - iv. Titus 2:7 – young men (and I would say all), *in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility,*
  - v. Proverbs 11:3, *The integrity of the upright will guide them, But the perversity of the unfaithful will destroy them.*
  - vi. Proverbs 21:3, *To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.*
  - vii. Hebrews 13:18, *Pray for us; for we are confident that we have a good conscience, in all things desiring to live honorably.*
- d. We have discussed how much the Bible addresses the heart and its purity – Matthew 5:8. A pure heart will be reflected in everything we do and are.

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<sup>1</sup> "Disposition." *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/disposition>. Accessed 18 Aug. 2022.

<sup>2</sup> "Integrity." *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language*, Fifth Edition copyright ©2022 by HarperCollins Publishers. All rights reserved. Accessed 18 Aug. 2022

- e. The one who lives with integrity will:<sup>3</sup>
  - i. Align the principles that govern his life with truth
  - ii. Be consistent between his principles and conduct
  - iii. Be consistent both publicly and privately.
- f. Consider David in Psalm 26:1-3, *Vindicate me, O Lord, For I have walked in my integrity. I have also trusted in the Lord; I shall not slip. Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; Try my mind and my heart. For Your lovingkindness is before my eyes, And I have walked in Your truth.* I always wonder, do we REALLY want God trying our hearts? How we answer that speaks volumes about our integrity.
- g. Psalm 101:2, again David said, *I will behave wisely in a perfect way. Oh, when will You come to me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.* NOTICE how David declares that he will control his character. We must understand that whether or not we live lives of integrity is up to us.
- h. Your pursuit of holiness will be governed by your integrity.

## II. Soberness –

- a. We need to be serious and alert, and it needs to be who we are, not just an occasional frame of mind. When we think of the word “sober” what often comes to mind is being free of intoxicants. That is certainly a state of sobriety. But there is a reason behind that – we are to be alert ALWAYS – aware of our surroundings and what Satan is trying to do to us, often through the efforts of others.
- b. Some passages about soberness:
  - i. 1 Peter 5:8 warns us to be sober and vigilant, because Satan is seeking to devour us.
  - ii. 1 Thessalonians 5:6-8 – do not sleep as others do (spiritually). We who are “*of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.*”
  - iii. Titus 2:11-12, *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age*
  - iv. Romans 12:3, *For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.*
- c. If I am to be holy, I need to be someone who lives a sober life. And I will be serious about it!

## III. Serious –

- a. Related to soberness is being serious. This means someone or something that demands careful consideration. We think of one that is thoughtful and often restrained in his words and actions. He is not flippant or half-hearted. There are times when we need to put all kidding aside and be serious.
- b. Some passages to consider:
  - i. 1 Peter 4:7 – we are called upon to be serious and watchful in our prayers (KJV – sober, NASB – sober-spirit).
  - ii. 1 Peter 1:13-15 - *Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; NOTE where this leads next – “Be holy...”*
  - iii. Ephesians 5:15-16, *See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.* Circumspectly is a word that means mindfully or carefully – we are serious in our walk.
  - iv. 1 Corinthians 13:11 – while illustrating the cessation of miraculous spiritual gifts, Paul makes a true observation about the serious things of life. There comes a time when we need to grow up. Pursuing holiness is one of those times.
- c. I have serious concerns in our society because people don’t want to be serious. They want to be entertained all the time. And many churches are CATERING to them! Many churches are MORE focused on entertaining than they are on developing lives of holiness and preaching God’s word. They are more interested in drawing the masses than maintaining the truth of God’s word. Consider Paul’s warning to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:2-5. He was to preach the word! But Paul warned of times

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<sup>3</sup> Integrity, Gary Henry. More Enthusiastic Ideas, April 13 reading. ©2016, Wordpoints Publishing, Louisville, KY.

coming when others would not endure “*sound doctrine, but according to their own desire, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers...*”

- d. Understand that God intends for us to enjoy life. And laughter is a good thing (cf. Ecclesiastes 3:4 – a time to laugh). We often look forward to being with one who knows how to brighten up a room. I know of preachers and Christians who are very good at telling jokes and making people smile, BUT they know when to get serious! Others, not so much – there are some who are known more for their jesting than they are for their message. That is a concern. We need to know WHEN to draw the line.
- e. BUT, while God intends for us to enjoy life, He wants us to be serious when it comes to our faith. Therefore, live life but always beware of the consequences of what you say and do. Life is a serious thing, and so is eternity. Striving for holiness will prompt us to be serious.

#### IV. **Self-control or self-discipline –**

- a. Holiness requires dedication as noted in previous lessons. It is also obvious by the qualities we have discussed. It requires hard work and sacrifice. It calls for us to be willing to focus our attention on God, EVEN in the face of distractions. And if enough time passes, there WILL be distractions that can hinder our efforts toward spiritual growth, whether it be temptations to do what we should not be doing, OR to not do what we ought.
- b. If we are to pursue holiness, we need self-control and self-discipline. These 2 terms are related, though they are different in meaning, yet they both accomplish the same result – you are behaving properly.
  - i. Sometimes when we see self-control we think about not doing something we want to do, or not responding to the advances of another. Self-control is self-restraint over impulses, emotions or desires.
  - ii. Self-discipline is the control of ourselves where we do what we ought to be doing, even when we do not want to. Self-discipline is acting right at all times. This is replacing the bad behaviors you are purging (by self-control) and replacing them with good ones. (Do NOT leave the house empty).
  - iii. You might compare these to the way we speak of the mercy and grace of God. God’s mercy is His NOT giving us what we deserve while God’s grace is His giving us what we do not deserve.
- c. The Bible and self-control
  - i. It is found in lists of godly conduct: Galatians 5:22-23 – a fruit of the spirit; 2 Peter 1:5-8 – the increasing of our faith. 2 Timothy 3:3 – the lack of self-control is in the list of the wicked and selfish as Paul warns Timothy.
  - ii. Proverbs 29:11, *A fool vents all his feelings, But a wise man holds them back.*
  - iii. Proverbs 14:29, *He who is slow to wrath has great understanding, But he who is impulsive exalts folly.*
  - iv. Abstain from every form of evil. 1 Thessalonians 5:22
  - v. 2 Timothy 1:7, *For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.* The ESV uses the word “self-control” for “sound mind”; NASB – “discipline”.
  - vi. 1 Corinthians 6:12 - *All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.*
  - vii. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 – *LOVE suffers long and is kind... does not behave rudely...is not provoked...does not rejoice in iniquity but rejoices in truth...bears all things...*
  - viii. James 1:19 – *let everyone be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.* Manifests self-control.
  - ix. 1 Corinthians 10:13 – no temptation... way of escape. We CAN control any given situation.
- d. The Bible and self-discipline
  - i. Having noted the difference, consider now self-discipline.
  - ii. 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 – run to win. Discipline your body as Paul did.
  - iii. Romans 12:1-2 – be transformed... renewing your mind.
  - iv. Hebrews 12:1-2 – run the race with endurance, looking to Jesus.
  - v. Galatians 6:9 – let us not grow weary in doing good... if we do not lose heart

- vi. Just about any verse that gives us positive instructions about what to do calls for self-discipline. (E.g. Hebrews 5:12 – you ought to be teachers by now...; Hebrews 6:1 – let us go on to perfection; Ephesians 4:31-32 – be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another...” – NOTE: Here we find BOTH self-control and self-discipline, etc.)
- vii. NOTE: Sometimes “self-control” in the previous section INCLUDES self-discipline. After all, self-discipline is a form of self-control.

We could add other qualities to these: Patience, courage, tenacity (persistence), etc. But the ones we have addressed are sufficient to understand what our disposition needs to be. The godly disposition is going to pursue holiness. Understand that this is something that CAN BE developed. You can change (e.g. 1 Corinthians 6:11, 1 Peter 4:3-4, etc.), but only if you have the genuine desire to do so. What about you? Are you disposed toward holiness? Think about it!