

Sunday, September 11, 2022 am

Closer to God 2022 (27)
Pursuing Holiness (5)
A Christian in Everything You Do

Today we continue our theme for 2022, "Drawing Closer to God". We are continuing to examine our lives – the way we live as we pursue holiness. We have noted that pursuing holiness is going to involve every area of your life – you disposition, your attitude, and last week we addressed your conversation. Today we want to talk about what you do as a Christian. Here we observe some general principles to keep in mind as we live our lives. Obviously, these apply to every specific area we have been and will be discussing.

I. We need godly conduct.

- a. The word conduct means the manner of one acting or controlling themselves. In essence, it is what you do.
- b. There are numerous passages that call for us to consider God in what we do.
 - i. 1 Peter 1:15, *but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,*
 - ii. 1 Peter 1:17 says, *And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear;*
 - iii. 1 Peter 2:12 – we live having our conduct honorable among the Gentiles...
 - iv. 1 Peter 3:16 - you live having a good conscience so that when they revile your good conduct they are shamed
 - v. 2 Peter 3:11 – knowing that one day this world will end, "*what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness*".
 - vi. James 3:13 – who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom...
 - vii. 1 Timothy 4:12 – Timothy was to be a good example in conduct
 - viii. Philippians 1:27 – let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ
- c. Understand that God does care about what we do.

II. Keep God first –

- a. Just by way of reminder, we are different, and it must be reflected in our lives. That has been a focus of our studies in 1 Peter (note the numerous passages above from Peter's letters about our conduct).
- b. Matthew 6:33. That means your life will be about Him – He is our priority.
- c. Romans 12:1-2 – a living sacrifice. We live our lives devoted to Him.
- d. To do this, in our daily lives we must make time for God –
 - i. James 1:22-24 – be doers of the word and not hearers only.
 - ii. Every day – God needs to be in our lives – we need to pray, read our Bibles, meditate on spiritual matters, look for opportunities to talk about God.
 - iii. You will be part of His church.
 - iv. You will live a clean and moral life – after all, this is what holiness is about (cf. James 1:27) Paul told Timothy, Keep yourself pure – 1 Timothy 5:22

III. Remember you are being watched –

- a. Both by God and by others. We have noted that you cannot hide from God. And we are also reminded that no matter what you do, others ARE watching.
- b. I must never forget my responsibility to be an example. Philippians 2:15, Matthew 5:16
- c. Never forget that often, our actions speak louder than our words. People KNOW what a Christian is supposed to act like – how we talk, walk, dress, etc. And they will be quick to point out our failures and hypocrisy – sometimes to you, but most often to others or themselves (self-justification).

- IV. **Do your best –**
- a. Again, be reminded that God always expects that we give Him our all in whatever we do.
 - b. Consider the following:
 - i. Colossians 3:23 – do it heartily as to the Lord
 - ii. Romans 14:6-8 – whether you are observing days (or not), eating (or not) – it must be “to the Lord.” Will you offer anything to the Lord that is substandard? (Cf. Malachi 1:6-8, 12-14; 1 Chronicles 21:24 – David would NOT offer to the LORD that which cost him nothing, etc).
 - iii. sort of, Ephesians 6:5-7, etc. 2 Timothy 2:15. Romans 12:6 – use whatever gifts you have.
 - c. But also accept who you are – 1 Corinthians 15:9-10 – by the grace of God, I am what I am.
- V. **Take care of yourself –**
- a. Corinthians 6:19-20 reminds us that our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. We are to glorify God in our bodies. That means that take measures to keep ourselves pure (this IS the primary focus). And I would add to that, just take care of ourselves. Strive to not abuse any aspect of our lives.
 - b. Good living habits include: Good sleep, eating, exercise, mental practices, self-control, fiscal responsibility, etc. Addressing these may give you greater opportunities to do more for Him and others.
 - c. NOTE: Can we become overly obsessed with such things? Absolutely, and the times we are living in often promote that. Some are obsessed with certain aspects of their lives to the neglect of other, often more important matters, ESPECIALLY spiritual matters (e.g. Would you neglect assembling with the saints to participate in some healthy sporting activity? Does your budget cause you to neglect your spiritual responsibilities to give? Etc.).
- VI. **Try to make the world around you a better place –**
- a. Is not our goal to make this world a better place by bringing it into greater conformity with the will of God. As I have often noted, I sincerely believe this world would be a much better place we followed God’s standards of morality and societal living. His standards are often strict and challenging, but they ARE better! NOTE: I understand that we are likely not going to change the world, but that doesn’t change the truth of HOW this world would be a better place. God KNOWS what He is doing and always has!
 - b. I should strive to be a pleasant person to be around – Romans 12:18 – as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Hebrews 12:14 – pursue peace with all and holiness without which no one will see the Lord.
 - c. **Maintain a godly attitude** - We addressed attitude a few ago.
 - i. Remember the attitudes we discussed related to this: Kindness, humility, impartiality and peaceable.
 - ii. Here I simply remind you that attitude is something that is seen and is reflected in what we do.
 - d. Be someone others WANT to be around!
- VII. **Remember the golden rule –**
- a. Matthew 7:12 – treat others the way you want to be treated. And be reminded of the POSITIVE nature of this command.
 - b. The rule MOST in the world abide by is sometimes called the “silver rule” – “Don’t do unto others what you would not have them do unto you.” Most people live decent lives and mind their own business. They are not mean or ugly to others, but they leave them alone and basically live for themselves not trying to cause trouble. And understand that such is part of the Christian life. We are to “mind your own business” (1 Thessalonians 4:11) and not meddle in the affairs of others.
 - c. But percentage wise, few fully apply the golden rule in their lives. Asking continually, “How would I want to be treated in that situation?” and then acting accordingly. NOTE: Sometimes, “minding your own business” is the RIGHT answer in applying the golden rule. But other times, fulfilling the command is a little more complex and difficult to do. But is the rule we ought to live by.

- d. BTW, the numerous “lover your neighbor as yourself” passages apply here. (cf. Matthew 22:39, James 2:8).

VIII. **Seek to serve others –**

- a. Much of scripture governing our lives is to remind us that it is not just about me. It is about others. As Christians we are called to serve – Romans 6:17-18 we are to become servants (slaves) of righteousness.
- b. Jesus was the ultimate server of others – on the night of His betrayal, He demonstrated service by washing the disciples’ feet (John 13). Of note is that He did this BEFORE Judas left to betray Him (John 13:21-30). Mark 10:45 notes that He *did not come to be served, but to serve and give His life...* His death on the cross was the ultimate example of service (Philippians 2:5-8).
- c. We are continually called upon to serve and be compassionate, especially to the downtrodden.
 - i. James 1:27, 2:14-17 – show your faith by your works.
 - ii. Matthew 25:31-46 – a judgment scene based upon serving others.
 - iii. Galatians 5:13-14 calls for us to though love serve one another (as brethren).
 - iv. Galatians 6:10 – as we have opportunity, do good...;
 - v. Hebrews 13:16 – *do not forget to do good and to share; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*

IX. **Pursuing holiness is also about what you will NOT do –**

- a. In this lesson we have been emphasizing some considerations about our conduct as Christians. But let us not forget that the way we live our lives also includes what we do NOT do.
- b. Again, there are multitudes of passages describing the way Christians are NOT to act.
 - i. 1 Thessalonians 5:22 – abstain from every form (appearance) of evil.
 - ii. Romans 12:2 – do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed. Again, we are different. Be reminded of 1 Peter 4:3-4 – we don’t live that way anymore
 - iii. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 – a list of sinful behaviors – “and such were some of you...”
 - iv. Colossians 3:5 – *Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.*

As you can see in this lesson, what has been said is nothing to new to us. But I believe these to be fundamental principles that govern how we conduct ourselves and DEFINE us as Christians. And not only will such things draw us closer to God, but they may help us bring others to Him as well. Thus, I encourage you to ask with anything you do if you are applying these and other principles. What does your conduct say about your relationship with God? Think about it!