

Sunday, November 20, 2022 am

CLOSER TO GOD 2022

Pursuing Holiness (13)

The Spiritual Man (2)

We are continuing our study of pursuing holiness. Based upon our understanding of God's holiness, we ought to be pursuing holiness if it is our desire to draw close to God. In this extensive study, we have noted how our pursuit of holiness will impact every area of our lives. Last week, we presented what I call a summary study of this section, we addressed the spiritual man. In particular, we contrasted to carnal (natural) man with the spiritual man. We defined what it means spiritual – which in essence is one who is vigorously pursuing the will of God, by means of the teachings of the Holy Spirit through His word. But we also noted what the carnal man is like – one who pursues the works of the flesh and worldly wisdom. In essence, he rejects the fullness of God to follow His own ways – and I might add – either partially or in whole. Because of his worldly mindset, he CANNOT discern God's ways. That does not mean it is impossible to do so, but in his current state, he will not give the teachings of God true and unbiased consideration.

On the other hand, the spiritual man is one who is seeking to follow God. We noted in scripture that we are called upon to be spiritually minded – Galatians 6:1, Romans 8:1, 6ff. Today, we want to address the qualities of the spiritual man.

I. Qualities of the spiritual man

- a. In this section, I want to present a number of scriptures, most of which we are familiar with and many we have touched upon in our studies of holiness. Here I want you see just how much the New Testament talks about being changed. Let's notice some qualities prevalent in the spiritual man.
- b. ***He is transformed and renews his mind*** –
 - i. Romans 12:1-2. You are no longer what you used to be. Rather than conforming to the world (what the carnal man does), you transform to what Christ wants you to be.
 - ii. The idea of transformation is the foundation of the English word for metamorphosis. A transformer changes something – like a caterpillar to a butterfly, OR how an electrical transformer converts (changes) the raw power into a usable and consistent form. Similarly, the carnal man is transformed into a spiritual man. The idea of transformation is noticeable change. The spiritual man's life is a totally different outlook.
 - iii. The old man has been put away and buried and you are now a new creation – Romans 6:4, 2 Corinthians 5:17 – if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation...
- c. ***He sets his mind on things above*** - Colossians 3:1-10. What does this look like?
 - i. ***He seeks those things which are above, and then sets his mind on them*** – vs. 1-2
 - ii. ***His life is hidden in Christ*** – vs. 3-4. Galatians 2:20 – it is Christ living in Him. He is seeking to imitate Christ in all that he does – cf. 1 Corinthians 11:1. Vs. 4 notes that when Christ, “who is our life appears”, then you also will appear with Him in glory. In this verse I am reminded of 1 John 3:1-3 – we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him...
 - iii. ***He puts to death his earthly members*** – vs. 5-9 - another list is given. Again, he doesn't live the way he used to. Recall 1 Peter 4:1-3 – we've been there long enough.
 - iv. ***He puts on the new man who is renewed in knowledge*** – vs. 10. The idea of renewal is to become reestablished in a new and often improved manner, or superior to before. This implies the GROWTH we continually talk about as Christians (2 Peter 3:18). UNDERSTAND, the process of transformation (conversion) is not complete until the change has happened!
- d. ***He brings every thing into captivity to the obedience of Christ*** - 2 Corinthians 10:4-5. A challenging thing to do, but here is one who is continually thinking about what it means to serve

- Christ. He controls what goes into his mind, so that what comes out is pure and undefiled (cf. Matthew 15:11, 15-20)
- e. **He walks in the Spirit and does not fulfill the lusts of the flesh** - Galatians 5:16-17. Paul will proceed to describe what this is like – Galatians 5:22-25 – the fruit of the Spirit.
 - f. **He possesses the wisdom from above & the fruit of the spirit** –
 - i. James 3:17-18 describes the wisdom that is from above – it is first (before anything else) pure, THEN (not necessarily in order, but ALL these qualities are present) peaceable, gentle, yielding, merciful and good, without partiality or hypocrisy.
 - ii. Galatians 5:22-23 describes the fruit of the Spirit - qualities present when the Spirit is influencing our lives.
 - iii. This is the disposition and attitudes that regulate our conduct.
 - g. **He will concede that he belongs to the Lord and live it** – cf. Acts 27:23 – Paul spoke of the “God to whom I belong”. Again Galatians 2:20 – Paul is not bashful in pointing out he belongs to the Lord in all things. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 reminds us that we have been purchased and thus we belong to God. As Paul here notes, this affects how I take care of myself – my body is “the temple of the Holy Spirit”.
 - h. **He thinks of others** – Philippians 2:1-4 – He seeks unity with his brethren, AND he considers others better than himself, looking out for their interests. 1 Corinthians 13:5 – Christian love “does not seek its own”; Romans 15:1-2 – we seek to please our neighbor (especially our brethren).
 - i. **He has no confidence in the flesh** – Philippians 3:3-11. The spiritual man understands how the flesh will fail you, both physically and carnally if we let it.
 - i. Paul proceeds to describe how he walked away from worldly pursuits.
 - ii. 1 Timothy 6:17, speaking to the rich – they warned to not trust in uncertain riches.
 - iii. Jesus Himself spoke of treasures on earth – Matthew 6:19-21.
 - iv. The flesh WILL let you down – very often.
 - v. Therefore, the spiritual man is always alert and sober – 2 Corinthians 2:11, 1 Peter 5:8-9 – sober and vigilant.
 - j. **He knows he needs the will of God and seeks it** –
 - i. We devoted 2 lessons to God’s word and how we will approach His word if we are pursuing holiness. Consider Romans 7:14, *For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.* While Paul is addressing the LOM, the point is God’s law is from Him and I need to view it as such. It exposes sin and the solution.
 - ii. Jeremiah 10:23 – the spiritual man knows that he cannot direct his own steps spiritually. In fact, he realizes there is NO WAY he can outthink God.
 - iii. Psalm 1:2 – seeking to please God, he continually studies His word – 2 Timothy 2:15.
 - iv. Hebrews 5:12-14 – in time he has matured and is able to discern between good and evil. He is a spiritual man in this.
 - v. Colossians 2:8 – warns us - beware lest anyone cheats you through philosophy and empty deceit. Ephesians 4:12-15 – he is not “tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine...”
 - k. **He reflects the image of God and Christ in his body** –
 - i. Romans 8:29 speaks of how those belonging to God are “*predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son...*” The idea of conformity is to be like-natured, or of the same essence.
 - ii. 1 Corinthians 11:1 – are we seeking to imitate Christ. Ephesians 5:1-2 calls for us to be imitators of God, as dear children.
 - iii. Can people see Christ in us.
 - l. **He views life in light of eternity** –

- i. The spiritual man realizes the temporal nature of this life – James 4:14. James 1:10 – as a flower, we will pass away. 1 John 2:17 notes that the world is passing away with its lusts, “but he who does the will of God abides forever”
 - ii. Everything now is about preparing for heaven, our eternal reward – 2 Timothy 4:7-8.
 - iii. This is why his mind is “on things above” (Colossians 3:1-2). Matthew 6:19-21 – his treasure is in heaven.
- m. **He views the afflictions of this world as a “light affliction”** –
 - i. 2 Corinthians 4:17-18. Paul has described some of what he and his brethren have gone through – 2 Cor. 4:7ff.
 - ii. Romans 8:18 – the sufferings of this life are not worthy to be compared with the glory to be revealed. Then in Romans 8:31-39 we find Paul’s description of how great God is and our hope as we endure.
 - iii. We have seen this in our recent studies of 1 Peter as he seeks to encourage these brethren to endure whatever happens.
- n. **EVERYTHING in his life is about God** – that is why I present this as our concluding lesson on pursuing holiness. One who is pursuing holiness will be spiritual – and it will affect every area of his life.
- o. **Finally, it is his choice.**
 - i. Romans 6:16-18 – we must understand that in this life God will NOT force anyone to follow Him.
 - ii. BUT also understand that it is a choice you are making. You can either decide to follow God and pursue the spiritual man, or you can conform to the world and continue in carnal living.
 - iii. But just know, that the choice we make WILL have eternal consequences. 2 Corinthians 5:10 notes that we will ALL stand before Christ in judgment and receive our reward based upon what we have done.
 - iv. Deuteronomy 30:19, Moses in his farewell address said this to Israel, *I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live;*

And thus we can see some qualities associated with the spiritual man. A number of years ago, Jimmy Tuten said the following in an article about being spiritual: *Being spiritual is the desire to be right with God, to want to make the right decisions in every walk of life and in knowing what we are and what we do. It is how we look at life continually.*¹ That about sums it up. So what about you? Are you going to pursue holiness or not? It WILL have a bearing on whether or not you draw closer to God. Think about it!

¹ Jimmy Tuten, Guardian of Truth XXX: 14, pp. 428-429, 439. July 17, 1986, via www.truthmagazine.com