

# On Being Men and Women of God

by A.W. Tozer

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*A person's holiness is not determined by their work, but rather by their relationship with God.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 7:18, Romans 12:1-2, Galatians 5:22-23, Ephesians 2:10, Colossians 3:23-24, 1 Thessalonians 4:7, 2 Timothy 2:21, Hebrews 12:14, James 1:22, 1 Peter 1:15-16

**Topics:** "Identity in Christ", "Holiness"

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## Description

A.W. Tozer emphasizes that one's calling does not inherently make a person holy; rather, it is the holiness of the individual that sanctifies their work. He cites Meister Eckhart's assertion that a holy man can make any calling holy, and warns against the misconception that the ministry itself confers holiness. Tozer stresses that true holiness comes from God through discipline and grace, and that a person's identity as a man or woman of God should take precedence over their profession. Ultimately, it is the character of the individual that determines the goodness of their actions, not the nature of their work.

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## Transcript

"Your calling," said Meister Eckhart to the clergy of his day, "cannot make you holy; but you can make it holy." No matter how humble that calling may be, a holy man can make it a holy calling. A call to the ministry is not a call to be holy, as if the fact of his being a minister would sanctify a man; rather, the ministry is a calling for a holy man who has been made holy some other way than by the work he does. The true order is: God makes a man holy by blood and fire and sharp discipline. Then he calls the man to some special work, and the man being holy makes that work holy in turn.

The anonymous author of the Cloud of Unknowing sets this truth sternly before his readers: "Beware, thou wretch . . . and hold thee never the holier nor the better for the worthiness of thy calling . . . but the more wretched and cursed, unless thou do that in thee is goodly, by grace and by counsel, to live after thy calling."

Our whole point here is that while good deeds cannot make a man good, it is likewise true that everything a good man does is good because he is a good man. Holy deeds are holy not because they are one kind of deed instead of another, but because a holy man performs them. "Every good tree bears good fruit . . . a good tree cannot bear bad fruit" (Matthew 7:18).

Every person should see to it that he is fully cleansed from all sin, entirely surrendered to the whole will of God and filled with the Holy Spirit. Then he will not be known as what he does, but as what he is. He will

be a man of God first and anything else second: a man of God who paints or mines coal or farms or preaches or runs a business, but always a man of God. That and not the kind of work he does will determine the quality of his deeds.

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