

# The Deeper Spiritual Life #3 'The Static Christian'

by A.W. Tozer

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*To live a deeper life in Christ, one must forsake the world and its spirit, and turn wholly to the Lord Jesus Christ.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:24, Romans 12:2, 1 Corinthians 3:1-3, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 5:7, Philippians 3:14, Colossians 3:2, Hebrews 6:1, James 4:4, 1 John 2:15-17

**Topics:** "Separation from the World", "Spiritual Growth"

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## Description

A.W. Tozer addresses the issue of the 'static Christian,' emphasizing the need for believers to move beyond a stagnant faith and pursue a deeper spiritual life. He highlights that true progress requires a complete forsaking of worldly influences and a wholehearted turning to Jesus Christ. Tozer argues that many Christians may appear religious but fail to truly separate themselves from the world, both in spirit and practice. He encourages listeners to embrace both the negative aspect of forsaking the world and the positive aspect of turning to Christ to experience true joy and fulfillment in their faith. Ultimately, Tozer calls for a transformative relationship with Jesus that leads to a vibrant and dynamic Christian life.

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## Transcript

Message 3 of 4 on the Deeper Spiritual Life by A.W. Tozer

February 5, 1956

"The Problem of the Static Christian"

Now I have been talking these Sunday mornings about the deeper life. What is it and how can I enter into it? I really haven't a text, but I have been reading this verse in chapter six of Hebrews. Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, the doctrine of baptisms and the laying on of hands and the resurrection of the dead and of eternal judgment. Let us go on unto perfection has been a sort of an overall text. Then I have also shown from 1 Corinthians three and other passages of Scripture that one of the great problems even of the early church was that of the static Christian.

It is one of the great problems today. I think it is a problem even greater than that of getting people converted. The problem of the static Christian, how to get a Christian interested in becoming more than an average run of the mill type of believers that you see everywhere. And so many of us become static or are

static. The static Christian is one who is retarded in his progress. Paul said, What doth hinder you? You did run well, but now you are hindered. And thus the progress is stunted and retarded, and the growth is stunted.

And then there's the lack of moral dynamic which every Christian should know. Now this is the static Christian. And I believe that if we will listen, we will hear God speaking. He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit said unto the churches. And I believe that if we hear what the Spirit says in our day, we will hear God say, Moses, my servant is dead. Therefore, arise, go over this Jordan and into the land which I have given to you. Every place the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given you.

I believe we will hear the Spirit of God say, let us go unto perfection. Let us go on beyond repentance from past sin. Let us go on beyond forgiveness and cleansing from past sins. Let us go on beyond the impartation of divine life. Let's be sure however, that we get these first things settled first, to the point of absolute assurance. There can be no deeper life until there has been life. There can be no progress in the way until we are in the way. There can be no growth until there has been birth. And all the efforts toward a deeper life will only bring disappointment unless we have first settled the matter of repentance from dead works and the forgiveness of sins and the impartation of divine life and converted.

But now to break down the deeper life, I want to briefly mention, that it is two things as I shall say today. It is more than that, but two I want to mention today. One is a complete forsaking of the world, and the other is a turning wholly to the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, that's not only my opinion of it, but that is what the Bible teaches about it. And that is the standard formula that has come down to us from the very early days of the church. You will find it written into the great hymns of the church and you will find it written into the great books of devotion of the church down the years, that these two things are necessary for a Christian who would go on and break the static condition and become a flowing, moving, progressive, dynamic Christian. There must be a complete forsaking of the world, and a turning wholly to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, we'll talk first about this forsaking of the world. It's entirely possible to be religious, and not to have forsaken the world at all. The proof of this is that you will find professed Christians wherever, well at least almost wherever you will find non-Christians. I want to be as broad minded and fair as I can about this. And I suppose there are places where you will not find men claiming to be Christians. I don't know whether gangsters who habitually and as a system, destroy by death there those who are their rivals, take them out and shoot them. I don't know whether you would find any Christians, professed Christians among gangsters or not. Although I do know this, that when certain gangsters have died by the bullet, they have been mumbled into the kingdom of God and squirted into the kingdom of God by oil and all the rest. And their leaders have tried very hard even to get those bloody men into the kingdom of God, unsaved, unblest, unforgiven, and without time even to say God have mercy on me a sinner. And yet people try to get them in, so I presume that there are those who claim to be some kind of Christian who even engage in the mutual extermination of each other for the sake of the Southside or the Northside or the West side racket.

I do remember hearing of a young man who was a murderer, who was sentenced to the chair a few years ago and was to die out here in Cook county jail. But they set his death hour for a certain day and then later reversed and changed it because they said it fell on a holiday of his religion. And they didn't want to put him to death on day that was a holiday of his religion. So, they changed it so he didn't have to die on a holiday.

So, I suppose that you will find Christians just about everywhere, or men who claim they're Christians. I mean, certainly you will find them at the racetrack. And certainly there never has been a sport invented so vile and violent and vicious, that you will not find Christians sitting around there with their New Testament in their hip pocket. And I don't think that there is a gambling wall where you won't find some kind of Christians there. I don't think that there's any worldly pleasures where you don't find them. It's possible to be religious, and not to forsake the world. Yet nobody can be a Christian in the right sense of the word until he has forsaken the world.

Second, it is possible to forsake the world in body and never forsake it in spirit at all. It's possible to forsake the world externally and still be worldly inside. Now, the situation with the monks and the nuns down the centuries has been exactly that. Now, I'm not saying this as a Protestant, I'm letting them themselves say it. Some of the great Christian souls were those who tried to reform these monasteries and nunneries and to get them to be in their real inner life, what they were in their external outer life. They were hidden away from the world in their bodies, and dressed a certain way, in order that they might be separated from the world. And yet some of these great souls, declared that these who had thus separated themselves from the world were more surely, and certainly, worldly than some of those who were not separated.

So we have Bernard and St. Francis and we have Teresa and Nicholas of Cusa and Richard Rolle and John of the Cross. And you could name them one after the other of those persons, who were trying hard to rouse the church, that they might be, inwardly what their profession showed them to be outwardly.

Now, Walter Hilton lived 200 years before Luther was born, and so he never heard of Protestantism or the Reformation and yet Walter Hilton, the English Christian was such a Christian, that he wrote a series of letters to the nuns in a certain convent and warned them of the very thing I'm talking to you about. And they call that series of letters, the Scale of Perfection. It's the most wonderful book. Don't ask to borrow it but I'll tell you where you can buy one.

But this Scale of Perfection, the opening part of it, at least, is devoted to this. It is devoted to saying to these sisters, Now, listen sisters, you have come out of the world and closed the door on yourself and put on a certain garb, which indicates that you're separated from the world. Now, said Walter Hilton, look out ladies, that you don't take the world with you into the monastery or into the nunnery and be as worldly in there as if you are out on the street. He said, remember that it's the forsaking of the world in your heart that makes you unworldly. And so there was a great, several great chapters written urgently warning these women, that it was entirely possible to put on the garb of the nun, and to live in a nunnery and, and still at the same time, be worldly inside.

So I say, it's possible to be religious and not to forsake the world. And it's possible to forsake the world in body and not in spirit. And it's never possible, however, to forsake it in spirit and not forsake it in practice. Now, I feel it necessary to mention this, because there are some supposed broad-minded Christians who will do almost anything that anybody will do. I've noticed this Brethren, maybe I've mentioned it before. But I have noticed this that in this day in which we live, all you have to do is to add "for God" or "for Jesus" onto a thing. And lo and behold that which the church has repudiated and all earnest Christians have not accepted for years is suddenly sanctified. I'm doing it for God. I'm doing it for Jesus. And if you can just get "for God" or "for Jesus", those little prepositional phrases dangling on the end, and lo and behold, that which wasn't ever counted right by the church down the generations is now suddenly counted right, because we've added, I'm doing it for Jesus.

That takes in almost everything that the world has ever done. And I'm expecting one of these days to hear about the association of Christian bartenders who are doing it for Jesus. They all say, we're not like the world we're not serving up this poison in just our own name. We used to before we accepted Christ. We used to deal this out for our sakes and for the money we made out of it. Now we're doing it for Jesus. Now, it hasn't got that far yet, but give us time, Brother, we're on our way. And all we have to do is wait a little and we will sanctify almost anything by saying you can do it for Jesus.

I warn your brother, you can't do anything for Jesus that Jesus wouldn't do. And you can't do anything for God that God has interdicted and turn the canon of these judgments against. The only thing that I can do for God is that which is holy like God and the only thing that I can do for Jesus is that which Jesus has allowed and permitted and commanded me to do.

But to live like the world and say, I'm separated from the world in spirit, I'm separated in spirit and I don't have to come out of the world because I'm separated in spirit. I know where that came from boy, I know where that came from. If you would sniff that a little I know what you'd smell. You'd smell brimstone, because that argument came from Hell, and certainly belongs there and doesn't belong in the church of Christ.

It is never possible to forsake the world in your spirit and not forsake it in reality. Now, let me give you an example of what I mean, Bible examples that I have here, Noah. God said, Noah, I'm going to destroy the world make me an ark and make it of gopher wood. And Noah did that thing. Now suppose that I'd preached on separation from the world. I might have said to Noah, Noah, don't you think you ought to get into the ark? What if Noah had said, that's an old-fashioned idea.

After all, what is the world? Give me a definition of what you mean by the world. The church can't agree on what's meant by the world. And therefore I am separating from the world in my heart, but I'm going to stay right down here on the ground and sleep under the bush and eat off of this tree and live like other people. But I won't be like other people because I'm separated in my heart. You know what would have happened to Noah? He'd been sending up bubbles before very long when the fountains of the great deep broke and the rain came down and the flood covered the mountaintops. Noah's carcass would have floated, bloated and distended along with the rest. But Noah knew that to forsake the world meant to forsake the world. So it said he went into the ark and God closed the door.

Take Abraham. God said, Abraham get thee out of thy country and away from thy kindred into a land which I will show thee. Now Abraham could have said, Now I have had a call from God to forsake my country and my people and to go to another land. But he said, I don't think I should take that literally. I think that that means forsake them in spirit and so I'm going to live right here in Ur of the Chaldes but I'm going to go into the Holy Land in spirit.

No, my brothers, Abraham had to go out in fact. And so Abraham departed and Lot with him. It says, Abraham went and took some people with him. And then take Lot for example. When lot finally got into Sodom and become mayor of the town they say. The angel said, escape for thy life and look not behind thee. Well Lot could have said, now he could have even written several articles on it. He could have had the debate on it and in a panel discussion on it among especially young people who will always know it all. He could have said, now, let's have a panel discussion on escape for thy life, look not

behind thee, what it means and while they were discussing it, the fire could have fallen and destroyed Sodom and Lot along with it. But Lot knew, escape for thy life, meant get out of old Sodom and stay out.

I'm sending fire on Sodom!

And then when those first Christians were told that to love the world and the things of the world, meant that if men didn't love God, they didn't hold discussions on what the world meant or what was meant by the world nor how far they could go, and still please God, they got out of the world. And they separated themselves completely from everything that had the world's spirit. And the result was they brought down fury on their own heads.

And that same world exists today that existed then and hear me say this again, some of you have told me don't believe it, but listen to me while I tell you again and repeat it again and the great God Almighty, either now or later, will confirm the truth of it. The world is no different now, from what it was when it crucified Jesus and martyred the first Christians. It's the same world. Adam is always Adam wherever you find him, and he never changes.

The reason we get along so well is that we have compromised our position. And we have allowed the world to dictate to us while we in turn, we're are permitted to dictate a little to the world. And so we have compromised it. And the result is there are very few people that are in any way embarrassed by the world.

I'm afraid if we ever get too popular, or the community accepts us here, I'm afraid of that. The church that this unsaved, worldly community accepts, is never a church full of the Holy Ghost. A church full of the Holy Ghost who is separated from the world and is walking with God will never be accepted by the community. It will always be looked upon as being somewhat off-center. Maybe if the laws are such that your protected, then civilization as such as it is now, you won't be attacked, but you will be looked upon as being a little bit off-center.

Now, are you preaching brother Tozer that everybody should probably get into space suits and zoom out of here and get away from the world. No, I'm not saying that at all. I am saying that there is a world that is not the world God means when he said forsake the world. You can eat and work and live and drink and sleep and bath and grow and beget your kind. Then bring them up and God made that. That's not the world.

The world is that organized thing filled with unbelief, which has got to amuse itself and which is built upon doubts and unbeliefs, self-righteousness and Adam. And the other of course, Jesus was in the world, but not of the world. There's no contradiction here in what I'm saying, I'm making a distinction between that part of the world which is divinely given, to plant, to reap and cook and eat and do our work and live in the world right. God meant it to be so and that's not worldliness. But, the worldliness is the pride of life, the pride of the eye, and the longing of the ambitious soul for position and all of that which the world does because of the rising of its sin within it. All that is the world and it overflows into a thousand things that the church has habitually rejected down the years, the church has rejected it.

Now, the second matter is, to turn wholly to our Lord Jesus Christ. First, is forsake completely the world and that's all negative, you notice that, that's all negative. Somebody says, Tozer's a negative preacher. I believe in the negative and in the positive. I do not apologize for preaching negative. I have a quarter here in my hand. On one side is a head of Benjamin Franklin and on the other side is an eagle with his wings outspread. Now one of those is the negative and one the positive side. The electricity that lights this building has a negative and a positive.

And so, they are negatives and positives that go all through the world. You turn your back on the north, that's negative, and traveled towards the south, that's positive. And so I turned my back on the world,

that's a negative. And then I turn wholly to the Lord Jesus Christ, that's positive. And every effort to preach the positive without the negative is like dividing this quarter edge-wise and cutting it through and then try to ride on a bus with that. He'd fling that back to you and say, that's only half

here. You need the other side. But you say, I got the head of Benjamin Franklin, there driver. He says, I know, but I want the eagle on too. That's the other side. How can you have an electric light with only the positive pole? Wou have to have both.

So, if we're going to turn ourselves wholly to the Lord Jesus Christ, there's going to have to be a complete forsaking of the world, all that is worldly in its spirit, all that is wrong per se, all that is unlike Jesus, all that is unlike God. You must forsake that no matter what the world thinks about us. That's negative and then turn wholly to our Lord Jesus Christ.

And this turning unto the Lord Jesus Christ, I want to talk about a lot more. Next week. I want to talk about that a little more. And I want to talk also next Sunday morning, developing this thought further about the deeper life in Christ leading us to a place where we're free in our hearts from fear and inordinate loves.

Now, it's this gives the deeper life, not the turning away, that's negative. You can forsake the world, quit gambling, quit drinking, quit smoking, quit living for the world. Never go to any of the worldly places of amusement, don't gamble, don't dance. Don't do any of these things you can quit all at and that's a negative. That has no power to impart any life of any kind. That's negative, but it's necessary before there can be any positive.

Well, the positive is then, that you turn to Jesus Christ. That's gives the power and the purity and the deep satisfaction and the joy unspeakable and full of glory. The negative can never shine. The negative can never be musical. The negative can never be fragrant. That's why it's possible to desert the world like the dear old fella with the long beard who rides his buggy along the highway over in Pennsylvania. God bless him. Yet, you go talk to him and he has no more religion than his horse. He has no more spirituality than the old horse with a swayback he's driving with his old 1890 buggy. He's separated from the world externally, but he's a worldling inside. Because he loves his horses. He loves his farm. He loves his crops. He loves the comforts of his life. He loves them all, but he's separated negatively from all the modern rat race. He isn't taking a part in it.

A man can go to a cave, you can go to a cave and leave it all in utter disgust like time in a vacuum. Go into the woods and live in a cave and still not have any power, any radiance, any joy, any inward glory.

It's turning unto Jesus Christ that gives that always. And the two can be done in one act. I could be facing North and God commands me to turn South. If I'd still remember, I don't know whether I could about face or not anymore and do it in two motions. I used to be able to do it for the time I was in the service. But if God says you're facing north and it's the wrong direction for you, about-face and march!

You can turn from the north and to the south in one easy motion. So, when God says forsake the world and turn to Christ, it is one motion. I'd do it in one free and easy act. And my turning from the world is my turning unto Christ. It doesn't always work that way, but it can be I say. So, the joy unspeakable is when we see Jesus, deep satisfaction.

Suppose we hunt around for new illustration, maybe it's ridiculous, but it'll illustrate anyway. Suppose that somebody decided and had the power to do it and he had a lot of gremlins or angels or something at his

command. And he said, now I'm tired of this darkness. I'm tired of this darkness. I want you to wipe the heavens clean of darkness. And he got a thousand or a million or two million or ten million gremlins or some other kind of imaginary beings with mops. And they mop the heavens of all darkness. It would still be dark. They don't have to worry. Go back to bed gremlin. Just wait till the sun comes up. The coming up of the sun will do what all of the mopping of the heavens would never do. Just wait for the sun!

So, some people try by the negatives to get themselves blessed. They won't do this. I remember one boy who wouldn't drink pop. He'd been at Nyack, he had said, I don't really know if they drink pop at Nyack now or not, but they didn't back then. And he stood at a soft drink counter over in Ohio and was very disturbed about a glass of pop. He said that he felt it was worldly. Well, he was an unhappy man and I have never seen a happy Christian yet that was world conscious, never. If he's trying to get loose from the world, or if he's worrying about what is the world or he's writing letters to find out what the world means, he's never happy man. He's busy with these negatives.

I've never seen a happy man yet that wasn't taken up with Jesus Christ the Lord. The sun comes up and the darkness goes out. Not all the little creatures in the universe could wipe the heavens clean of darkness as long as there's no sun, but when the sun heats up the night departs, and clouds flee away and the shadows are no more.

So, when we turn with all our hearts unto Jesus Christ our Lord, then we find the deeper life. Then we find in Him the power and the purity and the satisfaction and the joy unspeakable and full of glory. Nothing can't be something and the negative can't sing and the negative doesn't smell good and the negative can't give off a fragrance. And negative can't delight. Only the positive, only when I turned my eyes and gaze upon the Son of God, and my inner heart is taken up with His person, then, every instrument inside my music room gets tuned and the music starts. And radiance comes to the life and joy breaks out and Peter said, joy unspeakable and full of glory.

So it is, that's the deeper life. Two acts can be done at once. Turn from the world and unto Christ. And then all the natural things, eating and drinking and buying and selling, marrying and giving in marriage and all the natural things which God created to be done, which are not of the spirit of the world, but are natural and of God, they'll all be sanctified too. And they'll become fuel for the fire of the altar that rise day and night unto God.

So, the common things, things we call secular won't be secular anymore. The mundane things won't be mundane. They'll be heavenly too. Because the commonest thing, the peeling of a potato, the commonest thing can be done for the glory of God if we have turned from the world, and the world's ways and are looking full in the face of the Son of God. Then the sun will shine. Then all the gremlins of Hell can't wipe the sunlight away. If Hell should send up a legion to wipe away the sunshine, it could wipe the face of the earth and desperately and follow the sun around the earth and never succeed in keeping the sunshine away from the earth. Because when the sun shines on the earth, it's sunshine.

So, Hell can't destroy your spiritual happiness, if you're gazing at the face of Jesus, for He is the Son of Righteousness with healing in his wings. Well, we have that at least, turn from the world and turn fully unto Christ.

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