

# Practical Holiness

by Billy Strachan

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*Practical holiness is a personal and ongoing process of allowing God to be our holiness and guiding us in our lives.*

**Duration:** 42:35

**Scripture:** Exodus 15:11, Leviticus 23:11, Hebrews 12:5-14

**Topics:** "Holiness"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a powerful testimony of an IRA terrorist who found redemption and transformation through faith in Christ. The terrorist, who had committed heinous acts and enjoyed doing them, realized that his actions were sinful and unrelated to any political or religious cause. He had a life-changing encounter when he discovered an old copy of Our Daily Bread in his prison cell, which contained a message about putting off the old self and putting on the new self. This revelation led him to seek forgiveness, put his faith in Christ, and desire to share his newfound faith with others. The speaker emphasizes the importance of making the choice to change and pursue holiness, as God's power is released when we align our hearts with His will. The sermon references Peter's first epistle and Hebrews 12 to highlight the need for holiness and the loving discipline of God.

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## Transcript

I appreciated your prayer for Northern Ireland. I don't know if you knew it, but Mark Bahan, the president of Radio Bible Class, and myself, and the chief singer of the Discovery Singers from the television radio Bible Class program, Day of Discovery, we went over to Belfast in April and went into the prison at the invitation of both the IRA and the paramilitary terrorists to speak to them. And it was amazing to discover that they are reading the Our Daily Bread booklets, many of them on both sides, coming to know Christ as the Saviour while they're in prison.

And when we finished the evening speaking, two of us, two very different people, Mark and I, there wasn't small talk afterwards. The prisoners were dashing up, asking us all sorts of solid questions, but even saying, you know, there's no excuse for us not reaching people in the prison, because there couldn't have been two more different people speak to us tonight with different personalities and characters. And yet, in both cases, God spoke to us through your hearts.

Therefore, God can use anybody. And that was coming from IRA terrorists. And the whole reason that they've turned to the Lord and are appreciating the booklets is that one of them who's in for life, for

bombing, he's an older gentleman.

He'll never come out. Went into his cell one day and saw an old copy of Our Daily Bread lying on his bed. No idea who put it there.

It was outdated. He could see that it wasn't the right month. But he picked it up and thought, today's the 7th.

Let's look and see what it says on the 7th. And as he read it, it said at the top of the page, put off the old man, put on the new man. And he sat down with a bump in his bed and said to himself, I never knew there could be an alternative.

He had grown up all his life knowing he was a killer at heart, and that he'd been evil as a boy, and that what he did, he did enjoying it. And he knows now and has confessed it's nothing to do with IRA, nothing to do with Ireland, nothing to do with politics or a holy war of Protestants against Catholics. I did what I did because I enjoyed doing it.

But now I know it was sin, and that I don't have to be like that. I can become different. And he sat up the whole night, read the entire three months' readings, and put his faith and trust in Christ by morning.

Wrote to us and asked where he could get an up-to-date book and more books to give to others. He even wrote on one occasion and said, I found a new text that says, go into all the world, but the police authorities won't let me go. And he says, so I reckon that this world in the prison is my world.

Give me the materials to dish out inside the prison. So it was a delight for us to go over there and encourage him with a visit and to be able to minister to them. But that's the exciting thing.

You can change. You can change. The idea that I'm too set in my ways is foreign to scripture.

Now, let me read you a little reading before we commence our theme for the afternoon, which is practical holiness. And it's from Hebrews 12, and I'm beginning to read from verse five. If you endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons.

For what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if you are without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are you illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence. Shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the father of spirits and live? For they truly for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure, but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

Now, no chastening for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous. Nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore, lift up the holy hands that hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, and let it rather be healed.

Follow peace with all men, and follow holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. And I happened to mention that reference last night, that without holiness no man shall see the Lord. Now, it is rather interesting that the first mention of holiness and God being holy in Scripture was not by God.

You know, sometimes we tend to think that the Word of God tells us that God said, I'm holy, so watch it. But no, in actual fact, the word holiness never appears until after the two and a half million people were

redeemed out of Egypt. And when they passed through the Red Sea and came up on the other side to a new life through that miraculous passage of the Red Sea, they sang a great song in Exodus chapter 15.

And in the middle of that song they sang, it was inspired in their thankful singing, the statement that God alone is holy. So the first people ever to say the word holy in Scripture was forgiven sinners of their God who had redeemed them. He never gave himself that title.

They at last recognized that God is so supreme he could get them through an ocean, destroy their enemies. Therefore he is above their standard, therefore he is holy. And God in his word in Leviticus remind the people to be holy.

Now, it's rather fascinating where that quote came in. In Leviticus 22 and 44, it says, For I am holy, so be ye holy. You shall be holy, for I am holy.

Now, where would you tuck that in? Would you tuck in the holiness of God in a section of Scripture about making sure you're sexually pure, you don't commit adultery, there is no immorality? Well, in actual fact, in Leviticus 11, where the quote was first mentioned about you shall be holy, for I am holy, it came in the middle of talking about what you eat. And I find that rather intriguing, because we tend to classify sin and grade sin. And we would say of a like homosexuality, that's an abomination.

And yet God puts the word abomination with an attachment to the word overeating. And he calls people who overeat just as abominable. Because you see, a shoe is a shoe, whether it's size 2 or size 20, it's still a shoe.

And sin is sin, whether it's size 1 or size 90. Sin is sin. Therefore, one has to always keep in mind that we are wrong in saying what sins are deeper than others and more abominable than others.

Because if we start classifying what's worse than others, we're liable to make the ones we like to do less sinful. And it is interesting that even in the New Testament, the word glutton and homosexual and murder all comes into the same text. They're all an abomination.

They're all against the will of God. And it is possible for a person to die of overeating who has never committed an immoral act of sex. And that's just as bad.

We all have our imbalances. And yet the word of God is true and teaches us to be practical about the development of our holiness. And in that text in Leviticus, it's stated prior to the statement, you shall be holy, sanctify yourselves to be holy.

It's not something you just simply look up to God and say, well, you want me holy, get ahead and get it done anyway. And why don't you do it without me even noticing? And then it would be done. And God says, no, I cannot.

Because I've given you the biggest gift I've ever given anybody, the right to be made in my image. And the thing that makes God, God at all, is his right to be free. And God had no choice.

God would not be God. God is free to do as he pleases. And he made us in his own image and given us that right of choice.

And therefore, until we make the choices to have a better character, his divine power is not released to aid us to be a better character. And God is not there like a battery of special electric power that's dished out

willy-nilly. No, we must be the people who release the power of God by agreeing with him that we want the change and that we want to be different.

Now, Peter, in his first chapter of his first epistle, tells us about the need for holiness. And it's a rather interesting chapter, because as a human being, we think in terms that if I was able to love everybody like God loved everybody, then I would feel pretty holy. And if I felt holy, then I would be sure I'm a good Christian.

And that's the order in which we tend to put things. If I work at being loving and kind and gracious and good, I will feel very holy. And if I feel holy, I'll be sure I'm a good Christian, and God will notice that.

But in actual fact, when you read the first epistle of Peter, Peter deals with the three matters in the opposite direction. He starts out in that chapter by telling us, you are a Christian. You are saved with a security that is firm.

And because you're saved and sure you're saved, you can relax about that issue and rest in your assurance that you're a child of God. And when you rest in that, you can turn from constantly trying to prove you're Christian by acknowledging you are, and now occupy yourself to become holy enough to love another. Now, that's interesting.

We think we've got to love to feel holy to be saved, and he says, no, you're saved, so occupy yourself being holy enough to love. That's putting it in God's order. For he states this in that first chapter, we are elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

Grace unto you and peace be multiplied. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. To an inheritance, something that's waiting in heaven for us that we're going to collect one day.

And it's there already, to an inheritance incorruptible. Nothing will ever touch it and destroy it. undefiled, it will never get dusty and dirty.

And that fades not away, it never evaporates. And it's reserved, where? In heaven. For whom? You.

So right there in the presence of the Almighty is an inheritance of eternal life with Christ that's just waiting for you to go there and get it. And if God was of the impression you're not going to get there, it wouldn't be there. So our confidence is, hey, we're on our way to something that's waiting for us.

And God has said in his word, that which I have begun in you, I will complete. Faithful is he who calls you, who also will do it. And he tells us here that we are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.

Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through many temptations and trials. That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than that of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Whom, having not seen, you love.

In whom, though now you see him not yet believing, you rejoice with joy that you cannot utter. That's full of glory, and I like that text. It's a joy that you cannot utter.

And all too often today, people are trying to prove their holiness and their spiritual qualities by an expression of joy. And that is usually audible, excitable, emotional. Something that the ear and the eye can see in a person as they excitedly express their joy.

And yet, isn't it interesting that here we're being told that the real joy of the Lord is unspeakable. You can't even say it. You can't express it, but it's there.

You can be a person in a hospital bed and have a deep joy that you cannot even utter. Richard Dehan, the president past of Radio Bible Class, has unfortunately developed in the last years that stopped his ministry, Parkinson's disease. Now, it hasn't affected his body to the extent that he trembles like lots of people with that disease do, but it affected his face and his throat.

And when you see him, he tends to give the appearance of being a very sad person because the very skin of his face just hangs. And he can't utter much, but my, you should see what he writes. And even at a Carnforth, we've had various letters from people who have responded to his comments written within the individual packets they receive as members, encouraging them in their faith and sharing with them how he is just graciously plodding along, writing what he can write because he can't say it, but that he's full of the joy of the Lord.

And it's also interesting that the Bible tells us that it is the joy of the Lord that is your strength, not your joy for the Lord that's your strength. So any joy that's manufactured by self to impress the community or God is false. The joy the Bible speaks of is the very joy of the presence of Christ in his salvation within your heart, so that no matter what happens in life, you know that you're safe in him.

And you will receive the end of your salvation, your faith, even the salvation of your souls. And it tells us there that even the angels and prophets of past times were curious to know what all this salvation business was. They never understood what it was God was preparing, and it was something tremendously unique that cannot be claimed by any other religion, where all other religions you have to obey the tenets, laws, regulations, rules, dress, attire, in order that at the moment of death you might meet God.

Christianity is different. It is where the living God comes down and comes into your life and mine while we're bad enough. He takes up residence within the life of a forgiven sinner, but still a sinner, to live there.

Now that's a miracle. And when people say to me, Brother Billy, are you into miracles? I always tell them, yes, I'm into practicing the miracle. And they say, oh what miracle do you practice? Do you make long legs shorter or short legs longer? And I said, no, I don't deal in fiddly little miracles like that.

I'm not into tiddly little things like curing cancer or the mumps. I'm into the biggest miracle there is in the gospel. And they've said, what's that? I've said, putting God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost out of heaven into the life of a forgiven sinner.

Now that is a miracle. That's the one I am interested in. That's the one I serve Christ to declare.

I'll leave the other pundits to play with the temporary things. I'm into the big miracles. Oh, but Brother Billy, surely you must believe that God is capable of working other kind of miracles.

Oh yes. Has he ever done one for you? Yes. What's your miracle? Did he heal you of some sickness? No.

The biggest miracle outside of receiving Christ is that for the 38 years I've been a Christian, I've never cursed and swore in the pulpit. And they said, is that a miracle? I said, if you knew me before I was converted, that's a miracle. I couldn't even ask you to pass the sugar to sweeten the tea without describing the sugar in language that's not permitted even on BBC One.

And it's been an amazing thing to me all these years that each time I mount a church platform and commit my throat and my voice to the Almighty God, he has kept me from blurting out in my emotionalism rotten words during the preaching of the Word of God, because I've never forgotten any of them. And I never walk around pretending I don't know them. In fact, I think I wrote the encyclopedia.

I'm just amazed that people still use the language I used as a boy today. But I know it all. I don't pretend I don't know it to pretend I'm more holy.

I know it. And that to me is a great miracle that he's controlled my tongue in the pulpit all those years. Yes, because sometimes you can get very emotional and carried away and just blurt things out.

And even the angel said, this must be special salvation. Yes, it was. It was God inside a person.

And so he says in the 14th verse of this first chapter, moving into his second section, "...as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance, but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of behavior." Now, it's interesting to note that he's speaking here of practical holiness, something you have to do for yourself. As obedient children, not fashioning yourself, which means you have a capacity to fashion yourself. There are people who spend time fashioning themselves into one kind of person or another.

Putting on a role, playing a part. Sometimes we play so many parts, the part we play at church, the part we play at home, the part we play elsewhere, that we're never sure which one is the real me. And too often there is role-playing.

I once heard two ladies in the streets of Glasgow, since our brother mentioned the humor of the Glaswegians, and these two ladies were walking down the street in front of me, and I could tell that they were laying on thick to pretend, and you could tell from their attire and their dress that they were not from the most salubrious part of Glasgow, but they were pretending they came from amongst the wealthy up in Maryhill. That's where the wealthy stayed. And so they were clip-clopping down the street in front of me, conversing, and one of them was saying, Oh, I think Charles is simply marvelous.

And the other one said, Yes, I think he's wonderful. And the other said, Yes, he'd do absolutely oneth and far yeh. And she just let it slip.

And out came the gutter slang that told you she came from the south side and not the north end. Yes, it's role-playing. And that takes self-energy.

That takes self-energy. And that's why people get nervous. People often tell me they're nervous to speak for God, to be a witness of God.

Well, nervousness is indicating that you're utilising self-energy, physical energy, and it's draining you fast, and therefore you do end up getting exhausted. And the people who are nervous and witness are people

who are afraid to fail, afraid that their humanity will show through, that their cover will be burst. That's why, as he is holy, lives within you.

Instead of using your own energy to try to be holy, to please God, you thank yourself that you have the Holy One living within you, and allow him to release his kind of life and control and holiness through you. And when you're allowing him to be your holiness, there is no nervousness. There is no fear of failure.

There is no draining of your own resources because you're drawing from him. But you have to obey to give him that right to be there. And he has to be allowed to be the life in every area in your life that needs adjusted.

That's where the practicalness comes in. And it tells you here you have to fashion yourself. Now, that's a process.

It's not Shazam. Too often we go to meetings in the hope that some speaker will be able to do some great magical miracle with the Spirit of God in your presence that will zap you. And from there on in, for the next 90 years, you can relax.

You'll have no problems, everything sorted out, life wonderful, no difficulties, and have a great time. And the answer is, that's not true. Fashioning is a process that takes place all your life.

All your life. Fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts and your ignorance. In other words, you are personal.

This is not a general thing to the public. You are a personal individual. And as an individual, you know what nobody else in the church knows.

The vicar doesn't know. The curates don't know. The wardens don't know.

Nobody knows what you are really like except yourself and God. And you're the only one that knows what you used to fashion yourself like in the past. The things you did and enjoyed doing them.

The sins you committed and you plan to do it again. Now it differs from person to person. There are persons in the church that just cannot understand anybody that would ever be alcoholic.

Why? Because they've never had a problem with that. They've never touched it all their life. And yet the alcoholic might not understand why a person like that is a gossip.

Because you may find the alcoholic's a very discreet person that's never told another living soul something that that person ever received. You can have a person that's never gossiped, never got drunk, but that person can have an awful filthy imagination. But you never see that.

You never see that. That's why sometimes the holiness of a church is determined by outward behavior. And when people see someone coming into church who's drunk, they're liable to say, I wish that person would straighten up.

What they're saying, in effect, is you can see their sin. It's evident they're lying in the gutter outside the church, and it's an embarrassment to the congregation. But you know, we never say that of the gossip, the dirty-minded.

Why? Because they can come through that door on a Sunday, sit down there, and you don't see that. It's not embarrassing. And yet it can be there and completely cripple a person from being a holy person of God to be a blessing in the community.

So we all have our different weaknesses. We all have things within our lives that we know, that's me, that's what I'm like, and God and I knows that's what I'm like. And bit by bit, you can practice the fashioning of yourself into being a different kind of character.

You can deliberately choose not to want to continue being this kind of a person or another kind of a person. And you concentrate on that by taking the power of God to occupy yourself with that each time it arises in your life. And when that comes under control and you think you're really improving, that's when God suddenly says, now let me show you what's next.

And sometimes we get angry with God and say, how long have I been doing that all your life? Well, why didn't you tell me the first day I became a Christian? Look, it's taken us all these years to get you this far. And I'll tell you now, there's a few other things I'll be showing you before you go to heaven, but I'm not telling you now or you'd collapse. So we'll just do it an item at a time, an item at a time.

That is God. That's God's process. I've always felt that my life was like a house.

And when I got converted, it was as though I couldn't get my heels onto the very doorstep of my house for whiskey bottles. And when I received Christ in the military forces, it was as though God came along with a dust pan and a brush and swept up all the spirit bottles and lifted the lid of the trash can, put them in and slapped the lid on. And I had a clean doorstep for the first time in my life.

And I was able to stand on it and thought, my, aren't I a saint? Hello, everybody. Look, I've got a clean doorstep. Have you noticed? No bottles.

Isn't it nice? There's nothing on my doorstep. And I thought that was life. Till the spirit of God tapped me and I turned and I saw a door.

And I thought, what's that door, Lord? That's the door to your life, Billy. You mean I have a life? I'm not just a doorstep? Oh, no. You have a life.

Would you care to go in? Well, of course. I've been reading the book. Says I'm a saint.

Says I'm saved. Says I'm redeemed. Says I'm forgiven.

Go on, fling the door open. You'll find I'm fit to be a bishop. And it's as though the door opened and I looked in and I jumped in and slapped it shut, bolted it and threw the key over my shoulder.

And I looked at the filth in the walls of the hallway and said, God, how long have I had a filthy hallway since birth? Why didn't you tell me? Look, I've been working on the doorstep. Now are you going to give me permission to empower you to get your sleeves rolled up and start in on your dirty mind? And as I cooperate with God in getting the hallway clean, I find that I'm even able to leave the door open. And as people pass, go, oh, so that they'll turn and look into my hallway and say, oh, what a lovely clean hallway in that house.

And I begin to think, well, now I really must be a Christian until the spirit taps me and I look and there's a door. And I say, where did that door come from? Oh, that's one of the rooms in your house. You mean I'm

not a doorstep in a corridor, a hallway? There's actually rooms? Yes.

On this floor. What? You mean it's not a bungalow? No, you have a house. Well, you know, bit by bit, I've had to go into one room after the other and fashion it, not in the style that it used to be fashioned in, but to see that with the power of God who is within me, I'm cooperating to get the power I need to make things different in that room.

Well, I don't know about you, but I know about me. You know, there are times I feel that God taps my shoulder and says, going up and shows me an elevator, I think I must have the biggest building in the world. Because even after all these years, he's still showing me things that need adjusted, things that need to be learned, lessons that need to be taught.

And I have every time got to come back to square one of when I see something in my life that needs adjusting to decide whether I'm going to cooperate with God, obey, to get the Holy One to release his dynamic within me every time that issue comes up so that it doesn't win. It doesn't win. You see, that practical holiness does take your choice and effort, and that's why people would prefer to believe that they're saintly and that anything wrong in their lives is demonology.

And I tell you, we're in a church today where every sinful thing that Christians do, they're blaming on the demons, and the demons have nothing to do with it. The devil has never had to send a demon into the heart of Billy Strachan to be rotten. I'm pretty good at being rotten all by myself, and I'm not giving the credit to any evil kingdom for the sins in my life.

If I sin, I sin. Why do you think you have a church that gives you the opportunity every time you come together to admit that you've sinned and to show signs of penitence and repentance, and allow forgiveness to be reinstated and proclaimed, that you may step out into a new week in the process of becoming more holy? Trying to cut down the number of occasions you do this week that you did last week and had to confess again. It's so much easier to say, oh, I'm all right, it's the demons.

It isn't. It is self. And self finds it very difficult to agree with God.

As I said last night, you fight holiness rather than be practical about it. And it's the practicalness of holiness that's needed. And you yourself will know the things that need adjusted.

I don't have to guess. I don't have to suggest. The Spirit of God is quite capable, even today, of drawing to your attention something in your life that he says, now, do you understand? This is next.

Are you going to obey to be holy in that matter? Are you going to yield obedience in order that we may make progress? Well, of course, when you begin to see the years and the patience and the long suffering of God to give you time to change and for your practical holiness to make you a better character, do you know what the natural outcome of that is? You then turn around and see the new Christian that comes into your church, a mess. And instead of going up to them and saying, oh, so you got converted, did you? Well, we'll believe it on Sunday when we see you coming in here with your hair cut and all tidied up. No, you'll suddenly say to yourself, how many years has it taken God to get me here? And if you say to yourself, well, like I have to say, it's taken them 38 years to get me this far, then I always look at the new convert and say, just think what that person will be like in 38 years' time, not 38 seconds' time, 38 years.

And what does it teach me to do? It teaches me to love. It teaches me to love the very thing that we're trying to do to prove we're holy enough to be saved. Peter says, no, you're saved, so practice your

personal practical holiness, the process of agreeing with God what needs adjusted in your life over years, and that teaches you to look at the new baby in Christ and say, I'll wait.

I'll wait. My own son, prior to his conversion at 18, said to me, Dad, how long did you know I was leading a double life and going down the tube? I says, from day one. He said, why didn't you tell me? I said, because it was the hardest thing that I've ever had to do in my life is not tell you, because I knew you had to discover why you needed Christ.

And if I had just stepped into the situation the first day and said, don't do that again, in your love for your dad, you wouldn't have done it again, but you would have thought you were a Christian, because you didn't. And what you needed was Christ, not your father's warning. And it was the hardest thing Mother and I had to do, is to watch a life that needed Christ.

And even for me to get up and preach in churches, knowing that some people were looking at me through one eye, as much as what right have you to tell us about sin when you have a nudge, nudge, wink, wink sunlight you've got that we know about? And we had to wait. And it took place. I had driven all the way to Belfast by car.

I got there at 10.30 on a Saturday evening. I was going to begin 10 days of talks on the Sunday morning on relationships in a Christian family, when the phone rang, and it was my own boy on the phone, in tears to tell me his life was in a mess. I said, I'm coming home.

And I did what you never do to a church committee. I cancelled the 10 days the night before they started. And I just came straight back home.

We fell into each other's arms outside the house and just cried. I made him pack his bag and we left. And we spent a whole week together, just discussing his whole life.

It was amazing the things that came out. You must have been disappointed, Dad. I said, no, you only disappointed yourself.

He says, but I must have hurt you, not as much as I've hurt myself. I said, and don't forget this, your father did worse than you and before he was your age. Oh, he says, there was a difference.

I said, what was that? He says, you were a downright rotten pagan, but I was brought up in a Christian home. And he knew the difference. But he knew that Christ had forgiven him.

And he began the process of change. It was interesting because even I had to sit back with my wife and say, now, has it really happened? And you know, one of the first things that convinced me that he really was born again, he got rid of the XR2. Unlike any boy that would want a car, he wasn't content to go and get a secondhand heap to begin with for a few pounds.

It had to be vroom, vroom, vroom, vroom, the big XR2. When he got converted, he says, that's going. That's the first thing he sold.

And later he told me, Dad, I'm happy with a pound in my pocket. And before that, money meant everything. Money meant everything.

And he knew that Christ had forgiven him, but it was great to see the changes coming into his life. Marvellous. And the funny thing was, he said, you know, I love you, Dad.

And I said, why? He said, because I knew when I let you leave the house to drive to Belfast that I was going to phone you that night. And I didn't tell you before you went away. I let you go.

And I said to myself, I'll phone him tonight, and I bet you the old beggar won't come back. He'll say, son, I'll be home in a week. He said, but you came home.

I was more important than the meetings. I had no recourse but to become a Christian. Yes, even he knew there's a difference, and there's a character to be developed.

There's a new life to emerge. And I had to watch that change. He went with me to Michigan, and for a two-week stay to Vancouver.

And on the way home, he said, you've three weeks to get me back there to Bible school. And we waved him away, and off he went for two years. And last March, he married a lovely Christian girl in Vancouver, and he lives there.

What a change in a few years to a faith and trust in Christ, a Bible that's become alive. And even a speaker from this country, visiting that school, bumped into a lounge where Dixon, my son, was being made to give a Bible study on a chapter of Acts of the Apostles to a group. And they were all lying in the carpet, and he was lying in the carpet.

And he had his Bible above his head, and he was telling them what he'd found in this chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. And when he finished, this preacher went up and said to him, Strachan, if that's how you sound, flatten your back, do you know what you would sound like if you stood up and said that in a church? Because he didn't realize it, but he was speaking the Word of God very effectively, but lying flat on his back. But it'll take time.

He'll learn he's got legs, and he'll start to stand up to teach the Word of God. But we have to wait, if need be, 30 years. I don't mind.

God's been very patient with me and given me time to be practical in my holiness. He will give you time, and you'll begin to see others in the church that also need time. And as you give them time, they'll only come to one conclusion, you love me.

That's why Peter says towards the end of this chapter in verse 22, seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Holy Spirit unto unpretentious love of the brethren, see that you love one another with a pure heart like a disease. Yes, let it become an obsession to be as patient with others in this church as God has been with you. And as you give others time to change and develop their holiness, and you're developing yours, you'll find that out there in the community, people will be looking at all sorts of classifications of people in different stages of maturity coming in through the doors on a Sunday, and they'll be saying without you putting a tract in their hand or a campaign banner up, I think I could go there.

It looks like you can go in there no matter what condition you're in, and they give you time to change, and they love you. And that's the biggest attraction that there is to the gospel, patience and love, which is a manifestation of the holiness of God in and through the life of a forgiven sinner. Be practical about your holiness.

Let's have a word of prayer before we hand back to our brother. Thank you, Father, that you're so long-suffering. If it's necessary, you'll give us 90 years to make adjustments.

Teach us to so enjoy that quality of yours within us, that others will see it coming through to them, and they'll be being given an equal amount of time to become holy too. May the signal from this church to this community be patience and love and holiness, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

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Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/23/SID23967.mp3>  
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