

# Miscellaneous

by Harmon A. Baldwin

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*To seek holiness, one must be led of the Spirit, talk faith to God and to every one, and be patient and humble in their pursuit.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 34:4, Psalm 51:10, Matthew 6:16, Luke 11:9, Galatians 5:25, Philippians 2:12, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Hebrews 11:6, James 4:8

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit", "Sanctification"

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## Description

Harmon A. Baldwin emphasizes the importance of being led by the Spirit in the quest for God, urging believers to open their hearts before God, acknowledge their troubles, and talk faith while shunning unbelief. He highlights the power of faith in cleansing and the need for patience in seeking God's guidance and sanctification. Baldwin stresses the significance of waiting for the direct witness of the Spirit and avoiding rushing into professions without thorough surrender and examination before God. He encourages humility, persistent prayer, and fasting as vital components in pursuing holiness and perfect love.

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## Transcript

This chapter will be devoted to a few miscellaneous thoughts that may be of service to you in your quest after God.

1. Let us emphasize the fact that you must be led of the Spirit. This is all-important. All the help of your friends and teachers will be a hindrance without it. To this end throw your heart open, hold it steadily before God, and, as he points you to one trouble after another, be quick to acknowledge the situation. The quicker you do this the sooner the work will be accomplished.

2. Talk faith to God and to every one. Shun unbelief as you would a viper. Some people seem to think unbelief is a virtue. They call it being honest with themselves, getting discouraged with themselves, etc., but in reality it is throwing the lie into the face of the Almighty; for has he not said, "Seek and ye shall find"? also, "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it"? Then seek in expectancy. You must not only "believe that he is," but that "he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him," if you are to be successful.

An ounce of faith is worth a ton of groans and confessions. Without faith you can never be cleansed; but he that hath faith as a grain of mustard seed can remove mountains. Groans, when they are in the Spirit, are all right; but very often instead of being a sign of earnestness they are caused by a desire to dodge the

light and get through in some other than God's way. Man fell away from God through unbelief and disobedience, and God proposes that he shall return by faith and obedience. God works contrary to sin, always.

A good plan is to turn your eyes heavenward, get a sight of God and his amazing holiness; and then, when you turn again to view yourself, your native unholiness will show up in a clearer light than ever. The contrast will sicken you of self, make your soul long. yea, pant after a nature like that of God, and enable you by faith to lay hold on him for what you need.

3. You have a right to praise God. It is just as much your right now as it will be after the work is done. Let the Lord bless you and then praise him for it, but be careful that you do not take the first stirring of your emotions for holiness. God often blesses the seeker to keep him encouraged, or to convince him that he is on the right track. Wait for the direct witness of the Spirit, and do not allow any one to argue you into a profession without it.

4. There is no need of groaning and agonizing to convince God that you are in earnest. He knows all about that. Some people seem to think that if they can pray loud, and thresh around and sweat, the Lord will be convinced that they are in earnest and come to their rescue. But holding your heart steadily before God, and pouring out your complaints to him will bring him to your aid much more quickly and effectually.

Be patient, and get your heart still before God long enough for him to speak. It is a good rule to "make haste slowly." Be sure the ground is well covered, and then the enemy will not have any occasion to accuse you of shallowness when you get through. He will try it, no doubt, but you can defeat him much more easily when you are certain that you have thoroughly met the conditions before you profess the experience.

One great reason why some people have an "up and down" experience is that they cannot bear the idea of not being able to say, "I am saved, I am sanctified." Hence, as soon as they find their hearts unclean they rush into a profession without properly presenting and holding their case before God. They work themselves into a frenzy, and God blesses them in a measure (perhaps to keep them from losing their minds), and then they jump up, clap their hands and claim to be sanctified. In a little while, however, they are down and in doubt and bondage the same as before.

Reader, to know that you please God is greater victory than to be able to say, "I am saved and sanctified," especially when you have to say this with your own conscience contradicting the statement. Perhaps you think you must use the stereotyped expression, "saved and sanctified," to keep clear and hold an experience, but an experience that must be held in such a way is better lost. If you are forced to hold your experience, what comes of our preaching that holiness is a safeguard against backsliding that it is something to hold you? According to your idea, you must not only hold yourself, but have the additional trouble of holding an experience that is like a fractious horse, forever trying to get away.

Probably one reason why God does not oftener let the light shine clearly on the carnality in the hearts of young converts is because the light is so penetrating and the strength of the subjects so small that they are not able to bear it. So he lets them go on for a while until they get strong in grace and faith. It is a mistake to say that grace gets weaker, for if a person walks in the light it gets stronger and firmer. Then when the proper time comes God shines in.

Wesley says:

And now first do they see the ground of their hearts; which God before would not disclose to them, lest the soul should fail before him, and the spirit which he had made. Now they see all the hidden abominations there, the depths of pride, self-will, and hell; yet having the witness in themselves, 'Thou art an heir of God, a joint-heir with Christ, even in the midst of this fiery trial;' which continually heightens both the strong sense they then have of their inability to help themselves, and the inexpressible hunger they feel after a full renewal in his image, in 'righteousness and true holiness.'

We do not think for a moment that it is necessary or possible for everybody or anybody to see absolutely all the manifestations of carnality within them. It is so subtle, so complex, and has such diversified manifestations that this would be impossible. But God will disclose enough to give us such a conception of "the body of sin" that we shall cry out against it till deliverance comes.

5. Lay no plans, and conceive no formulas for the working of the Holy Ghost. Let him work in his own way. There is enough variety in his workings so that no one need copy the experience of another. No matter how the spirit wishes to use you, give yourself without reserve into his hands.

The fact that you have done all that you see to do does not prove that you have done all that you can do. At times the light may not shine so brightly, and then again it will pour in more clearly than before. You have not done all you can do until you exercise faith in the blood and receive the witness of the Spirit that the work is completed, and that your heart is cleansed. So long as the witness carries keep pressing forward.

6. Be humble. Fling away the idea that you are conferring a favor on God in seeking holiness. It is he who is conferring on you the greatest boon possible to mortal man, the boon of "perfect love." Fletcher says:

If thou seest any beauty in the humbling grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sanctifying love of God, and in the comfortable fellowship of the Holy Ghost, let thy free will run to meet them, and bow itself toward the ground. O for a speedy going out of thy tent, thy sinful self! O for a race of desire in the way of faith! O for incessant prostrations! O for a meek and deep bowing of thyself before thy divine Deliverer!

The nearer you get to God the worse your heart may seem to be. In reality it is not worse, but you now see it as it is, and as it has been all along. The way up is down. Most people would like to soar into the experience of perfection as in a balloon; but instead of this, one must dig down through all the strata of sin and unbelief till he reaches the lowest place possible of attainment before God in his present condition. We must, as Fletcher says, "Go down till we come to the lowest place."

Quite often God works contrary to what we would think. He shows us our indifference, not always by a special revelation but by allowing us to feel indifferent and sluggish till it takes an effort to shake ourselves loose; to show impatience he allows days of testing till it seems we can scarcely stand; he shows us unbelief by allowing doubts to come in like a flood; pride by permitting its assaults in various ways; and so on through the whole list of evil propensities. But if there come these days of sluggishness, trial, testing, etc., we must press through all, remembering that,

"Behind a frowning providence he hides a smiling face."

7. Pray much. Find occasions and places to pour out your heart before God. You cannot expect to make any headway without this. Be importunate. Fasting also is a good accompaniment of prayer. While you rejoice in God's favor, do not cease to afflict your soul before him and you will soon find the door of the

kingdom.

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