

Holiness and Practical Living

by James Blaine Chapman

The sermon emphasizes the importance of holiness in practical living through obedience to God, divine guidance, and faithful stewardship.

Scripture: Proverbs 3:5, Proverbs 16:9, John 16:13, 1 Corinthians 10:31, Ephesians 6:1, James 1:5, 1 Peter 3:15

Topics: "Christian Living", "Spiritual Guidance"

Description

James Blaine Chapman emphasizes the importance of children obeying their parents 'in the Lord' and resisting any demands that go against the principles of Christian conduct, even if it leads to consequences. As individuals reach the years of responsibility, they are encouraged to seek divine guidance through prayer and trust in God's providence to direct their paths in important decisions like relationships, career choices, and living arrangements. Chapman highlights the significance of seeking multiple sources of guidance, including God's Word, providential circumstances, and the Holy Spirit's leading, especially in crucial matters like marriage. He stresses the need for believers to live out their faith in their daily lives, showing patience, kindness, and integrity, and to actively participate in spiritual disciplines and maintain a standard of conduct that reflects their commitment to God.

Transcript

No child has any choice regarding his parentage or the place and condition of his birth. So far as the child's responsibility goes, all these things are accidental. There is not much the child can do about the general course of his life during his minor years. At a very early age he can give his heart to God and be saved and sanctified wholly, but in working out his life he is subjected to the conditions around him, even as our blessed Lord was subject to His earthly parents during His minor years. In Christian lands it is unusual to find parents who are unwilling for their children to live the Christian life, even though they may not share fully the children's practical judgment of what is best and wisest. There are instances, however, in which it becomes necessary for even a young child to bring to bear the full meaning of the scriptural admonition to obey his parents only "in the Lord." Should a parent insist that a minor child use liquor or tobacco, attend places of worldly amusement that are clearly ungodly, engage in dishonest dealings of any kind, or enter into associations that the child believes firmly are injurious to the soul, the minor child must choose to suffer affliction with the people of God and keep himself within the bounds of his own good conscience. Any demand for choice or action that is in violation of the Ten Commandments or the well-established principles of Christian conduct must be resisted, even though such resistance may lead to punishment, disinheritance, and even banishment.

When the years of responsibility come along, questions like the choice of company, matrimony, vocation, education, and even the place of one's abode, should be taken to the Lord in earnest prayer for divine guidance, and in the fullest confidence that God does know and care and will find a way by His providences, His Holy Word, and the Holy Spirit to direct the course of any who are willing to listen diligently to His voice.

As a young sanctified Christian I found great help in Impressions, a book by Martin Wells Knapp. From this book I learned that in important matters one should not be hasty in his conclusions and should insist on having "two or three witnesses." That is, the providences of God may determine us in many simple things like eating, drinking, sleeping, and the hours of labor. The Word of God, the Bible, is sufficient Guide for actions like purity, honesty, veracity, and industry. The inner impressions of the Holy Spirit are enough to direct us in prayer, testimony, and other such matters. But in such matters as matrimony there should be agreement of two or all three of these methods of guidance before we are satisfied. "Impressions," Mr. Knapp said, "may come from our own desires, from the devil, or from the Holy Spirit, and we need always to keep the Word of God before us and to remember that always the Spirit and the Word agree, and that the Holy Spirit will not lead us to do anything that is contrary to the Word--the Bible."

The majority of people do not have great, romantic experiences in life. Their course leads over a more or less undulating plain. Every day is much like every other day. The necessities of economic life drive them to their hours of labor and of rest. Their occupation brings them the large percentage of contacts with others, and hence their opportunities for doing good. And this is equivalent to saying that what we all need most is grace to live the common life in an uncommon manner. We need wisdom to see God in the circumstances of everyday life, and we need grace to do faithfully the myriad of little things which seem to have no particular connection with our religious profession. To be patient where others would become irritable, to be cheerful where others would be possessed of fear, to be kind when others would be resentful, to be pure when others would break under temptation, to reject all price offered for doing wrong, to just exemplify the spirit of the Master in the common places among common people this, to the great majority of us, is real victory.

It is our common obligation to "attend the means of grace," such as family and secret prayer, the services of the church, and as many of the gatherings of the people of God as we can profitably afford. It is our obligation, without exception, to maintain a standard of conduct and conversation that will commend the profession we make, and make it clear to all that we are conscious always that God sees and knows and cares and that we are responsible to Him now and at the judgment and in eternity. Excessive talk and unguarded levity are twin enemies of true spirituality, and carelessness about keeping one's word even in small matters, and about meeting his bills or meeting his financial obligations, will limit, if not actually destroy, the value of a Christian professor's influence.

We are all commissioned of our Lord to evangelize our neighbors and to send the gospel to the uttermost part of the earth. Some are called personally to devote their lives to the public ministry or to some form of Christian service which within itself becomes a vocation. But those who are not so called are yet commissioned to do the same work in a different manner, that is, by supporting with influence, prayers, and money. In matters of money and goods, Christians are differentiated from pagans in this: pagans account themselves owners of what they possess, while Christians know and confess themselves to be stewards only God is Owner of all. Money is a great means of doing good when properly used. But when improperly used it is a snare and a curse. From the days of Abraham, and long before the Old Testament law was promulgated, good men found the tithing plan a useful guide in making acknowledgment of their

stewardship of money and goods, and that plan and principle has never been abrogated. The systematic, faithful tither is assured of a good conscience in prosperity or adversity, and this together with a spirit of liberality enables him to share with those who go, and to feel and know that he is a faithful steward of the gospel, as well as of the money and goods with which he is entrusted.

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