

Personal Holiness - Part 1

by William MacDonald

To live a life of personal holiness, we must cultivate a deep desire to obey God's Word, avoid the world's temptations, and surround ourselves with believers who will help us grow in our faith.

Duration: 39:33

Scripture: Genesis 39:12, 1 Samuel 3:1, Psalm 101:3, Psalm 119:9, Psalm 119:37, Proverbs 4:23, Matthew 5:29

Topics: "Holiness"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of taking resolute action and exercising strict control over certain aspects of our lives. He specifically mentions the need to control television and movies, as they can be associated with sin and lower our spiritual temperature. The speaker references Bible verses such as Psalm 101:3 and 1 Samuel 3:1 to support his argument. He also shares personal experiences of being raised in a home where movies were prohibited and highlights the story of Joseph as an example of taking decisive action to resist temptation.

Transcript

Dr. Koronis for the rest cure, isn't it? Um, I don't know about you, but I find in my own life every so often I need to come and have my spiritual batteries recharged. And I don't doubt that's true of some others here tonight. We all face the danger of letting down.

We all face the danger of becoming complacent. Where it all seems to become old hat to us. We, we lose our enthusiasm for divine things.

And we need a fresh touch for God. Sometimes those who are older look at young people who are burning for Jesus and they say, I was like that once. Well, that's a terrible admission to have to make, isn't it? To see young people on fire for Jesus and to have become cold or even bitter or cynical along the way.

And then I realized that there are some here tonight with problems. And it's quite possible that your problems won't be dealt with in the ministry. We try and we're on our knees before the Lord asking the Holy Spirit just to use that unintended word to help somebody along the way, but you might be here with problems.

Some of you might be here with a problem of assurance. You can't look back to any particular time in your life when you trusted Jesus Christ as Savior. You might be fuzzy on the whole idea of assurance.

Some of you may be having personal problems in your own life. I rather suspect that's true. I watch people's faces and sometimes faces tell a lot.

And I, I suspect that there are problems in personal lives here, problems in business life, in the home, marital problems. And as I say, it may not be answered in the ministry. I wish you'd feel free to come and talk to us.

We don't know all the answers, but we like to sit down with people and open the Word of God and seek to help them directly. In my series here this week, I'd like to talk to you on the subject of personal holiness. I often think of what a Pentecostal preacher said once.

He said, if you haven't tried holiness, don't knock it. And I think there's a lot to that. A little saver went to a meeting with his father and he became reckless during the meeting.

And his father had to clip his ear during the meeting. And when they were going out, the usher saw Johnny and he said, you don't look happy, Johnny. And he said, I'm not.

And he said, why? He said, it's hard to be holy and happy too. But it isn't. You can't be happy without being holy.

And you can't be really holy without being happy. I'd like to suggest to you that the greatest hindrance to the work of the Lord in the world today is the lives of us Christians. Do you believe that? Oh, you think, no, a lack of dollars, that's a big, no, it never was the problem and never will be.

Lack of finances is not the problem in the work of the Lord. The problem is the lives of Christian people. The secretary was listening to her radio one Saturday night and she heard her boss preaching the gospel on the radio.

And he came in Monday morning and his nose was out a joint and he took it out on her. And after he stepped out of the office, she said to the other girl in the office, he said, yeah, come to Jesus on Saturday night and go to hell on Monday morning. That's it.

Come to Jesus on Saturday night and go to hell on Monday morning. And that's what his life was saying to her. Oftentimes I was talking to brother Kim here this afternoon.

We're reminiscing about a mutual friend during the Navy days. There was a young fellow out in Honolulu named Burt Graves. And after he'd get off duty, he used to go out in the basketball court and shoot baskets.

And there was another fellow who was not a Christian that used to go out and join them playing basketball. His name was Dick Kegler. And Dick used to watch Burt.

Dear friends, the world really watches us. We don't realize how much people really do watch us. And Dick Kegler was watching Burt Graves.

And one night he came to Burt and he said, Burt, you have something I don't have. I don't know what it is, but I want it. And it was an easy thing that night for Burt Graves to lead Dick Kegler to the Lord.

And Dick has been going on for Jesus ever since. Why? Because he read the life. He saw Christ in the life of Burt Graves and he wanted it.

I think that's what the Lord Jesus meant when he said, follow me and I'll make you fish as a man. You follow me. You live the life and I'll take care of the fish.

I believe it's true too. I really believe that Burt was a living example of that. God wants his people to be holy.

God is looking for saints. I know in a way we're all saints in a way. We're all saints positionally, but God wants us to be saints practically.

You know, the meaning of that word holy, the basic meaning of the word is different. You ever think of that? To be holy means to be different. I know it means to be set apart, but that's what set apart means to be different.

Turn to Numbers chapter 23 and verse nine, Numbers 23 and verse nine. It says, and this is Balaam's prophecy. Of course, one of Balaam's prophecies is from the top of the rocks.

I see him from the hills. I behold him. Low.

The people shall dwell alone and shall not be reckoned among the nation. That was it. That's what God wanted.

I know that Balaam was a false prophet, but many a truth has been spoken between false teeth. And this was one of them. Low.

The people shall dwell alone and shall not be reckoned among the nations. God wants us to be different. He wants us to show to the world that Jesus Christ makes a difference in the light.

Trouble is we don't want to be different. It's tough when you're in high school or are in college or even in the community. It's tough to be different stuff to swim against the tide.

He wants us to be different for Jesus. Now, in the matter of Christian holiness, there's a curious mingling of the divine and the human. Let me explain it this way.

Only God can make you and me holy, but he won't do it without our cooperation. I hear an awful lot of preaching in other circles today, and it makes it sound that you can have that you can go down to the altar at the close of a meeting and have a crisis experience of the Holy Spirit, and you're catapulted onto a plateau of super holiness, and you have no problems from then on. I don't believe that for a minute.

I've heard it. Believe the promise, claim the filling and all the rest just by a single crisis experience of the Holy Spirit. I believe in crisis experiences of the Holy Spirit, but I also believe that in this matter of holiness, our cooperation is absolutely essential.

The farmer plows, he sows, he cultivates, and God gives the increase the mingling of the human and the divine. We have to fight the good fight of faith, and God gives the victory. This is the way I believe it is in the life of holiness.

The danger is self-satisfaction. Somebody has said that satisfaction is the grave of progress, and I believe that's true, and I believe it's true in connection with our subject tonight. Satisfaction is the grave of We figure, well, here I am, and what I am, I am, and it's almost as if there's no room for improvement, or we don't care.

The wonderful thing, I think, to see believers who are sensitive before the Lord and want to grow in the life, to me it's very, very touching. A bunch of our young people went down to Yosemite not too long ago. The trip was organized by some of the leaders, and they were going to climb the steep trail to Glacier Point.

It was spring. There was still snow, and some snow and some ice, and they went down there and they camped, and in the morning they were going to climb the steep trail. And one of my young friends went along with a recent believer, I think he's been saved two years, and he had taken along an unsaved friend that he wanted to witness to.

So they started out, and they started up the trail, and they came to a stop, and they signed, Trail Closed. So the spiritual leaders jumped the fence and started up the trail. And my young friend said to them, hey, did you see the sign? And they said, yeah.

He said, what about it? They said, come on. He didn't. He didn't go on.

He went back with the friend he was trying to witness to. Now, you know, it took courage for him to do that. In a party of Christians, it took courage for him to say, I'm not going to pass that sign.

The sign says, Trail Closed. I want to always have a conscience void of offense toward God and toward man. You know, I was really touched when Eric told me what had happened.

He wasn't trying to blow his own horn or anything else. He wasn't trying to bring discredit on anyone else. But it's that sensitivity that the Lord loves and loves to see in his people.

We have to strive to be more holy. And we'll never become holy by being passive and waiting, or as I said before, by a simple crisis experience. I suggest to you tonight that if we're going to be holy, there are certain things you and I have to do.

There's a book we have to read and obey. And you know that book, that book is the Bible. And you know that there are two things that God himself cannot part.

And that's dust on the Bible and ice in the heart. Can't do it. God's omnipotent, but he can't do that.

He can't part dust. And there's no use of me thinking about holiness if the Bible is a closed book from Monday through Saturday. Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his ways by taking heed thereto according to thy word.

Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee. It's a wonderful thing, isn't it, when you open the word in the morning and you're reading there and you don't know that during that day something is going to come up. Some temptation is going to come up.

Some problem in the Christian life is going to come up. And you know you read the answer in our life. We must read, obey.

Obedience is the organ of spiritual knowledge. And it says we obey the word of God, that we grow in the things of God. The end of his wonderful sermon on the mount, the Lord Jesus said, who's the wise man? The wise man is the man who comes, the man who hears his saying and does them.

Thinking doesn't mean what it says. You have to use common sense, don't you? We say, well, I know it means that for most. Think of sixty theological rationalizations.

Why the kind of a Christian who grows on his knees. Either it means what it says or attitude in people's hearts. He looks up and says, here's a man.

That's the man that pleases. There's a book we have to read and obey. There's an altar we have to frequent.

There is the altar of prayer. My dear friends, we're really in a battle. And it's not getting any easier.

And the only way we can ever move. I don't know if I can explain. And you know, coming back here to Minnesota and to Corona, I'm not saying that to inflate you.

It makes you proud. But I want to tell you, you notice the difference. And I tell you, we have to pray casualties in the Christian life is littered with corpses today.

And we really love one another. We should pray. What do you pray? Well, I'll just let you into a little of my prayer life.

I say, Lord, don't let the temptation to sin and the opportunity to sin. Sometimes I have the temptation, but I don't have the Lord. Don't let me die a wicked.

I know that in me dwelleth no good thing. I pray Lord. And I do.

I said, Lord, take me home to heaven. Some of our friends go home to heaven, you know, and we stand around and weep and grieve. How do you know? How do you know? But they prayed that prayer and God is answering it.

Weep if you hear that I've gone. Sing the hallelujah. I mean that sincerely.

I really do. Home to heaven. Shame and dishonor on you.

Keep me from doing it even if I want. Jesus, in a way, it's a puzzle. He taught the disciples to pray, lead us not into temptation.

Well, you say the Lord would never lead us. What did he mean when he said that? Lead us not into temptation. The Lord never would lead you into temptation.

What does he mean? What it means. But what it says to me is when I pray that I can get near it. Don't let me get close.

Just keep me as far away. Serious business, isn't it? So that's the second thing we have to do. An altar that we have to.

And it's a good thing for us to feel our own frailty. And we should be in that position of brokenness and humiliation before the Lord all the time. The third thing is there's a word we hand down.

Very negative, isn't it? No. Thinking of it, you've had to say it today. You're going to entertain it and roll it as a sweet morsel under your tongue of whether you're going to reject it.

And that word is the hymn writer says yield not to temptation. Each victory will help you some other to win. And I believe that to say no, it makes it easier to say no.

The next time every time you yield makes it easier in this salute action. Jesus said in Matthew five, 29 and 30, if your right eye offends you, suck it out. And some of the young people would call it gross today.

Didn't say you had to do it. He said it would be better to do it. Teaching there that they're kind to action.

Joseph is an illustration of that, isn't it? When a woman tried to seduce him into sin and she grabbed his coat and he slipped out of the coat and put a few healthy miles between him and the woman that gained a crown that he'll wear because he had the courage to stand up for God and for what he knew. I think I could add this to that. We have, if we're really going to make progress in the life of holiness, we're going to have to take a resolution.

And I speaking of the general run of programs that there is on TV today, I may have shared with you before my favorite verses on TV. The first is Psalm 119 verse 37. The Bible is so up to date, isn't it? Psalm 119 verse 37.

I'm sure some of you know it by heart. It says, turn, that's the T, turn away my eyes from beholding vanity, the TV. Turn away my eyes from beholding vanity and quicken thou me in thy way.

And the second one is in first Samuel chapter three, verse one, first Samuel chapter three, verse one. And if you'll just let me paraphrase it, says the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli. The word of the Lord was precious in those days.

There was no television. You get it? It says really no open vision, but I can look back to times when before television came, the word of the Lord was more precious in homes than it is today. The word of the Lord was precious in those days.

There was no television. And I think you might also look at Psalm 101 verse three, which is apropos, although it doesn't mention TV by name. Psalm 101 verse three, I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes.

I hate the work of them that turn aside. It shall not cleave. TV does not help us on the highway to holiness.

The trouble is you start looking at it and you get used to it and your spiritual temperature is lower than you don't even realize it. It's a subtle thing, isn't it? It's a subtle thing. It's the world coming into our house and, and we're succumbing to the chill of our environment.

And a very, very world is back away at God. And then in the same breath, we could mention a movie today, because I don't see how a man can go, a woman can go on and increase in holiness that they feed on the stuff that comes out of Hollywood. I don't see.

So I thank God today I was brought up by Strict who, um, who ruled us with a Bible in one trap and the other. And, uh, one of the edicts in our, we were the odd kids and, uh, until we were 18. And then she said, okay, you're old enough.

You know, I'm so grateful for that today. You know, why does my, and some of that still, some of it comes back to me when I'm, when I least want years of movies in there. They had kind of a humorous twist that I couldn't help thinking of when we were singing the chariots of fire, this picture chariots of fire came along and I, all my friends at all, see chariots of fire.

I said, listen, mental block. I've never been in a theater. I'm not going to go.

If they'd only show it in a neutral place, I'd go. I won't go to a theater to see it, you know, relic of the Victorian era. They thought in January 15, 1980, I'm in London.

And I'm with comes in and he's a bill. He said, I just been to see chariots of fire. You have to go and see it.

If they'd show it in a neutral place. I want to see it. I really want to see it because I heard it really honors God.

And I've used the story in, in illustrations in my preaching for years. An illustration of the truth that those that honor God, God will honor. I said, Roger, I'm not going to go to see it in a theater.

Too old to begin. Well, it was time that a British airways plane coming back to the United States, the stewardess announces, ladies and gentlemen, the film to be shown on today's flight is chariots of fire. Bill McDonald, he won't pay 350 to go and see it.

He won't pay 350 to go see it in a theater. He'll pay 750 to see it on British airways. That's very exceptional chariots of fire and the general stuff that comes on the films today.

Spiritually resolute action. We must take your children too. And then we have to exercise strict control of things that are associated in our minds with sin.

I often think of that in Jude verse 23, it says, Hey, hating, even the garment. And, you know, I believe that with every one of us, every David has his Bathsheba, you know, and every one of us has his own besetting sin or sins. And I believe that they're associated with sin.

And we, okay. Number five, there's a position we have to keep a position. We have to keep it said, keep your in Jude 21, it says, keep yourself, isn't it? Sunshine.

The answer is you don't let anything come between you and the sun profound. Is it? And I believe that's how you keep yourself in the love of God. You don't let anything come between yourself and the Lord of evil, nothing between my soul and the savior.

Keep the way clear. Let nothing between number six companionships to cultivate says in first Corinthians 15:33, evil companionships, corrupt good manners. How often do you hear it? You say, what happened to that young person? Oh, he got in with bad company.

I was reading the other day, and I think it was our daily bread about the parrot that loved to fly out and get there with the crows in the field, you know, and the farmer had just had enough of those crows. And one day he went out with his shotgun and he let off a blast was there breathing at last and where he shouldn't have been. It's wonderful to have Christian fellowship.

It's wonderful to have Christians whose desire is to help us along and edify our inside. They weren't as much as I would like. I don't remember ever being in his presence, but he was trying to feed me the word and encourage me and teach me and warn me.

And I tell you, if you have somebody like that, it's a great gift in life. Do you have someone in life who loves you so much that if he or she sees something in your life that is not Christ-like, he'll speak to you about it? I have one friend like that. This country and calls me from Detroit.

He says, how's your spiritual life? Nobody asked. His name is George Verwer. It's a wonderful thing.

Are you that kind of a friend to somebody else where you can go lovingly? The way you do it is awfully important. When we wash one another's feet, all with ice water, manifesting the meekness and humility of Christ and seeking to help a brother. You know, the communists do that.

They cultivate self when they maybe they have a big, uh, date and they organize the thing and they have really down to a fine point. You know, I feel we fail. I feel that some of us can be a perpetual problem.

Cultivate this matter. Then something else I would suggest, and it's very, very precious to me, and that is that there's a blessed hope that we want to maintain. I link the hope of the imminent return of Christ.

And the reason I do is because the scripture does. It says every man that has this hope in him, even as he is pure. I don't ever want expectation of the Lord.

Jude verse 21 says, waiting for the mercy, lovely use of mercy has many faces in the Bible. And this face means coming. The coming of the Lord is a mercy from God waiting for them to realize that very soon we want to be ready when he comes.

We want to have garments that are clean and tangled from the things of this world. So we'll be prepared in that moment of time to go up and meet. And then finally, I think that if we're going to think seriously about the life of holiness, there's a consecration that we want to maintain.

You say, what do you mean by that? Well, I mean Romans 12 verses one and two. I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. Be not conformed to the world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable will.

There has to be a time in my life when I do that for the first time. And after I do it for the first time, I should do it continually. My experience is that caught up before anything else.

And yet tomorrow, with all the pressures of life, I forget and start to live my life the way I want to live it. And that's why I say a consecration to maintain. It isn't enough to put self on the altar today.

The wretched thing will crawl off tomorrow. If at the beginning of every day, I don't come before the Lord and say, Lord Jesus, 24 hour period. Live your life and make me a... Father, we thank you for speaking to our hearts tonight.

We feel the pull of the world all the time. So many things to drag us down spiritually. We have such a wily foe, the devil, seeking whom he may devour.

We have the flesh within the world without always working away at us. But Lord, I believe it's the sincere desire of every believer in the meeting tonight that we might be holy. When he appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

And so we put our hearts very low tonight and say, O Lord Jesus, keep us. Keep us pure. Keep us separated from the world.

Make it so that men may judge of us that we have been with Jesus. Work out your perfect will in our lives at any cost. And O Lord Jesus, take us to heaven rather than letting us make shipwreck on earth.

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