

Seek to Be a Vessel, Sanctified and Useful for God

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of being a sanctified vessel for God through self-cleansing and pursuing spiritual purity.

Scripture: Malachi 3:17, Matthew 12:34, 2 Timothy 2:20, 2 Timothy 2:22, 1 John 1:7

Topics: "Sanctification", "Holiness"

Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of being a holy vessel for God, highlighting the dual aspect of cleansing in the New Testament: God's cleansing of our sins through Jesus' blood and our responsibility to cleanse ourselves from wrong habits and behaviors. Poonen urges believers to daily cleanse themselves, seeking to be vessels sanctified and useful to God, focusing on spiritual value over mere usefulness in God's work. He warns against youthful lusts and encourages pursuing righteousness and fellowship with those who seek purity to avoid sin and grow in holiness.

Transcript

One of the characteristic of a true servant of God is that he must be a holy vessel, a vessel who cleanses himself (2 Tim. 2:20, 21). There are two cleansings spoken of in the New Testament. One is the cleansing that God does: "The blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin. If we confess our sin He is faithful and righteous to cleanse us" (1 John. 1:7, 9). God cleanses us from the guilt of sin. We can't do that. Only the blood of Jesus can do that. The second cleansing is something that we have to do ourselves ("If a man cleanses himself" - 2 Tim. 2: 21). These are like two sides of a coin. God cleanses away our past sin and we cleanse ourselves from the wrong things we see in our lives.

Maybe you have the habit of cracking jokes that hurt others - something that Jesus would never do. Don't ask God to cleanse it away. Say, "Lord, I am going to cleanse myself. I am going to give up this bad habit, with Your help." Or perhaps you have a curiosity that makes you a busybody in other people's matters. You must cleanse yourself from being interested in matters that do not concern you in any way. If a man cleanses himself thus, he can be a vessel sanctified and useful to the Master.

The passion of my life for many years has been to be a vessel useful to God for every good work that He can do through me in my one earthly life. We may live at the most 80 or 90 years on this earth. Every year of our lives must count for God. If you want to live such a life, cleanse yourself daily. Ask the Lord to show

you the things that are useless - and cleanse them away. Let your life be one of continuous cleansing. If you are serious about this, you will be a vessel useful to the Master. There are many vessels in the church that are useless.

Paul compares Christians to different types of vessels in a house."In a wealthy home there are dishes made of gold and silver as well as some made from wood and clay. The expensive dishes are used for guests, and the cheap ones are used in the kitchen or to put garbage in. If you stay away from sin you will be like one of these dishes made of purest gold - the very best in the house - so that Christ himself can use you for his highest purposes" (2 Tim. 2:20,21 - Living).

But don't think of usefulness alone. Many people are happy to know that God is using them. In a house, people use wooden boxes more than their golden vessels. But which vessel has more value? Are you concerned about your usefulness or your spiritual value? Your spiritual value is far more important to God than your usefulness in His work. God uses many people to do His work - even the devil. The devil once sent a thorn as a messenger into Paul's flesh - and God used it to keep Paul humble. God used Balaam. God used Solomon even to write Scripture; but he went to hell after that. So don't ever glory in the fact that God is using you. Many who prophesied and did miracles in Jesus' Name will be rejected in the final day (Matt. 7:22, 23). So being used by God is not the main thing. What is your intrinsic worth? Are you a golden vessel?

When there is a fire in a house, people rush to remove their gold and silver vessels - not their earthen jars. So will it also be, when the world is on fire. "They shall be Mine, says the Lord Almighty, in that day when I make up My jewels. Then you will see the difference between those who serve God and those who don't" (Malachi 3:17, 18 - Living). If you are only a cheap earthen vessel at present, you can become a golden vessel by cleansing yourself from everything that you see as un-Christlike in your life.

If you decide to cleanse yourself, one of the first things you must run away from is youthful lusts (2 Tim. 2:22). Even a man like Timothy who was about 45 years old at this time, had to run away from youthful lusts. Paul tells this wholehearted brother Timothy that the only way he could escape sinning in this area was by running away from temptation. He was not to imagine that he was too old to be tempted in this area. Don't imagine that because you are 45 years old you won't be tempted. Don't allow such sins to drag you down and destroy your ministry.

"Pursue after righteousness with those who call upon the name of the Lord with a pure heart" (2 Tim. 2:22). In other words, we must seek for fellowship primarily with those who seek for purity. That will help us to flee from sin. Our best friends on earth must be those who desire purity with all their hearts. Many believers have lower standards and are not interested in godliness. But we must spend most of our time with those who are seeking to live a holy life.

How can we know if someone has a pure heart? Jesus said that people speak out of that which fills their hearts (Matt. 12:34). We know what is filling a man's heart by the things he loves to speak about. If he is always talking about money and material things, it is because his heart is filled with thoughts of money. On the other hand, when a man wants to talk mostly about the Lord, you know that's what is filling his heart. I want to fellowship with those who long to be like Jesus. When we love the Lord we love to talk about Him. This is the secret of effective service for the Lord.

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