

# Dependent Upon the Holy Spirit

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, last time, which wasn't last Monday, we looked at one of the essential keys in our pursuit of holiness.

! And it involved the level of commitment that's not really available to unbelievers.

! We have to be seriously committed in the pursuit of holiness, and that means we have to devote sufficient time for our commitment to bear fruit.

Essential to the legitimate pursuit of holiness or godliness is the practice of seeking an ever deeper devotion to God.

We should grow in that through our Christian walk. And as believers, we must recognize that we're different from unbelievers. I did not say we are better.

[ 1 : 11 ] Although I will say, because of what God has done in our life, we are better off. Not only in this life, but in the one to come. The Word of God defines unbelievers as godless.

Paul came up with this list as it relates to unbelievers. He said they have no fear of God. They are hostile to God.

They are unwilling to submit to God's law. They are unable to please God. And that's only a partial list, but it applies to all those who reject Christ.

This list describes what we could call morally upright unbelievers. And there are unbelievers that do some good things.

And it also encompasses very immoral people. People that are licentious or totally lacking in morals.

[ 2 : 24 ] Now, all of us at one time fit in one of these two categories. Either we were morally upright unbelievers or we were immoral believers.

And that all changes, of course, at rebirth. Although it might have taken a few years, as in my case, to realize that there has been a change.

At regeneration, we were given the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit of God. That means that God had given us everything we need for spiritual life and godliness.

We find ourselves in a post-redemption world of developing a basic God-centeredness in our life.

But that was just the beginning. We were babies in Christ. We were crawling around in diapers.

Paul says we needed milk and not meat.

[ 3 : 31 ] But at that moment, the path forward for us was to grow in devotion to God. Now, we never arrive to the maximum level of devotion in this life.

Just like we never arrive at perfection. There is always room for increasing godliness. The Bible commands us to train ourselves to be godly and last time we talked about part of that is to maintain a level of commitment to do so.

This is referred to in the Word of God as sanctification, that process of being recreated in the image of Christ. That will not be completed until we see Christ in glory.

John wrote about that in his first epistle. We'll see Him as He is and be like Him. We also said last time that we are to fear God, love God, and desire God.

And this evening I want to add a fourth category. To grow in godliness or holiness, we must be at all times totally dependent upon the Holy Spirit.

[ 4 : 56 ] Only the indwelling Holy Spirit of God can bring about this growth. There is a great passage of Scripture that comments on this truth in 1 Corinthians chapter 3.

Paul writing, of course, says, What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one.

I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth.

Each of us are called upon to plant or to water. I did some of that Saturday because I bought Diane some flowers for Mother's Day and then discovered I was going to have to plant them and water them under her supervision.

But we're called upon to plant and to water. And we do that through the means of grace that God has granted us. But only God can make godly devotion increase within our hearts.

[ 6 : 16 ] Now in the time we have remaining this evening, we're going to examine those things that we need to inculcate into our lives as we grow in our striving for holiness and our growth in godliness.

Consider these items, and we could obviously add to them, it would be very easy to add to them. We need to pray for growth in godliness.

That needs to be a matter of prayer. Meditate on God's Word. Worship God in spirit and truth and fellowship with God and with His people.

The first of these I want to mention that we'll consider is praying for growth in godliness. Now if we are truly serious about striving for holiness and increasing our godliness, the path for both of these must be laced in prayer.

Prayer is essential. And I'm referring to very specific prayers asking the Lord that He will take charge of our life by causing us to grow in our devotion to Him.

[ 7 : 42 ] This is what King David had to say in the book of Psalms, Psalm 86, Teach me Your way, O Lord, that I may walk in Your truth.

Unite my heart to fear Your name. Great passage of Scripture for all of us. Now we've mentioned several times the fear of the Lord. Keep in mind what Solomon had to say on this essential element of our spiritual growth.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. That's just when we begin. It's the beginning of knowledge. And then Paul wrote these inspired words in the great book of Ephesians, I bow my knees before the Father from whom every family in heaven on earth is named, that according to the riches of His glory He may grant you to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in your inner being so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, that you being rooted and grounded in love may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and the length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations forever and ever.

Amen. Amen. A few years ago, there was a very popular book that came out titled Pray the Scriptures. That was not something new to me for I had heard Dr. McBride speak on that topic years before that book was ever published.

[ 9 : 49 ] Basically, you examine the Scriptures in the Bible and I have to say for the church, especially the New Testament for us, where God reveals what He wants for His people.

Once a passage is located, pray specifically that God would fulfill that passage in your life.

Dr. McBride went so far and said, you want answered prayer? Pray the Scriptures. Pray what God says He wants for you and ask Him to give you that. And that's the whole premise of that.

Pray the Scriptures. Pray the Scriptures. When you pray this way, the topics are inexhaustible.

They're everywhere. If we are really committed to striving for holiness, to striving for godliness, our prayer life will reflect that.

We will pray that we have a godly fear of Him. We will pray for a deeper understanding of His love for us. We will pray for closer fellowship in the church among brothers.

[ 11 : 08 ] Pray the Scriptures and pray them regularly. Another thing that's really important and I wonder if we have enough time.

It just seems like, you know, where does time go? And that's meditate on God's Word. Sit down and think about what you've read. Reflect on that.

As we read God's Word and pray the Scriptures, we should set time aside to meditate on what we have read. If we want to know more about the holiness of God, we should read Isaiah 6.

Remember the seraphim and Isaiah entered the temple and the Lord's robe filled the temple and there was smoke and we should read Revelation 4.

After reading those passages, perhaps several times, we should meditate deeply on what we've taken in. Isaiah 40 is a chapter on the greatness of God.

[12:15] We should read that and meditate on it. It is a powerful resource for meditation. Psalm 139 is a chapter on the omniscience and omnipresence of God.

If you want to reflect upon and meditate upon the majesty of Christ, look at Revelation 1.10-17 and really think about those things and then flip over to Revelation 5 and read the whole chapter and meditate on that.

I spoke of this in a previous lesson, but if you want to enter into praise of God, read the longest chapter in the Bible, Psalm 119. It contains 175 verses of praise and no praise is ever repeated. I mean, of course the Bible is inspired. Humans couldn't come up with that. Now these passages that I've read to you are only suggestions. There is an inexhaustible resource in God's Word. Some will be more meaningful to a person's circumstance than will others be. We should be goal-oriented as we meditate on passages that will help us strive to create in your heart great reverence for the Lord.

[13:47] And as we go deeper in His Word, it should create within us a godly fear and reverence for Him. That occurs best when we meditate on what we have read.

And I've used this word fear a bunch. Fear to the believer, fear of God is not, I've got to hide in the dark and get in the corner and maybe God won't find me. Of course, what does it say?

That the darkest night is like full daylight to God. He sees everything. It's reverence. Now, there are people one day that will cringe in fear.

In fact, they will pray that the rocks and mountains follow them and hide them from the wrath of the Lamb. That day is coming. That day is coming. But we're talking, when we fear the Lord, we reverence Him.

We're in awe of Him. We can and must pray and meditate, but these alone are still not the sole path to devotion.

[14:51] There are other aspects that must come into focus as well. We must worship God in spirit and truth. Another aspect of holiness is the worship we engage in.

Worship is essential to the practice of godliness and it is integral to our devotions. So what are we to do when we worship?

And when I speak of worship here, I'm including both private worship that should occur every day, one-on-one with God, you and God, private worship in our prayer closet, and the prayer closet doesn't have to be a closet with clothes hanging in it.

It can be wherever you're at. And in our public worship whenever the church gathers. worship is the act whereby we ascribe to God glory and honor and majesty because He is worthy to receive such from all creatures.

From all creatures. The word worship comes from an old English word, worth-ship, meaning worthiness. He is worthy to be worshiped.

[16:16] We come up with worshiping God in spirit and truth from the Lord's discussion with the woman at the well in John 4. And I'm sure you remember that, but whether you do or not, I'm going to read a bunch of it to you.

A woman from Samaria, now let me stop right there. You understand Samaritans were not loved by Jewish people. And Jewish people were not loved by Samaritan people.

Samaritans were considered half-breeds. Half-Gentile, half-Jewish. And to the devout Jew, that means they weren't Jewish at all. A woman from Samaria came to draw water.

Jesus said to her, give me a drink. For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, how is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?

It was unthinkable that a Jew and especially a rabbi would talk to a Samaritan or a woman. They just didn't do those sorts of things. For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.

[17:34] Jesus answered her, if you knew the gift of God and who it is that is saying to you, give me a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.

That impressed her. The woman said to him, sir, you have nothing to draw water with and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob?

And they're at Jacob's well, by the way. He gave us the well and drank from it himself as did his sons and his livestock. Jesus said to her, everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again.

But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

The woman said to him, sir, give me this water so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water. Of course, she missed the whole point. Now Jesus is going to have a little fun with her. [ 18 : 44 ] He said to her, go, call your husband and come here. The woman answered him, I have no husband. Jesus said to her, you are right in saying I have no husband for you have had five husbands and the one you now have is not your husband.

What you have said is true. The woman said to him, sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.

Jesus said to her, woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know.

We worship, being the Jews, what we do know for salvation is from the Jews but the hour is coming and is now here when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth for the Father is seeking such people to worship Him.

Seeking those who worship in spirit and truth. God is spirit and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.

[ 20 : 00 ] And I love this final exchange. The woman said to him, I know that Messiah is coming. He is called Christ. When He comes, He will tell us all things.

And anytime some liberal pastor says to you, Jesus never claimed to be the Messiah, read him the next verse. Jesus said to her, I who speak to you am He.

Identifying Himself to a Samaritan woman that He was the Messiah. Now if you're in doubt of whether or not you're worshiping properly with your brothers and sisters, just remember right now in heaven many of our brothers and sisters that have gone before us are worshiping as we speak.

We could name them. We could name them. There is ongoing worship in heaven right now. And many of our friends and family members are experiencing it right now.

Let me read you some of the worship going on in the fourth chapter of Revelation. Right now. And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings are full of eyes around, all around and within and day and night.

[ 21 : 28 ] They never cease to say, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty who was and is and is to come.

And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the 24 elders fall down before Him who is seated on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever.

They cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power for you created all things and by your will they existed and were created. Happening right at this moment. When you get a dry spell in your worship, go to Revelation chapter 4 verses 8 to 11 and start reading.

Here's another one. And they sang a new song. Sang, Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals for you were slain and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and you have made them a kingdom and priest to our God and they shall reign on the earth.

[ 22 : 57 ] Then I looked and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.

And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea and all that is in them saying to him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever.

And the four living creatures said amen and the elders fell down and worshiped. Boy, that's worship, guys. Those elders represent the church.

That's worship. That's worship. That is true worship that's taking place in heaven and should be taking place on earth. Right now, yesterday, at your home tonight, tomorrow morning, that's worship.

What about your posture for private worship? I don't think God's legalistic on that. I had a friend of ours, I'll tell you his name later because we're good friends, you and I are with him and he's a good guy but he drove a truck, that gives you a hint, cross country.

[ 24 : 36 ] But he said, I never pray when I'm driving. I said, why not? He said, oh, I don't think, you know, you're not giving God full attention because you're having to drive. I said, if God was sitting next to you in the seat, would you talk to him?

Well, yeah, I would do that while he's sitting next to you in the seat. There's nothing wrong with that. Nothing wrong with that. So, what about our posture for worship?

And again, I don't think God is legalistic. We can stand, kneel, lay down. I've done that. But I do think there are many passages that speak of kneeling as a physical acknowledgement of one's reverence, awe, and adoration to God.

Psalm 5-7, I will bow down toward your holy temple in the fear of you. Psalm 95-6, O come, let us worship and bow down.

Let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker. Philippians 2-10, At the name of Jesus, every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth.

[ 25 : 53 ] Nothing wrong with kneeling before God. Usually, when I get that far, I go ahead and lay down because my knees are shot. One of them, well, Mike and I both have replacement knees.

You got a replacement, didn't you? I mean, I went to the hospital. I hope you did. I hope they weren't lying to you. A few years later, I followed suit.

And then let's talk about fellowship. Fellowship with God and with His people. In the private time we spend with the Lord, we need to focus on developing and improving our fellowship with the Triune God.

We're having fellowship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Apostle John wrote about this in the opening four verses of his first epistle called 1 John.

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life, the life was made manifest and we have seen it and testified to it and proclaimed to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us.

[ 27 : 17 ] That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you so that you too may have fellowship with us.

Here's that word. And indeed, our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ. And we are writing these things to you that our joy may be complete.

What a way to start. What a way to start. The primary reason for private worship or what we typically call our quiet time is fellowship with the Lord.

We're fellowshiping with the Lord. It is to be a quiet time of worship as we enter into fellowship. And there's no set pattern to be used in private worship.

If we follow rigidly such patterns in our quiet time it becomes very mechanical. So just don't do that. But we know that we learn godliness by practicing and by participating in private worship.

[ 28 : 38 ] We just don't want to become mechanical. We are practicing godliness and that's why we should have a quiet time every day or several times a day if possible several times a day.

I wonder how many of us have ever prayed the prayer voiced by the Apostle Paul in Philippians chapter 3. I said earlier pray the Scriptures.

This is just one section. Philippians chapter 3 8-11 and by the way Philippians is rich and Colossians with these things and the third chapter of Philippians is almost all.

I think I read one time it's one of those chapters in there that was 31 verses with 30 commands. It was amazing. Listen to what Paul says. Of course obviously writing by inspiration of the Spirit of God.

Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish in order that I may gain Christ and be found in Him not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law but that which comes through faith in Christ the righteousness from God that depends on faith that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection that I may share in His sufferings becoming like Him in His death and by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

[ 30 : 33 ] That's amazing. Of course our public worship when we gather as the church is also described as fellowship. It is the fellowship of believers as we raise our voices in praise to our King

and our Lord.

Now tonight we're learning from God's Word but we're doing so because we have gathered here in fellowship with God and with each other and as often happens in Baptist circles fellowship also involves food and we did that and that's okay nothing more than that.

There is great strength to be enjoyed as the church gathers together to worship our triune God Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Now in that regard our fellowshiping together on earth is but a precursor to our fellowshiping together in heaven.

Just think we're going to be fellowshiping together we're going to see the King on the Emerald Throne and obviously we want to do that with what David called clean hands and a pure heart.

[ 31 : 59 ] Thank you.