

# Take Time To Be Holy

---

M.W. Bassford  
7-16-06

## Introduction.

- A. In many of our recent lessons, we've been looking at the problems we have as Christians making our faith a part of our everyday lives. It's easy to be a Christian Sunday morning, but it takes more work to be a Christian Monday afternoon. This is a struggle that each one of us must face individually. It is the things that we choose for ourselves, things like regular Bible study, prayer, and devotion to acts of service, that determine whether God will be pleased with us or not. These are the things that we must practice.
- B. Part of the problem, though, is not just in doing these things that God wants us to do, but in remembering to do them in the first place. I have no trouble praying if I'm thinking about praying. The problem comes when I go for days without ever thinking about prayer at all. Satan uses my forgetfulness to keep me from serving God. The struggle becomes, then, not just doing these things, but keeping them in the forefront of our minds.
- C. Thankfully, though, we have help in this spiritual battle. God gives us all sorts of weapons that we can use to keep Him as a part of our everyday lives, things that teach us about what we should do. Some of these spiritual weapons are obvious; others are less so. For example, how often do we think of the hymns we use in worship as a way to constantly remind ourselves of spiritual things? Colossians 3:16 tells us that one of the primary purposes of our singing is to teach and admonish one another. The hymns we sing are to instruct us in the will of God, and even if we're alone, we can still use a hymn to teach and admonish ourselves.
- D. One hymn in particular that does a wonderful job of teaching and admonishing is "Take Time To Be Holy." When we look at the first verse of this hymn, we see that it is packed with encouragement to do everyday spiritual things that enrich our relationship with God. Better still, these aren't just things that the writer of the hymn invented. Instead, everything the hymn encourages us to do is also recommended in Scripture. Let's consider this hymn and these passages this morning, then, so we can learn how to take time to be holy.

## I. Holiness in Our Relationship With God.

- A. As a hymn "Take Time To Be Holy" has a definite structure. The phrase "Take time to be holy" is like a heading for each verse, and everything in the verse is a sub-point, some method we can use to take time to be holy. It's structured even beyond that. The last three ideas of the first verse are ways that we can show holiness in our dealings with others, but the first three ideas are about holiness in our relationship with God.
- B. The first of these sub-points about God encourages us to **SPEAK OFT WITH THY LORD**. It essentially echoes the instruction of 1 Thessalonians 5:17, which tells us to pray without ceasing.
  1. We see a reason why we should pursue this frequent, unceasing prayer in Philippians 4:6-7. This passage tells us that prayer is supposed to be the glue that keeps God in our lives and holds God and us together. Here's how it works: Whenever we encounter some trouble in our lives, something that would cause us anxiety, we are to bring it to God in prayer. Once we have laid our difficulty before the throne of God, we don't have to be anxious anymore. This doesn't mean that we don't have to take steps to solve our problem, but it does mean we don't have to worry about the outcome. God is now working for us, and once we know that, our hearts and minds are guarded by a peace that surpasses understanding.
  2. Better still, this action of praying to God and enjoying His peace becomes cyclical. Look at how Paul describes the manner of our prayers in Philippians 4:6. We are to pray and make supplication with thanksgiving. Thanksgiving for what? In context, it must be thanksgiving for the times when we were anxious before, prayed, and received the peace we want to enjoy now. It's a cycle. We are anxious, we pray, we receive God's peace. We become anxious again, we remember how God helped us before, and we pray again while thanking Him. That thanksgiving reminds us of what God has already done, and it encourages us to seek His help again and trust that we will receive it. It makes God a part of our lives.
- C. In addition to reminding us to speak oft with our Lord, "Take Time To Be Holy" also provokes us to **ABIDE IN HIM ALWAYS**. Scripturally speaking, the idea of abiding in Jesus has a very particular meaning, and we see this meaning set out in John 15:4-5. Here, Jesus defines Himself as the vine, and us as the branches. We, as branches, need to abide in the vine in order to bear much fruit, because unless we abide, we can do nothing.
  1. This verse, then, describes abiding as both an action and an attitude. The action is fairly simple. We need to stay with Jesus. We need to remain with Jesus. We need to live our lives within the boundaries that His word has set. We need to cling to Him and constantly draw closer to Him, so that our relationship with Him nourishes us spiritually. We need to abide in Him.
  2. However, all of this abiding has a purpose, and we need to abide with that purpose in mind. Jesus tells us that the point of our abiding in Him is so that we will be able to bear much fruit, and we have to take that for our goal in our walk with Him. A branch of a grapevine can hold to the vine so tightly that nothing can

- get it off, but unless that branch actually produces grapes, it's pointless. In the same way, unless we produce fruit for Jesus, we are pointless as His disciples. The purpose of our abiding is the fruit we bear.
- D. Also, this hymn encourages us, in our relationship with Jesus, to **FEED ON HIS WORD**. This is just repeating the point of Matthew 4:3-4, in which Jesus cites Scripture to reject the devil's temptation.
1. Certainly, we need bread, or food of some sort, in order to continue our physical existence, but Jesus makes the point that a steady diet of the word of God is equally necessary for our spiritual existence.
  2. This involves two things: first, feeding on the word itself, and second, applying the word so that we grow spiritually. The first one is obvious. We need to be people who spend time with the book. Just opening the Bible inside this building isn't enough. We need to study the Bible on our own, and we need to study it constantly. It's not enough, though, just to read the word and never allow it to govern our conduct. Instead, it needs to change the way we live, so that the nourishment of the word appears in our lives.

## II. Holiness in Our Dealings With Others.

- A. That's the end of the first set of ways to be holy. The second set talks about ways that we can show holiness in the ways we interact with others, and the first reminder in this second set is to **MAKE FRIENDS OF GOD'S CHILDREN**. It encourages us to associate with the other disciples of Jesus, as taught in Romans 12:9-10.
1. This passage begins by telling us to abhor what is evil and cling to what is good. It then gives an application for this principle. We are to turn our affections, our brotherly love, not toward worldly people, but toward other Christians. It is they to whom we are to give preference love in our honor. We are to esteem them more highly than we esteem anyone else. They are to be our friends.
  2. There's an excellent reason for this. People in the world, no matter how good they are, are not Christians, and they do not hold to the same moral standards to which we hold. Unless we are extremely careful, they pull us toward their standards instead of Christ's standards. By contrast, when we're around true Christians, they build us up. Christian friends are important because they bring us toward Christ.
- B. Our friendship with God's children has another important consequence. It enables us to **HELP THOSE WHO ARE WEAK**, which is what Paul instructs us to do in Galatians 6:1-2. This passage is the Christian's handbook on dealing with spiritual weakness in other Christians, and there are four parts to it we need to address:
1. First, this passage applies whenever any one of our brethren is overtaken in some trespass, which tells us that we have a responsibility to everyone in this church. For us to carry out that responsibility, we have to know our brethren well enough to tell whether they're overtaken in any trespass. Sadly, many members of many congregations are ignored. No one notices whether they're at services or not, no one knows how they're doing. Eventually, these ignored members fall away, and we can't let that happen here.
  2. Second, this passage instructs us to restore people like this in a spirit of gentleness. Whenever a brother or sister stumbles, it's very easy to act as though we're above them and their sinful conduct, as though we are never tempted or led to sin. This passage tells us that our attitude must be exactly the opposite. We need to love them and love their souls, and allow that love to guide us in the way we treat them.
  3. Third, it tells us to look to ourselves lest we be tempted. This is something we need to do in two ways. First, we need to make sure that in our helping them, we pull them up rather than allowing them to drag us down. We're no help to them if they lead us astray too rather than us returning them to the fold. Second, any brother overtaken by any sin should remind us that we ourselves are also vulnerable.
  4. Last, this passage tells us to bear one another's burdens. Our actions determine our own spiritual fate, but along the way, all of us need help. There will be times when we have the chance to help someone out, and we need to take it. Then, when we need help, there will be somebody there for us.
- C. This verse concludes, though, by telling us that we should do these things while **FORGETTING IN NOTHING HIS LIKENESS TO SEEK**.
1. Now, this is a confusing statement. Here's why it's confusing: the hymnist had something to say, but he also needed to say something that would rhyme with "weak." "Seek" rhymes with "weak," so he stuck seek at the end and crammed his content in front of it, so that it said what he wanted to say—kind of. If we untangle the tortured grammar, it really says something like, "Don't forget to seek the likeness of Jesus in anything," which is excellent advice, found in, among other places, Ephesians 4:14-15.
  2. Here's the point of this passage for us: all of our actions need to be done with Christ in mind. This is true in our dealings with other Christians, but it is true generally. Our object is to conform our life to the way that Christ lived. We can't be people who can be turned aside from our course by everything that crosses our path. Instead, we must be steadfastly directed toward Christ.

## Conclusion.

- A. From this, we see that if we listen to "Take Time To Be Holy," it can really help us to live a life that is more pleasing to God. It's the listening and remembering part, though, that's most difficult. Here's a way to manage it: If you look at the page after the outline in your handout, it's a "Take Time To Be Holy" checklist. If you'll laminate this and put it on the fridge, you can mark off the items on it with an overhead pen as you do them. But if you haven't begun serving Jesus or have turned away, you need His help today.