

The Godly Man's Portion & Sanctuary

Lesson 16: Particular Exhortations for the Godly, Part 1

If there's to be a *general course of godliness* it must be supported by a *devotion to particular godliness*.

*My challenge to you: 1) find the Scriptural support for each of these directions, 2) choose out a handful each week or month to make a matter of holy prayer and sincere pursuit, Rom 6.1-19; Phil 2.12-13.

I. Introductory considerations

- A. Count upon the fact that a course of particular godliness is costly, Mt 5.29-30. Either resolve to give yourself to a life of practical godliness or it's in vain to listen to any counsel.
- B. Pursue practical godliness in covenant with God, acknowledging that Christ has redeemed you to make you holy, devoted, and zealous for good works, Tit 2.11-14, and acknowledging that what you're pursuing is not the saving of yourself, but the practical outworking of the salvation you've freely received, Rom 12.1-2; 1Cor 6.19-20; Eph 2.10; 5.1; 1Pet 1.15-19; 2.9-12; 4.1-3.
- C. Understand that practical godliness is nothing more than what you've bound yourself to as one who's given himself up to Christ, Rom 6.4, 12-14, 19; 2Cor 5.14-15. Let your own covenant with Christ be enough to bind you to a course of practical godliness.
- D. Press hard for sensible communion with God in all your spiritual duties. Never be satisfied with the mere doing of a thing. Press in, by prayer and affection, to commune with God Himself in it. Beg God that every duty will be a means of real, sanctifying grace.
- E. Don't confine your spirituality to spiritual duties. Live spiritual lives as well. "Practice the presence of God" in everything. Walk in constant communion with your God. *Coram Deo*.
- F. Be watchful. Let your eyes be upon both the Rule and your work, to see that they agree as much as possible. Keep a special watch on your prevailing sin, that sin which stands head and shoulders above the rest. It may be pride, worldliness, anger, sloth, lust, or some other sin. Find it, eye it, and understand that your main work lies with it. You'll strive with other sins in vain when this one runs free. Let no sin sneak by, but set your mighty men on this one.
- G. Press on in the name and strength of Jesus, Eph 6.10. Live by faith in His victory over your sin, Rom 6.10, and depend upon His promise for the assistance of the Holy Spirit, Phil 2.13.

II. *Directions for the evening.* –Withdraw yourself from the world, set yourself in the presence of God, and answer the following questions of self-examination.

A. Concerning my duties.

- 1. Did God find me on my bed when He expected me on my knees?
- 2. Did I do my private and family devotions more out of habit than out of sincere affection?
- 3. Did I seek to commune with God in my duties?
- 4. Have I neglected or been careless in my reading of Scripture?

B. Concerning my sins.

- 1. Do I live knowingly in any sin?
- 2. Have I strived to keep myself from my bosom sin? What victory have I gotten over it?
- 3. Do I mourn for my own sins and the sins of others?

C. Concerning my temptations.

- 1. Have I watched against and not run intentionally into temptation?
- 2. What temptations have I overcome today?
- 3. Have I been careful of the company I keep?

D. Concerning my heart.

- 1. Have I preserved my heart in a serious, spiritual condition? Have my calls to duty found me preparing for duty, or am I usually surprised and not ready?
- 2. Has the Lord been kept before my eyes and has eternity been kept before my heart?

3. Have I walked during the day in a prayerful spirit?
 4. Have I given liberty to my pride, anger, discontent, or impatience?
 5. Have I been conscious of evil thoughts?
- E. Concerning my conscience.
1. Has my conscience been blind or mute today in the face my sins?
 2. Was my heart deaf or stubborn in the face of its rebukes?
 3. Did I do anything against or with a doubting, unclear conscience?
 4. Did I either defile my own conscience or scandalize my brother's?
- F. Concerning my tongue.
1. Did I bridle my tongue when it was not wise or godly to speak?
 2. Did I speak evil of any man today?
 3. Was the Law of the Lord before me today as the rule of my life, as I sat in my house, as I went by the way, as I was lying down, and as I rose up to work and play?
- G. Concerning my talents and provisions.
1. Did I waste or vainly spend any part of my estate today?
 2. Was I proud of my possessions or indulgent of my appetite today?
 3. Did I send Christ away empty-handed today when I had what He needed and could've given it?
 4. Did I redeem my time from: needless engagements, idle imaginations, fruitless discourse, and unnecessary sleep?
 5. Did I lose an opportunity of doing or receiving good? Did I neglect to exhort or reprove when there was an occasion for it? And if I was reproved, how did I receive it?
- H. Concerning my pleasures.
1. Did I sincerely strive to eat and drink today to the glory of God?
 2. Did I eat or drink to excess and immoderation, as a glutton and drunkard?
 3. Did I rise from the table without a thought of thanks to God for the means of His provision or a thought of devotion to God with the strength of His sustenance?
 4. Did I mock God by pretending to give thanks in prayer?
- I. Concerning my calling.
1. Did I serve God today in my calling?
 2. Was I idle and slothful today?
 3. Was I too taken up with my earthly affairs that it robbed me of my spiritual commitments?
 4. Did I defraud or wrong anyone today?
 5. Did I lie or break a promise today?
- J. Concerning my relations.
1. Did I faithfully discharge and do nothing against all my relations?
 2. Have I behaved as a *Christian* husband or wife, parent or child, master or servant?
- K. Concerning my conduct with brethren.
1. Did I carry myself toward my brethren: lovingly, delighting in them, bearing with them, covering their sins; peaceably, not provoking them to sin; and profitably, provoking them to love and good works?
- L. Concerning my conduct with the world.
1. Did I carry myself toward the world: wisely, so that they were not a snare to me; inoffensively, so that I was not a stumbling block to them; and kindly and compassionately, so that I might, if God wills, win them to Christ?
- M. Concerning my providences.
1. Have I diligently observed all the remarkable providences of God toward me, especially those that have come in answer to my prayers?

2. Have I been thankful for my daily mercies?
3. Have I honorably carried this day's crosses?

N. Concerning the use of my liberty.

1. Have I kept myself far enough within the bounds of godliness, or am I prone to walk unsafely along the edges of godliness and moderation?
2. What have I done for God and my soul today? Or did I lose a day to grow in grace and holiness?
3. Did I live a diligent, watchful, self-denying life today?

III. *Directions for the morning.*

- A. If you neglected to examine yourself in the evening, then do it in the morning.
- B. Ask yourself: What sins have I committed? What duties have I omitted? Which of these directions have I neglected? And then renew your repentance and double your watch.
- C. Examine whether God was first and last in your thoughts morning and evening.
- D. Be careful to keep your chief end before you all day long, Eph 2.10; Gal 2.20.

IV. When time is short and you cannot take the time for a thorough self-examination, then shorten it. Better to cut it short than leave it out altogether. Here's *a shorter course for self-examination.*

- A. Did I enjoy any sensible communion with God today in my private and family devotions?
- B. Did I strive to keep my heart in a spiritual condition as I went from duty to duty?
- C. Have I been in a spirit of prayer all day long?
- D. Did I give way to my pride, sinful anger, discontent, impatience, or vanity?
- E. Did I immoderately devote myself to earthly things?
- F. Was I diligent to keep away from my bosom sin and not walk in any known sin?
- G. Have I wronged anyone in word or deed?
- H. Have I been temperate and self-denying in the use of earth's lawful comforts and pleasures?
- I. Was the Law of the Lord before me today as the rule for my life?
- J. Did I send Christ away empty-handed when I had it to give?
- K. Did I lose an opportunity of doing or receiving good?
- L. Did I neglect or do anything against my duty to my relations?
- M. What did I do for God and my soul today? Or did I lose a day to grow in grace and holiness?