

“Working With The Holy Spirit In The Good Life”

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Sermon Study Guide

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LUKE 12:1 NLT

1 Meanwhile, the crowds grew until thousands were milling about and stepping on each other. Jesus turned first to his disciples and warned them, “Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees—their *hypocrisy*.”

Jesus warned the disciples not to lead a double life. Hypocrisy was evident among the Pharisees and there was great temptation for the disciples to do the same. The Bible is clear that one cannot lead a double life without being found out. Read Romans 2:12-16 and you’ll find out that the secret life will one day be judged. In fact, 1 Corinthians 4:5 says, “So don’t make judgments about anyone ahead of time—before the Lord returns. For he will bring our darkest secrets to light and will reveal our private motives. Then God will give to each one whatever praise is due.”

God knows our innermost secrets and the way we pretend to be something we’re not. Why do people pretend to be something they are not? I’m not talking about striving toward being Christ-like. We should all do that. I’m talking about a two-faced mentality that appears one way to one crowd and changes with another.

It’s like a chameleon. What is the true color of a chameleon? It changes colors to blend into its environment - mostly to hide and to be defensive. That’s a good thing for chameleon, but deadly for a Christian. Let’s define hypocrisy.

DEFINITION OF HYPOCRISY: The act of putting on a false appearance of goodness --- pretending to be what one is not – a pretence -- a sham.

How can you guard your heart and lifestyle against hypocrisy? Can you truly be transparent without feeling as though you need to be defensive and isolated?

HOW TO GUARD AGAINST HYPOCRISY

You have to be on guard constantly against a false image. Let's face it – everyone knows you aren’t perfect. Why are you pretending like you have it all together. I don’t mean its ok to mess up because, after all, you're bent towards sin. The Bible says we can have victory over sin because of Christ’s sacrifice (Romans 8).

What are the steps to guarding against hypocrisy?

1. Guard with transparency.

Luke 12:2 & 3 NLT

“The time is coming when everything that is covered up will be revealed, and all that is secret will be made known to all. Whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered behind closed doors will be shouted from the housetops for all to hear!”

How hard is it to be transparent in your life? TOUGH! We all have a past we wish we could redo or bury in a huge hole. There are many things that keep us from being transparent. Things like pride, shame, selfishness, and what other’s think keep people from being transparent. But transparency is necessary if you desire to avoid hypocrisy.

Jesus said in Luke 12:2-3 that one day, everything that is covered up will be revealed to everyone. Either that can be scary or liberating. If you are hiding your past instead of dealing with it by taking it to the cross you are

in for a rude awakening one day. But, if you have revealed your past, repented from it, learned from it and are using it to help others win and enjoy the good life, you have liberty!

QUESTION: What are you hiding that God already knows about? What sin do you need to confess? Who do you need to confide in to help you grow in the Lord?

2. Guard by fearing God.

Luke 12:4-5 NLT

“Dear friends, don’t be afraid of those who want to kill your body; they cannot do any more to you after that. But I’ll tell you whom to fear. Fear God, who has the power to kill you and then throw you into hell. Yes, he’s the one to fear.”

Sometimes we pretend everything is OK in our lives because we’re afraid what other people may think about us. After all, we are a Life Group leader. We are a Deacon. We are a leader in a ministry and other people look up to us. What will our kids think? We are perfect!

Repenting from sin and being honest in your spiritual condition actually brings life. Sometimes, we’re afraid that our mates will find out our shortcoming. What if they leave us? What if they never speak to us again? All while we never think about what the one true, Holy God thinks! What can man really do to us? Let’s make a list: ignore, shame, forsake, gossip, hate, hurt---shall I go on? What can God do to us? Here is another list – forgive, restore, redeem, make whole.

We can’t skip over the issue of “holy fear” here though. While the Lord is quick to forgive, He is a just God and cannot leave unrepentant sin unpunished. How do we fear the Lord? Holy fear is done in a lifestyle of worship and praise unto God. The Bible says in Psalm 33:18, “The eyes of the LORD are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love.” We also get wisdom. Psalm 111:10 says, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.

Question: Do you fear the Lord? Do you fear man more?

How do we fear God?

The first step is to fear Him, not man.

Luke 12:6-7 NIV

“Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.”

Holy fear of God involves trust in him. You’ll never be transparent with God unless you learn to trust Him. After all, if He’ll take care of the birds, don’t you think He will take care of you? You have to see Him as a Father. He’s not just an uncaring deity in the sky waiting to punish you for your failures. He’s your Father – your Daddy. He will take care of you as you trust in Him. Will man do that for you? Eventually they will fall short.

Isaiah 59:1 NKJV says, “Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear.”

Publicly living your life is another step in learning to fear God.

Luke 12:8-9 NLT

“I tell you the truth, everyone who acknowledges me publicly here on earth, the Son of Man will also acknowledge in the presence of God’s angels. But anyone who denies me here on earth will be denied before God’s angels.

You cannot live the Christian life privately. Isolating yourself from the fellowship and accountability of other believers is a necessity to spiritual growth and the good life.

How do you publicly acknowledge God? Well, how do you privately avoid Him? Constantly coming to church late, skipping church services, avoiding Life Group, making jokes during serious times of worship, and rejecting accountability in your spiritual walk are just some of the ways we privatize our Christianity. There is no such thing as a private Christian life.

The church in Acts 2 met together in the temple and in homes. They broke bread together. They sold their possessions to help others. They had everything in common and depended upon each other for daily spiritual growth. That is the model of a public faith. It’s a faith that shouts God from the rooftops.

Read Hebrews 10:25. How important is fellowship with other believers?

Question: How can you publicly acknowledge God in a practical way? List some practical examples.

TWO STRONG POINTS YOU MUST REMEMBER AS YOU ALLOW THE HOLY SPIRIT TO WORK IN YOU ARE:

- 1. Nobody loves you like God loves you!** Let’s look at some scripture to back that up.

Jeremiah 31:3

“The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness.”

Psalm 103:17

“But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children.”

God loves His children. What other verses can you find that prove His love toward His church?

- 2. The other point is you must let your acknowledgement of God flow feely.**

Here are some scriptures to show other our love of God.

Psalm 26:7 NIV

“...proclaiming aloud your praise and telling of all your wonderful deeds.”

Psalm 35:28 NIV

“My tongue will speak of your righteousness and of your praises all day long.”

Psalm 71:23 NIV

“My lips will shout for joy when I sing praise to you— I, whom you have redeemed.”

THE ULTIMATE FEAR OF GOD

Let's get more specific about the fear of the Lord. The ultimate test of the fear of the Lord is allowing the Holy Spirit to move in your life. When the Holy Spirit convicts of sin we should repent. Obedience is the litmus test of Holy Fear. Talk is cheap.

When we don't allow the Holy Spirit to move in our lives, we blaspheme the Holy Spirit.

Don't blaspheme the Holy Spirit!

How do we blaspheme the Holy Spirit? Some would say, “That can't apply to me. After all, I'm saved. I can blaspheme the Holy Spirit.”

What is blasphemy?

Blasphemy is defined as the continual and deliberate rejection of the Holy Spirit's work and witness.

In **1 Timothy 1:19-20**, Paul says Christians should be “holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith. Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.”

When you do not hold on to faith and a good conscience, Paul says you shipwreck your faith. He knew about shipwrecks! (2 Corinthians 11:25). What an illustration! You are sailing smooth when you are trusting in the Lord and adhering to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Once you stop, you shipwreck your faith.

Paul went on to name names of those not living the faith. He says they have been turned over to Satan so they would not blaspheme. These were Christians who, Paul says, blasphemed. They continually ignored and rejected the work of the Holy Spirit.

Read 1 Corinthians 5.

“It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife. And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this? Even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. And I have already passed judgment on the one who did this, just as if I were present. When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.”

This sexual immorality occurred among believers, not unbelievers. Paul said it was so wild that even unbelievers don't do this kind of thing. It's bad when the church has more sin in it than the world does. These Christians should have been repentant and grieved by the sin. Instead, they continued to disobey and sink in their sin, despite the Holy Spirit's conviction. Paul said this sinful nature must be destroyed so the spirit would be saved on the day of the Lord.

Question: Are you rejecting the Holy Spirit's promptings? Are you caught in habitual sin? Are you still caught up in something the Holy Spirit told you time and time again to avoid and repent from? How does a Christian continually ignore the plea of the Holy Spirit?

There is a process that occurs when you say "no" to the Holy Spirit.

1. The first step in this process is GRIEVING the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 4:30 NIV

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

We must continue to resist the Devil because we belong to God. We grieve the Holy Spirit when we snuggle up to sin. The acceptance of certain behaviors because they are more "accepted" today is wrong. Comparing sins is another way we can grieve the Spirit. "At least it's not as bad as..." is one way we sadden the Holy Spirit.

Question: How do you grieve the Holy Spirit? Give examples.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NIV

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

God lives in you as a believer! His Holy Spirit resides in your innermost being. You were given a new spirit when Christ saved you and now you belong to Him. Would you mistreat the property of someone else? If someone loaned you their car, would you misuse it or purposely ruin it? Of course not! Now that you belong to God, He has loaned you yourself. You are His and are to act accordingly. When you do your own thing, you violate and mock the price He paid for you.

2. The next step is RESISTING the Holy Spirit.

You are no longer just giving in to sins occasionally. Now, when the Holy Spirit convicts you of sin, you resist His plea. You hang on to sin. It's like it is your little pet. You've gotten used to it and maybe even like the short term illusion of satisfaction it brings you.

Acts 7:51 NIV says, "You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit!" Being "stiff-necked" gives the image of one with His nose stuck up in the air. It's a mentality that you know better than God, so you don't have to listen to Him. How prideful!

Question: How have you resisted the Holy Spirit?

3. Putting out the SPIRIT'S FIRE.

Read Revelation 2:4-5. Have you lost your first love? What now is the love of your life? Christ used to be your heart's desire, but now, the voice of the Holy Spirit has become like a whiney, irritating noise.

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:19-20. How have you put out the Spirit's fire? Were you once on fire for the Lord?

4. Hardening the Heart.

After grieving and resisting there comes quenching the Holy Spirit's fire. Next, your heart is hard. I think of Pharaoh's heart when Moses was pleading with him to let the Children of Israel go free. Put yourself in the shoes of Pharaoh. When you get to this point in your spiritual decline, you are in the same place he was. You totally ignore the Spirit's draw and are oblivious to the consequences of sin. You really don't even care about them anymore.

Hebrews 3:8-13 NIV says, "Do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert, where your fathers tested and tried me and for forty years saw what I did. That is why I was angry with that generation, and I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.' So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.'"

Questions: What do you think brought the Israelites to this point? God says He was angry with that generation? Why? How long did they resist God?

5. The end of DRAWING

While you were once sensitive to the drawing of the Holy Spirit, now you don't even sense it. In fact, the Holy Spirit is beginning to draw you less and less because of your hardness of heart and resistance.

Read Hebrews 10:26-29 and 38-39 NIV.

In Revelation 3, we see that the church has become lukewarm. God did not say He would think about vomiting them out. He said he would! Ignoring His Spirit's drawing and promptings makes Him sick after the price He paid to draw us close to Him. Jesus' sacrifice cost God the life of His Son. That sacrifice bought us back from the Devil and gave us a right standing and relationship with Him. It's like slapping Him in the face or spitting in His eyes.

Question: Why is the Holy Spirit so important in our lives? Why do I need Him?

The Holy Spirit is a Person:

- 1) He teaches you things about God and yourself. John 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.
- 2) He tells the truth. John 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceeded from the Father, he shall testify of me:
- 3) He guides. John 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.
- 4) He convinces. John 16:8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

5) He prays for you. Romans 8:26-27 Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because he makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

6) He commands. Acts 13:2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

Four important principles to remember about the Holy Spirit

1) The Holy Spirit is God, but He is a Person, not a force

2) We cannot focus on the Holy Spirit too much. Why? What is the Holy Spirit's mission? To reveal Jesus. What is Jesus mission...to reveal the Father. What about the Father...to send Jesus and the Holy Spirit so we can come to Him. Perfect Harmony. They never had a crisis management meeting in Heaven. They never tried to sit down and work things out. They never had a power struggle amongst themselves.

3) The Holy Spirit gives gifts for use in ministry and empowers effective ministry

4) The Holy Spirit is a distinct Person within the Godhead, not a force, a thing, or an "it"

Read theses scriptures about the Holy Spirit:

- 1 Corinthians 2:9-13
- Luke 11:9-13
- Matthew 5:6
- Ephesians 5:18
- Galatians 5:16-26

Question: What happens if I am not filled with the Spirit? How is the Holy Spirit's involvement in my life connected to the goodness of God? Is the "Good Life" achievable without the Holy Spirit?