

Take Time To Be Holy

Introduction. There are only twenty-four hours in a day; and from that point of view everyone has the same amount of time. If one would maintain a healthy body and a vigorous mind, sleep is essential; and for that need approximately eight hours have been set aside. Another eight hours have been designated for work; and when one works and sleeps as he should, he is doing what God wants him to do.

The remaining eight hours should be used for spiritual development, recreation, duties, and work in connection with our personal lives and pleasures. "But," says one, "how do we get time for all those things? I just simply cannot find the time to do many of the things which I know God wants me to do."

No one will have time for such things unless he takes it; and it is here that we can see the need for self-control one of those vital virtues so often mentioned in the New Testament. Self-control has been defined as holding one's self within due limits, as it respects duties, pleasures, and everything else. We have eight hours at our disposal; and it is from that period that we are to "take time to be holy;" and if we will do this we shall soon see that our whole life will be affected by this wholesome attitude. The spirit of man is more important than his body; and it is for that reason that it is necessary for him to take the time that is needed for the growth and development of his soul (Matthew 16:25-26).

I. **What Does It Mean To Be Holy?**

- A. The statement, "You shall be holy; for I am holy," is mentioned several times in the scriptures (Leviticus 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7; 1 Peter 1:16).
 1. The Old Testament word for "holy" is *qadash*, which means something consecrated or sacred to God. It was used many times of things which on account of some connection with God possess a certain distinction and claim to reverence, as places sacred to God which are not to be profaned (i.e., the temple).
 2. The New Testament word for "holy" is *hagios*, which means set apart for God so as to be exclusively His. In a moral sense, it conveys pure, sinless and upright behavior. Holiness is a state into which God in His grace calls men. Christians are called to sanctify themselves, cleansing themselves from all defilement, forsaking sin, living a holy manner of life, and experiencing fellowship with God in His holiness.
- B. The fundamental idea in both terms is separation from all evil, so that one may be consecrated and devoted to God and His service. Separation alone is not sufficient; the one separated must also share in the purity of God.

- C. The English word "holiness" is from the Anglo-Saxon root *halig*, which means whole or complete; and from that same source comes our word "health" with a similar meaning.
1. It would therefore be perfectly proper to apply both terms to the body and spirit; but in our use of them we have applied the word "health" to physical matters and the word "holiness" to spiritual matters (3 John 2).
 2. Holiness, then, simply means a life, both spiritual and physical, which has been separated to God is maintained in health before him (Romans 12:1; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 11:28-30; 2 Corinthians 7:1).
- D. The difference between a faithful child of God and one who is not a Christian is the difference between one who belongs to God and one who is at the disposal of any and every master who pays his price.
1. The essential difference is the difference between the White House and the Garden Plaza Hotel. The hotel is at the disposal of anyone who can pay the price; but no one, regardless of his wealth or standing, can rent the White House.
 2. Here are two men -- one a man of the world and the other a Christian. The man of the world will hire himself out to what ever pays the price he demands: it may be immorality, covetousness, drunkenness, jealousy, bitterness, or whatever appeals to him; while the Christian, if he understands his relation to God, refuses every such offer in order that he may be faithful to his Master (Matthew 16:25-26; Philippians 3:7-11).

II. ***The Basis For And Effect Of Holiness***

- A. The nature of God is the foundation of all moral and religious obligation; and it is for that reason, and in order that we may be like Him, that we are told to be holy. By virtue of being born into the family of God we should desire to reproduce this family likeness.
- B. Man was made in the image of God; and he has, therefore, the capacity for the holiness enjoined upon him (Genesis 1:26-27).
- C. The standard of holiness is God Himself, and no one can please Him who does not strive to become like Him (Matthew 5:48). The perfection that is in view is spiritual maturity. The very starting point for the development of a holy character is the realization that the grace received from God calls for an adequate response (Psalm 116:12).
- D. Holiness begins in the heart and works its way down into the very depths of our nature; and then entering our lives it widens out over the whole area of our conduct. Without this holiness, no one will see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14).

III. **The Process At Work**

- A. The well known hymn, "Take Time to Be Holy," is a fine illustration of the thought now under consideration.
- B. The author, W. D. Longstaff wrote it after hearing a sermon on "Be Ye Holy As I Am Holy."
 1. Take time for prayer.
 - a) "Speak oft with thy Lord." If we should be granted an audience with the President of the United States just one time, we would spare no inconvenience or expense to keep the appointment. But how do we treat the Lord to whom we may speak at anytime during the day or night (1 Thessalonians 5:17; Romans 12:12; Hebrews 4:16)?
 - b) "Spend much time in secret with Jesus alone." It is in the quietness behind the shut door that our souls are nourished; and it is in such quietness that we can speak to God (Matthew 6:6). We ought to be alone with the Lord as much as possible. Prayer may be public or private, but it must always be secret in sense that it is a personal transaction between the soul and God.
 - c) "Forgetting in nothing His blessing to seek." There is no problem too great for the Lord to solve; and there is no mystery too difficult for Him to unravel (Philippians 4:6-7).
 2. Take time for nourishment.
 - a) "And feed on His word." Few of us have to be begged and persuaded to eat our food for the body; but what about our spiritual man?
 - b) Consider the exhortations in the scripture for our spiritual nourishment (John 6:35, 53-57; 1 Peter 2:2; Hebrews 5:11-14). Few of us are at the level we need to be or could be.
 3. Take time for guidance.
 - a) "Each thought and each motive beneath His control." A normal life cannot be still, it must have direction; and since man is a finite being, he must have guidance (Jeremiah 10:23; John 14:6; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).
 - b) Whether we be in joy or sorrow, we must allow the Lord to guide our lives (Psalm 119:105).
 4. Take time for companionship.
 - a) "Make friends of God's children." God wants His people to be friends to everyone and to all that is right (John 15:14; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; James 4:4).
 - b) We must "give preference to one another in honor" (Romans 12:10). We must lead the way in showing the honor which is due to each other.
 5. Take time for compassion.

- a) "Help those who are weak." The Christian life is not lived merely for oneself (Romans 15:1; Galatians 6:1-2).
 - b) Our society has made each of us so cold to each other. We live closer together but are farther apart than we have ever been. We need a closeness, compassion and warmth which exudes from the congregation and is noticeable to all.
6. Take time for poise.
- a) "Be calm in thy soul." With the Lord, there is no need to be afraid of anything (Matthew 14:27). God will care for us and protect us.
 - b) "Like Him thou shalt be." We must be transformed into His image (2 Corinthians 3:18; Romans 8:29).
 - c) "Thy friends in thy conduct His likeness shall see." Christ does not want to see us showing ourselves to the world by being hateful, mean, jealous, covetous, violent, or contentious. He wants us to show forth dignity, purity, self-control, gentleness, and the ability to forgive (1 Peter 2:11-12; Titus 2:6-8).
7. Take time for loyalty.
- a) "Abiding in Jesus." The idea is that we are to remain with the Lord and not run off when the going gets tough (John 8:31-32; 15:1-7).
 - b) It requires faith for one to wait on the Lord, especially in matters one is anxious about (Isaiah 40:31).
8. Take time for preparation.
- a) "Thus led by His Spirit to fountains of love." By examining God's word, we are led by His Spirit into a love which not only encompasses God, but must also encompass our brethren (Romans 8:14; John 13:34-35; 1 John 4:20-21; 5:3).
 - b) "Thou soon shall be fitted for service above." Everyone of us are slowly making our way toward death. What kind of preparation are you making for your function of glorifying God (Revelation 22:3; 2 Timothy 1:12; 4:6-8)?

Conclusion. Are you taking time to be holy? Are you really working your very best for God? I know that we do not have a lot of time during the week, but that time should be used appropriately for the best possible results to come forth. If we cannot even work to attain holiness ourselves, how can we ever persuade others to live a holy life?

You need to work diligently at becoming more holy for the Master's sake. We do not have to travel up to Jerusalem and find the pool of Bethesda, and wait for the coming of the angel to move the waters, and for some strong man to lift us and put us in (John 5:4). The fountain is all around us and it flows clear and free.