

## Sermon Series: Pursuing Godliness

Sermon Title: Increasing Our Devotion to God

April 7, 2019

Today's Scripture:

Introduction: I see that Nicolas Cage recently got married in Las Vegas to his make-up artist. The marriage lasted 4 days when he filed for an annulment. In contrast to his marriage, is the 81 year marriage of Dale and Alice Rockey of Olathe NE. They have taken the prize for the longest married couple in America. The secret to their marriage is her quip "I always let him have my way"! Perhaps that is the secret to walking with God like Enoch did 6000 years ago. He always let God have his way. Today's message is all about learning to walk with God because if we want to grow in Godliness there is no other way to accomplish that than by learning how to walk with God in fellowship and joy and persistence.

Main point: Pursuing godliness requires walking with God daily. That walk is pleasant only when we learn to fear Him, love Him and then desire Him.

1. Growing in godliness is not about doing for God, it is about walking with God.
  - We think that godliness is a person who doesn't swear, gossip tattle, watch porn, go to R-rated movies, and prays a lot, sings a lot and meditates a lot. We think that achieving godliness means knowing your Bible and obeying all the commandments perfectly and memorizing chapters and entire books of the Bible.
  - It is not knowledge or rigid and begrudging conformity to God's laws. It is all about walking with someone you love.
    - Walking implies agreement on where two are going. *Amos 3:3 "Do two walk together, unless they have agreed to meet?" (ESV)* So, if we want to walk with God daily, we need to be in agreement where we are going in this life. So that means:
      - Agreement that our goals in life are identical. He wants me to become like Christ in all things and he wants me to lead my family to be like Christ in all things. This is huge. Dads, if you are doing this you are accomplishing 90% of what God calls you to do on this journey of life.
      - Agreement that God's ways are best. *Psalm 18:21–22 [21] For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God. [22] For all his rules were before me, and his statutes I did not put away from me. (ESV)* There are no shortcuts that I think are faster, easier and less costly. I agree with my Father that always telling the truth, always being content with my wife, my things, my life, always valuing life and watching over my anger against others, are better than cheating and taking

shortcuts.

- More than just agreement however is appreciation for and then love for God's laws. *Psalm 119:97 Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day. (ESV)* "Oh Lord, I love how you made me treasure truthfulness to falsehood, because now I have been blessed with trust and respect, and people can see more of me in you."
  - This love for God's laws leads to appreciating him and then loving him. When we enjoy personal friends, it is because we see life in the same way. It's really hard to have friends who are polar opposites of you politically. People who hate Trump have a hard time sitting and eating dinner with those who love him. I was driving behind a car driven by a liberal. Bumper stickers read, Bernie Sanders supporter, and elect women, Medicare for all. I don't think she and I would enjoy sharing a latte at Starbucks. I am sure she would leave after a few sentences.
  - This agreement, then appreciation and then love for his law which leads to loving him produces **feelings** of love. You want to be with him more. You enjoy being with him and talking to him. You are aware of his presence. You hunger for the leading of the Spirit which you know when it happens and you crave it daily, then hourly, then minute by minute. My sermon prep.
  - Unfortunately, many Christians are afraid of God. They imagine that he is unhappy with them because they are not perfect or they have believed the lie that OT God is mean. How sad. Maybe they had a lousy earthly father that was gruff and unkind. Hang-ups. That's all. Oh how they are missing out. Some say they can relate to Jesus because he has flesh and bones. Good start. But then move on to the Father. Jesus would be very upset to be the sole beneficiary of worship. If you like Jesus you will like the Father.
- Walking implies agreement about goals (direction in life) ways, (how to go about getting there) but it also implies frequency. Walking with God is not a monthly or weekly event. It is an hourly event. Paul describes it this way: *1 Corinthians 10:31 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. (ESV)*
2. Loving God's law leads to loving God and walking with Him but the fear of God leads us to respect Him enough to desire Him.
- The fear of God is one critical mark of a true Christian. *Jeremiah 32:40 I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me. (ESV)* *Acts 9:31 So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord*

*and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied. (ESV)*

- Even Jesus delighted in the fear of the Father. *Isaiah 11:3 And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.*
- The word phobos in Greek has two meanings: 1) Terrifying dread or 2) reverence for one's husband. Nonbelievers are to have a terrifying dread of the wrath of God but Jesus and we have a holy reverence for our Father. This means we take him very seriously and his name very, very seriously. No flippancy in our prayers. No hip language that youth pastors tend to use toward God to show they are cool. Deep respect.
- But how does this make me delight in God even more?
  - 1) By marveling at His power, Think electricity or nuclear energy or the officer who carries the football (nuclear codes to start a nuclear war so that President Trump can carry a very big stick.
  - 2) By being welcomed even though other gods would never condescend. Think Allah ever would?
  - 3) He uses that power to spank me when I stray. I would not respect any dad who never carried out empty threats.
  - 4) But most importantly it causes me to delight in God because I am awed by His majesty.
- This is why we worship. We are awed by his majesty and power first and then overcome by his mercy love and grace.
  - Israelites overwhelmed with awe. *Exodus 15:11 "Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders? (ESV)*

3. A Case study on how to walk with God – The Example of Enoch. *Genesis 5:21–24 [21] When Enoch had lived 65 years, he fathered Methuselah. [22] Enoch walked with God after he fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons and daughters. [23] Thus all the days of Enoch were 365 years. [24] Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him. (ESV)*

- Enoch walked with God in a time when sin was so bad he was a few years away from the flood. He chose to be loyal to God rather than man.
- He was pleasing to God. *Hebrews 11:5 By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God. (ESV)*

Application

WHY pursue godliness?