

Helping Others to Godliness

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- [0 : 00] We're looking at the godly man's picture, and the next characteristic of the godly that we'll be considering today is that they strive to be an instrument for making others godly.
- The godly strive to be an instrument for making others godly. Now there has been a wrong view of godliness that thinks it is something that will drive you away from people into a solitary life of contemplation and prayer.
- And that was the popular view of godliness during the Middle Ages that filled the convents with nuns and the monasteries with monks, where Martin Luther found himself.
- And that view was challenged and corrected then by the Protestant reformers and by their stepchildren, the Puritans, in the 16th and the 17th centuries.
- The monk Luther took Katie, a nun, and married her, and was thereby showing that godliness does not drive us into seclusion, but is meant for relationships.
- [1 : 13] And I trust that our study of this book, which was first published in 1666, has exposed that long picture of the godly as a fraud.
- Because among other things, what have we seen in our study of the godly man? Let me just read a few of the chapter heads. A godly man is a man fired with love. He's a man of humility toward God and toward other people.
- He's a man who weeps and weeps over the sorrows of others. He's a patient man, patient with other people.
- He's a man who loves the saints. He's good in his relationships. And now this morning, a man who strives to be an instrument for making others gladly. Do you see the directional arrow of these subjects that we've been looking at?
- They're not something that drives us in isolation from the world, but pushes us out into social interaction. And if the Lord Jesus himself is the perfect portrait of the godly man, then what do we learn from him about godliness?
- [2 : 27] What do we learn from him about the life of godliness? Is it a solitary life away from people or is it a life in the midst of people?
- Tell me. What do you see in the gospels? In the midst of people. Now, granted, we're only given those three years, really.
- We just get a picture of our Lord when he was 12. And sure, his public ministry was more in public than those first 30 years.
- But even there, he was working in his father's workshop and customers coming in, going up to Jerusalem for the feasts amid the throng, making their way, going into the temple.
- Even there we see the active social life. But especially when we come into the gospels. He's worshiping in synagogue with people.
- [3 : 29] He's attending weddings. He's attending funerals and parties and feasts and lived three years with 12 men he was training. He ministered to the multitudes as well as to the individuals who sought him out.

Nicodemus, the woman at the well that he sought out. Zacchaeus that he sought out. And many others. Jesus did not live a life in isolation from people. And his teaching did not call people into isolation but taught them how to live in relationships with other people.

So it's true he did withdraw and get alone with God, didn't he? What was his habit? We see this in the gospels. What was Jesus' habit concerning solitary time with his father?

When did he do it? Early in the morning. We're given a summary of his life. And it says very early before it was light he left the house and went off to a solitary place where he could pray.

So yes, Jesus treasured that alone time with his God. And you remember Peter and the others came and found him and said, everybody's looking for you, Lord.

[4 : 43] Come on, we've got work to do. Jesus didn't say, just tell him to forget it. I'm praying. This is just me and God here.

Me and my father here. No, he said, let's go on to the next city so that I can preach to them too because that's why I've come.

He was a man among men. And he moved toward them. Yes, he had his time out periods because if we don't have those times alone with God, then when we move among people, we won't have anything to give them.

And so the time alone with God is preparatory. It's not meant to keep us away from people, but it's meant to prepare us to move into society and there be God's man, God's woman, a godly man or woman.

So that was his habitual practice. Practice. And the Lord Jesus had the perfect blend of time alone with his father and then time ministering to people.

[5 : 48] So the point is clear in our present section of the book. Our present lesson is a godly man strives to be an instrument for making others godly. Watson begins this section this way.

The godly man is not content to go to heaven alone, but wants to take others with him. So God is the fountain of grace.

And yet the saints are the pipes to transmit living streams to thirsty souls. Ultimately, it is God who is seeking and saving sinners. But he is seeking and saving them through his instruments, his people.

Now, Watson says this great effort for the conversion of others to see them made godly. Proceeds from three things.

Number one, from the very nature of godliness. And I liked him starting with that. What is it that drives us into the world to make converts of sinners?

[6 : 56] It's the very nature of godliness. It's what godliness is. And we've seen that what godliness is is godlikeness. It's being like God.

And God's good. And God is love. And his goodness is love. It's not something kept to himself. It was there forever within the Trinity and the relations between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Goodness and love flowing every direction. But he determined to make a creation and to make them the objects of his goodness and love.

And so it is the very nature of his goodness and love to outflow like a fountain. Diffusive and poured out on others.

Psalms 84, 11 says, The Lord God is a sun. It's a beautiful day this morning. We can see the sun shining in its brilliance. What is it doing?

[8 : 00] What is it sharing? What is it diffusing? Warmth. Is that all? Light.

Is that all? Come on, you scientists. Energy. Life. Energy.

Light. Warmth. Heat. That's the nature of the sun is to give off. Life. And that's the nature of God.

And godliness is being like God. And so the more godlike we are, the more diffusive and outflowing we will be with our good things. Delighting to share our greatest treasures.

Even Christ and eternal life in him. Watson says, We'll not be happy to go to heaven alone. We'll want to see others made rich. With what we have so richly received in Christ.

[8 : 56] And indeed, we will be the happiest when we are bringing others along with us. Because the very nature of godliness is joy in enriching others.

Just as God rejoices over his people with singing. So the Apostle Paul clearly demonstrated this aspect of godliness as well, didn't he? The Lord Jesus demonstrates it as the perfect portrait.

But we see it in the Apostle Paul as well. And Watson points us to his example. Paul was a godly man. And so he was very solicitous and eager to persuade others to come to his savior.

He went up and down the world to see sinners converted to his saving God in Christ. Willing to suffer anything. To endure any hardship. To deny himself anything.

If only he might win some to Christ. And how earnest he was in persuading men to taste and see that the Lord is gracious.

[10 : 07] Remember when he was on trial before King Agrippa. He's there and yes, he's to give a defense of his innocence.

And present the case for his innocence. But he's not just interested in laying out evidence of his innocence. He presses the good news about the suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ to the king.

He's seeking to persuade him to become a Christian during his own legal hearing. He's aiming for something more than proving his own innocence. He wants to see Agrippa repent and believe and receive the forgiveness of sins.

And a place among those who are sanctified by faith in Jesus. And almost exasperated you can see. Imagine the scene when Agrippa says to Paul.

Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian? That's very clear what Saul Paul was after that day. And Paul replied, short time or long, I pray God that not only you, but all who are here.

[11 : 20] Listening to me today may become what I am. Except for these chains. A believer in Jesus. Forgiven all of our sins.

I wish not only you. But all of you. Knew the joy that I had. So that's just godliness in action. That's just God likeness.

Seeking the welfare of others. Longing to bless them with the best thing that we have to give. And folks, the best thing we have is the gospel, isn't it? The saving gospel of Christ. That changes a man's eternal destiny from hell to heaven.

His eternal status from being condemned to being righteous. An adopted son of the living God. So to be diffusively good makes us resemble God.

And that is why it's the very nature of godliness to seek the conversion of others. Can you see that? That's where he's beginning. The very nature of godliness would urge us to seek the conversion of others.

[12 : 24] Any comments or questions on the first point? We got three this morning. All right? Secondly, this effort for the conversion of other people proceeds from compassion for the lost.

He says godliness makes the heart tender. Godliness makes the heart tender. Surely we see that in the apostle, don't we? The apostle Paul.

We couldn't say that he had a tender heart before he came to know the Savior. He was out to kill, to shed blood. Yes, in the name of God, but that was not tenderness.

But once Christ saved him, he wept for sinners. He bled for sinners. He was tenderized with the gospel.

And had this compassion for the lost that drove him. You remember the scene in Samaria back in 2 Kings 4 and 5 when the northern kingdom of Israel, capital city of Samaria, had been besieged, surrounded by the Arameans.

[13 : 38] And all supplies into the city had been cut off, which forced a famine within. It went on and on and on until women were desperately eating their children just to stay alive.

And there were four lepers at the city gate. And they had the same problem, no food. And they got to thinking one day and decided to risk it all.

And we hear them considering their options and then deciding, let's go over and turn ourselves over to the enemy. Because if we stay here, we're going to die. And if they kill us, we're going to die.

But if they spare us, we'll live. So out of the three choices, there's one option to live. Let's take it. What do we have to lose? And so they headed off for the Aramean camp.

And they found that the camp was deserted because God had caused them to hear the sound of chariots and horses and a great army marching.

[14 : 46] Isn't that something? When we think about the weapons that God has to scatter his enemies, he can just make a sound in their ears and they all hear it. And it sounds like horses and chariots and a thunderous army coming to get us.

And they panicked. They ran. They left everything behind and just ran for their lives. And so here are these four lepers and they're coming into camp.

And there's nobody there. They were ready to turn themselves in and surrender. Now they're moving into each tent and eating and drinking and gathering treasures and going and hiding it.

And then finally something dawned on them. And they said to each other, we're not doing right. This is wrong. There's something wrong with this picture.

This is a day of good news and we're keeping it to ourselves. There is a whole city starving. Our city, Samaria.

[15 : 50] And we're here gorging ourselves and keeping it from them. Besides, if they find out about what we're doing, we'll also be punished. So they went and reported it and the city was saved from the enemy and from famine.

But isn't there something there of the kindness of God that tenderized them? To be kind to their neighbor. To their fellow man. And even so, godliness all the more makes the heart tender.

We've not been saved from starving. That were bad enough. We've been saved from eternal torments. And the godly cannot but pity those who are rushing onward into hell.

Considering that they were as well. Before someone told them of Christ. So the godly knows what, as Watson says, the godly knows what a deadly cup is brewing for unbelievers.

The cup of God's wrath. That they will, in the words of Jude 7, suffer the punishment of eternal fire. That they will suffer what the Lord Jesus said.

[17 : 05] In a place where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth without end. And so the godly man pities and is tender toward captive sinners hurrying to hell.

And so he strives to get in between them and hell. And to warn them and to point them to the Savior. And Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5.11, Therefore, knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.

Who do you think knew best what the terror of God is? The wrath of God. Who would have had the clearest idea of what that wrath is?

Of all men who ever lived? It would be the Lord Jesus himself, right? And no one spoke of hell more than him. No one warned people more clearly and sincerely and urgently than the Lord Jesus.

It was his pity and compassion that moved him to preach the good news. For when he saw the crowds, he was moved with compassion for them.

[18 : 22] Because he saw them as they really are. As harassed and helpless sheep without a shepherd. You know that a sheep has no defense but the shepherd.

And to be a sheep without the shepherd is a terrible plight. It's to let the troubles and trials and cares of life beat up on you. And leave you harassed, stripped, helpless before it.

And that's how Jesus saw the multitudes. And no wonder his heart went out to him. He also saw them as a rich harvest rotting out in the field. For lack of labors to go in and fetch it and bring it into the barn.

That's how Jesus saw people. Do we see people as Jesus does? Posting onward to hell. Most of them don't have a clue where they're going.

Or why. Or how Christ could save them. And so our Savior sobbed over them. As he was heading into Jerusalem for the last time.

[19 : 24] Why? Because he sees the wrath of God that's coming upon Jerusalem. For having rejected their Messiah. Maybe we need to meditate more on hell.

Brothers and sisters. That knowing the terror of the Lord. We would persuade men. Out of compassion for their souls. That's the second. Incentive.

Or reason. That the godly. Move toward the lost. Seeking to convert them. Let me give you a testimony of a church.

That I think is encouraging. Something of this tender compassion. God's Grace Reformed Church.

In Victorville, California. Anybody know where Victorville is? Where is it? Okay. I'm talking about Los Angeles. Okay. So it's right there in the mess of things.

[20 : 20] Right? And here's this church. It's an Arbinet sister church. God's Grace Reformed Church. Pastor Ismael Miranda.

What language do you think he speaks? Yes. They have a service in Spanish. And they have a service in English.

And in the update a month ago. Pastor Ismael says greetings from God's Grace Reformed Church. We're excited to tell of the wondrous working of our Lord.

He's been exceedingly faithful to us. As a church we have been focusing on the two great commands. What are they? Love God.

Love God. Love man. Love God. Love man. All the law hangs on those two hooks. We've been focusing on loving God and loving man.

[21 : 23] That's been our church focus. I don't know how long he's been preaching on loving God, loving man. Don't you love the simplicity of that?

The importance of that focus. That's keeping the main things, the main things, right? And sadly, even though we all know that that's the main thing, we can lose sight of it.

God's Grace Redeeming Church, Reformed Church, is focusing on the main thing. Loving God, loving man. And we've been praying for hearts that do love God and love others.

And this prayer has produced a wonderful spirit of unity in our church, even during this challenging COVID time. We have instituted both a drive-in model of service and an in-person meeting with mask wearing.

Remember, he's in Victorville, California. Our study of the two great commands has led our members to embrace evangelism. Now, somebody explain to me the connection between the two great commands and new initiatives toward evangelism.

[22 : 40] What is it? What's the connection? How do these two things relate? Love God, love man. What's that do to shove us out to see others converted?

Yeah? It's the heart of God. It's the heart of God. God's heart is implanted in you. He loves the world that he gave his only begotten son.

Therefore, we have that same heart. And therefore, we evangelize. We decide. That's it. And it's just a beautiful thing to see.

And to even hear of, isn't it? We're focusing on the two greatest things. And the effect of that, under the blessing and smile of God, has been that our people have sought to evangelize all the more.

And he says that, yes, during this time of pandemic, our small church has seen the addition of several families and individuals.

[23 : 47] Many have expressed a desire to join us in membership. Our prayer meetings have been well attended. With the membership continually praying that God will add souls to his kingdom. You see, as they are being fired with God's love, remember, it's the nature of godliness.

It's the nature of God and his love to pour it out on others. And what do we have more to give to others than the gospel?

And it didn't stop with L.A. area. He says, we recently received another incredible blessing from our Lord. A reforming church in Cuba has contacted us.

And I just heard last week of the dire situation in Cuba. There's not medicines readily available for people who need them. The poverty. You saw they've got a new president.

But there's problems there. Well, here, a reforming church in Cuba has contacted us. They're currently in a Pentecostal denomination. But the leadership has become thoroughly convinced about the doctrines of grace and the 1689 confession of faith.

[24 : 52] They ask for any help that we can give as they embark on the road to reforming this church. Please pray for Pastor Rainier in Cuba and that our church, along with Arbinet, can be of aid to them.

So, again, it's pouring out. It's pouring out to the lost in their midst and to those all the way down in Cuba. Well, that's, to me, a beautiful picture of how the nature of godliness moves us toward the lost.

And compassion for the lost. Love, compassion moves us toward the lost. Well, the third thing.

Our efforts for the conversion of souls proceeds from the very nature of godliness, from compassion for the lost, and thirdly, from the zeal for Christ's glory, from zeal for Christ's glory.

The salvation of sinners is no small glory to Jesus Christ. Somebody tell me why that is. Why is Jesus Christ glorified in the salvation of sinners?

[26 : 04] Why is he honored? Why is he magnified? Seen to be majestic. What is it about salvation that glorifies Jesus?

There's more than one reason. You got any? Share it. He's the only one who can provide salvation. Say, wouldn't that be quite an honor for you to have?

If everybody had COVID and was dying and you were the only one that had the cure. What an honor. Well, everyone, literally everyone, is dying of the disease of sin and will die and go to hell.

But Jesus alone is the way to the Father. Is that not glorifying to him? You remember the rich young ruler that came to Jesus. What must I do to inherit eternal life?

And Jesus exposed his love for money as being more than his love for Jesus and for the kingdom of God. And he went away sad. And as he's walking away, Jesus turns to his disciples and he says, How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom.

[27 : 15] It's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. And the disciples drop their teeth and say, What? Who then can be saved?

And Jesus says, With man it is impossible. But with God all things are possible. So yes, that's very glorifying to Jesus that he's the only one that can save us.

What else? How does the conversion of a sinner bring glory to Jesus? It's taking, stealing a person from the kingdom of darkness and Christ's chief rival, Satan.

That salvation brings them over to the kingdom of life. Yeah. So we're born slaves of Satan. What is a power strong enough to lose his grip on our souls?

Well, it's Jesus Christ. And in building his church, where does he get the stones to put into his kingdom, into his church? He gets every single one out of Satan's hand.

[28 : 27] And so every conversion is demonstrating the power of Christ, conquering Satan, and bringing those in the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear son.

The father's bringing them to Christ in his kingdom. So that's an honor to Jesus. He can snatch them out of the devil's hand. Now, can anybody snatch them out of his hand?

No. But he's the good snatcher. He snatched every one of us as brands from the fire, as slaves in the prison house of Satan. Why else does salvation bring glory to Christ?

God bless the power as he brings us from death to life. God bless the power as he brings us from death to life. God bless the power as he brings us from death to life.

God bless the power as he brings us from death to life. So our medicines can do a lot of things to preserve life, but they can't do anything to bring back the dead to life.

[29 : 29] And Lazarus is four days in the grave and stinks by now. And Jesus just says, Lazarus, come forth. and he's out of there. That's an honor to him.

But that's just a picture of what Jesus did in every one of our lives. We were dead, Ephesians 2, dead in our sins, and God made us alive in Christ.

And how's the song go? Long mine spirit, prison lay, fast bound in sin and nature's night. Thine eye diffused a quickening ray. I woke the dungeon flamed with fire.

My chains fell off, my heart was free. I rose, went forth, and followed thee. We were dead in sin, and Jesus' almighty power gave us life. Give me one or two more.

Yeah, Mark, good to have you back, Guy. It fulfills God's promise to give Jesus the travail of his soul.

[30 : 41] So it honors the faithfulness of God to his son, the promise that was made from the eternal decree. You go and die, and I'll give you a people redeemed by your blood.

And that promise is being kept every time a sinner is given to Christ. Anything else that magnifies Jesus?

Yes? It transforms vile sinners into people who can then reflect Christ's character. Yeah. So we were more devil-like, and now we're more godlike.

That's our study. What does godliness mean? Well, we wouldn't have a study of godliness had it not been for the power of God to be able to transform us, metamorphosize us from ugly worms into beautiful moths that reflect the glory of Christ.

Just, well, thank you for that. Great glory comes to Jesus when anyone is converted.

[31 : 51] And so Christ's glory is dear to the godly, and because of it he seeks to promote it in the conversion of sinners. Watson says every convert is a jewel adorning Christ's crown.

Every convert is a choir member to sing his praises for all eternity and tell of his excellencies. Look what Christ has done. Look what no one else could do.

Look what I could not do for myself. He has done for me. And how we'll worship him forever and ever for his precious blood and resurrection. Worthy is the lamb that was slain and has purchased us for God.

So, if we pity sinners and want to see Christ glorified, we'll seek to win them to Christ. And the very diffusive nature of godliness is to share what we have, to see others enjoy it too.

Well, he comes to his uses. That's a practical term that the Puritans use for application. Use number one, use number two, and so on. So, use of the text then, or of this truth.

[32 : 57] If the godly are to seek this conversion of others, how much more should this be true of his nearest relations? Here's what he means, and I'm quoting him.

The godly will be careful that their children come to know God. He labors to see Christ formed in those who are himself in another addition. Do you think of your kids that way?

That was kind of a jogger for me. What are your kids? Now, some of them are more than others. An addition of you. I won't mention any names, but you know who you are, and your kids are just a spitting image of you.

And what he's saying is that if we're burning for people to come to know Christ, that we'll surely not overlook those who are another addition of ourselves.

Augustine says that his mother, Monica, travailed with greater care and pain for his spiritual birth than she did for his natural birth. I don't know how he knew that, but that's just to say how much she was in travail and prayer for his spiritual birth.

[34 : 09] And so, Watson says, the time of childhood is the fittest time to be sowing seeds for their conversion. Number one, it's pleasing to God that our children should know him early in life.

Remember your creator in the days of your youth, our children are told. He's pleased when he has more than the tail ends of a life that has been spent out in the service of Satan, and now at the very end of life, he gets a few days.

No, he's pleased to have the whole of life from the strength of youth right on through serving him. Secondly, by endeavoring to bring our children to Christ, we shall provide for God's glory on earth after we are dead.

Now think about that. By endeavoring to bring our children to Christ, we'll provide for God's glory on earth even after we're dead. I quote him, A godly man should not only honor God while he lives, but do something that he may promote God's glory when he's dead.

What a wonderful investment to be in heaven glorifying God and to have our offspring glorifying him down there on earth.

[35 : 21] Let's labor to see our children glorifying God in their generation. What a generation it may turn out to be. Let's labor to see them in Christ, living for his glory.

Watson gives us an agricultural illustration.

He says there's good ground and there's bad ground. A good piece of ground bears not only a forecrop but an aftercrop. Paul and I were talking a week or two ago about, you grew up in Minnesota, right, Paul?

Or Michigan. It was Michigan, northern Michigan. And you talked about ground where you grew up having one cutting of hay per year, whereas some of the good ground around here, you all cut your hay several times, don't you?

And what he is saying is he who is godly does not only bear God a good crop of obedience himself while he lives, but he brings, by bringing his children to Christ, he bears an aftercrop when he's dead.

[36 : 36] So we can think how valuable, and we will see this in Philippians 2 as we get to the end of the chapter, how valuable Timothy was in the gospel endeavor. Paul had no one like him.

That's quite an honor. No one like him. How did Timothy come to know Christ? A mother and a grandmother. Some of you grandmothers take that on board.

Lois and Eunice. From infancy, Timothy knew the holy scriptures, which were able to make him wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

And that's what happened. So keep sowing the seed, parents. I'm thankful for you parents that are very serious about your responsibilities in bringing up your children, in the nurture and discipline of the Lord, the instruction of the gospel, setting Christ before them as you instruct and discipline them.

We're thankful for Sunday school teachers who even now are sowing more seeds on top of yours, trying to just reinforce what they're hearing at home.

[37 : 47] And God has been very kind to us as a congregation. And God has been very kind to us as a congregation in the conversion of many, many of our children, even in their early ages.

The last two baptisms were young people. And the next two that we're putting forward for baptisms are teenagers. God is blessing the means of grace in the home.

And that should be to your encouragement, parents, to keep laboring in prayer and in the word, building those relationships with your kids and holding Jesus before them in word and example.

So let's be more aware of the mission field right under our nose. That's what Thomas Watson is saying. We've got young people. We've got children. And let's be anxious after their salvation.

Well, time is gone. Let me pray and let's pray together as we commit these things to the Lord. Our good and loving Father in heaven, we do thank you for your heart of love that poured out in the giving of your Son for our salvation.

[39 : 06] Lord, we want to be more like you. And we want to be more in earnest to see others made godly, to not be satisfied to go to heaven alone.

So help us to feel the challenge of their need and to pity them. Help us to see that Christ would be glorified in conversions and so to pursue them.

Thank you. Both our children and our neighbors, our relatives, our workmates, wherever we find them. Come and move us out with that same heart that moved the Lord Jesus out of heaven to come and die for us.

Thank you, Lord, for each one of the young people that have come to know you. Thank you for that miracle of the new birth. Thank you for that supernatural gift of faith and repentance by which they came to you.

Thank you that you've done these works and we together give you glory for it. We thank you for what you're doing out in Victorville, California. Bless that church with conversions.

[40 : 16] Their own children and these that they're inviting and telling about the Savior. And there in Cuba, may the gospel transform lives for the praise of Christ.

Lord, some of our children are outside of the home now and they're outside of Christ. We pray you would track them down and raise up means and instruments for their salvation wherever they are.

Encourage us. Build us up. And help us to encourage one another. We thank you in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.