

How People Change

7 strategies to aid in the pursuit of growth

Equip Class – Session 7 – February 28, 2024

Purpose to be Godly

I. Introduction

A. Recap of where we have been.

B. Let me ask a question that has been asked many times by many people throughout human history – why are we here? What is our purpose?

- “Make this your maxim, godliness is the purpose of your creation. God never sent men into the world only to eat and drink and put on fine clothes, but that they might ‘serve him in holiness and righteousness’ (Luke 1:74-75) . . . He sent us here on the grand errand of godliness” (Thomas Watson, *A Godly Man’s Picture* pg. 208).
- “Godliness is the path to pleasure, for by godliness we glorify God, and in glorifying God, we enjoy God. There is no greater pleasure than close fellowship with our Creator and, therefore, no higher purpose than godliness” (Tim Challies, “Purpose to be Godly”).

II. Jeremiah 2:4-13.

A. God defines evil in two ways:

B. “Using imagery that those residing in Judah would understand, Jeremiah compared the nation’s actions to someone abandoning a **spring of living** (running) **water** for **broken cisterns**. The most reliable and refreshing sources of water in Israel were her natural springs. This water was dependable; and its clear, cool consistency was satisfying. In contrast, the most unreliable source of water was cisterns. Cisterns were large pits dug into the rock and covered with plaster. These pits were used to gather rainwater. This water was brackish; and if the rains were below normal, it could run out. Worse yet, if a cistern developed a crack it would not **hold the water**. To turn from a dependable, pure stream of running water to a broken, brackish cistern was idiotic. Yet that is what Judah did when she turned from God to idols.”¹

“Esteeming God less than anything else is the essence of evil” (John Piper, *When I Don’t Desire God* pg. 34).

III. Behold

A. We are worshippers (Matthew 4:10).

“The reason we are always worshipping is because we are always looking at something. And sometimes the glory appears so great, so massive, so important, you will sacrifice whatever it takes to get it” (Matt Papa, *Look and Live* pg. 31).

“When we sin, worship does not stop, it changes direction” (Harold Best, quoted by Matt Papa in *Look and Live* pg. 30).

“An idol, simply put, is anything that is more important to you than God. It is anything that has outweighed God in your life – anything that you love, trust, or obey more than God – anything that has replaced God as essential to your happiness” (Matt Papa, *Look and Live* pg. 64).

“Worship is the natural by-product of seeing glory. Glory is foundational to worship” (Matt Papa, *Look and Live* pg. 31).

¹ Dyer, C. H. (1985). [Jeremiah](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, pp. 1131–1132). Victor Books.

B. Behold the glory of God (Psalm 57:11).

1. The Glory of God's Power.

a. Psalm 19:1

b. Consider a few fun space facts to give you a glimpse of God's power:

- i. 1,000,000 earths fit inside our sun.
- ii. In a larger star named Betelguese, you could fit 1 billion suns or 262 trillion earths inside that star.
- iii. There are 100 -400 billion stars in our Milky Way galaxy alone.
- iv. Astronomers estimate there could be anywhere from 100 – 400 billion galaxies.
- v. The observable universe is around 47 billion light years in every direction.
- vi. And God just spoke the universe into existence (Genesis 1:1) and He sustains the universe by the word of His power (Hebrews 1:3).

2. The Glory of God's Wisdom (Job 38:2-4; Romans 11:33).

Consider the following facts about the human body that display the wisdom of God and will blow your mind (from Matt Papa, *Look and Live* pg. 52-53).

- i. The human body has 300 million cells that die every minute.
- ii. The human body produces 300 billion new cells every day.
- iii. The human body contains roughly 37 trillion cells.
- iv. Each human body has 6.5 feet of DNA strand in each cell.
- v. If the strands of the human body could be strung together it would stretch back and forth to the sun 70 times.
- vi. The length of the entire human DNA code is 10 billion miles.
- vii. I don't even know how to compute such huge numbers.
- viii. Isaiah 40:28.

3. The glory of God's Sovereignty.

a. "Abraham Kuyper famously said, 'There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, Mine'" (Matt Papa, *Look and Live* pg. 54).

b. God is sovereign over life and death – Deuteronomy 32:39.

c. God is sovereign over all kings and kingdoms – Daniel 2:21.

d. God is sovereign over the weather - Matthew 8:23-27.

e. God is sovereign over salvation – John 6:44.

f. God is sovereign over all things – Colossians 1:16-17.

4. The glory of God's Gospel (2 Corinthians 4:4).

"The gospel is good news because in the gospel we finally see a glory that will totally satisfy us and enthrall us forever – the glory of God. We are supposed to be stunned" (Matt Papa, *Look and Live* pg. 84).

"But let me be clear: We must turn to Him. We must look to Him. Seeing the glory of God in the face of Christ is a work of repentance . . . To truly look toward something is to repent of what you formerly looked toward. It is to consider the former thing not as satisfying or captivating" (Matt Papa, *Look and Live* pg. 86).

C. We become what we behold (2 Cor. 3:18; Romans 8:5-6; Colossians 3:1-5).

John Piper, speaking of 2 Cor. 3:18 said, “Now notice. ‘Beholding the glory of the Lord’ is a present tense, ongoing action — not a one time action — ongoing. And so is ‘being transformed’ — ongoing, not one time . . . **You become most like progressively what you admire most.** If you admire the glory of God most and all of his ways, you will become more and more conformed to that. That is what it says. ‘Beholding the glory of the Lord, we are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.’ This is so encouraging because none of us has arrived (Ask Pastor John; June 15, 2016).

“That’s how we change, by experiencing a greater thrill” (Matt Papa, *Look and Live* pg. 79).

IV. Strive.

A. Consider the following Scripture to help us see the necessity of not only beholding but striving (Hebrews 12:14; 2 Timothy 4:7-8; Romans 8:13; Galatians 5:24; Luke 9:23).

B. Striving is a vital part of our victory over sin.

- “I would be remiss if I didn’t finish this chapter by saying something about the last word in the chapter title [effort]. Yes, the Spirit empowers our pursuit of holiness. Yes, the gospel drives us toward Christlikeness. Yes, faith fuels our obedience. But we still put forth effort. God’s mercy does not automatically produce obedience. We must be told to obey and then go do it” (Kevin DeYoung, *A Hole in Our Holiness* pg. 88).

C. Growing in godliness is not accomplished by letting go and letting God or simply waiting on God; Sanctification [Growing in godliness] is accomplished by divinely enabled toil and effort.

- “If you will here stop and ask yourselves why you are not as pious as the primitive Christians were, your own heart will tell you, that it is neither through ignorance nor inability, but purely because you never thoroughly intended it” (William Law).

V. Conclusion - Behold and Strive – consider how we might weave these two thoughts together:

- “The essence of the Christian life is learning to fight for joy in a way that does not replace grace. We must be able to say at the end of our lives, ‘I have fought the good fight.’ But we must also say, ‘It was not I, but the grace of God that is with me’ . . . Our joy in him will be the greater because we see him as the one who gives both the joy and the strength to fight for it” (John Piper, *When I Don’t Desire God* pg. 44).

VI. Discussion Questions

A. What did you find most helpful, challenging, or encouraging from this talk.

B. When you think about Beholding and Striving – which one comes easier to you and which one is more difficult for you? Why do think that is?

C. When you behold the Glory of God’s Power; Wisdom; Sovereignty; and Gospel; which one leads you to awe and worship of God the most? Explain or clarify why you selected what you did.

D. What is your reaction to “You become what you behold?” Do you find it encouraging, convicting, helpful, or unhelpful, etc.?

E. What is your reaction to the William Law quote:

- “If you will here stop and ask yourselves why you are not as pious as the primitive Christians were, your own heart will tell you, that it is neither through ignorance nor inability, but purely because you never thoroughly intended it” (William Law).
- Do you find it encouraging, convicting, helpful, or unhelpful, etc.?

F. Which of the following sessions did you find most helpful in this class and why?

- Be diligent in the means of grace
- Guard against worldliness
- Think holy thoughts
- Watch for temptation while Redeeming the time
- Ponder the brevity of life
- Spend time with godly people
- Purpose to be godly