

How to Live a Godly Life in an Ungodly World Proverbs 3:5-12

This morning, we finish our weekend of Penitent Men where we discussed God's Expectations on Men. We finish this weekend by asking a question of all of mankind, both men and women. How do you live a godly life in an ungodly world?

- ⁵ **Trust** in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will guide your paths.
- ⁷ Do not be wise in your own eyes; **fear** the LORD and shun evil. ⁸This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.
- ⁹ **Honor** the LORD with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; ¹⁰then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.
- ¹¹ My son, **do not despise** the LORD's discipline and **do not resent** his rebuke, ¹² because the LORD disciplines those **he loves**, as a father the son he delights in.

I. **TRUST (נָטַח – baw-takh) the Lord and He will faithfully lead you through life.**

⁵ **Trust** in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will guide your paths.

This Hebrew word translated "trust" is more often translated "hope" in other Old Testaments uses of the word. The Hebrew word has the thrust of imploring the reader to find confidence, security, and well-being in their relationship with the Lord.

We often confuse "trust" with "believe" and use them interchangeably. Let me use the metaphor of a "parachute" to

demonstrate the difference. I believe that a parachute can function to allow a person to jump out of an airplane and glide through the air and make a non-fatal landing on the earth—After all, I have seen it happen, so **I BELIEVE the CONCEPT of the parachute’s function is true!**

However, **until I am faced with no other alternative**, I will not strap on a parachute and jump out of a good airplane! Although I **BELIEVE** a parachute can work, **I don’t TRUST it enough for me to unnecessarily try it out!**

I often see the same response by people regarding their attitude toward the Lord—they **believe** in the theological concept of God as the Omnipotent Creator able to do anything, BUT to **trust** Him enough to step out of their comfort zone and obey Him is a step farther than they are *voluntarily* willing to go—until they see the absolute necessity!

BELIEF WITHOUT OBEDIENCE IS NO FAITH AT ALL! It is merely a theological concept with little pragmatic application! This type of belief does NOT save because it is cerebral—not volitional.

Until you have a relationship with the Lord that is firm, fixed, infinite, and final faith, you will not be secure in your relationship to the Lord; not able to rest in your commitment to God; and not willing to *“trust in the Lord with all your heart!”*

Do you have the “trust with all your heart” kind of personal relationship with Almighty God ?

II. **FEAR (אָרַח – *ya-rah*) the Lord and He will strengthen you to live an overcoming life!**

⁷*Do not be wise in your own eyes; **fear** the LORD and shun evil.*

⁸*This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.” (cf. 1 John 4:4, “Greater is He that is in you...”*

What does it mean to fear the Lord? It is NOT a cringe kind of phobia fear! It means to have a deep, reverential awe and respect for

the authority, magnificence, and power of Almighty God! My fear regarding God is not that He might condemn me or destroy me—my fear is that I might disappoint or shame Him in my attitudes or actions!

How is a “fear of the Lord” demonstrated? It is most honestly demonstrated when my commitment to obey the will of God exceeds my decision to pursue my own wants and wishes.

In today’s vernacular, It is often stated: **I Am Second**—or **He>I** because He is **First**! Of course, that is easy to say, but it is extraordinarily difficult to live out! All our lives, we wrestle with the *“lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life”* (1 John 2:16)!

However, **John the Revelator** describes how such *“reverent fear”* is the reality of our future: *“²Then I saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who have overcome the beast and his image and the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God. ³And they sang the song of Moses, the slave of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, ‘GREAT AND MARVELOUS ARE YOUR WORKS, O LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY; RIGHTEOUS AND TRUE ARE YOUR WAYS, KING OF THE NATIONS! ⁴WHO WILL NOT FEAR, O LORD, AND GLORIFY YOUR NAME?’ For You alone are holy; For ALL THE NATIONS WILL COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE YOU, FOR YOUR RIGHTEOUS ACTS HAVE BEEN REVEALED”* (Revelation 15:2-4).

Pastor who was in prison for doing illegal things while a pastor was interviewed about when he fell out of love with Jesus. His answer was, “I never fell out of love with Jesus, I just didn’t fear God.

Do you revere God enough to submit your life to Him?

III. **HONOR** (כָּבֵד – *ka-bad*) **the Lord and He will provide for you!**

⁹**Honor** the LORD with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; ¹⁰then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine” (cf. Matthew 6:33 “Seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, and all...”)

Honor is an interesting word—it is often translated, “glorify!” In the Hebrew, it literally means “weighty, heavy, fat.” It conveys the idea that God is powerfully weighty.

We tend to use the word, “glorify,” in a rather superficial way. We think that *glorify* refers to anything that we might say or do which either refers to God in a favorable way or which might add to His reputation!

We can never add to the glory of God because His glory is boundless, BUT we can rejoice in His glory, and we can declare His glory! To glorify God, we must correctly declare and do things that will accurately declare the *weightiness* of God! He is really beyond our ability to comprehend His divine characteristics! Every description and every analogy that we use to describe God are both inadequate and inaccurate! The Bible repeatedly declares: “There is no one who understand God or who seeks after God” (Psalms 14:2; 53:2; Romans 3:11).

So, How “weighty” is our Lord?

Listen to what Jesus said, ⁴²...*Did you never read in the Scriptures, ‘THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone; THIS CAME ABOUT FROM THE LORD, AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES’?* ⁴³ *Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation, producing the fruit of it.* ⁴⁴ *And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust”* (Mt 21:42–44).

In your life, Jesus will either be your CORNER STONE or a CRUSHING STONE.

Notice in our text that the “Glory” of God is in the context of His provisions for our lives: *wealth; First-fruits; overflowing barns; brimming vats*. It seems that the way we declare God’s glory is a function of how we handle His provisions in our lives.

Does the Lord own everything in your possession? Are you an owner or a caretaker...a possessor or a steward in submission to the authority of the OWNER? If we honor (“glorify”) Him with what He has provided, we demonstrate that He is greater (weightier) than our need for the things of this world. Of course, in the final analysis, if we do glorify Him as His steward of this world, we will share His glorious riches as co-heirs—eternally!

Do you honor, glorify, the Lord in how you handle and care for what He provides in your life?

IV. **RESPECT** (סּוּם – *ma-sas*) **the Lord’s discipline because it proves He loves you more than life.**

“¹¹ My son, **do not despise** the LORD’s discipline and **do not resent** his rebuke, ¹² because the LORD disciplines those **he loves**, as a father the son he delights in” (cf. Hebrews 12:7 “Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father?”)

My father disciplined me all the time. Sometimes, I will get disciplined when I don’t think I really deserved it, to which my father would reply, “I’m sure I missed something or will miss something soon. Either way, you deserve it.

That was a true statement.

I now have my own children and can testify that is exhausting trying to discipline your children.

Discipline is mentally, emotionally and physically costly, but lack of discipline is much more costly! Ultimately, it is necessary to develop

SELF-DISCIPLINE, or you will live undisciplined and that will be a cost you cannot sustain!

According to our text, God loves you so much that He will discipline like a father would a beloved son.

SO, HOW MUCH DOES GOD LOVE YOU? He loves you so much that He gave up the splendor of heaven, came to this sinful world, lived a perfect, sinless life, and submitted Himself to the cruel death on a cross just so you might be forgiven to become His divinely adopted child—**there could be no greater love!**

God's love is both protective and corrective. He guides your steps and He keeps you on the straight and narrow. His love is never displayed in fury, and it is never punitive!

Our enemy will try to convince us that in our sinfulness, God will unleash His wrath to punish us. **That's not true!** God has no need to punish us for our sinfulness because the inevitable consequences of our sins are always punishment enough—"*...the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord*" (Romans 6:23).

We can thank God that He loves us enough to discipline us for our good and for His glory (cf. Romans 8:28-29).

Conclusion

1. So, how do we live a godly life in an ungodly world? **Trust, Fear, Honor, and Respect the Lord!**
2. **HOWEVER, THERE IS A CAVEAT, A NECESSARY PREREQUISITE before you can Trust, Fear, Honor, and Respect the Lord.**
3. **WHAT IS THE "PREREQUISITE?" IT REQUIRES THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD IN OUR LIVES before we can have a Trusting, Fearing, Honoring, Respectful relationship with the Living God!**

4. Does the LORD live in you? Have you been born-again? Do you have a personal relationship with Almighty God? It's only by His abiding presence that we have the possibility to live a godly life in an ungodly world!

You may think that God must really love you cause He just seemingly turns a blind eye to your sin without showing any real discipline in your life. If God promises to discipline those that He loves, those who are His, than the real question today is: Are you His?

5. The abiding presence of Almighty God in the lives of believers gives us the power to live purposefully, victoriously and eternally—it is *"CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY"* (Colossians 1:27).

The question for you today is not CAN YOU live a godly life in an ungodly world, but will you live a godly life that is dependent upon Christ for strength or will you live independent from Christ and His will for you and just fit into the culture of the ungodly world in which you live?