

2015

**Valley Bible Church
Men's Breakfast Presentations**

Date	Title & Description	References	Page
May 21	Paul's Practical Plea Present your body a living sacrifice	Ro 12:1-2	1
May 28	Holiness Positionally perfect in Christ	1 Pet 1:15-16	2
June 25	Evaluating Activities	1 Cor 10:31 and many more!	3
July 2	Why Personal Holiness? 5 reasons including being an ambassador	2 Cor 5:20	4
August 20	Your Eternal Home Heaven or Hell ... which?	Matt 25:41	5
August 27	Do You Know? People are watching you	2 Cor 5:20	6
October 15	All Things! Everything is Father-filtered	Ro 8:28	7
November 19	Think About It! Sowing and reaping	Gal 6:7-8	8
December 3	Got Peace? Don't worry about anything, pray about everything	Phil 4:6-7	9
December 10	Don't Borrow Trouble! Tomorrow has its own problems	Matt 6:34	10

Paul's Practical Plea

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 12:1-2 (ESV)

Spiritual Worship

Presenting your body – your life, your most precious possession – to God as a living sacrifice is the ultimate act of worship. How is this done? By daily telling God in prayer that you're dedicating every aspect of your life to Him that day. Then put your promise into practice: Seek His direction in everything you do (Proverbs 3:5-6); seek, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to glorify God in every area of your life (1 Corinthians 10:31); serve God with the abilities and spiritual gifts He has graciously given you (1 Peter 4:10).

Transformed, Not Conformed

In verse 2, we are admonished not to be conformed to this world – not to allow the world system to shape us, to force us into its mold. How can the world force us into its mold? One way is by getting us to think and behave the way unsaved people do, getting us to accept the ethical and moral standards of the world system.

Instead of being conformed, we are to be transformed. We are to be re-shaped, re-molded, changed to a different form (spiritually) than that which we used to be, that which we observe in the unsaved people of the world. Note that this transformation is an ongoing process, not a once-for-all-time event. You've got to continually work at it. The Christian life is not static!

We're also told how to effect this spiritual transformation: By the renewing of our minds, changing our thought patterns and our will to make them more Christlike. This is accomplished by reading and studying God's Word. How much time do you spend with your Bible, the only book God ever wrote?

Practically Speaking

Do we live like the people of the world? Do we talk like them (profanity, obscenity, gossip, lies, etc.), watch the same filthy movies and TV shows, read the same smutty books and magazines, visit the same pornographic internet sites, spend our time and money as they do? Are we allowing the world to shape us? Your spiritual health is determined by what you feed your soul.

VBC Men's Breakfast
May 21, 2015

Holiness

... as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

1 Peter 1:15-16 (ESV)

What is holiness?

In one word: separation.

God alone is perfectly holy – without sin, totally separated from all moral defilement and hostile toward it. Holiness is the preeminent attribute of God.

In the passage above, Peter urges us to “be holy in all your conduct.” That means we are to live separated lives – we are to be separated *from* sin and *to* God. Does that mean we are to live a monastic life? Of course not! God wants us to be witnesses in this world (Acts 1:8).

God wants us to be separate from, to avoid, sinful activities, activities that God’s Word explicitly tells us are wrong, and those “gray area” activities of which God convicts us.

Your Standing In Christ

At the moment of salvation you were united with Christ. In the Bible this is frequently referred to as being “in Christ.” As such, your standing (position) before God is one of perfection – you are positionally perfect because the Lord Jesus Christ is perfect and you are in Him. Perfection is a requirement for entering Heaven (Matthew 5:48, Revelation 21:27), but you are not yet perfect in practice (in this life).

When you invited Christ into your life as your Savior from sin, you were also justified – a judicial act on God’s part by which He declared you to be righteous (in right standing before Himself) and not guilty of your sins (Romans 3:20-28). But because of your sin nature and the sinful acts it prompts, you cannot – and won’t – be sinless until you are in Heaven.

Good News!

When you trusted Christ as your Savior, God created (yes, created – Ephesians 4:24) within you a new nature that is absolutely holy. As a result, in your daily life you now have the choice of following the dictates of the old, sinful nature you inherited from Adam or the dictates of your new, holy nature.

It’s up to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to avail yourself of God’s provision for living a life that honors and glorifies Him. Read Paul’s admonition in Ephesians 4:22-24.

Evaluating Activities

The Bible clearly admonishes us not to do certain things. Thus, a holy life, a life set apart for God's service, must exclude those things. The ten commandments (a.k.a. the *decalog*, literally "ten words") provide a starting point. We are not to worship other gods, take God's name in vain, covet, murder, commit adultery, etc. (Exodus 20:1-17). The Christian who gets involved in prohibited activities needs to confess those sins (1 John 1:9) and repent of them to restore fellowship with God.

There are other activities – commonly referred to as “gray area” or “neutral” activities – for which the Bible doesn't provide explicit guidance, but does provide basic principles for evaluation. Some of those principles are the basis for the “will it” questions below. For a given activity, if the answer to any *italicized* question is “yes,” you should not be involved with that activity.

- Will it not violate the clear teaching of God's Word?
Will it violate the clear teaching of God's Word?
- Will it be profitable for me – build me up, strengthen me – spiritually?
(1 Corinthians 6:12)
Will it be detrimental for me – tear me down, weaken me – spiritually?
- Will it not enslave (master) me? (1 Corinthians 6:12, 10:23)
Will it enslave me, become my master, become an addiction?
- Will it not violate my God-given conscience? (Romans 14:5-23)
Will it violate my conscience?
- Will it bring glory to God? (Romans 14:10-12; 1 Corinthians 10:31)
Will it bring dishonor to the One who redeemed me, He who bought me with the price of His blood?
- Will it edify other believers – build them up and not cause them to “stumble” spiritually? (Romans 14:13-15; 20-21, 1 Corinthians 8:9-13, 10:23-33)
Will it result in fellow believers stumbling, weakening their spiritual life?
- Will it be a good witness to the unsaved? (1 Corinthians 10:31-33)
Will my actions and words cause unbelievers to think poorly of Christians and our Savior?
- Will it not be harmful to my physical body, the temple (sanctuary) of the Holy Spirit? (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)
Will it harm my body, that which belongs to God and for which He paid a high price?

Why Personal Holiness?

Review of past discussions regarding holiness

In Romans 12:1-2, the Apostle Paul admonished us to present our bodies (lives) to God as living, **holy** sacrifices. We are not to be conformed to the standards and practices of the world system, but be transformed by the renewing of our minds through the reading and study of God's Word, the Bible. [May 21, 2015]

In 1 Peter 1:15-16, the Apostle Peter, quoting Leviticus 11:44, reminds us that God desires that we be **holy** because He is **holy**. God knows that personal **holiness** is the route to a happy, abundant, meaningful, productive life for the Christian. [May 28]

At the moment you received the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior from sin, you were declared positionally holy in God's sight, and that will never change; you are eternally secure in Christ. But you still sin because of your old sinful nature. So you must strive for personal holiness in your everyday life. To that end, we reviewed some practical ways to evaluate the appropriateness of activities as they relate to a **holy** life. [June 25]

“Holy living is about experiencing abundant life in Christ, and it should be a daily, even hourly, pursuit.” Dr. Charles Stanley, *In Touch* magazine, April, 2014

Why be concerned with – and strive for – personal holiness?

- Because God asks us (and expects us) to be holy – and that's reason enough!
- Out of gratitude for what He has done for us, we want to serve and honor God with our lives.
- To attract others to Christ. We have the great privilege and serious responsibility of being ambassadors for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20). Let's be winsome Christians!
- For better, more meaningful, productive lives on this earth – spiritually, physically, emotionally, relationally, financially (but God doesn't promise us prosperity!), etc.

“Holiness is happiness in the bud, and happiness is holiness at the full.”
Puritan theologian Thomas Brooks

- For future rewards in our heavenly home.

Reminder: We are saved by grace, not by works (Ephesians 2:8-9). Our striving for personal holiness is not a futile attempt to earn our way to Heaven!

VBC Men's Breakfast, July 2, 2015

Your Eternal Home

You have an eternal soul that will consciously live forever in either Heaven or Hell. And it's totally your choice where you spend eternity.

This present life is not a dress rehearsal – it's the real thing, it's your one and only opportunity to determine your eternal destiny. I've heard people say they'll make peace with God when they're on their deathbed.

Bad decision!

You may not have a deathbed. You could drop dead of a sudden heart attack, or be killed instantly in an automobile accident. That's why the Bible tells us that today is the day of salvation:

Indeed, the "right time" is now. Today is the day of salvation.
2 Corinthians 6:2b (NLT)

You have no guarantee of another breath or another heartbeat. When you take your last breath and your heart beats for the last time, your eternal destiny is sealed. There is no possibility of salvation after death. After death comes judgment, not another opportunity to trust Christ as your Savior.

... it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment
Hebrews 9:27 (ESV)

You were born a sinner, under God's condemnation. So not deciding *for* Christ is the same as *rejecting* Him.

Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. John 3:18

Remember, where you spend eternity is *your* choice. Choose wisely – you'll live with the consequences for eternity.

VBC Men's Breakfast
August 20, 2015

Do You Know?

Do you know ... that you can tell much about a person just by observing them?

Listening to someone's words reveals much about them: What they value and don't value; who and what is and isn't important to them; their goals and aspirations, hopes and fears. Words reveal what's in the heart. As someone has said, "What's down in the well comes up in the bucket."

A person's actions, reactions, and interactions with others are also indicative of what's in their heart, what they are really like on the inside.

Do you know ... that you're being watched?

What would a stranger conclude if he were to overhear your conversation with a friend?

If an invisible person followed you around for a day, what would he report?

Do you know ... that Someone *does* follow you around every day because He resides *in* you? (John 14:17)

The Holy Spirit hears every word you speak, sees everything you look at, hears everything you listen to, knows your every thought, goes everywhere you go, ...

Do you grieve (offend) the Holy Spirit with your thoughts, words, and deeds? (Ephesians 4:30)

Do you know ... that some people form their opinion of God based on what they observe in the lives of those who claim to be Christians?

Based on observing your life, what are people learning about God? Are you a winsome Christian? Does your life attract people to the Savior?

Do you know ... that a Christian is an ambassador, a representative, of the Lord Jesus Christ?

... we are Christ's ambassadors, God making His appeal as it were through us. (2 Corinthians 5:20 – Amplified Bible)

That is both a great privilege and a serious responsibility!

All Things!

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose

Romans 8:28 (ESV)

This verse is only *For those who love God, ... for those who are called according to His purpose*. Romans 8:28 doesn't apply to the unsaved, those who have never accepted God's free gift of salvation provided through the death of His Son. But it applies unconditionally to those who have!

Because the Holy Spirit is the divine Author of all Scripture, this verse is a promise from God that He won't allow anything into our lives that isn't for our good!

We all have, or had, or will have, bad things in our lives. What about those things? The verse says *all things*, not *some things* work together for good.

Nothing – good or bad – enters the life of a Christian without God's permission. As evangelist Ken Poure used to say, "Everything that comes into our lives is Father-filtered!" So if evil comes into your life, God must have allowed it – why? – for your good. That's sometimes hard to accept and believe, isn't it?

Because He is sovereign and omnipotent, God could have prevented the bad stuff that came into your life – kept it out of your life – but He didn't. Why? Because He loves you supremely, as demonstrated by His willingness to sacrifice His Son on the cross for you.

For your benefit, God desires to conform you, mold you, into the image of Christ (Romans 8:29). God can use struggles, heartbreaks and tragedies in our lives to bring about His glory and our good. Such events, though we don't understand the reason for them – and may not, probably won't, like them – are part of His perfect plan for us. We just have to trust Him for ...

All Things!

VBC Men's Breakfast
October 15, 2015

Think About It!

⁷Don't be misled – you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always harvest what you plant. ⁸Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit.

Galatians 6:7-8 (NLT)

These verses are both a warning and an encouragement.

Note the way the passage begins: ***Don't be misled.*** In other words, don't be fooled, and don't fool yourself into thinking you can somehow escape this law of planting and harvesting (sowing and reaping). No one is exempt from this principle.

The ultimate mocking (snubbing) of God's justice is, of course, ignoring or rejecting His offer of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. That's described in the first sentence of verse 8. The people who mock God ***will harvest decay and death.***

The law of sowing and reaping is also an unalterable law that affects everyone – Christian and non-Christian – in every area of life. It is an irrevocable law of life, there is no escape from it.

Just as sowing and reaping is a law of the natural realm, so it is also a law of the spiritual realm. We reap what we sow. There are consequences to our actions. The world operates under the law of cause and effect. There is no way around it. Every time we choose an action, we also choose the consequence(s) of that action.

We cannot sow disobedience to God and expect to reap His blessing. What we sow, we reap. We *will* reap the harvest of our lives. Each sower determines what his harvest will be. Let's personalize that: By your words and deeds, you're determining what you will harvest in your life, whether good or evil.

Just as planting a seed in the ground doesn't immediately produce a crop, so sowing a seed – good or bad – in your life may not produce immediate results. But it will produce results!

In the sixth of his published Life Principles, Dr. Charles Stanley reminds us, "You reap what you sow, more than you sow, and later than you sow."

Think About It!

VBC Men's Breakfast
November 19, 2015

Got Peace?

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-7 (NLT)

Commands

- ***Don't worry about anything***

Worry doesn't accomplish anything – and it's a sin! Don't be fearful or anxious – indicating a lack of trust in God's wisdom, sovereignty, or power.

Please note that the verses above apply only to born-again Christians. If you've never received the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior from sin, you've got a lot to worry about, namely, spending eternity in the Lake of Fire, separated from God.

- ***Pray about everything***

Every circumstance and situation. Major and minor.

- ***Tell God what you need***

Confess known sin then pray specifically for your needs. God already knows what you need, but invites – wants – you to ask.

- ***Thank Him for all He has done***

Thank Him for who He is. Keep Him on the throne of your life.

Thank Him for what He has done in the past.

Thank Him that He cares about every aspect of your life and wants you to bring your requests to Him.

Thank Him that He knows what's best for you personally (omniscience) and has the power to do what's truly best for you (omnipotence) – even though it may not necessarily be what you want or think is best!

Promised Results

- ***You will experience God's peace***

A peace that transcends human understanding, a peace that reassures your heart. Note that these verses indicate that you **will** – not just may – experience God's peace. God's desire is that we have peace.

- ***His peace will guard your hearts and minds***

Hearts and minds is a reference to your entire inner person. God's peace will keep watch over your heart and mind to protect them from anxiety, doubt, fear, and distress.

Don't Borrow Trouble!

You may have heard the expressions “Don’t borrow trouble,” and “Don’t borrow trouble from tomorrow.” They’re rooted in Matthew 6:34:

Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. (ESV)

This verse concludes a lengthy, well-known passage from the Sermon on the Mount in which the Lord Jesus Christ admonishes us not to be anxious (worried) about the ordinary cares of life, such as food, clothing, and shelter. He tells us that God knows our needs and will supply them in His timing. Rather than be anxious about these physical things, we are to put God first in our lives. It’s a matter of priorities.

Verse 34 (above) wraps up the teaching in verses 25-33 with this basic message: “Don’t be anxious today about tomorrow because tomorrow will have its own set of problems.” Every day has its own problems, its own burdens.

What’s wrong with anxiety? Plenty! It can damage your health, it is counterproductive, it may negatively affect the way you treat others, and reduce your ability to trust God.

Anxiety is vain – it serves no useful purpose. It is futile and useless. Regarding anxiety, Spurgeon said, “It does not empty tomorrow of its sorrows; but it empties today of its strength.”

Anxiety today doesn’t help you avoid tomorrow’s problems, but because it negatively affects you, it does lessen your ability to cope with problems that may occur tomorrow. And it robs you of whatever measure of peace you may have today.

Adding tomorrow’s problems to today’s problems just compounds our difficulties. As Spurgeon wrote, “Do not drag the future into the present.”

God will give us the strength to bear whatever evil may come tomorrow, but we’re not strong enough to bear the foreboding – the fear – of it today.

Planning for tomorrow is time well spent, worrying about it is time wasted. As Philippians 4:6 admonishes us: ***Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything.*** In other words,

Don't Borrow Trouble!

VBC Men’s Breakfast
December 10, 2015