

Four Characteristics of a Man of God, part 1

I love working with my hands. I have built bookcases from wood, a bed, cutting boards, and other wooden items. I have put together wooden model boats, and created a variety of such items. I have performed repairs on our cars and our houses. Many people have done the same thing! When we try something for the first time, we usually ask someone for advice, or find directions that will guide us.

God has given us guidance and directions in the Bible too! The Bible provides information about how to have a great marriage, and how to protect the church against false teachers. But the important instructions that God has given us are how to be saved and how to grow spiritually. Throughout the New Testament,

we are given bits and pieces of information about how to grow spiritually. 1 John 2:12-14 paints a picture of three stages of spiritual growth. The ultimate goal of spiritual growth is to know God the Father. Hebrews 5:11-14 tells us

that in order for that to happen we must learn more than the basic truths of Scripture. We must learn both the simple and more difficult doctrines of the Bible.

Our study today is a wonderful passage because it combines many of these principles into one passage. The Holy Spirit gives us a manual about how to become a man of God. It is a wonderful set of instructions. We are going to be given five instructions in this and the next study. Each instruction is about one characteristic of a godly man. Each characteristic is simple because they assume the reader understands the fun-

damental principles. So, we will explore the simple directions so that we can understand how to become a man or woman of God. This study is from 1 Timothy 6:11. We will be given two directions in this study and the last two directions in the next one.

A MAN OF GOD WILL FLEE FROM THESE THINGS. The first instruction about how to be a man of God is given to us in verse 11,

But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness. 1 Timothy 6:11 (NASB)



The first characteristic of a man of God is that he will “flee from these things.” But to what things is Paul referring? He told us in verses 9-10. He referred to wanting to get rich, the love of money, and all the sins and evil that follow. It

would include the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2:15-16). These sins include greed, evil desires, and the worst is drifting from the faith. So the things Paul is referring to result in a split devotion between God and money (Matthew 6:24).

Paul said to, “flee these things.” The Greek word for “flee” is *pheugo*. It means to “run away,” as if from danger. We get the English word “fugitive” from this word. That is, believers are to run from the love of money and all of the related evils as if we were fugitives trying to escape those running after us. In

parts of the New Testament, we are told to flee other things such as immorality in 1 Corinthians 6:18. That would include all sexual activity before marriage or fornication, adultery, incest, homosexuality, and sex with animals. In 1 Corinthians 10:14, we are told to flee idolatry. What is idolatry? Colossians 3:5 defines it as,

... immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed. . . Colossians 3:5 (NASB)

Also, 2 Timothy 2:22 warns us to flee youthful lusts. This helps us understand the word flee. So in our study in 1 Timothy 6:11, we are told to flee from making money an idol and all the other sins that follow.

Another important piece of information about “flee,” is that it is in the present tense. That means we are to always be fleeing the love of money and all the other sins connected to it. Money should be used as a tool for basic needs, and at times some of our wants. It should also be used to spread the truths of the gospel. The man of God must not be consumed with himself, but with God.

MAN OF GOD PURSUES SIX SPIRITUAL QUALITIES. The second instruction in the manual about how to be a man of God is also found in verse 11. It is that the man of God must,

... pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness. 1 Timothy 6:11b (NASB)

Here Paul says the man of God must pursue a number of spiritual qualities. The Greek word “pursue” has the meaning of “to run.” The man of God is to run after six spiritual qualities. The six spiritual qualities come in three pairs. Righteousness and godliness are connected. Faith and love are connected, and perseverance and gentleness are connected. So, let’s look at the first pair.

Righteousness and Godliness. Righteousness refers to external behavior, while godliness refers to our inward attitudes and motives. An important truth about these two is that righteousness flows from godliness. Jesus illustrated them for us in Matthew 15:15-20. Here is the passage,

Peter said to Him, “Explain the parable to us.” Jesus said, “Are you still lacking in understanding also? Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated? But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man.” Matthew 15:15-20 (NASB)

What did Jesus say determines our external behavior? He said it is our heart or mind. That is, our inward attitudes and feelings determine our outer behavior. This is a good illustration of righteousness and godliness. Righteousness flows from our internal godliness.

That is why Scripture tells us that the external behavior of unbelievers will be used at the judgment to condemn them. Our external behavior reveals if we have been born again on the inside. Our external behavior reveals our true self. This reminds me of the movie called, “The Never Ending Story.” It is about a boy who was warned about a cave in which he would discover his true self on the inside. It was produced and released in 1984. I have remembered that part of the story because it illustrates the truth that our real self is on the inside. No one else knows our thoughts, attitudes, or motives, except for God Himself. Our outer behavior reveals our inner self. So, that is why Paul put these two virtues together.

So, how does a believer pursue righteousness and godliness? There are two answers. First, remember that throughout Scripture believers are urged to flee false doctrine. It is a constant theme of Scripture. Paul did that also in 1 Timothy 4:1-5. Then in 1 Timothy 4:6-8 we were urged to be constantly nourished on the words of the faith and sound doctrine. The passage also tells us to avoid false doctrine and wild ideas about Scripture, and to strive for godliness. Then in verse 13, Paul urged Timothy to read, exhort, and teach Scripture. In verse 15, he said be absorbed in these things—be absorbed in Scripture. Why does Scripture constantly urge us to read and study it? Because it is the very Word of God! God the Holy Spirit uses it to transform us on the inside to godliness which then produces righteousness on the outside. 1 Thessalonians 2:13 says,

For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe. 1 Thessalonians 2:13 (NASB)

Notice the Holy Spirit says the Word of God performs a work in believers. Just reading Scripture performs a transforming work. The Holy Spirit uses that Word to change us.

The second major thing we have been told to do is walk in the Spirit. It is wonderful to know that when we study the Scriptures, we are already performing the first important and necessary step to walking in the Spirit. The second and third steps to walking in the Spirit are to confess our sins and to pray regularly. Why do we need to walk in the Spirit? Ephesians 3:16 tells us. The verse is referring to God the Father when it says,

That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man . . . Ephesians 3:16 (NASB)

This reveals that every believer needs help in the inner man. I need help and you need help. Walking in the Spirit gives power on the inside. To walk in the Spirit requires spending time in the study of Scripture, prayer, and confession of sins.

Philippians 2:12-13 is like a ribbon and bow on a package. It tells us how our sanctification works. Verse 12 urges every believer to work out their salvation. That requires self-effort on the outside and the inside. Verse 13 tells us that it is God who is doing the work in us according to His will. Together, these verses teach us that as we study Scripture, walk in the Spirit, and strive to obey, God makes it all work out according to His plan. As we do these things, we will be running after inner godliness and that will produce righteousness on the outside.

Faith and Love. The next two spiritual qualities are faith and love. Paul combines these two together regularly in his writings. Faith refers to trust in God, and love refers to the highest form of love, *agape*. So how does a believer pursue faith and love?

Scripture tells us that we receive faith as a gift from God

Himself in Ephesians 2:8. The passage says,

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Ephesians 2:8 (NASB)

Faith is not something we create by our own will. Faith is a gift from God and He uses the Word of God in the process. Romans 10:17 says that faith comes from hearing the Word of God. So, that is how we first come to have faith in Christ.

But how can we grow in faith? One answer is given to us by Jesus in Matthew 16:8-9 when He was talking to the disciples. In verse 8, Jesus told the disciples they had little faith. Then in verse 9, He told them why they had little faith. Here are both verses,

But Jesus, aware of this, said, "You men of little faith, why do you discuss among yourselves that you have no bread? Do you not yet understand or remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets full you picked up?" Matthew 16:8-9 (NASB)

Notice that Jesus told them they had little faith because they did not remember the miracles that they had watched Him perform. This helps us understand that we will also grow in faith as we remember the miracles that God has performed in the Bible and in our lives. So, read Scripture and see what God has done in the biblical account. Remember and perhaps keep a list of the special things God has done for you in your own life!

James 1:1-4 tells us that God causes our faith to grow by testing us through trials. That is a painful way for our faith to increase. I would rather spend time remembering the fulfilled prophecies and miracles that God has done. Another way to pursue faith is to ask God to increase our faith. Mark 9:24 tells of a man who asked Jesus to increase his faith. So, those are some ways to have more faith.

Next, how do we grow in love? The place to start is Romans 5:5. The verse says the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

Hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was

given to us. Romans 5:5 (NASB)

That means that all of the love of God has already been poured into our hearts. So why do we have trouble loving others? The answer is there is unconfessed sin in our lives. As we confess our sins and study Scripture, we will be walking in the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit will grow. Galatians 5:22-23 tells us that the first part of the fruit of the Spirit is love. We have been told to also love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. We have also been told to love our enemies. That only happens as we walk in the Spirit. As we choose to show *agape* love to God and others, that love will flow out more and more. That is how we can pursue love.

So, faith and love are foundation principles for every believer. Faith and love are the first essential ingredients in developing our relationship with God Himself. Every believer is urged to trust and love God. As we love Him, we will love others. A lack of love for a wife, a husband, a family member, or an enemy can be traced to a lack of love for God.

Perseverance and Gentleness. The last two spiritual qualities are perseverance and gentleness. These two spiritual qualities are concerned with difficult situations. Perseverance is *hypomone* in the Greek. It literally means “to remain under.” That is, Timothy was to continue remaining committed to Christ even under difficult situations. John MacArthur writes that perseverance,

... does not describe a passive, fatalistic resignation, but a victorious, triumphant, unswerving loyalty to the Lord in the midst of trials.

This characteristic does not imply tolerance or a permissiveness toward false teachers, in difficult situations, or with sinful people in the church. Remember that Paul had already directed that sinning elders be removed from office, and Christ had already outlined the process of church discipline for sinning believers. In Titus 3:10, Paul urged the church to reject factious people.

Gentleness comes from the Greek word *praupathia*. It has the meaning of “kindness.” That is, while a man of God is persevering through a trial he was to be gentle toward others. So,

both words describe how a man of God is to behave in difficult situations and toward difficult people.

Now we can understand the importance of these six spiritual qualities. The first two words, righteousness and godliness, have to do with the outer and inner man of a believer. Faith and love are about our relationship with God Himself. From these, perseverance and gentleness can then flow.

CONCLUSION. A man of God flees the love of money and the sins related to it, and runs after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness. These are the marks of a man of God. There is a wonderful song titled, “The Mark of a Man of God,” by Jeremy Camp. Here are the lyrics of the first two stanzas and the chorus of the song.

Verse 1

A godly man is such a rarity today

So many start, strong and true, and quickly fall away

A godly man will take his stand he can't be bought or sold

Hand to the plow, he won't look back though other hearts turn cold

He keeps the faith and keeps his conscience clear

He lives this life of grace through all his years

Chorus

The mark of a man of God

Is what he's faithful to

And what he's fleeing from

And what he's fighting for

The heart of a man of God

Is what he daily pursues

His family, friends, the Word, the church
and worship of the Lord

The godly man daily takes up the cross of Christ

And faithfully follows Him as a living sacrifice

Verse 2

He's not ashamed of the gospel, his sufficiency's in Christ

The power of integrity is the passion of his life

Instead of reckless faith, he has proven that his faith works
The ultimate priority, the Master's plan for the church
Saved without a doubt because his first love is the Lord
And the gospel according to Jesus is the truth he would die for.