

Fan Into Flame: A Pursuit of Holiness, pt.4

2.7.10

Introduction

1. When I say, "You are to be holy." What images come to mind? Somber, serious, dedicated, zealous, moral, no compromise, sinless, dealing with your sin, perfection, etc. In summary, drudgery and self-discipline.
2. Holiness, the word, means to be unique, different, separate, but the image of holiness is different. It means to pursue the superior pleasures of knowing and serving God.
3. 2 Chron.34 -35: the story of Josiah.
 - a. The map of Israel & Judah.
 - b. Sixteenth king of the southern kingdom of Judah (640-609 B.C.). A godly man, he stood in marked contrast to his grandfather, Manasseh, and his father, Amon. In fact, Scripture declares there was no king either before or after him that was as obedient to the Law of Moses (2 Kgs 23:25) – 25
Never before had there been a king like Josiah, who turned to the LORD with all his heart and soul and strength, obeying all the laws of Moses. And there has never been a king like him since.. In the lineage of Jesus – Mt.1.1
4. The series: Fan Into Flame
5. 4 Characteristics of those who pursue the superior pleasures of Knowing God.

Having Godly Influences (33.24 – 34.2)

- A. He could have been a puppet of a godless aristocracy, or had a unscrupulous mother who controlled the kingdom for her advantage. There was no controlling or immoral people who were using their influence to divert the throne from God's best. His mother didn't open the door for him to worship foreign gods.
- B. This characteristic is more about what we can do to fan into flame in other's lives a desire to pursue the superior pleasures of knowing and serving God.
- C. Appl – As parents and grand parents we must be a godly influence to our children and grand children.

- a. Ex of Marty Tyson with her grand son Cory; Lupe & Nelda's influence with Joey; & My dad's influence with Joy. Like Simeon & Anna. Keith Green & Leonard Ravenhill.
- b. As parents, we are filter and block from our children the inferior pleasures of sin. We can't compromise on this! We need to guard what they watch and who is influencing them. We need to remove the filth; remove the distractions; live the life.

Personally Seek the Lord (34.3)

- A. This passage speaks volumes. At the age of 16, he personally sought after God. This is what made Josiah one of the Jews greatest kings and this is what will make you great in God's Kingdom.
- B. Appl – Young person begin today to pursue the superior pleasures of knowing God. One scholar said this & I believe it to be true with all my heart: Nothing seems so beautiful as early devotion to Jesus.. It is this devotion which begins early that lasts longest, and shows the most blameless record. With many young people the sixteenth year of life is a turning–point in a different direction. Josiah then “began” to seek the Lord. Too often it is the period when the restraints of religion are thrown off, and young men “begin” to think and act for themselves in forbidden ways.
- C. Illust – Talking with Johnny Teague and wishing he had responded to the call of God at 18 rather than spending 20 years doing his own thing.
- D. He had a relational pursuit of God rather than a convictional pursuit of God.
 - a. A relational pursuit – I want to know God; I want to experience Him; I want to understand Him; know His heart; live in His presence; know and walk in my identity as a child and His bride. The relationship is most important.
 - b. A Convictional pursuit – I want to live for God; be committed; serve God; radically deal with sin; no compromise. The truth is most important.
 - c. What happens when you have a convictional pursuit of God rather than a relational pursuit of God? You focus on the truth; being right; doing right; the Bible; and if there isn't a transition into a personal pursuit you

become a legalist and full of spiritual pride and eventually turns into spiritual toast. **I know this one; I lived it!**

- i. It's like a person coming into a church and finding a place of service, but after a while they move to another church. Why? Because they had no strong relationships.
- ii. The same happens to those who have a convictional pursuit of God. They serve God and do the right things, but eventually they move on to something else b/c they had no strong relationship with the Lord. Cause oriented people can have this problem – missions, healing, evangelism, helping the poor, etc.
- iii. How do you know if it's a convictional pursuit: You have little grace towards those who differ with you; everything is right or wrong; people who disagree with you are heretics, controlled by the devil, blinded to the Truth; your prayer life is cold; you seldom have time to listen to the Lord. It's manifestation in me in my early 20's – I saw all RC as lost; all Methodist as liberals; CofC as heretics; Pentecostals as whacky.
 1. Ill of Jehu. He had strong conviction, but no relationship and it led to his demise.
- iv. **A relational pursuit will give way to a convictional/righteous actions.**

Doing Righteous Actions (34.3–13)

- A. When we pursue the superior pleasures of knowing the Lord there is a corresponding desire to do what is right.
- B. The Removal of Idols (v.3–7)
 - a. **Images of Ashtoreth, Chemosh, Baal, Asherah Poles.**
 - b. Appl – We must remove the idols from our lives. Those things that grip our attention and turn our focus away from the Lord. They can be anything – spouse, children, work, gaming, technology
 - c. Characteristics of idols – consumes our time, money and focus. It diverts our attention away from God and others. Technology, Sports & Entertainment. Nothing inherently wrong with any of them, but we are

consumed by them. There is a point that a commodity becomes an idol. You plan your life around them.

C. The Restoration of the Temple (v.8 - 13)

- a. He took intentional actions to refurbish the Temple
- b. Appl - It's not just enough to remove the idols. You need to restore the activity of God in our Temple with righteous living. It's like casting out a demon. You need to replace it with
- c. 7 Key Righteous Actions. Mike Bickles book, *7 Commitments of a Forerunner*, we offer a starting point in defining a few practical ways to walk out our pursuit of God:
 - **Pray Daily**: connecting with God while changing the world by releasing His power.
 - **Fast Weekly**: positioning ourselves to receive more from God by fasting two days a week.
 - **Do Justly**: being zealous for good works of compassion and justice that exalt Jesus as we impact the seven spheres of society.
 - **Give Extravagantly**: experiencing the joy of financial power encounters as we sacrificially give to the kingdom.
 - **Live Holy**: living fascinated in the pleasure of loving God that overflows to loving people.
 - **Lead Diligently**: taking initiative to minister to others and make disciples by regularly leading in outreaches, prayer meetings, and Bible studies.
 - **Speak Boldly**: being a faithful witness of the truth with allegiance to Jesus' Word.

Responsiveness to the Lord (34.13 - 32)

A. Verses: 15, 18f., 22, 27, 29 - 32.

B. Responded to God's Written Word

- a. He was sensitive to God's voice in the Bible. It crushed him and motivated him to action.
- b. Appl - God's written Word should get a hold of our lives and shake us. God gave us His word to give us hope and direction. WE are people of the Living Word!

C. Responded to God's Spoken Word

- a. The voice of God from the mouth of the prophetess.
- b. Appl – God speaks most clearly through His Word; and He speaks frequently through the voice of others. Please note the clustering of voices.

Summary: The last three are the characteristics of those who pursue of the superior pleasures of knowing the Lord. The first characteristic is what we can do to encourage it in others.

Keith Green Story

- Songs: The Easter Song; Oh Lord You're Beautiful; There is a Redeemer.
- Born in 1953 in NY
- By age 12, composed over 40 original songs; youngest to sign with ASCAP or Amer Society of Composers, Authors & Publishist.
- Upcoming teen sensation; Decca Records, Jack Benny Show, but another rising teen heart –throbe took his place, Donnie Osmond...He said, "At age 14, I was a has-been."
- Young Adult – drugs, Buddhism,
- Saved in early 20's began writing Christian music.
- John the Baptist type ministry – wake up, repent, no compromise, live wholeheartedly; confronted hypocrisy.
- Challenging songs, born out of his own struggle: To Obey Is Better the Sacrifice, Create In me a Clean Heart; My Eyes Are Dry; Rushing Wind; Asleep In the Light.
- In July of '82, at the age of 28, he died in a plane crash near Lindale, TX.

After striving for years to measure up to God's holiness, at times even questioning his own salvation, Keith came into a deeper understanding of the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross -- both to forgive his sins, and to clothe him in His righteousness. It was like a huge weight had been lifted off of his chest. It wasn't that Keith became less concerned with purity and holiness. But now he was more motivated by love and less by fear in His pursuit of Jesus. He learned so much more about God's grace and the importance of pausing simply to behold His glory and enjoy His presence. That is perhaps, what Keith loved most.

He moved from primarily a convictional pursuit of God to a personal pursuit of the Lord. Keith left us more than his music. Like Josiah, he left us the example of a person who pursued the superior pleasures of knowing God and building His kingdom