

***A Passion for Holy Living***  
Colossians 1:10; 1:21-22; 2:20; 3:5-8  
Free Lutheran Fellowship at Willow Springs  
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Godly men and women in the Bible are compared to sturdy trees. Psalm 1:3 *He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season.* Sin is like a disease in a tree that makes it gnarled on the outside and rotten on the inside. A good wind will blow it over.

I have been thinking about the governor of New York and the Mayor of Detroit resigning in disgrace. What a shame it was for these talented men to work so hard to get so far and then ruin it with a few moments of sinful pleasure. They must just hate themselves for their foolishness.

What a joy it is to make it through life and leave a good example for the next generation to follow. When Pastor Elden Nelson became the President of the AFLC he commented that his goal was to “finish well.” He wanted to make it to the end of his ministry without bringing any shame on the name of Jesus Christ. I believe that if we keep him in prayer, that he will do well, in spite of the pressures and temptations he faces every day.

Don Gander has often commented on the life of William Jones, a Mineral Point business pioneer that built that Jones Mansion that the Ganders lived in. Don can make a long list of the good things that came out of that one man’s life of business development and civic service. The Bible says that *righteousness exalts a nation.* On television I heard the Today Show host Matt Lauer comment on a man that has “a good name.” Lauer observed that we only have one chance to have a good name.

As we think about these things I want to share some great verses from Colossians under the theme, “A Passion for Holy Living.”

God is not so much interested in our happiness as He is in our holiness. And the beautiful thing is that a holy life is a happy life...no regrets. I regret my sins but I never regret keeping a good name.

Have you ever met a retired man that regretted being an honest and hard working employee?  
Have you ever met a couple on their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary that regretted being faithful to their spouse?  
Have you ever met an adult that regretted being obedient to their parents when they were young?  
Have you ever met a Christian on their deathbed that regretted serving Jesus?

There are plenty of regrets with sin but no regrets with holiness. Let’s look at “a passion for holy living” from God’s Word.

### **I. GOD IS WORTHY OF OUR HOLY LIVES**

Colossians 1:10 *so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;*

God is worthy of our holy lives. He has been so good to us.

Forgiveness

Inheritance  
Provision  
Love  
Healing

God is **worthy** of our worship and obedience. I often pray in the morning: *“Lord, help me to live a life that is pleasing to you today. I want you to be happy that you created me and made me your child.”*

When I wear a clerical collar or pastoral vestments I am much more conscious that I represent Christ and that my lifestyle represents the God I serve.

When a greater percentage of our society went to church it was hard to see ourselves as representing Christ. Those of us who go to church today, are the minority. People know we profess to be Christians. They watch our lives.

**We are the only Bible that many people read.** Our lives, day by day, words, actions, represent the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our loving Savior is worthy of our holy living.

## **II. CHRIST IS MAKING US PRESENTABLE TO THE FATHER**

Colossians 1:21-22 *And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, 22 yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach--*

I am still pondering the statement Don Gander made in Sunday School that before we get saved we can't help but sin. It is true. Without Christ in our life, evil deeds come naturally. It is natural to be selfish, immoral and unforgiving.

But Christ is making his blood-bought children presentable to the Father. We are getting cleaned up so that Jesus can present us to His father with joy.

My family has been watching this “Biggest Loser” show on TV about losing weight. I am amazed at the “before and after” pictures of people who have lost over 100 pounds. You hardly know they are the same person.

One very large woman was really starting to look pretty. She spoke with tears in her eyes and said, “I just want to be feminine and look nice. I have been overweight all my life and have always dreamed of having a body that is shaped like a woman is supposed to be like. I dream of walking and not having my legs rub together.”

I don't think there is anything wrong with someone wanting to look their best. These men and women are becoming what they were meant to be physically. Their bodies were disasters when they joined the weight loss team but through the encouragement of their coaches they have become handsome, healthy, energetic and vibrant. On one episode they walked the runway and were greeted by a loved one...usually in tears of joy. When they go home after 6 months the whole community is in awe.

That is a picture of Christians lives that are growing in holiness.

Anger to patience.  
Touchiness to kindness.  
Selfishness to generosity.

Immorality to purity.  
Hate to love.

Some day God will present us to the Father after a lifetime of spiritual transformation. Imagine the cheers in heaven when Jesus takes out his “power point” projector and presents the redeemed before God with before and after pictures. There will be shouts of joy. CHRIST IS MAKING US PRESENTABLE TO THE FATHER.

### III. THE BIBLE SHOWS US WAYS TO CHANGE

#### **Get perspective.**

Colossians 2:20 *If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees,*

Keep a heavenly mindset. Constantly remind yourself that you are a citizen of heaven, raised with Christ, here on a temporary assignment. I like to constantly think about my life from the perspective of my funeral. On that day, as I view my life from my home in heaven, what choices will I be proud of? I don't want regrets in heaven.

#### **Take Action.**

Colossians 3:5-9 *Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. 6 For it is on account of these things that the wrath of God will come, 7 and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. 8 But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth.*

Take out the garbage. Get rid of the media, the attitudes and the behaviors that are associated with your life before Christ.

Destructive habits are hard to break but I have a suggestion. Announce to your family what you want to do...quit smoking, quit complaining, quit overeating. And then tell them you will **give them money** every time that they catch you.

I heard of two men who wanted to lose 30 pounds. They set the time frame and then agreed to pay the other several thousand dollars if they didn't reach the goal. It worked. One man even suggested that you pay \$1,000 to the political party you don't like if you don't reach your goal. That one almost always works. Just imagine the motivational power of having to give money to the presidential candidate you don't support!

Another thing that really helps me live on a higher level is to **read about the lives of great Christians**. Biographies are very inspiring. One of my favorites is called “*Agape Leadership-Lessons in Spiritual Leadership from the Life of R.C. Chapman.*” R.C. Chapman was a lawyer in England who became a pastor. Charles Haddon Spurgeon called him “The saintliest man I ever knew.” When Chapman became a pastor he concluded, “There are many who preach Christ, but not many who live Christ. My great aim will be to *live* Christ.”

No matter what insult or injustice people did to Chapman, he consistently responded in a kind, loving, patient and Christ-like way. Given time, his holiness overcame the evil that assaulted him.

If we allow sin to fester in our hearts, Satan has many open doors to enter our lives and afflict us. But if we allow the Holy Spirit to root out sin and fill us with the Lord Jesus Christ,

Satan must flee.

I am thankful for the fight I have had with cancer. It has helped me grow spiritually. The Bible tells us that suffering produces holiness. 1 Peter 4:1-2 *Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.*

I believe that many times the trials of life are the very tools that God is using to make us holy and “Spirit-filled.”

So let’s take action against sin and seek to be filled with the fruit of the Holy Spirit. This will be the result of a close relationship to the Lord, prayer and meditation upon the Word of God.

You know you have the real thing when people can see Christ in you.

### **REVIEW: *A Passion for Holy Living***

- I. CHRIST IS WORTHY OF OUR HOLY LIVES
- II. CHRIST IS MAKING US PRESENTABLE TO THE FATHER
- III. THE BIBLE SHOWS US WAYS TO CHANGE

### **CONCLUSION:**

Are you tired of being a slave to sin?  
Is God calling you to reflect Jesus?

How do you want to finish your race of life? Do you want to end up like the governor of New York or the Mayor of Detroit? Or do you want to finish the race with integrity and a good name that honors Christ?

If God is calling you today to holiness, pray with me:

*Dear Heavenly Father, I am tired of being a slave to sin. I have allowed selfishness, lust, greed, bitterness, pride, gluttony, jealousy and many more sins to grow in my heart. Please cleanse me. Filled me with the fruit of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness and self-control. Make my life so Christ-like that people will ask me why I am so different. Glorify yourself through my life and one day present me before my heavenly Father unashamed about the way I lived. I don’t have the power to do this. I have failed many times. But I call upon you to change my life in the same way you forgave my sins and saved my soul, by your grace and strength. I pray in the mighty name of Jesus Christ.  
Amen*

### **Twelve Benefits of a Holy Life**

- Job 17:9 Strength.
- Psalm 24:4 Blessing in the presence of the Lord.
- Psalm 1 Blessings, fruitfulness & prosperity.
- Psalm 32:1&2 Blessings.
- Psalm 66:18 Answered prayer.
- Psalm 94:5 The appropriate “attire” for God’s house.
- Luke 1:75 The proper way to serve the Lord.

2 Corinthians 7:1 Our response to the promises of God.

Ephesians 4:24 The restored image of God.

1 Thessalonians 3:13 Prepares our hearts for Christ's return.

2 Timothy 2:22 Prepares us for prayer.

Hebrews 12:10 Is obtained through God's discipline in our lives.