

## Articles and Sermons :: The Secret of Living A Godly Life by Zac Poonen

**The Secret of Living A Godly Life by Zac Poonen - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2009/2/3 20:15**

### **The Secret of Living A Godly Life**

*by Zac Poonen*

Under the old covenant, people were exhorted to meditate on "the LAW of the Lord" (Psa.1:2). But under the new covenant, we are exhorted to meditate on "the GLORY of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18). If we look only at the letter of God's Word, we will become Pharisees, and we will build a church of Pharisees. But if we look at the glory of the life of Jesus, as we see it in the Word, we will be transformed increasingly into His likeness.

The secret of living a godly life (the Holy Spirit tells us in 1 Timothy 3:16), lies in seeing the example of Jesus, Who lived on earth with all the limitations of the flesh, and Who had no more resources than we can have - the power of the Holy Spirit, and Who yet lived in perfect purity in His spirit. If He could live like that, so can we. "The one who says he abides in Him, ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked." (1 Jn.2:6). We cannot blame the flesh any more for our sinning. For there was One Who walked this earth in the flesh and Who did not sin. He overcame through the power of God's grace - and so can we. The measure in which we ourselves follow Jesus in an overcoming life will determine the measure in which we can lead our fellow-believers also to walk as Jesus walked.

Immediately after speaking about the secret of godliness (in 1 Timothy 3:16), the Holy Spirit warns us about deceiving spirits who will come in the last days seeking to turn believers away from this way of godliness to a counterfeit way of becoming holy. "The Spirit explicitly says that in the latter times, some will fall away from this faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits" (1 Tim.4:1). The primary mark of all deceiving spirits is that they "do not acknowledge that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh" (2 Jn.7). They will not acknowledge that Jesus overcame all sin in the flesh. Through listening to such deceiving spirits, believers will finally be led to believe "doctrines of demons" (1 Tim.4:2). Two examples of doctrines of demons are mentioned there: forbidding marriage and forbidding the eating of certain foods. Celibacy and fasting have always been regarded among heathen religions as ways to become holy. But these demonic doctrines will find their way even into Christianity in the last days. We see that being fulfilled in our day. There are Christian groups today that teach that we can become more holy if we remain unmarried or if we fast regularly. Are these doctrines of demons? Yes. Because they turn our attention away from the secret of godliness to asceticism. Instead of following Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit, we then begin to seek after godliness through monastic self-discipline. There is nothing wrong with remaining unmarried or with fasting. But when these are promoted as the secret of godliness, then the error is serious. In fact any doctrine that leads people away from "Christ manifest in the flesh as the secret of godliness" - is a doctrine of a demon. True holiness is attained, not by yoga or meditation or self-discipline, but by the power of the Holy Spirit.

In Colossians 2:20-23, Paul says that ascetic practices may have some external value, but they will not lead us to the Divine nature being manifest in our flesh. Only the Holy Spirit can produce that. In the church, we must set people free from religious asceticism. Otherwise we will be proclaiming only a Christianized version of yoga. The Devil is forever seeking to lead believers either to the one extreme of materialism, or to the opposite extreme of asceticism. Materialism is not so dangerous, because it is obviously worldly even to a carnal believer. But asceticism is more dangerous, because it appears to be leading to godliness. Both these are cliffs that stand opposite to each other. But both lead to the bottom. Irreligious lovers of money and religious, self-disciplined Pharisees are both headed for hell. And as servants of God we must not forget that.

**Re: The Secret of Living A Godly Life by Zac Poonen - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2009/2/3 21:46**

Zac Poonen is tremendous. He has a way, unlike any other minister I know, of presenting deep spiritual truths in a way anyone can understand and apply. I bless the Father for such anointed instruction. This article is a great encouragement. Thanks Greg.

Re: - posted by Trevino (), on: 2009/2/4 8:49

Quote:

-----True holiness is attained, not by yoga or meditation or self-discipline, but by the power of the Holy Spirit.  
-----

Amen. This article spoke volumes to my heart this morning. It's exactly what I needed to hear. I've been beating myself up, focusing on disciplining myself with fasting (I, I, I, always I)... and when I fail... I become utterly downcast and feel as though God is angry with me as His child, and I end up running from Him.

I'm beginning to realize that I've been striving in my flesh to become a holy, godly man, rather than relying and surrendering totally upon the Spirit of God. Gordon, thanks for sharing this.