

# AVOIDING EVIL & SEEKING GOOD: *THE DESIRE FOR MORE*

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“I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may *be rich*, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so *be zealous and repent*. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.”

(Rev 3:15-20 ESV emphasis mine)

What is something that you really care about? Who is someone that you dearly, whole-heartedly love? When we truly love something or someone, we will give it everything. It does not matter how challenging it is to make the time for it or how many personal sacrifices are needed. We will give it all our attention, time, and focus. Whether it be a huge project at work, an important final exam for school, or a particular person that we care about, we strive after what we think is important. No matter the cost.

So if we say that we love God so much, why is it so hard to chase after Him in that similar manner? Why is it so difficult for our mouths and hearts to connect when we say “I love You, God” on a refreshing Sunday morning at church, while our everyday actions like doom-scrolling on the couch after an exhausting day at work reveal the exact opposite?

## **Chase After God**

Chasing after God, seeking good, does not mean simply refraining from bad things. As a Christian, yes, of course you can profess that, “I am fully capable of staying away from drugs, not cheating on my spouse, keeping my cool instead of seriously hurting somebody that got on my nerves,

and not falling at the feet of a celebrity or artist I enjoy”. A lot of us are excellent at avoiding humongous evils such as these (at least I would hope so).

We are to intentionally turn away from evil, completely avoiding it from the beginning just as Proverbs 4.14-15 tells us, “Do not enter the path of the wicked, and do not walk in the way of the evil. Avoid it; do not go on it; turn away from it and pass on.” So when we are asked the question of what is sin or evil, we often start with the big “thou shalt not’s.” But while...

- Murder
- Adultery
- Idolatry
- Pride
- Covetousness
- Drunkenness
- Stealing, etc.

Are certainly great evils of our age- we also tend to overlook the more miniscule or hidden evils:

- The tiny compromises that we make throughout our day
- The unkind thoughts that we have toward a coworker or classmate
- The snarky comments we make under our breath
- The half-hearted promises we make and break
- Or seemingly little white lies we construct.

Though seemingly harmless, they are far more dangerous than we think. Because for every “fun-size” wrongful act that we give in to, those bite-sized chunks inadvertently lead to a “full-size” sin.

## **The Danger of Still Waters**

The lack of spiritual vibrancy occurs one compromise at a time. The fertile ground that cultivates this spiritual dullness is often spiritual complacency. Lukewarm, stagnant waters that, while not carrying any dead carcasses that float to the surface, do not contain any living, breathing riches of life either. Jonathan said this about avoiding evil and seeking good during the past YABS session: As Christians we focus on a lot of spiritual defense, but we also need to implement offense in advancing the kingdom. So, what are we doing to push for more of the kingdom of heaven? Not only to others, but in our personal everyday

walks with the Lord as well- pursuing more than stagnant faiths that are neither here nor there.

Certainly, avoiding big evils is one of the first steps in doing so. But we need to be reminded that advancing the kingdom of heaven also involves avoiding every “little” temptation, compromise, and even innocent looking thing that can snowball into a bigger issue. It involves being aware and honest with the plunging reality of sin, not only in the world around us but inside our own broken selves as well. We must question and be aware of our environments, everyday lives, and thought patterns.

## **Pursuing More**

Avoiding evil requires that we keep our complete and utter focus on the face of our Lord, constantly bringing it back to Him, in order that we may not turn to our left or right. And when we do stumble onto the path of wickedness, thank God that all we need to do is confess our sin and come back to Him once again.

Seeking good is a conscious choice or a zealous chase after God. When we really love God, we run after Him with everything. We will give our attention, time, and focus to that which we love.

As we partake in this lifelong journey of falling in love with God, He is faithful to use our adoration for Him for His glory. For every gaze that we give looking at Him He will use our surrender to carry out His sovereign plans. And in continually beginning with God in all that we do, we are learning to practice the way of life that participates in His kingdom mission. He wants to use us as a vessel for His glory, desiring for us to strive for more than static Christianity.

Let’s not stop at just avoiding big sins, savoring big encounters with God on Sundays or during a spiritual revival. Let us seek to love God with everything, including daily life. Begin to seek good with the little things. What does seeking good in the little things look like in your life? That could mean...

- The way in which you interact with other human beings
- The choices you make in the middle of the day when you’re grumpy
- Or even what you decide to do with extra time on the weekend.

But more often than not, we will find that seeking good must include humility; surrender to God and service unto others.

## **“I am available”**

Making the decision to seek good requires that we ignite a hungry desire to love God. By being zealous for the Lord and choosing good works, we are attempting to rewire the parts of ourselves that want to be apart from God. So that is when we depend on our King for His saving grace just as Paul stated in Titus 2.11-12, “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age...”

It is always a costly challenge to pursue more. However, the only thing we must do is come back to Him in love, again and again. He is faithful to do the rest if we would only allow ourselves to be used and ask for His divine help in doing so.

This first step of availability and surrender to Him can come in many different forms for each and every aspect of life. However, the main goal is to seek good in every way possible. This includes your workplace, your home, your daily routine, where you study, and especially in our church communities. Put on the new self in Christ (Galatians 5.20) that is passionate for the Lord, desiring to glorify Him in every act of service- all of our speech, action, or thought.

The reality is that we all play a crucial role in sharing the kingdom of heaven, but the real question is are you willing to step out and fulfill it? Are you going to take the opportunity to shine the light of Jesus?