

## SPIRITUAL APPLICATIONS FROM MY EXPOSITIONAL STUDY OF REVELATION 4 & 5.

[www.prshockley.org](http://www.prshockley.org)

The following is a compilation of spiritual applications from my expositional sermons on Revelation 4 & 5. Some applications will be more pertinent than others. You may need to consult my expositional lessons of Revelation 4 & 5 in order to better understand the contextual development of the following applications. However, I've tried to add context to remedy those potential problems. I've also included a final thought (primarily from the writings of Oswald Chambers). May this help you as you study this breath-taking portion of God's Word: Revelation 4 & 5.

### I. Revelation 4:1-3: A Glimpse of Glory

Having considered Revelation 4:1-3 whereby we see a heavenly depiction that affirms God's presence, position, and power as the One who His Sitting on the Throne, how we should then live?

**I think if we could see Him as He is, we would immediately filter out the essential from the incidentals.** For example, we would give up our pettiness, the routine hum-drum of living, rekindle our intimacy with God, flee from sin, and unequivocally trust Him with all our circumstances, problems, and difficult situations.

#### 1. Pettiness:

Mike Yaconelli, editor of the *Wittenburg Door* once wrote:

Petty people are ugly people. They are people who have lost their vision. They are people who have turned their eyes away from what matters and focused, instead, on what does not matter. The result is that the rest of us are immobilized by their obsession with the insignificant.

It is time to rid the church of pettiness. It is the time the church refused to be victimized by petty people. It is time the church stopped ignoring pettiness. It is the time church quite pretending that pettiness doesn't matter...

Pettiness has become a serious disease in the church of Jesus Christ—a disease which continues to result in terminal cases of discord, disruption, and destruction. Petty people are dangerous people because they appear to be only a nuisance instead of what they really are— a health hazard.<sup>1</sup>

George Will once stated, "*Pettiness is the tendency of people without large purposes.*"<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> *The Wittenburg Door*, December 1984/January 1985, quoted from *The Finishing Touch* by Chuck Swindoll, 517.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 516.

## 2. **We would give up our rut of routine.**

There is a sign along an Alaskan highway that I am sure has brought a smile to motorists: “Choose your rut carefully...you’ll be in it for the next 150 miles.”

I also think we would give up the routine after having a glimpse of glory. I would argue that many of us have no idea how deeply entrenched we are in the rut of the routine. Externally, everything looks great. We are involved in church, we have Christian friends, we study Scripture, and we meet needs. To be sure, faithfulness it is a big part of Christian maturity-we *need* to do those things.

But I would think that if we were called to heaven like John, we would come back immediately with a new direction, a new path; we would immediately jump out of that rut and strive enflamed for God. We would truly make it our singular aim and ambition to please Him. Prison couldn’t hold us back and home arrest would be out of the question. In fact, I believe we would...

## 3. **Rekindle our intimacy with God.**

Rekindle our intimacy with God. After being in His throne room seeing Him who is depicted with white light and fiery red with an emerald like rainbow encircling the throne, I suspect our minds would constantly dwell on it; I think we would be on our face in long periods of prayer. We would find that memory occupying our thoughts, our day dreams, etc. I think we would find ourselves lying on the grass, sitting on a front porch, taking long walks, pondering all the implications of the vision we received.

Moreover, we would be motivated like never before to worship God by turning the focus from us to the one who made us in His image. Dr. Allen states it so well, “True biblical worship concerns the whole of one’s life; its ultimate meaning is rooted in one’s wholehearted love for God.”<sup>3</sup> I think it would not longer be so quickly said of some of us, “This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.”<sup>4</sup>

## 4. **Flee from Sin.**

We would separate ourselves from that which is profane and wicked. We would proactively seek not to offend Him. We would whole heartily turn away from sinful appetites and fleshly tendencies because it is so ugly and He is so pure and beautiful. Our disposition would be like Ezekiel and Isaiah; woe unto us for we are sinful people.

## 5. **Really be able to trust Him.**

**Going back full circle to our introduction-** I think after we saw Him, we would trust Him so much more with our circumstances, no matter how difficult they may become. After seeing Him, when we found ourselves faced with troubles, I bet our response would be “God is well able to handle this.” In fact, the “What if’s” would no longer be part of

---

<sup>3</sup> Allen, *The Wonder of Worship*, 55.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

our vocabulary; no longer would we be immobilized by the unknown. See, “*Worry occurs when we assume responsibility for things which are outside of our control.*” If you saw God sitting on His throne, ruling and directing His plan for the ages, you and I would immediately realize that worry and faith never mix well.<sup>5</sup>

**Final Thought:** If John’s account is reliable (which we believe it is), then there is no need to experience the court of heaven in order to change our perspectives, mindset, and choices right now. We have enough information from His Word to apprehend that mindset, to cultivate that disposition. We are not in the dark; we are not outside the loop; we have received God’s memo and the memo says, “*I am present; I am the Sovereign ruler of the universe; I am Holy, I am Just, I am Gracious and Merciful.*” Therefore, let’s take God’s Word as our vantage point.

## II. Revelation 4:4-11: What do God’s Surroundings Say about Him?

Chapter 4 gives us certain truths about those who surround Him in this future heavenly vision:

1. First, the 24 elders and the four living creatures continuously worship Him. They do not cease. **They know their purpose. Do you?**
2. Their activity of worship is God-centered. No attention is drawn to them. There is no first person in their claims of worship. **They know what really counts. Do you?**
3. Notice their location: they are in God’s presence. The 24 elders encircle the throne. They fall before Him. The four living creatures are in the midst and around the throne. If they are worshipping Him continuously, they never leave His presence. **They know where to be. Do you?**
4. The content of their worship is most biblical: they continuously bring attention to God and His holiness, eternity, and worthiness. **They know what to offer Him. Do you?**
5. Notice the disposition of the 24 elders: They fall down and they cast their crowns. Whether these crowns are crowns of rewards or rulership, what is absolutely clear is that **they know who their God is. Do you?**

Chapter 4 also gives us a central truth about Him in view of the beings that surround Him?

1. All they do is reflect who He is for He alone is worthy of their worship. Do we?

**Final Thought:** We are continually in His presence. We always say He is with us. To be sure, this is true. No matter how painful or terrible a circumstance is, He is here, He is always sufficient, He is always available. ***But when we say He is with us, have we considered it the other way around- we are with Him!*** We are with Him in our conversations; we are with Him in our thoughts; we are with Him in our dealings with others; we are with Him when we are

---

<sup>5</sup> Swindoll, *The Finishing Touch*, 633.

tempted; we are with Him in our attitudes and actions of arrogance, apathy, our criticisms, hypocrisy, selfishness, and even our flirtations with and enjoyment of sin.

### III. Revelation 4:8: The Holiness of God:

Becoming holy is not an attainment; it is a state into which God in His grace delivers us into the moment we believe: the sinner becomes the saint. Yet we who are in Christ are commanded to conform to Christ in our moment-by-moment behavior as pilgrims passing through this land (cf. the concept of abiding; John 15; we must learn, abide, and obey).

If am to be holy because He is holy then here are six points of application that may help us in obeying this command especially if reflecting His holiness is displaying excellence. But as I list these points of application let's remind ourselves that while we look to Jesus Christ to see how we ought to live, we look to the Holy Spirit to make it happen. The Holy Spirit uses the Scripture to change our lives. But knowing the truth is not enough; we must welcome the truth, and we do so by conforming ourselves to it, always depending upon Him on bended knee.

1. **Cultivate the desire to be a holy man or woman of God.** A.W. Tozer says, *“Every man is as holy as he really wants to be. But the want must be all compelling.”*<sup>6</sup>
2. **In your decision-making, think as God thinks and will as God wills.** Holiness evidences itself in the decisions we make and things we do, hour by hour-day-by-day.
3. **Be resolved never to do anything which you would be afraid to do if it were the last hour of your life.** Like Jim Elliot stated, *“Wherever you are, be all there. Live to the hilt every situation you believe to be the will of God.”*
4. **Develop an intimacy with God with utmost reverence in mind.**
  - a. Psalm 89:7 states, *“God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be held in reverence by all those around all Him Him”* (Psalm 89:7).”
  - b. Psalm 99:5 states, *“Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at His footstool-He is holy.”* Yes, at the “footstool”- in the lowest posture of humility, prostrate your heart, your mind, your disposition before Him. The more we are awed by His infinite perfect holiness, the more inclined we will be to approach Him in a manner that He deserves. The crudeness, the nonchalant attitude, almost flippant mindset we may have when we go before His throne of grace, may begin to fade.
5. **Never tolerate activities that are not in keeping with a holy God.** Place every detail of life under the scrutiny of God Himself. Consider the words of A.W. Tozer. Tozer prays:

---

<sup>6</sup> A.W. Tozer, *Gems From Tozer*, pp. 68-69.

Father, I want to know thee, but my coward heart fears to give up its toys. I cannot part with them without inward bleeding, and I do not try to hide from Thee the terror of the parting. I come trembling, but I do come. Please root from my heart all those things which I have cherished so long and which have become a very part of my living self so that Thou mayest enter and dwell there without a rival. Then shalt Thou make the place of Thy feet glorious. Then shall my heart have no need of the sun to shine in it, for Thyself wilt be the light of it, and there shall be no night there. In Jesus' name. Amen [*The Pursuit of God*].

6. **Authentic holiness points people to Jesus Christ.** If your disposition, mindset, and activities of holiness are not drawing others to Jesus Christ, it is not the right kind of holiness. We are not called to draw attention to ourselves as we seek to glorify God. Instead, we are called to present, reflect, and show Jesus Christ. I don't want people to look at us and say we are good and noble people or that we doctrinally know our stuff; that brings glory to ourselves. No, I want them to say that we here at Pine Valley Bible Church *intimately* know Jesus Christ. Sure, we need to know rightly in order to behave appropriately. They need to see Jesus Christ through our lives. In other words, people need to see that we are all about Jesus in our thoughts, activities, the way we interact with others, and in the manner in which we live. Stated differently, if glorifying God is displaying excellence, Jesus is the only person worthy of displaying. As Dr. Pentecost once said, "*The spiritual life of the believer is the life of Jesus Christ reproduced in the child of God by means of the Holy Spirit*" [From his awesome work, *Designed to be Like Him*].

**Final Thought:** "We must continually remind ourselves of the purpose of life. We are not destined to happiness, nor to health, but to holiness. Today we have far too many desires and interests, and our lives are being consumed and wasted by them. Many of them may be right, noble, and good, and may later be fulfilled, but in the meantime God must cause their importance to us to decrease. The only thing that truly matters is whether a person will accept the God who will make him holy. At all costs, a person must have the right relationship with God...Holiness is not simply what God gives me, but what God has given me that is exhibited in my life." ~ Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest*, 1 September "Destiny unto Holiness" (revised on-line edition).

#### IV. Revelation 4:9-11: The Worthiness of God:

- A. If worthiness is giving what is due God, what are you offering Him in daily worship? Do you offer him what you enjoy and figure God will like it? Once again, like a thoughtful gift, real worship means knowing what's important to the receiver.
1. What do you offer Him in your worship? Does that truly express His worthiness?
  2. When do you offer such worship? Does that truly express His worthiness?
  3. Why do you even offer worship?
- B. Yesterday I listened to the story of a pastor who went to minister in Africa. After being there for a while he turned to God in prayer-absolutely angry at Him. He said I came to preach the Good News of Salvation, to see these dear children be spared from the fury of hell and damnation. But it turns out that they aren't ignorant of your presence. Rather,

they refuse to acknowledge your presence. Why? Why would you send me here to be in the company of rebellious savages who know you exist but refuse to bow to you? In that moment of prayer he came to horrible realization: “To show you, preacher and pastor, that you are robbing me of my glory.” See, this pastor went to Africa for his own sake, maybe for the sake of others, but not for the glory of God.

- C. **Who do we think we are kidding?** When we are not offering him our utmost best, offering God the worthiness that is due Him, we are actually saying to Him, “God you are not worthy enough to receive my utmost.” We know from the story of Cain and Abel that God doesn’t like acts of selfish worship cloaked in unselfish appearances.

But then the question comes: **How can we offer Him our very best?** Surely, because of the residual effects of our sin nature, every act we do is tainted in some way with selfish motives or intentions.

On the surface, that seems right. (a) We are very selfish creatures. (b) There is this warring within, there is this old man, and (c) there are thousands of past experiences in our own lives to which we can appeal to demonstrate that though our actions appeared to be God-honoring, but if the truth be fully known, our motives were indeed selfish.

- D. If it is inevitable that at the core of every action is a selfish motive, even in those acts that appear to be most noble, then I don’t see how any “*reward*” will survive the exposing fire at the judgment seat of Christ. Consider the words of 1 Corinthians 3:10-15. **Every selfish act will be wood, stubble, & hay.**
- E. Thus, while I am not advocating perfectionism, I do believe it is possible to offer our very best to Him with God-honoring motives, when we are controlled by the Holy Spirit, walking dependently, step-by-step in His strength, bearing the fruit of the Spirit.
- F. Having said it is possible to offer Him our very best because of the Holy Spirit’s ministry (s) in our lives when we “*abide*” in fellowship with our living God, let’s look again at the passage, and I want you to notice two qualities of worship that are expressed in this praise:

1. **Humility and submission.**

- a. When these high orders [24 elders] sing their praises to the One sitting on the throne, they fall before him and relinquish all their honor to him.
1. When they fall down, they offer *humility*. They aren’t clinging to their own bit of honor. Nothing is reserved for them; nothing is held back.
  2. When they cast their crowns, they offer submission. They aren’t clinging to even one “smidgen” of power, no matter how well deserved it may be. All they have that is worthy of self-recognition is laid before the throne of God.
- b. To be sure, the positions they occupy and the authority or rewards they have are indeed blessings. They are privileged, blessed to occupy these thrones that encircle God’s throne and to wear crowns of rulership or

rewards. But, in their worship of God, do you see them clinging to their own bit of honor and power, no matter how well deserved it may be?<sup>7</sup>

1. Do you see any reservation as they worship him? No, as they prostrate themselves we see every ounce of energy is directed to God. **They are offering Him their utmost.**
2. Are they distracted in any way in their worship? Are they looking back at John as they worship him? Not one of them said, “I can’t worship right now because John is here. . . I don’t see them asking in their praise to God, “You know, I wonder what this John is up to? I don’t see them saying, “The four living creatures with all their eyes around and within are giving me the creeps **They are focused.**
3. Do you see any embarrassment in their worship? Do they even care who sees them? They don’t think it is embarrassing to drop to their knees and bow their face to the floor. **Rather than be self-conscious, they know who they are worshipping.**
4. Do you see any bit of selfish motive? Is there anything here that says, “what about me? Are they seeking to gain any bit of the glory, to fulfill their personal needs and wishes? **No, their worship of God is their identity.** What about you?

G. If anything less than my very best is what expresses His worthiness, then what are steps I can take to offer my utmost in worship? In answering this question I am going to start with are affections, consider our appetites, then our thinking, and lastly, our surroundings. By approaching this holistically, we may better address this subject.

*Beginning with our affections (the desires of our heart):*

1. **Pray to God every day that you will whole heartily seek to honor His name.** Just as Jesus prayed in Matthew 6:9, “Pray then like this, ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. To see God’s name honored should be the greatest joy of all who love God.
2. **Pray to God every day that you will authentically find joy in worshipping Him.**  
Do you realize time and time again the psalmists links the joy we have in God with the praise we bring his name. Consider Psalm 9:2, “I will be glad and exult in you; I will sing praise to your name, O most High”
3. **Pray to God every day that He will bind your heart to Himself.** Is that not what we ask God to do when we sing “*Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing*” by Robert Robinson?

---

<sup>7</sup> Allen P. Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory*, 483.

One of the reasons why I've come to enjoy this hymn so much is because I am acknowledging God's absolute right to bind my heart to Himself:<sup>8</sup>

*"O to grace how great a debtor, Daily  
I am constrained to be!  
Let thy goodness, like a fetter,  
Bind my wandering heart to Thee.  
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,  
Prone to leave the God I love;  
Here's my heart, O take and seal it,  
Seal it for Thy courts above."*

***Let Thy goodness, like a fetter, bind my wandering heart to Thee.*** A "fetter" is a chain. We need to pray this with all our wandering heart, "Grant us, O God, to see the surpassing value of your goodness so that it binds us, as with a chain, to you. I offer you my heart...take and seal it, for your courts above."<sup>9</sup>

- 4. Regularly examine the desires of your heart and see whether they express the worthiness that is due Him.** Activities tend to follow the desires of your heart. Let me put it this way, "*What do you want out of life?*"

***Moving from our affections to our appetites:***

- 5. Quit nibbling at the table of the world.**

John Piper puts it this way:

"If you don't feel strong desires for the manifestation of the glory of God, it is not because you have drunk deeply and are satisfied. It is because you have nibbled so long at the table of the world. Your soul is stuffed with small things, and there is no room for the great. God did not create you for this? There is an appetite for God. And it can be awakened. I invite you to turn from the dulling effects of food and the dangers of idolatry and to say with some simple fast: 'This much, O God, I want you.'"<sup>10</sup>

Using Old Testament ceremonial language Paul says, "*Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be new lump, as you really are unleavened*" (1 Cor. 5:7). In other words, you are sinless in Christ; therefore become sinless in practice.

***Moving from our appetites to our thinking:***

- 6. Meditate on God's Instructions:**

---

<sup>8</sup> John Piper, *When I Don't Desire God: How to Fight for Joy*, 152.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 172.

*The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul;  
 The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;  
 8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;  
 The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;  
 9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;  
 The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.  
 10 More to be desired are they than gold,  
 Yea, than much fine gold;  
 Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.  
 11 Moreover by them Your servant is warned,  
 And in keeping them there is great reward. <sup>11</sup>*

Other passages: John :17:17; Romans 12:1-2; 1 Timothy 3:16-17.

***Moving from our thinking to our surroundings:***

7. **Give God your very best (Mark 14:3-8):** There is really something beautiful when you give back to God what He has given to you. In that moment, when you give back the good and perfect gifts God has given you, He is worshipped...for you are willing to give up for the glory of God. Consider the anointing of Jesus by Mary in **Mark 14:3-8**. Though you may not be able to pour costly perfume on Jesus' feet, in one sense you actually do when you sincerely love others, meeting the practical needs of others, even if that means it will demand self-surrender.
8. **Determine what places, activities, and thoughts prompt you to worship.** Incorporate those elements into your daily and weekly life. Devote quality time to them. Similarly, identify and avoid the things that hinder meaningful worship.
9. **Lastly, seek to see what few only take time to see: The glory of God revealed in creation. Psalm 92:4; Psalm 19:1-4.** Do we *really* realize that God's creation reflects and even rests on the glory of Him.

**Final Thought:** I want to illustrate upon this last point by a sharing a story from C. S. Lewis' *God in the Dock*.

I was standing today in the dark tool shed. The sun was shining outside and through the crack at the top of the door there came a sun-beam. From where I stood that beam of light, with the specks of dust floating in it, was the most striking thing in the place. Everything else was almost pitched-black. I was seeing the beam, not seeing things by it. Then I moved so that the beam fell on my eyes. Instantly the whole previous picture vanished. I saw no tool shed, and (above all) no beam. Instead, I saw, framed in the irregular cranny at the top of the door, green leaves moving on the branches of a tree outside and beyond that, 90 odd million miles away, the sun. Looking along the beam, and looking at the beam are very different experiences.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> *The New King James Version*. Nashville : Thomas Nelson, 1982, S. Ps 19:7-11

<sup>12</sup> C. S. Lewis, "Meditation in a Tool shed" in *God in the Dock*, pg. 212.

See, here is a man who is able to see what few see. Ladies and gentlemen: every day take a moment, gaze upon some aspect of God's creativity, and allow that display of glory prompt you to worship Him, giving God His proper due.

#### **V. Revelation 5:1-5: How to Display Jesus Worth in your Daily Living.**

1. **Our lack of attention to Christ informs our children that He really isn't important.** Even when we marginally pursue Him we are telling others that He is only worth a marginal pursuit. For example, God you are worthy of our focus only on Sunday mornings.
2. **When we settle for what is good but temporal, our impact will be short-lived.** But when we demonstrate that Christ is life, our passion, and our purpose, that He is the utmost object of our affections, we exchange the unimportant and mundane, for the eternal.
3. **When we shift our priorities, we reveal where our loyalties truly lie.** Just consider: In today's world, under Satan's domain, people are warring for the hearts and minds of others to share in their unbridled lusts, their destructive beliefs, and their deceptive plans. So, we need to demonstrate unfaltering loyalty to Christ. As Martin Luther states, "*Where the red battle rages there the loyalty of the soldier is proved and to be steady on all the battlefield besides is mere flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point.*"
4. **Eliminate pride and conceit.** Oswald Chambers puts it this way:<sup>13</sup>

We have to get rid of the idea that we understand ourselves, it is the last conceit to go. The only One Who understands us is God. The greatest curse in spiritual life is conceit. If we have ever had a glimpse of what we are like in the sight of God, we shall never say - "Oh, I am so unworthy," because we shall know we are, beyond the possibility of stating it. As long as we are not quite sure that we are unworthy, God will keep narrowing us in until He gets us alone. Wherever there is any element of pride or of conceit, Jesus cannot expound a thing. He will take us through the disappointment of a wounded pride of intellect, through disappointment of heart. He will reveal inordinate affection-..."
5. **Don't conform to the trends and personalities of our culture.** Since the most brilliant, most wealthy, the most beautiful, and the most popular, are not qualified to even touch the scroll, then we shouldn't seek to imitate them. Rather, we should be imitating Christ for He alone is worthy. This should be freeing to those of us who feel pressured to conform to the trends and personalities of our culture.
6. **Recognize our true value from God's perspective.** We need to truly recognize that our value, our worth is two-fold. We are God's handiwork and secondly, He purchased our redemption by His own person, the second person of the One and Only Triune God. Consider for a moment at your worth, your significance, by looking at Christ's ministry on earth...what He did for you!

---

<sup>13</sup> Oswald Chamber, January 12<sup>th</sup>, *My Utmost for His Highest*.

- a. In the incarnation He was born to die for us
- b. He lived in the midst of sinful humanity;
- c. He hungered for us;
- d. He thirsted for us;
- e. He fasted for us;
- f. He suffered for us;
- g. He was rejected by His family for us;
- h. He was betrayed for us;
- i. He was ridiculed for us;
- j. He was abandoned for us;
- k. He was abused for us;
- l. He was mocked for us;
- m. He who was innocent was declared guilty for us;
- n. He was tortured for us;
- o. He cried out in pain for us;
- p. He took our sins away;
- q. God turned away from Him for us;
- r. He died and was buried for us.
- s. He arose bodily for us;
- t. He ascended to the right hand of the Father for us;
- u. He sent the Holy Spirit for us;
- v. He intercedes for us;
- w. He united Himself to us (Romans 6:5)
- x. He is preparing a place for us;
- y. He will come back for us or our bodies if we are already dead at the Rapture;
- z. He will even reward us at the Bema Seat;
- zz. He will restore the Kingdom and bring in the eternal state and we will be in His company for eternity.

Put differently, in exchange for our wickedness, He gives us His righteousness. Since our worth is only found in His worthiness, then the best way to allow Him to live through us by means of dependency.

7. Well, how can we do so? **Relinquish, Cultivate, and Remember: RCR:**

a. ***Relinquish all claims to our rights to ourselves.*** In other words, sign away all our rights to God and Him alone. When we see ourselves in the light of Jesus' worth, the "*I, myself, and me*" fades; we have no leg to stand on. How? By relating everything to Christ by making it our aim to please Him; it is not by pleasing ourselves that we display Christlikeness. We need to really realize that selfishness or self-absorption produces so many of the problems in our lives: "*If it is not about me, it's not worth talking about!*" See, we don't begin to really live out our new identities in Christ as a saint, as a child of God until we sign our rights away and become a slave unto Christ and we do so by yielding to the Holy Spirit.

b. ***Cultivate Humility.*** I think it is only in a disposition of humility that we really see the glory of Christ. Selfishness so clouds our sight, obscures our path, and limits our visibility—the focus is on us. It fosters famine in the soul and dissatisfaction towards the blessings He has already given us: our

spouses, our children, our homes, etc. And false humility invites the scourging of God; He hates deception.

c. **Remember** it is not what you do for Him but what He does through you that reflects His worthiness. So many of us gauge spiritual success by what we do for God, but see, every person in this room is unworthy. Relishing in our own glory or even in someone else's success, as profound as it may be, is unfortunate: If we do it will be wood, hay, and stubble, in the end; we will have robbed the glory that is due Him. Rather, we are called to abide, to bend low, to be dependent upon Him. **Candle**. The characteristic of a candle is to consume itself in order to bring forth light. We are to be the same!

8. **Take pleasure in Jesus' worth.** Duty, while important, is insufficient also take cultivate utmost affections for Jesus Christ in our lives; See we must take pleasure in His person, His worth. For example:

If I buy a bouquet of tulips for my wife and come to the front door, ring the door, and place the tulips behind my back to surprise her. She opens the door and says, "*Why did you ring the door bell?*" I pull out the tulips and hand them to her. Then she says, "*What is the occasion for these tulips; why did you do you this?*" I say to her, "*It is my duty.*" How will she respond?

But if I were go back in time and re-do the event and repeat the same sequence but this time after she asks the question, "*What is the occasion for the tulips, why did you do this? And I say to her "Because I couldn't help myself;"*" I think my wife will know that I am relishing in who she is.

While it is our responsibility or a duty to relinquish, cultivate humility, and yield to God, it is not merely for duty sake; that alone is insufficient to allow Him to be the utmost object of our affections; we need to take pleasure in the worthiness and glory of Christ.

9. **Final thought from Oswald Chambers:**<sup>14</sup>

Have you the slightest reliance on anything other than God? Is there a remnant of reliance left on any natural virtue, any set of circumstances?...It is quite true to say - "I cannot live a holy life," but you can decide to let Jesus Christ make you holy. "Ye cannot serve the Lord God"; but you can put yourself in the place where God's almighty power will come through you. Are you sufficiently right with God to expect Him to manifest His wonderful life in you? [And when we say]"Nay, but we will serve the Lord." [we need to remember that] It is not an impulse, but a deliberate commitment. You say - But God can never have called *me* to this, I am too unworthy, it can't mean *me*. It does mean you, and the weaker and feebler you are, the better. The one who has something to trust in is the last one to come anywhere near saying - "I will serve the Lord."

---

<sup>14</sup> Chambers, January 9<sup>th</sup>, *My Utmost for His Highest*.

We say - "If I really could believe!" The point is - If I really *will* believe. No wonder Jesus Christ lays such emphasis on the sin of unbelief...If we really believed that God meant what He said - what should we be like! Dare I really let God be to me all that He says He will be?

## VI. Revelation 5:6-14: What is *your* Story, What is *your* Song?

1. Do you know these expressions of worship? Do you ponder these perfections of God? If not, why? As I pondered these songs I've thought to myself:
  - a. Since Christ is the only one worthy because He died for us, then why aren't we more grateful than we are?
  - b. Since Christ is the only one worthy because He redeemed us, then why do we still seek the approval of and/or compare ourselves with others?
  - c. Since Christ is the only one worthy because He is our God and we are His people, then why do we do so little to express our utmost affections for Him?
  - d. Since all of creation declares that God the Father and God the Son be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever, then why don't our daily lives reflect consistent godliness?
2. These questions go back to the issue of Jesus' worthiness in our daily lives. Why aren't our lives more expressive of Jesus' worthiness? Or let me put it this way, "*Why do our lives reflect the west side of the cathedral rather than the east?*"
3. For some the answer is ignorance. We don't know the Scripture because we are either new believers or are untaught. Meditating on the Scripture both individually and corporately and being personally disciplined by a mature believer can remedy that problem. But for those of us who have studied the Scriptures carefully and purposefully, still why aren't we more expressive of Christ's worthiness as we go about our daily lives? Yes, we know He is worthy! Yes we know Christ is worthy to receive power, riches, wisdom, might, honor, and blessing! Yes, we know that one day we will fall down and worship Him without any hindrance (which shouldn't be an excuse)! But why aren't we unpacking these truths more effectively in how we live, moment-by-moment, day-by-day?
4. I submit to you that *one* of the major reasons why is because we find ourselves preoccupied with fleshly lusts, growing sinful appetites, and selfish tendencies.
5. How do you know what these fleshly appetites are? Ask yourself what sins you find yourself regularly committing or consistently confessing. You will likely see there is a pattern and I submit to you that along with it, you also find guilt and embarrassment. You may feel guilty because in retrospect you felt that your confession for that sin was sincere, acknowledging to God that it is wrong (1 John 1:9), but you find yourself committing it again, again, and again.

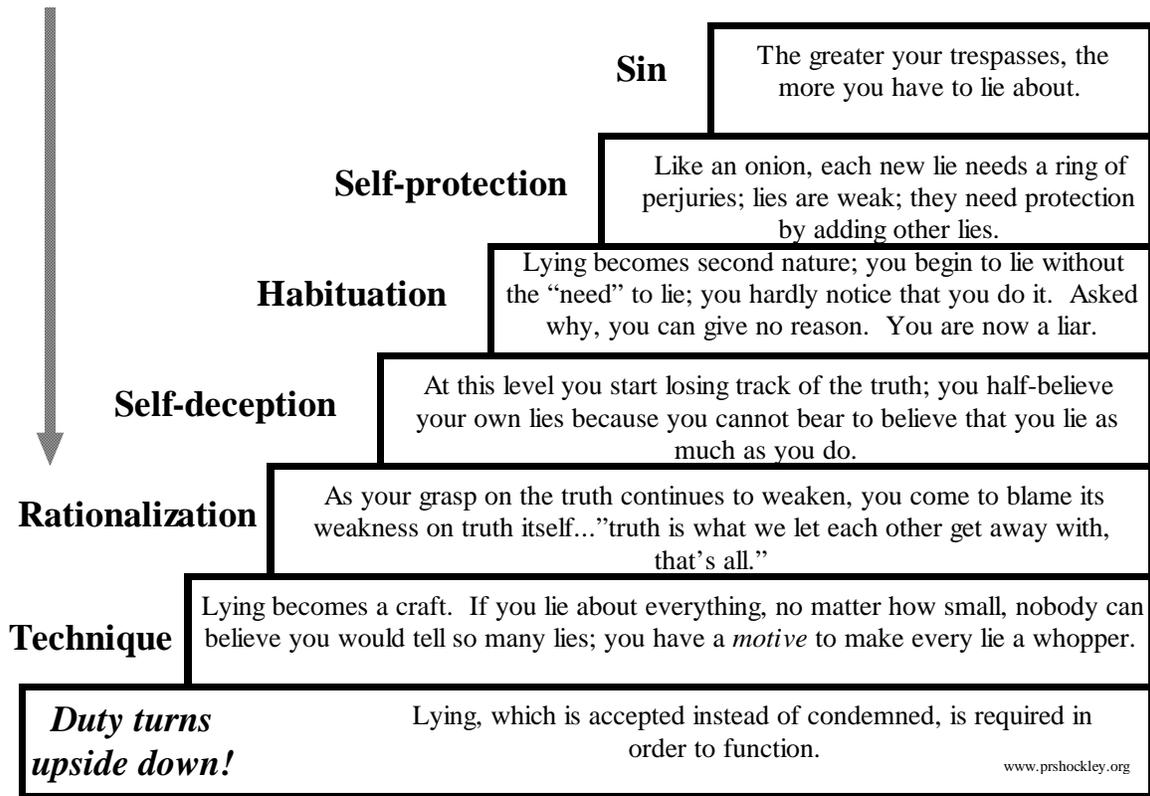
6. As I've mentioned before an old theologian once told me that the sins of his youth still haunt him today but as he has walked with the Lord over the years they have lost their attractiveness.
7. While sincere confession restores our intimacy with God, it does not deal with the sinful appetites we have fostered and fed due to our sinful disobedience. They are still lurking in the shadows. But we need to deal with these sinful appetites for two reasons.
  - a. If we desire our worship to be more Christ-centered, then we need to put them to death as Paul states in Colossians 3:5;
  - b. Because sinful lusts can take us places we never thought we would go.
8. Radio personality Paul Harvey tells the story of how an Eskimo kills a wolf. The account is grisly, yet it offers fresh insight into the consuming, self-destructive nature of sinful appetites.

"First, the Eskimo coats his knife blade with animal blood and allows it to freeze. Then he adds another layer of blood, and another, until the blade is completely concealed by frozen blood.

"Next, the hunter fixes his knife in the ground with the blade up. When a wolf follows his sensitive nose to the source of the scent and discovers the bait, he licks it, tasting the fresh frozen blood. He begins to lick faster, more and more vigorously, lapping the blade until the keen edge is bare. Feverishly now, harder and harder the wolf licks the blade in the arctic night. So great becomes his craving for blood that the wolf does not notice the razor-sharp sting of the naked blade on his own tongue, nor does he recognize the instant at which his insatiable thirst is being satisfied by his OWN warm blood. His carnivorous appetite just craves more--until the dawn finds him dead in the snow!" It is a fearful thing that people can be "consumed by their own lusts."

9. Another way of looking at our fleshly appetites is by considering the downward steps we take when we do sin. And there is a lesson here in view of what I am about say: *The more we sin a particular sin the more we are taken by that particular sin.* For example, let's consider the issue of lying.

**The Seven-Step Descent of Dishonesty: The more we lie the more we are taken in by our lies.**  
 ~ adapted from *What We Can't Not Know* by J. Budziszewski (Dallas: Spence, 2003), 195-97.



Since we desire to honor God, what can we do about these fleshly appetites? We need to put them to death. Once again, I am not talking about confession of sin. Sincere confession of sin is *the* divine provision that restores the believer’s intimacy with God as stated in 1 John 1:9. Rather, what I am talking about are those sinful appetites, those “patterned” tendencies that we too often find ourselves yielding to that produces the need to confess our sins to God. What I am talking about is dealing with those sinful appetites that so easily entangle us, keeping us from offering our utmost affections to God.

The following are ideas on how to put to death the deeds of the flesh which are adapted from Dr. John Hannah of Dallas Theological Seminary when he spoke at a spiritual life conference on having affections for Jesus Christ which my former church hosted:

**The Mortification of Sin:**

1. Consider the dangerous consequences of sin both vertically and horizontally.
  - a. Vertically: We experience guilt; loss of peace & strength, grieve the Holy Spirit and smother its ministry like water on a fire.
  - b. Horizontally: We burn bridges, we damage relationships, we hurt or even ruin the lives of others whether emotionally and/or physically.

2. Load the conscience with the guilt of sin (consider God's infinite patience & forbearance; God has been so good to you...why would you want to insult Him-He hates sin!).
3. Consider the state of one's self all times in terms of frailty, because of depravity, & vileness: the presence of sin; no one is immune to sin (no matter how much doctrine one knows!). Each time we give in to that temptation our appetite for it grows. For example, if we struggle with gluttony, then we don't need to go a buffet. If we struggle with internet pornography, then we need to take the internet out of our home.
4. Trace the particular manifestation of sin to its root. It is nearly enough to deal with the fruit; we need to pull out the root. If we don't deal with the root of the problem why we have affections for this particular sin, then odds are the appetite will re-grow.
5. Don't hurry to gain relief for your sin. Sure, we need to immediately confess it, but we need take time and consider why we are doing this just as when we send our kids into their room to think about their bad behavior.
6. Act quickly against the first temptations toward sin. Scripture says flee from sin but stand firm against the devil. I think there is a significant reason for this command!
9. Allow God to speak peace rather than assume you have it. See we can so easily deceive ourselves into thinking everything is okay in our fellowship with God; He is really pleased with our behavior. But because we are so hardened by our sin or so stubborn, if truth is known, we lack that hard pursuit of God; we are more carnal than spiritual. Usually our spouse is the one who knows where we truly are spiritually.
10. Other mental weapons in the struggle against sin involve whole hearted trust, faith, & obedience; the presence of right thoughts; the meditation upon and memorization of Scripture; yielding to the Holy Spirit, moment-by-moment; the recognition of God's sovereignty, the effects of sin; long periods of intense, sincere, fervent prayer; the love & kindness of God; the wonder of Calvary; the reality of indwelling sin. ~ Dr. John Hannah

**Final thought by Oswald Chambers:** "Anything that disturbs our rest in Him must be rectified at once, and it is not rectified by being ignored but only by coming to Jesus Christ. If we will come to Him, asking Him to produce Christ-awareness in us, He will always do it, until we fully learn to abide in Him. Never allow anything that divides or destroys the oneness of your life with Christ to remain in your life without facing it. Beware of allowing the influence of your friends or your circumstances to divide your life. This only serves to sap your strength and slow your spiritual growth. Beware of anything that can split your oneness with Him, causing you to see yourself as separate from Him. Nothing is as important as staying right spiritually. And the only solution is a very simple one— "Come to Me . . . ." The intellectual, moral, and spiritual depth of our reality as a person is tested and measured by these words [of Jesus Christ who says, "Come to Me"].<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Oswald Chambers, August 19<sup>th</sup>, *My Utmost for His Highest*.