

August / 2017

Attitudes About Elders (Doy Moyer)  
Attitudes Without Elders (Luke Moyer)  
Teach us to Pray: The Bread We Need (Luke Moyer)  
Godliness (Part 1) (Forrest D Moyer)

8  
Issue

# MIND YOUR FAITH M a g a z i n e



## Attitudes About Elders

## Editor's Notes

In this second issue regarding eldership, we wish to focus on the congregational attitude towards the elders and even the appointing process. How we go about dealing with conflict is just as important as the conflict itself (1 Timothy 5:19-20). Focusing on the duties, qualities, and character of elders is important, but we must begin with our own attitude. Where do we get our standards for elders? Where shall we begin if we think an elder errs? These types of questions are not about any particular elder or their situation, but rather our mind and understanding of scripture.

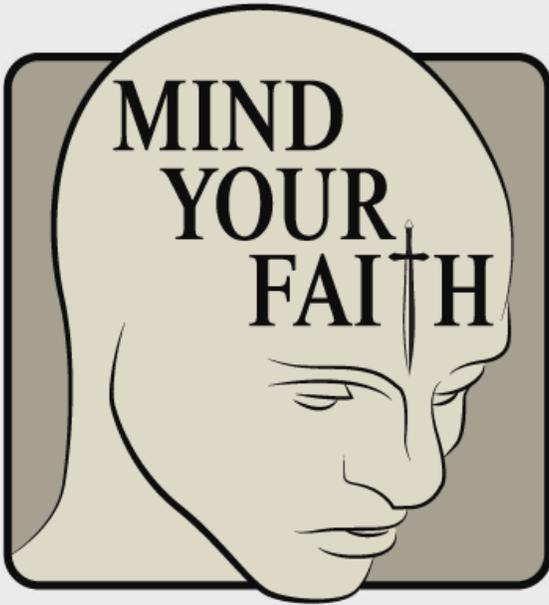
We are to honor, (1 Tim 5:17) to hold in high regard (1 Thess 5:13), and to have confidence in and submit to (Heb 13:17) our elders. These are the attitudes we have as we approach elders, regardless of the situation. Even when we are not currently under an elder's oversight, we should respect the office and its function.

In picking the visual theme for the issue, I decided to approach with the understanding of seafaring. If we compare our journey of faith as a sea voyage (1 Tim 1:19), then there are several analogies we might make to the functions and roles within the church. In a pastoral setting, the elders are the shepherds. In our seafaring analogy, I have chosen the 'oversight' of a lighthouse. It is possible to navigate a shoreline without lighthouses, but it is certainly more difficult. A vessel can much more accurately and safely navigate difficult waters when such a solid landmark is in view.

The Overseers, then, not only watch out from a different vantage point that we (via spiritual maturity and logistical information), but we can look to them as helpers and guides. If we ignore the guides, then we risk danger. If we approach their purpose with arrogance or ignorance, then we may run ashore. Elders, as examples for us to follow, and as overseers of our souls, represent in a very dignified way, the lights which are to shine before men, that as we see it we may give glory to God.

~Luke Moyer





## Editors

Doy Moyer  
Luke Moyer

## Contributors

Forrest Moyer



[Moyerpress.com](http://Moyerpress.com)



[facebook.com/moyerpress/](https://facebook.com/moyerpress/)

# Contents

Attitudes about Elders <i>(Doy Moyer)</i>	4
Attitudes Without Elders <i>(Luke Moyer)</i>	12
Teach us to Pray: The Bread We Need <i>(Luke Moyer)</i>	16
Godliness (Part I) <i>(Forrest D Moyer)</i>	18

# Attitudes about Elders

**DOY MOYER**



**B**rothers and sisters in Christ comprise a body, with each part meant to function and share in the growth and participation. In speaking about the fact that all are to be servants, that we are to grow together to attain unity, Paul writes, in Ephesians 4:15–16: “speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.”

This kind of participation with others can be very delicate. Given that we have a variety of differences in how we might think, the only way this kind of unity and growth can be accomplished is by submitting ourselves first to God, then to each other. We must never make the work about our own wills. This should be recognized even by the two greatest commandments: love God and love your neighbor as yourself.

Submission to one another needs to happen, according to Ephesians 5:21, “in the fear of Christ.” And it needs to be done in love, not out

of spite. It’s not a matter of mere duty, but is based on an attitude that seeks what is best for others. Once again, as we think about attitudes here, we remind ourselves of Philippians 2:3–5: “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus...”

Why do we keep this reminder constantly in front of us? Because it is the only at-



united in spirit, intent on one purpose.”

All it takes to rip open a congregation and wreak havoc is that one Diotrophes (of 3 John) who pushes his own agenda, who refuses to reason, who imposes his own selfish ambition upon others and does so to the point of division and great harm to the body. The one who acts this way does so on the pretension that he is the greatest among the disciples, the very attitude condemned by Jesus among His disciples (Luke 22:24–27). Brethren, I have seen it and lived through it first hand. May God help each of us to maintain a proper, godly, loving, gracious spirit.

### **God Wants Elders and Deacons in a Local Congregation.**

Local churches exist in order to benefit, bless, and edify Christians as they worship and work together to the praise of God’s glory.

Congregations are established as independent, autonomous groups in the New Testament. There was no central organization or earthly headquarters to which they answered. Each congregation answers to Christ as head, and nothing or no one else. We are amenable to no human institution. Of course, while the apostles lived, they served as a living canon of God’s will and could direct the churches (cf. 1 Cor. 16:1–

2). They left written records of what God wants, and these are the Scriptures. It is these that give us our direction as a local church.

Each congregation was to be organized as its own functioning entity, and as part of this God established a simple pattern for churches: there would be overseers, deacons (special servants), and the rest of the saints in that local place. Evangelists would be a part of this, too.

Acts 14:23 speaks of Paul and Barnabas appointing elders in every church they were teaching. Paul wrote to both Titus and Timothy telling them of the importance of elders in the congregations with which they were laboring. To that end, Paul gave qualifications for men who would serve in that capacity. I believe these to be character qualifications primarily, which would indicate the kind of man that the shepherd is.

Elders are limited to their own local work; they have no authority over other congregations. That the elders were to serve only the local group over which they had been appointed is clear. 1 Peter 5:1–3 says it this way:

“Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not un-

itude that will work to help make a congregation (and a Christian) what God intends. Indeed, it is the only attitude that truly follows the attitude of our Lord and Savior. If we are concerned about being Christians, if we are concerned about what it really means to follow Christ, then this is the attitude we must imbibe. As Paul put it in the first two verses: “Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love,

der compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.”

This shows that they are shepherds who tend and nourish, and overseers of the work. Further, Paul told the elders the church at Ephesus, in Acts 20:28:

“Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”

Again, biblical Elders have no authority to make the calls for other congregations. They are localized, and are called upon to oversee the work with which they are associated. This should be seen as a blessing when we have shepherds who can concentrate on this work and dedicate themselves to the health of this flock.

Paul addressed the church at Philippi this way (1:1–2):

“Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

We also want to notice that the terms elders, overseers,

and shepherds, all refer to the same position. We see this in Acts 20. Paul called “the elders of the church” at Ephesus together (vs. 17). The term elder indicates one who is mature—its more about spiritual maturity than just age. Wisdom should be associated with the mature. Then, as Paul spoke to them, he referred to them in vs. 28 as “overseers.” Some translations will say “bishops,” but the idea is the same. They oversee the work, making sure that it is proceeding according to God’s will as revealed. Then, to describe this work, they are told to “shepherd” the church. Another term for shepherd is “pastor,” which is often misused today to refer to just the preacher. To shepherd is to tend a flock, nourishing, caring for it, guiding it.

The terms used are not meant to be titles. They are descriptive in nature. That is, elders are mature children of God who have godly wisdom. They oversee the local work—not at lords, of course, though they do have to make many judgment calls (which, again, is why wisdom is so important). Their work is really that of shepherding, feeding, nourishing, tending the local flock of God’s people. It is a great responsibility and is, indeed, a position of service.

Now the point of this is that God wants local congregations to have men who will serve as shepherds. Because

of God’s desire, we need to do at least two things:

1. Teach. Teach the truth about it to all, teach our youth, teach our men, and help to bring men to the point where they can serve. This is a continual process.

2. As congregations, pay close attention to this so that we will choose godly and qualified men who will serve.

The one option we do not have is to ignore God’s will about it. Having qualified men, we need to recognize them for this and be willing to serve under their oversight.

## **Our Attitude Toward Elders is Critical**

Let’s understand that the work of shepherding a local group is not easy. Look back to Acts 20. After Paul told the elders of the Ephesus church to shepherd the flock over which they were made overseers, he continued (vv. 29–32):

“I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the



“Appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work” 1 Thess 5:12-13



inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”

There would be hard work ahead of them, keeping the flock safe and properly fed. One of the tasks they have, as Paul told Titus in speaking of elders, is that they are to be “holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict” (vs. 9). No one cherishes having to do this, but do this they must.

They are to watch out for the souls of those whom they serve. No, they aren’t lords, as we have well noted, but they are still overseers and have the task of keeping an

eye out for the Christians within their local group. Hebrews 13:17 puts it this way:

“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.”

Notice here that the writer says to “Obey your leaders and submit to them.” “Obey” here is a word that is elsewhere used to talk about being persuaded, won over, or taking advice. The idea isn’t that of a dictatorship issuing laws, but that of a willing submission to the judgments of those who serve in this capacity. In other words, we are

to listen to and be persuaded by our leaders. They are in that position because we trust that they have godly wisdom and have the best interests of all of us at heart.

As overseers, they have judgments to make. They aren’t changing God’s laws or issuing new commands; indeed they are, as all of us are, amenable to God and His word. Transgressing God’s word is grievous no matter who we are. No one has a right to overstep biblical boundaries and God’s authority. However, being committed to God and His truth, they are making judgments about various aspects of the work here that help keep things running efficiently. We need to respect

these judgment calls and help them fulfill what they ask of us so that they will be able to serve with joy, not grief.

They are also dealing with souls, our souls, and this means that they will be involved with knowing us, responding to problems that may arise, and helping people work through difficulties that could put their souls at risk. As a corollary to this, let's understand that the shepherds will have information about situations that not everyone else will have. They will know details that they will not share with everyone, nor should they. They will be handling matters that are sensitive, and they will do so discreetly. All of us need to be very understanding of this, and not make judgments about them that fail to take into account the highly sensitive nature of their work. Let's always resolve not to make things harder on them than what they already are.

Help the elders serve with joy, not grief. It is never profitable for us to create stumbling blocks for the work. It does us no good to fuss about the judgment calls made by the elders. Grumbling and complaining because we might disagree about their judgments will be neither fruitful nor helpful in their

service. How we talk about the elders and what our children hear us say will have much impact. Help them have joy in their service! It's hard enough without us second-guessing the judgments they have to continually make.

We need to remember that these are still brothers. Their wives are still our sisters. Their children and families are our family. Let's treat all

**“let's understand that the shepherds will have information about situations that not everyone else will have. They will know details that they will not share with everyone, nor should they. They will be handling matters that are sensitive, and they will do so discreetly.”**

with the respect and love that we would want from anyone dealing with our own flesh and blood. We are God's household, and this familial bond should be great and greatly cherished.

1 Cor. 13:4-7—Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not

seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

We must apply these principles of love to the process of selecting and working with elders. Respect, love, and unity are what we ought to desire because these are what God desires.

What if we disagree about something? Then we need to assess whether the disagreement is over a personal judgment or over biblical doctrine. Let's say more about this.

### **It's Not about Personal Preferences**

We must be able to differentiate between what the biblical text says and requires and what our own preferences might be about a matter. This is true whether we are talking about a judgment made by the current eldership or whether we are talking about the consideration of a man to become an elder or deacon.

There might be things that happen during a period of selection that you don't personally care for. It may not be

exactly how you would like to see something happen. While God wants congregations to have elders, nowhere does He specify the exact process for doing this. Judgments have to be made that are in line with Scripture, and which are also expedient for groups of various sizes.

Because of these judgments, one might be tempted to raise issues that could potentially create bigger problems. Great care needs to be taken, for while we always need to stand for what is right and true to the Scriptures, we must first make sure this is what the Scriptures demand, as opposed to making our own preferences and personal consciences what everyone else must bow to.

Let's illustrate this in mun-

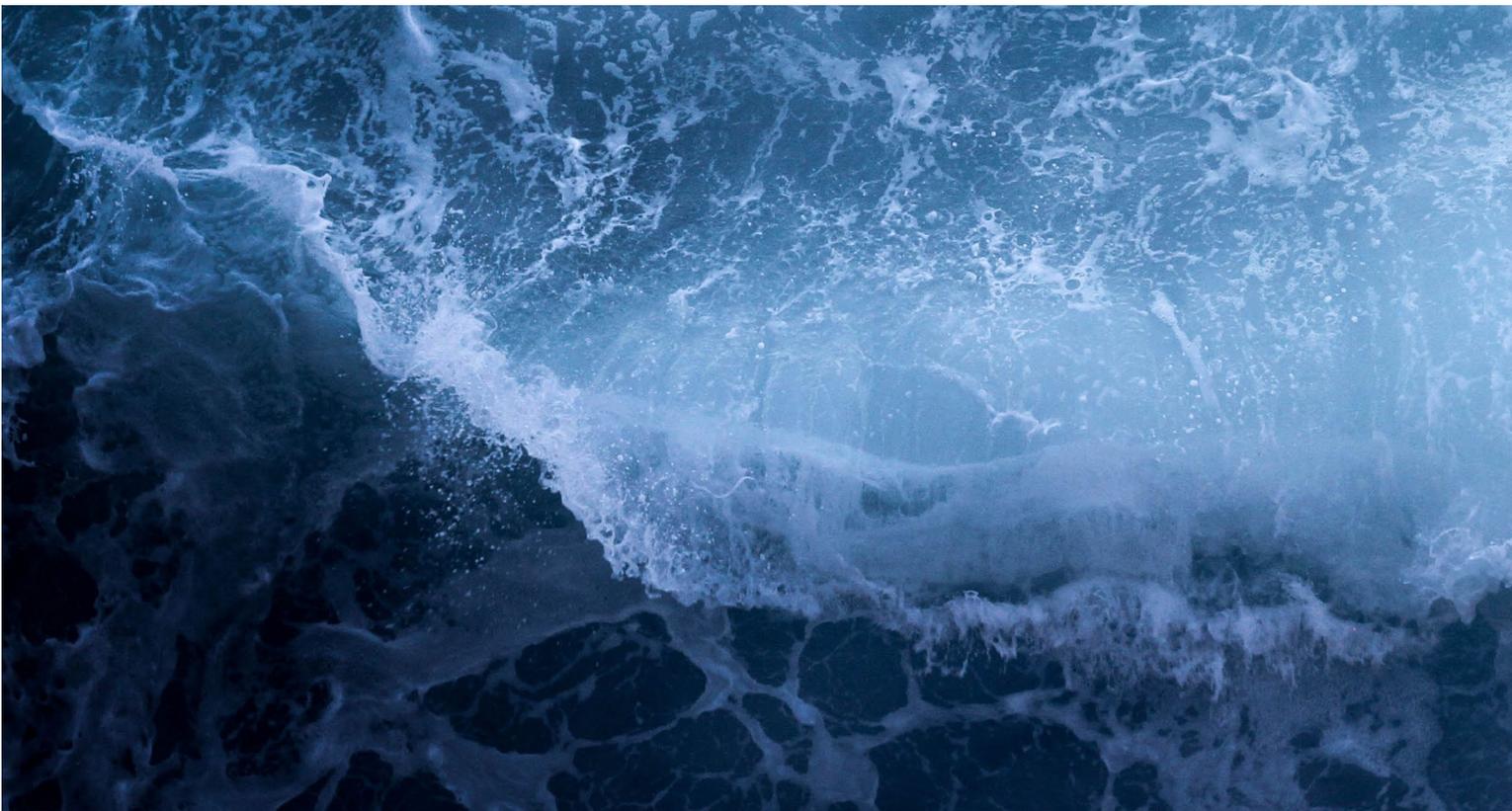
dane terms to make the point: Let's say that my personal preference for a color is dark blue. Perhaps I'd rather see all the pews and carpets that blue color. So when the topic of changing out pews and carpets arises, I push for the dark blue because that's what I like. But then we start learning that there are more who like burgundy. And I start lobbying my brethren for the blue. Now I begin to create an "us" vs. "them" mentality—the blue brothers versus the burgundy brethren. I'm so obsessed with this that I create tension with those who don't agree with me. I start giving those disapproving looks, talking behind their backs, mocking whatever is not dark blue. I push so hard that I become willing to divide and lose brethren over it. My personal agenda then tears away

at the fabric of our spiritual fellowship.

Does this sound silly? Yet are we willing to take a preference we might have and make it the standard by which all our work is judged? Will I press my own judgments so hard that it creates a tension within the group?

Distinguish, then, between what the biblical text requires and what we personally prefer. How important is this for considering elders and deacons? Again, this also applies, not just to the judgments made by a current eldership, but also to the qualifications of men who might be chosen to serve.

Some of the qualifications in 1 Tim. 3 and Titus 1 have relative judgments attached



to them. For example, a man is to be “hospitable, able to teach...” What if my preference were that a man should have guests in his home every week? Every couple of days? And that he ought to be teaching a class every single time a class is offered? (I’m not saying these are my preferences; it’s just a “for the sake of argument”). How far do we push this? Does the text require that? Can a man be apt to teach without teaching a class every quarter? My point is that we need to be reasonable about this, and not put arbitrary requirements on a qualification when it is, by its nature, open to some judgment. Must he be hospital? Yes. Must he be able or apt to teach? Yes. But there is room for how much and to what extent we make the application. There is room for some

judgment, and we must allow for that in how we approach these matters. We want to be careful, but we also want to be generous and loving.

When it’s about personal preferences, we need to be submitting to one another to maintain unity. Again, this isn’t a popularity contest. It’s not a power struggle. It’s a humble recognition of what God wants for a group of His people, and our attitudes in how we comply with His will.

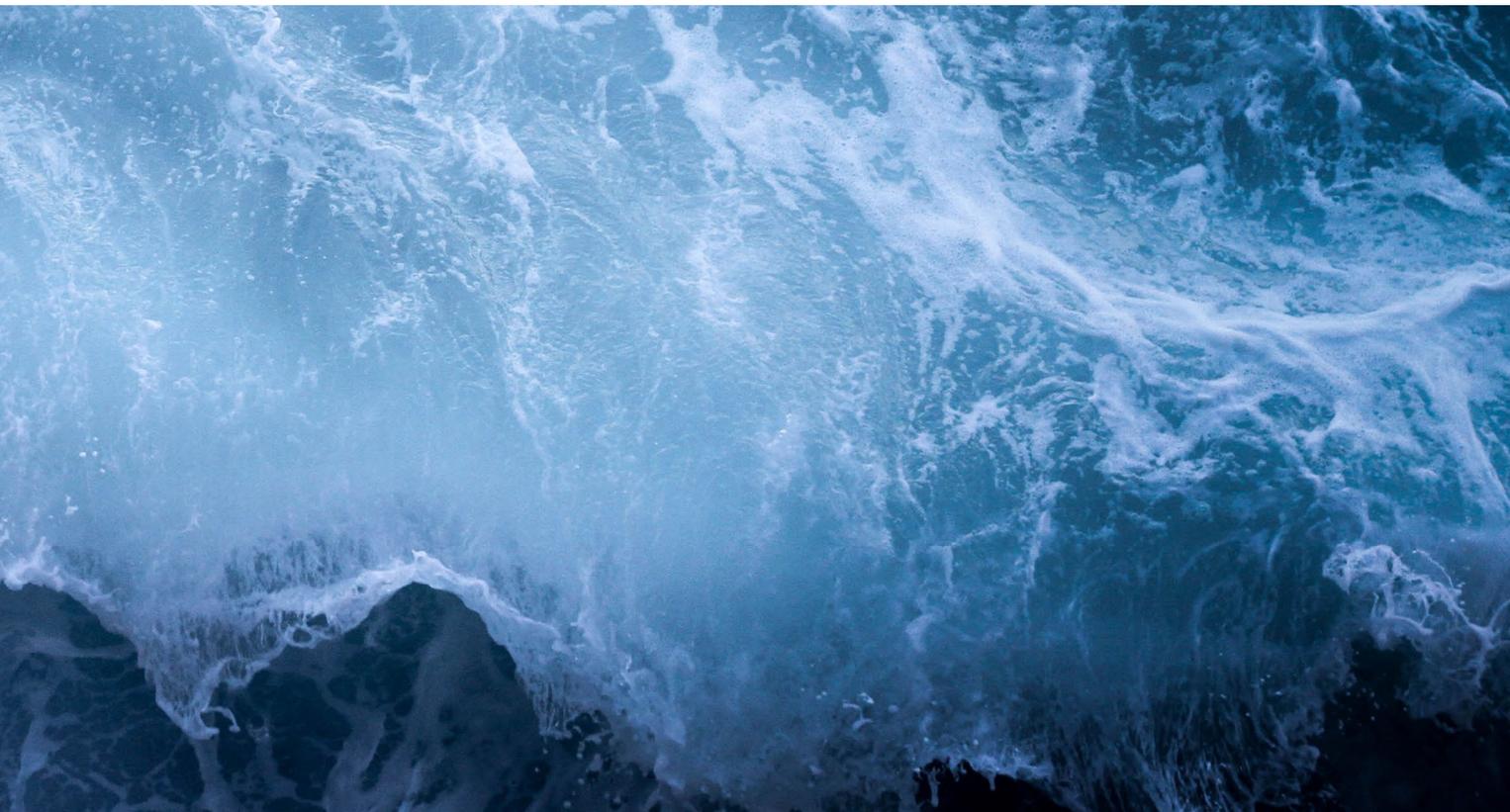
## Conclusion

We are one body, and by the Lord’s help and grace, we will remain so. This means, though, that we all need to pay attention to our own attitudes as we submit to our elders and even enter into processes that can be taxing

if we aren’t careful. It should be a given that we all want to serve and select in a way that honors God and follows Scripture.

1 Corinthians 16:13-14 — “Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.” **MYF**

\*Scripture quotations are taken from the NASB @ The Lockman Foundation



# Attitudes Without Elders

**LUKE MOYER**



It is no secret that many congregations of the Lord's people do not have elders. How should these churches consider their 'elders' and each member's responsibilities? Sometimes we think in business terms first. Without elders we must have business meetings, heightened member participation, a special attention to developing elders, and a more significant leadership from the preacher. These things may occur from

a logistical perspective, but they are not the scriptural focus of the office. Having elders does not change if business meetings occur. Elders are not CEO's or a board of directors; they are overseers of souls. They can and most often do make the financial and operational decisions of a church, but that is based on expediency. Having elders should not diminish membership participation and involvement. Rather, elders

seek to inspire and exhort members to excel in their labors. Just because elders shepherd in a flock does not mean the membership can sit back and relax. Likewise, the attitude of developing servants is ongoing, whether the church is with or without elders. The leadership of a preacher remains constant in the presence of elders and without. Preachers ought to be leaders and teachers, but have no authority outside the

scriptures. Their focus is to teach, admonish, and exhort (Titus 2:15). But they have no inherent authority to make decisions for a congregation or for an individual (pay close attention not to confuse Paul's work as an apostle with our work as evangelists). They serve a teaching and advisory role in all public settings. Logistically, the preachers of a local work may have opportunity and maturity to organize and facilitate private spiritual guidance, but they do so as a member of the flock, not as an authority figure.

The real question for this discussion is: what should be the attitudes of congregations when there are no elders? By this question we are not addressing the logistical practices regarding business meetings etc. We wish to look at our mindset and the spiritual work before us.

## **1 The mindset of humility and selflessness.**

Humility is foundational to every congregation. It must pre-exist before elders are chosen to serve. Without spiritual overseers it becomes more essential to focus on an attitude of service. While this should be the focus of every congregation, without guides to head off dangerous situations, it becomes incumbent upon each heart to 'bear his own load.' Since only elders have authoritative roles over

the church, no one can presume that authority in the vacancy of elders. Each member may be considered 'spiritual' and thereby assist his brothers (Gal 6:1-3), but there is a direct warning about thinking too much of ourselves and our position. Humility and service are key. Even the preacher, who may exhort and advise, has no authority to direct the members; each member must choose to find and then act in the most humble and serving manner the situation allows.

Self-willed individuals are cancerous within the body of the church. Those like Diotrophes of 3 John take authority upon themselves to 'run' the church. In reality, he was only running people off (v10). From Titus 1 we read that one of the primary responsibilities of elders is to fend off false teachers. There appeared to be no elders at the church Gaius attended in 3 John. So what does John 'the elder' prescribe in such situations?

1. Support preachers of the truth by hospitality and financial support. By supporting the true gospel, you display your personal allegiance while also disapproving error. This is a mindset of service and personal sacrifice. Those who supported and showed hospitality to preachers and even strangers incurred the disdain of Diotrophes. We should not let our pride get

in the way of good work.

2. Do not imitate evil. When false teachers arise, do not follow them or do what they do. They may attempt to run the church, but wherein the church does not follow, they have no authority. This looks easy on paper and when the problem is readily identified. It takes great humility and wisdom to actually practice this within a local work with no elders. John's instructions are to the individual and not to the church. John himself was in a position to 'call attention to his deeds' in a public way. If the truth is readily identified, then we are allowed to call upon scripture publicly to reprimand (1 Tim 4:13; 2 Tim 4:2-5). But if you find the situation difficult or too complex to identify in a clear scriptural manner, then act according to personal conscience, and let God deal with the error in His own time.

3. Speak the truth. Testify for it. Find individuals who speak truth and stand with them. Only by spreading truth can we combat deception. Make sure you are in possession of the truth, and then spread it. It takes humility to adhere to truth rather than personal preference. It takes service to gently display the truth by action and practice.

---

## 2 The mindset of work

We have a tendency to build qualifications for elders (and deacons) and neglect the qualifications Paul continues to lay out for each demographic within the church. In his letter to Titus he gives in chapter 2 qualities and responsibilities for six types of members within the church.

1. To Titus as a preacher Paul says to speak things fitting for sound doctrine. This begins with teaching true doctrine itself (that which was passed on by Paul), and then expands to practical application. This requires a solid knowledge of the truth and of proper teachings. It also requires a level of wisdom and ability to extrapolate from the truth to match the situation.

2. To Older men Paul gives a list of qualities not dissimilar to the character of elders themselves: temperate, dignified, sensible, faithful, loving, perseverant. Even when a man is not in a position to be an elder, these qualities are his personal goals. It is no accident that 'elders' have similar qualities to 'older' men. While elders/overseers are aged in spiritual maturity, those who are physically aged should seek a maturity which is able to help others. These qualities place older men of the congregation in a good

position to help the rest of the congregation by training and example. Just because a group is without elders does not mean they are without the leadership of examples.

3. To Older women Paul gives the objectives of reverent behavior, avoiding gossip, avoiding dissipation, teaching good, and encouraging others. These things are expected of those who have, through their age, gained wisdom. Age ought not be a fearful number among women who have a mindset of service. While older women may not have the abilities they used to, their wisdom and teaching are invaluable to a congregation.

4. Younger women are charged with loving their family, sensibility, purity, building up the family, kindness, subjection, and keeping the word of God respected in her influence. These are not light tasks. They take a mindset of work. Implied within this passage is also their willingness to listen to older women concerning their advice, and to the charges of their husbands. Even a woman without a husband can still emulate all these qualities.

5. Younger men are also given the quality goals of sensibility, displays of good deeds, truth, dignity, and un-questionable speech. Young

men who will seek these objectives shall be integral in the development of the local church.

6. Finally, unless the previous qualities were insufficient to cover all bases, Paul urges servants to be submissive, favorable, passive, honest, and faithful to their charges. While these are physical servants of masters who may even be outside the church, all members of the Lords body: the teachers, the men, the women, older, and younger, should strive for true service, seeking the best for each other. Boiled down, we are all to deny ungodliness and fleshly desires, seek righteousness and God's favor, be zealous for good deeds, and wait for the return of our Lord. These things we should and can do even if we do not have elders amongst us.

## 3 The mindset of honor

Just because a church can function and grow without elders, we should never disparage the work elders perform. Elders are marvelous blessings; gifts from God (Eph 4:7,11). They help the congregation accomplish all the things so far mentioned. Not only do they assist by prayer and scripture, but they have the responsibility to personally guide our souls in these directions (Heb 13:17).

While each of us must encourage each other and drive doubt away (Heb 3:12-13), overseers have the ability and authority to maintain your soul in a much more intimate way. This work and service is something that we should be supporting, even when we are not under eldership.

members to pursue the office and encourage other congregations to take full advantage of opportunities elderships provide. This kind of honor on the true office will recognize the full qualities. Without elders, we must be careful not to infringe upon the role when the qualities are

What is our attitude about elders when we have none? Ultimately, the same as if we have them. Our attitudes remain unchanged. Our work, function, and the logistics of operation will change with eldership, but the attitudes of work, service, submission, humility, and honor must

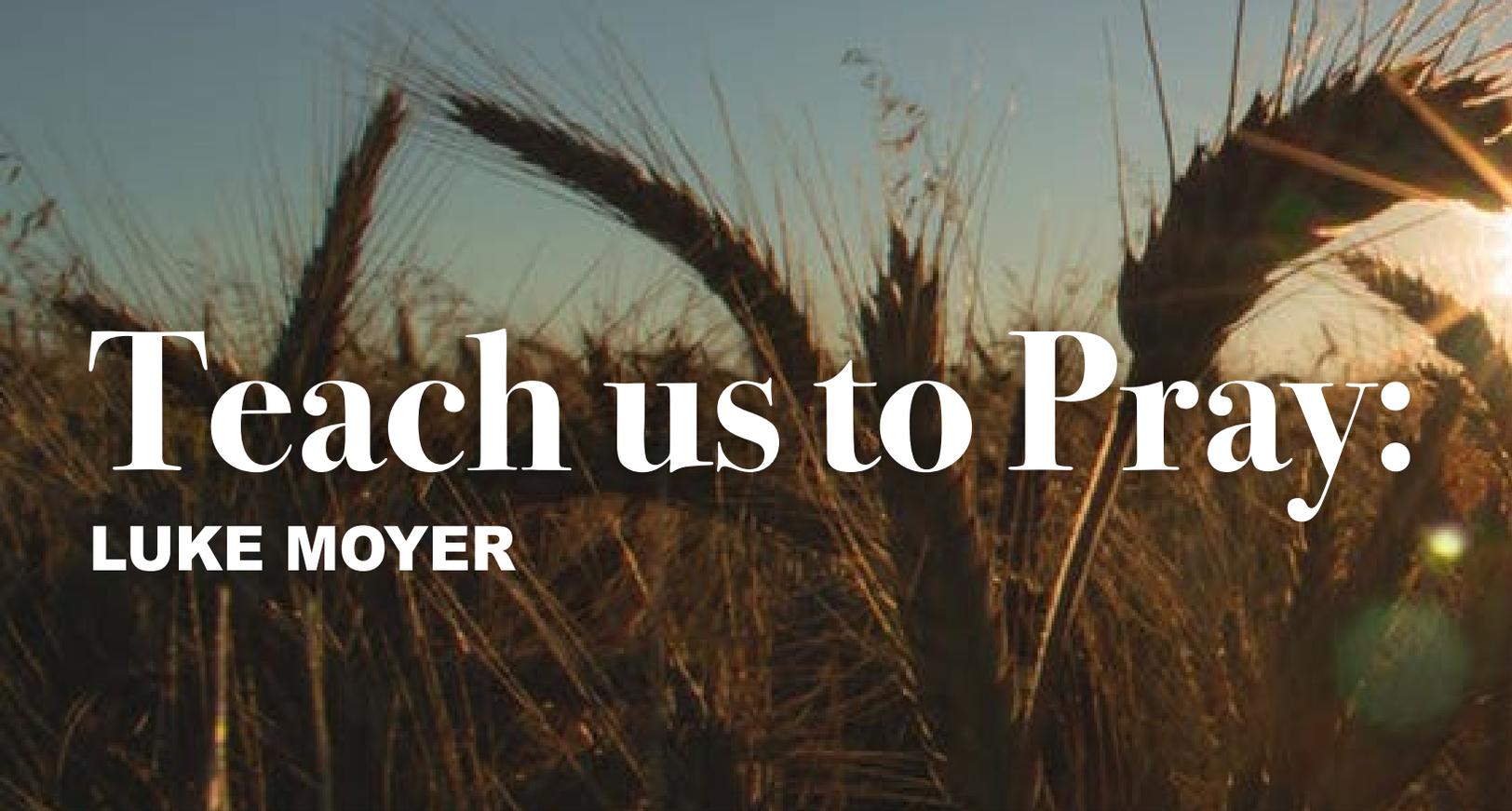


Those who have no elders should be acutely aware of the void left by that kind of service. Instead of proudly displaying an air of independency and self-sufficiency, churches without elders should place high honor on the office (1 Tim 3:1). This should encourage their own

amiss. Better to leave the office vacant with attention on personal growth, than to fill the office with someone unqualified. If we hold the office in high honor, then we will praise the work of those who fill it, and will avoid placing any unworthy individual in the role.

remain constant. Let us all, whether under overseers or not, strive toward the qualities within our role so that we can build up the church at our own location.

**MYF**



# Teach us to Pray:

**LUKE MOYER**

“Give us today, our daily bread.”

**P**rayer is more than just praise. It is more than just acknowledgment. Prayer can, and in most cases includes, petition. God has built into us the need to ask. In Jesus’ parables He consistently teaches that requests are part of our duty. To make no request of God implies that we feel adequate in ourselves to supply what we need. Be reminded of when Jacob wrestled with God in Gen 32. At the end of the struggle Jacob, being the lesser, vigilantly requested a blessing from his superior. Petition implies inferiority, while blessings are given by those in higher authority. Part of our humility is making requests to our Father. We depend on Him for everything and must vocalize that awareness.

There are three requests within the Lord’s prayer. The first is based on trust, the second on forgiveness, the third on obedience. We trust the Lord to provide, so we pray. Very little is so frustrating than when a provider does not know the needs he must care for. On earth, we recognize that children ask when they want something. That is part of Jesus’ point in his explanation of the prayer in Luke 11. We do not see children holding back when they are deprived of what they need. In the same way, a lack of asking for what we need highlights that we do not realize our true dependence. Now, the Father in Heaven already knows, because He is truly good. But James backs this point up in his chapter 4. We sin because we do not

have, we do not have because we do not ask. Even when we think we are asking, doing so with the wrong motives misunderstands the request. If our motives are on the holiness and will of the Father, then we will trust that He will give us our daily needs. Jesus expounds on this point in Matt 6. Each day has enough troubles of its own. Being worried only indicates we are relying on the world for what we need. Seek first the kingdom of God and these things will be added.

I find the phrasing of this first request curious. This truly is the chiasmic center of the prayer. In Matthew’s recording, Jesus uses parallel phrases before and after. But this request for bread is a single line without much



# The Bread We Need

other explanation. This most likely indicates that this act of trust is one of the most important elements of true prayer. The wording “Give us this day our daily bread,” is traditional. This translation has been useful in memorization and spreading this prayer. However, it is valuable to note some other possible interpretations. “Give us, today, our forthcoming bread,” and “Give us tomorrow’s bread, today,” are both legitimate understandings. In a society in which food was gathered for both today and tomorrow (the day of preparation for the Sabbath, for example), I tend to think the last translation would have been their initial understanding. A rather paraphrased understanding may even be: “Give us what we have com-

ing.” This straightforward request of God places all things in His hands. He knows what bread we need, He knows how much, He knows when, and He certainly knows the same for everything else we need. “Give us our daily bread,” is not a demand, but rather the fullest expression of trust and acceptance of God’s will.

When I used to pray “Give us this day our daily bread,” I found it hard to do so without the feeling that I was unduly demanding. I kept thinking: ‘I don’t deserve this,’ ‘God doesn’t have to listen to this,’ and ‘who am I to demand this of God when I keep rejecting what He gives me?’ This may be the point. Requesting physical needs while recognizing spiritual deficiency ought to stir us to be asking

for different bread. Jesus tells the disciples on other occasions one kind of bread to avoid and one to eat. He told them to avoid the leaven of the Pharisees and to eat, instead, His body. The Pharisees and Herod relied on themselves, while never actually doing the things which pleased God. Jesus, even with the fullness of God in Him, relied upon the Father for strength. His death on the cross is our daily bread. The physical necessities of life are worth praying about, but they ought to point us to those greater spiritual nourishments. Ultimately, we need to be praying not for any limited version of what we think we need, but truly the bread that we need today. **MYF**

# Godliness

## Part 1

Forrest D. Moyer

Guardian of Truth XXXII: 15, pp. 464-466 | August 4, 1988

Godliness is a beautiful trait that must be added to our lives (2 Pet. 1:6). Paul wrote to Timothy: “But have nothing to do with worldly fables only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come” (1 Tim. 4:7-8). In order for godliness to have a fertile field in which to develop, it is necessary that we keep such things as would corrupt and uproot the growth of the pure fruit. Thus, Paul tells Timothy to avoid “worldly fables fit only for old women.” Fables, myths, or tales that are “profane” or “worldly” must be avoided since they are side-issues and have nothing to do with sound doctrine. Rather, they detract from the faith.

On the other hand, we must “discipline” ourselves for the purpose of godliness. The

word discipline (*gumnazo*) is defined “to exercise vigorously, in any way, either the body or the mind . . . of one who strives earnestly to become godly, 1 Tim. 4:7” (Thayer, p. 122). We do not have time for fables; our time is to be consumed in the exercise of self for godliness. The ardent, strenuous efforts are to be put forth with respect to godly living. The reason stated is “for bodily discipline is only of little profit.” This passage is usually applied to the taking of physical exercise such as calisthenics, etc. It is emphasized that there is some profit in physical exercise. It is sad, though, that it is limited in that it develops only part of a person - the outer man which, regardless of how much we care for it, will pass away. However, the context would indicate that the exercise or discipline to which Paul here referred would be in the realm of following rigid rules regarding the body that were advocated by the Jewish ascetics. Such things

as abstaining from certain foods and any extreme form of bodily discipline has little profit, indeed. In Colossians 2:20-23 as Paul discussed some of the Gnostic’s rules about the body, he said that such rules “are of no value against fleshly indulgence.” The point is that there is no particular godliness involved in following such rules. Godliness does demand that we discipline our bodies to refrain from that which is sinful (Rom. 8:13,19). The reason is that we might be servants of righteousness.

But the main point that we want to talk about is the statement in v. 8: “but godliness is profitable for all things.” So we must ask, “What is godliness?” It is from the word *eusebia* of which Thayer says, “in the Bible everywhere piety towards God, godliness” (Thayer, p. 262). This form of the word is found 15 times in the NT and, in the KJV, is translated “godliness” 14 times and “holiness” once (Acts 3:12). “Eusebia is the

right attitude of God and to things divine, the attitude which does not eliminate God altogether, and which gives God the place he ought to occupy in the life and in thought and in devotion . . . eusebia gives God the right place, and worships God in the right way” (Barclay, *New Testament Words*, p. 107). Thus, godliness involves the right attitude of mind toward God and right kind of action toward God and divine things. It involves believing God (taking him at his word) that leads to full obedience to him in whatever he requires. This is what Paul says is profitable! Let us look to see in what ways godliness is profitable for us today.

## **I. Godliness Is Profitable For All**

1. Godliness is profitable for all races. The gospel is designed to save both Jews and Greeks (Rom. 1:16). Among the Gentiles it is for the “Greeks and barbarians, the wise and the foolish” (v. 14). The reason is that “there is no partiality with God” (2:11). Thus, “God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears him and does what is right, is welcome to him” (Acts 10:34-35). Thus, when one is bap-

tized into Christ, he becomes a child of God and the spiritual descendant of Abraham and “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:26-29). God is totally color blind as he looks upon his creatures. (We, too, must have this characteristic of godliness.) The gospel is for all, and godliness is profitable for people of all nations, races, and colors. In our striving to be like God, we must seek to carry the Word to peoples of all nations everywhere.

2. Godliness is profitable for all ages. There is no one too young to begin to learn about God, and there is none too old to be saved.

a. The young need the profit that comes from godliness. “Remember also your creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near when you will say, ‘I have no delight in them...’ (Eccl. 12: 1). Jesus said, “Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Matt. 19:14). Thus, there is some pointed teaching in God’s word concerning the conduct of the young. “Now flee from youthful lusts, and pursue

righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart” (2 Tim. 2:22). The application is to all, but those who are young are especially indicated in this passage. The young person must “flee youthful lusts” - those desires that are common to the young person. But it is not all negative; the young person must avidly pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace from a pure heart. Let us instruct the young in such areas as this from the time that they can know what we are talking about.

The great value for godliness in the lives of the young is seen in Ephesians 6:1-3 where Paul pointed out that obedience to parents has a promise attached to it. That promise is “that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth” (v. 3). This is quoted from the Lord’s requirement of Deuteronomy 5:16. The wise man indicated the profit of godliness by saying, “The fear of the Lord prolongs life. But the years of the wicked will be shortened” (Prov. 10:27). He further said, “The fear of the Lord leads to life, so that one may sleep satisfied, untouched by evil” (Prov. 19:23). The young person who is godly is promised a longer life. He is

going to profit in every way by his godliness. Later in our study we shall observe how we profit by the living of a godly life. Brethren, let us look to the very fertile fields of young people as those who will profit by godliness. I feel that so often we overlook the great work that can be done here. I have found in my work that the most receptive age group to the gospel is those of college age. We have had more baptisms from that group than from any other. Our "Crossroads" brethren have seen the tremendous opportunity among young people and have concentrated their work in college areas. All of us should learn the value of the young person to the cause of Christ. What a great and rewarding work this can be!

b. Godliness is profitable for manhood and womanhood. Godliness brings real strength to men and women in the promise of life as they face the problems of work, family, and community relationships. Godliness will make one a better husband and father (Eph. 5:25 ff.; 6:4). It will make one a better wife and mother (Eph. 5:21-24; Tit. 2:4-5). It is by godliness that a man and woman form the closest of all earthly ties - the marriage bond. It is only by godliness that this bond

can be properly maintained. It is by godliness that we deal properly with others at work and with our neighbors. Truly, godliness is profitable for men and women in the very throes of life.

c. Godliness is profitable for the elderly. As the years pass and the sight grows dimmer and the body more frail, it is truly comforting to know that our God is with us and will sustain us and carry us through to victory. The wise man says that "the gray head is a crown of glory if it is found in the way of righteousness" (Prov. 16:31). The key to it all is "if it is found in the way of righteousness." By our godliness we have a deep fellowship with the Father and his son (John 14:23). Nothing can be more rewarding to an older person than knowing "him and the power of his resurrection" (Phil. 3: 10). The psalmist prayed, "And even when I am old and gray, o God, do not forsake me" (Psa. 71:18). God promises, "Even to your old age, I shall be the same, and even to your gray-ing years I shall bear you I" (Isa. 46:4) Thus, the psalmist can say, "The righteous man will flourish like the palm tree, He will grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Planted in the house of the Lord, they will flourish in the courts of our

God. They will still yield fruit in old age" (Psa. 92:12-14). How precious to see an older person walking with the Lord with the sweetness of God's loving kindness reflected in his soul. On the other hand, how sad it is to see one growing old without the Lord. It is heartbreaking! Godliness is so profitable for old age. It takes one by the hand to lead him through the valley of the shadow of death. Godliness is profitable for all ages.

3. Godliness is profitable for people in all financial brackets. In life there may be a great difference in the financial power of people. But there is a final leveling power that is coming to all: death. In death the rich man has no more than the poor man. "For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either" (1 Tim. 6:7). This reminds us of Job's statement: "Naked came I out of my mother's womb; naked shall I return thither." When the gospel addresses a man, it addresses the fact that all are sinners - rich and poor alike. The gospel has exactly the same demands of the rich and the poor. Everyone must be saved by faith on the basis of God's grace. The wealth of a person does nothing to influence God's treatment of him. All of his benevolent deeds

do not buy him any favor with God. James could say, "But let the brother of humble circumstances glory in his high position; and let the rich man glory in his humiliation ('on a level with the poor,' Williams), because like flowering grass he will pass away . . . so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away" (Jas. 1:9-11). Therefore, none is so rich as not to need godliness; none is too poor not to be made rich by it. James further said, "Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which he promised to those who love him?" (Jas. 2:5).

How does the poor man profit by godliness? James says that he is elevated to a high position (1:9). That position is seen in Ephesians 2. This chapter shows that all are dead in trespasses and sins (v. 1). It also shows us the immense wealth of our God. He is "rich in mercy" (v. 4). He has "surpassing riches of his grace" (v. 7). In chapter one Paul speaks of "riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us" (vv. 7-8). When the poor man comes to Christ, he comes to one who can "supply all your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19). Because

of his surpassing riches, God takes the poor man and saves him by his grace (Eph. 2:4). But he does something else. He has "raised us up with him, and seated us with him in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus" (v. 6). This saved man now has a position of fellowship with Jesus - seated with him. Truly, he is elevated to a high position.

But how is the rich man brought low? Well, before he can come to God, he must empty himself of any self-sufficiency. He must humble himself before God, recognizing that he is nothing and has nothing so far as God is concerned. Thus, he becomes "poor in spirit" in order that he might enter the kingdom of God. He is blessed in this humiliation. So, he is to rejoice in his being made low in order that he, too, might be saved by God's grace and raised up to sit with Christ in heavenlies. This is the occasion of his rejoicing.

Therefore, to the rich and poor alike Jesus says, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your trea-

sure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:19-21). Truly, godliness is profitable for all financial brackets. We all stand on equal footing as we come before our Lord.

4. Godliness is profitable for people of all educational backgrounds. We must remember that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men" (1 Cor. 1:25) and that "the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. For it is written, 'He is the one who catches the wise in their craftiness'; and again, 'The Lord knows the reasonings of the wise, that they are useless'" (1 Cor. 3:19-20). God has chosen the simple things so that all can understand his way of grace and be saved by it. He also has chosen the "foolish" things in order that we cannot boast of our wisdom and greatness before him. Once again, all men must humble themselves; they must empty themselves of their worldly wisdom in order to allow the Lord to save them. Perhaps the reason that many of those with worldly wisdom never come to the Lord is that they are not willing to cast aside their human achievements and bow at the cross of Jesus so that they can be saved by his grace. **MYF**



# Sanctify Christ

## For Christ and His People

A blog to exhort the believer in the faith. These regularly updated articles and posts are designed with the Moyer Press premise in mind: to create and publish spiritual materials to help the Christian grow and the seeker to discover God.

[\*\*Subscribe via Email\*\*](#)

