

# Living a Godly Life in an Ungodly World

Sandy Fairservice  
To the Tuesday Group seminar "Living Sacrifices"  
July 19, 2003

---

## **The Sofia story**

Many years ago I went on a day trip on the adventurers' sailing ship *Sofia*. The prospect of joining for an extended cruise in the Pacific was attractive, available, desirable, but impossible because I was committed to God's calling. But for a day I was almost convinced I could do it. It was as if I was under hypnosis. When I disembarked from the day trip at Nelson, the spell was broken. At the most, I wrote an article about it and sent it to a magazine. In my research I had discovered that the ship was a hotbed of immorality, and it was a good thing not to have anything to do with it.

"Train yourself in godliness" (1Timothy 4:7)

Godliness and holiness are used interchangeably in the New Testament. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of persons ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness... 2 Peter 3:11

## **1. God wants us to live a godly life.**

Reasons:

- It will please God. Ecclesiastes 2:26: 'For to the man who pleases him God gives wisdom and knowledge and joy...' It will be a good life.
- He is holy. We are his children. Peter 1:15: "but as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." Ephesians 1:4: "even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.
- Our lives will authenticate the gospel we bear.
- We are to be light and salt.

## **2. What a godly or holy life looks like.**

- Like the life of Jesus Christ
- Separated *from* the world (2 Corinthians 6:17, 18, 7:1—promises of family and protection.
- "Do not be mismatched with unbelievers. For what partnership have righteousness and iniquity? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, 'I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore come out from them, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you,

### **ILLUSTRATION**

The hull of a vessel.

In the water.  
No water in it.  
No leaks.

and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.’ Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, and make holiness perfect in the fear of God.

- **Idolatry starts in the heart—the mind.** Ezekiel 14:1-8

Colossians 3:5: ‘Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.’

- Separated *from* the world in order to be holy *to* the Lord (Exodus 28:36-38)

- A holy life is an exchanged life—“put off”, “put on”. Ephesians 4:22, 24: “Put off your old nature which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.”

- *Devoted*-dedicated (hard working, single minded for God’s glory) Colossians 3:23: Whatever your task, work *heartily*, as serving the Lord and not men.’ ‘And they *devoted* themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.’ Acts 2:42.

- Example: Jesus accomplished the work the Father gave him to do (John 17:4).

Example: Paul works at his task with all God’s mighty power available to him (Colossians 1:27-29): “Him we proclaim, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man mature in Christ. For this I *toil, striving* with all the *energy* which *he mightily inspires* within me.”

- Paul urges us never to give up on the Lord’s work because there will be a reward (1 Corinthians 15:58).

#### ILLUSTRATION

The Priest’s Purification

Off with the day clothes. Washing.  
On with the holy clothes.

#### ILLUSTRATION

Paul’s hard work and self-sacrifice testimony:  
2 Corinthians 11:24-28  
Far more labors, far more imprisonments, with countless ...

### 3. How to lead a godly life

- Make the decision. It is up to you.
- Discover the standards—read and study Scripture. Example: Ephesians 3:25-32 25: “Therefore, putting away falsehood, let every one speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil. Let the thief no longer

steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his hands, so that he may be able to give to those in need. Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for edifying, as fits the occasion, that it may impart grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."

AND some of the lists in First and Second Peter and elsewhere.

- Get some help—accountability one to one or one to a few. Prayer.
- You make the first move. God will follow with power Ephesians 3:14-21. Power that works in you. He who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:6).  
**Illustration:** Indiana Jones steps across the abyss to get the Holy Grail. Suddenly there is a path across the abyss.
- When you fail, confess your sin and carry on as before (1 John 1:9).

#### 4. Things that will hinder our quest for godliness

- *Our desires* Galatians 5:16: "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. James 1:15: Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin; and sin when it is full-grown brings forth death."
- *Outside influences* (Colossians 2:8 **philosophies, bad company**—"Do not be deceived, bad company ruins good morals" 1 Corinthians 15:33). We are children of our time. Alternative spiritualities, political correctness, revulsion to commitment. "I will probably see you." Imagine if Jesus had said, "I may come again." The choice smorgasbord—double-mindedness. 2 Corinthians 1:17: "Was I vacillating when I wanted to do this? Do I make my plans like a worldly man, ready to say Yes and No at once?" Commitment—such a dirty word today, but a major characteristic of a holy life. Psalm 15:7. Keeping your word, whatever it costs you.
- *Rejection of conscience* (1 Timothy 1:19) By rejecting conscience, certain persons have made **shipwreck** of their faith...

#### ILLUSTRATION

Archdeacon Whakaruru, Nelson, blesses places about once a week. Prevalence of Maori beliefs. No mention of Christian truths. Ubiquitous presence of Maori spirituality, which the gospel once replaced.

***The Sofia story conclusion.***

The ship that held out a promise of so much foundered in a storm as my article arrived at the Sydney-based magazine. One life was lost. A wave punched in the hull just off Northland and it went down quickly. Too much water had got into the boat.

**ILLUSTRATION**

The Sofia sank because too much water got into it.

**Conclusion:** God will use you if you are pure.

2 Timothy 2:21: If any one purifies himself from what is ignoble, then he will be a vessel for noble use, consecrated and useful to the master of the house, ready for any good work.

Do not withdraw from the world, or compromise with it. Stay in the world, be different from it, and influence it for the gospel.

---