

The Scope and Character of Godly Living
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Omnipresence

Do you leave God behind in the church building? For too many of us, God gets compartmentalized, pigeonholed into certain geographical places and certain compartments of life. Maybe God is in your home but not in your driving habits. Maybe he is in your Bible reading but not in your politics. This compartmentalizing is an old trick. The ancient Canaanites believed that their gods had control only of a local land area. If they changed residences, they changed gods. Furthermore, one god might be responsible for fertility, another for war, another for storms, but God, the true God, taught Israel differently. His throne was portable (Ex. 25:12-15). He went where the people went, and so was involved in *all* their doings.

God's total sovereignty gets an even greater emphasis in the New Testament. Jesus says, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of *all* nations" (Matt. 25:18-19 [*sic*, correct to Matt. 28:18-19]). The "ark" of God's rule is now carried everywhere that His people go. If you belong to Christ, then through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit you have become a portable temple or sanctuary of God. Wherever you go, you carry the "ark" of God's kingly presence with you in your heart. Don't be like the Israelites who misrepresented God by their behavior. Paul had to say of them, "Because of you the name of God is blasphemed among the nations." Rather have the law of God hidden in your heart as you go the dishes, to the school, to recreation, to the office--so that Christ's name will be honored. May God's rule be exhibited both in your words and your deeds, not in just some compartment.

"Good" Works

It takes no great skill to criticize someone else's wrong-doing, but it does take skill to do some lasting good yourself. Other men may praise you for some "good" work, but does that mean that God is pleased? Secularized thinking says, "Yes." "Serving God is identical with serving men." However, Jesus warns to the contrary: "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts; for what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15). You are indulging in foolish optimism if you imagine that either your ideas or other men's ideas about giving service to God are sufficient.

To give an acceptable offering to God, you must follow God's *own* instructions for offering. In the Old Testament, God required three things for the offering to build his house: (1) the people ought to offer willingly (Ex. 25:2); (2) the offering, itself, ought to consist of valuable and beautiful material (25:3-4); (3) the offering ought to be *useful* for building God's house (25:5-9).

First, God want a change of attitude, a change of heart. Do you go to church or put money in the offering because you have to? Only God can make you a willing, cheerful giver. However, what can you give? What is valuable today? Time is probably the most valuable thing in our human reckoning, but even if you gave all your time to religious service, it could still be a service without your heart in it. You ought to ask, "What does God value?" God values *men*, human *lives*. However, in yourself, you are not precious in God's sight. "All our righteousnesses

are as filthy rags."

However, Jesus Christ *is* precious, supremely precious in God's sight, and he has offered himself. If you belong to him, he has made *you* precious: "Because you are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you, I give men in return for you ..." (Isa. 43:4). Through Jesus your own offering--of yourself first of all, but then of your time, your money, your works, your praise--becomes a lasting and acceptable work to God. That kind of offering, that kind of good work doesn't pass away but is beautiful and useful to God.