

Option 3 – Going Wholehearted, Part 3

(appropriate for High School Graduates)

Michael R. Daily January 2017

Other youth bible studies by Michael Daily available at: <http://gciweb.org/2011/04/youth-bible-study-materials-michael-r-daily/>

This lesson is part 3 of a series on “Going Wholehearted” in the Christian life.

Wholehearted: *completely and sincerely devoted, determined, or enthusiastic; marked by complete earnest commitment; free from all reserve or hesitation*

To create a picture of what it means to be wholehearted we are looking at the seven churches of Revelation to understand how Jesus evaluated them. If we create a list of all the things Jesus said they were doing right and then add to the list the opposite of all the things Jesus said they were doing wrong, then we should be able to get a realistic picture of what it means to be wholehearted. In part 1 we looked at the church at Ephesus. A list of characteristics of the Wholehearted from the Church at Ephesus is below:

Characteristics of the Wholehearted (from Ephesus)

- 1) They do not leave their first love
- 2) Their deeds result from their relationship with God
- 3) They hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans – false teachers who teach licentiousness / sexual immorality.
- 4) They put to the test those who call themselves apostles
- 5) They do not tolerate evil men
- 6) They toil, persevere and endure for His Name’s sake and do not grow weary

Characteristics of the Wholehearted (from Smyrna)

- 1) They endure tribulation, poverty, and the blasphemy of non-believers
- 2) They suffer imprisonment and testing without fear
- 3) They are faithful unto death
- 4) They look forward to receiving eternal rewards for their faithfulness to Christ

As we continue our study of the other churches in Revelation we will add to this list as new characteristics are found but we won’t repeat those characteristics that we have already studied. When we are done studying all seven churches we will have a more complete list of what being wholehearted in the Christian life looks like.

The Church At Pergamum

Pergamum (aka Pergamos or Pergamon) was a rich and powerful ancient Greek city built along two tributaries of the Caicus River (today called the Bakırçay River), located in modern day Turkey 10 miles east of the coastline of the Aegean Sea and about one mile north of the modern city of Bergama, Turkey. The city was elevated about 1000 feet above the surrounding area. Many remains of its monuments can still be seen. Pergamum was a center for the worship of Dionysus, Zeus, and other pagan gods, including the worship of Roman Emperors.

For more information on historical Pergamum please see: <http://www.cbn.com/700club/features/churchhistory/pergamon/>

Revelation 2:13-16

‘I know where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is; and you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. 14 But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit acts of immorality. 15 So you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. 16 Therefore repent; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth.

Characteristics of the Wholehearted (from Pergamum)

- 1) They hold fast His name even while living where satan's throne is
- ~~2) They are faithful unto death (covered in Part 2)~~
- 3) They do not hold to the false teachings of Balaam – sexual immorality and eating things sacrificed to idols
- ~~4) They do not hold to the false teachings of the Nicolaitans (covered in Part 1)~~

One Christian in Pergamum named Antipas is mentioned as a “faithful witness.” Church tradition says that Antipas was a physician suspected of secretly propagating Christianity. The Aesculapians (members of the medical guild) accused Antipas of disloyalty to Caesar. Upon being condemned to death, Antipas was placed inside a copper bull, which was then heated over a fire until it was red-hot.

The Altar of Zeus, which has the appearance of a large seat, may be what was being referred to as Satan's throne, although the term is also a clear reference to the dominating hold that satan had on the culture of the city. The Altar of Zeus was dismantled and moved to Berlin in the late 1800's and is currently on display in Berlin in the Pergamon Museum, which opened in 1930 during the rise of the Nazi party.



Altar of Zeus at the Pergamon Museum in Berlin

The Teachings of Balaam

In the Old Testament the prophet Balaam was hired by the Moabite King Balak to curse Israel but instead Balaam blessed Israel. But afterward, Balaam gave advice to Balak that the best way to hurt Israel would be to draw them into God's disfavor by luring them into sexual relationships with Moabite women which would then lead Israel to worship Moabite gods. References to those who follow the teachings of Balaam occur in the New Testament as well as the Old Testament. The warning is one of false (apostate) prophets and teachers who advocate intermarriage or sexual immorality with the heathen (resulting in compromise and idolatrous worship).

II Peter 2:1-2, 14-15, 17-21

But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. 2 Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned;

14 having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children; 15 forsaking the right way, they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness

17 These are springs without water and mists driven by a storm, for whom the black darkness has been reserved. 18 For speaking out arrogant words of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error, 19 promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved. 20 For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. 21 For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them.

Jude 1:3-4, 10-13, 16

Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints. 4 For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

10 But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed. 11 Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah. 12 These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted; 13 wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.

16 These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage.

For more information on the Teachings of Balaam please see the appendix.

Properly Understanding Grace for Living The Christian Life

License: *a disregard for standards of personal conduct (a.k.a. licentiousness)*

Grace: *unmerited divine assistance given to humans for their regeneration or sanctification*

Grace is assistance given to us by God that we don't deserve. God gives us eternal life by regenerating grace. He provided us assistance through Christ so that we could have an eternal life we don't deserve.

But tonight we will talk instead about the grace given to us by God for our sanctification – grace to live the Christian life.

Grace for Living: *unmerited divine assistance given to humans for their sanctification*

Progressive Sanctification: Over our entire lives we are gradually, but steadily, changing to be more like Jesus in our faith and character, by the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

As Christians God gives us grace (undeserved assistance) to obey Him as we go about our daily lives.

Romans 6:14

For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

Grace is not about cutting people slack, its about enabling them to obey God more fully beyond what they could do by themselves. Most Christians don't think of grace in this way but that is what the Bible teaches.

II Corinthians 9:13-14

Because of the proof given by this ministry, they will glorify God for your obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ and for the liberality of your contribution to them and to all,¹⁴ while they also, by prayer on your behalf, yearn for you because of the surpassing grace of God in you.

God's grace enabled the Christians in this passage to obey Him in confessing the gospel and making financial contributions to other Christians beyond what they could do in the flesh. We learn from this passage that we should pray for each other to be obedient to the command to share the Gospel and to give liberally to others. Do you routinely let people know you are a Christian? Do you live a lifestyle of being generous with others? These are things we can put on our prayer lists for each other.

Hebrews 4:16

Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Grace is God's unmerited assistance that we receive when we are in need of help.

II Corinthians 9:8

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed;

Grace is God supernaturally enabling us to do good deeds beyond what we normally could do. Its not about cutting people slack! This means we can pray for ourselves and others that God would give us grace to enable us to perform "every good deed". Because of the Grace of God we don't really have an excuse not to.

A Salesman Out of Town

Imagine, guys, that you are a salesman out of town on a business trip. Your name is John. Girls, imagine this story is about your husband. You are far away from home where no one knows you. Before you left you had a fight with your wife and your dog bit your hand. Now you have spent the day trying to sell your product without success. All day long the world has been beating you up. Now as you trudge back to your hotel in a cold, heavy, pouring rain you feel miserable and unappreciated. As you enter into the warm, comfortable hotel lobby you can hear the soft music coming from the bar off to the right. You hear the light clinking of glasses and the quiet laughter of people relaxing. As you look closer you see a beautiful woman sitting alone at a small table. She looks over at you and smiles. She motions to you. Its obvious she wants you to join her. And why not? You deserve something good happening to you once in a while. As you begin to turn in her direction you suddenly hear behind you the familiar voice of one of your co-workers. "Hey John (your name), is that you? Hey, Bible thumper John, is that you? I didn't know you would be in town. How's the wife?" Then you remember, "That's right I'm married. That's right I am a Bible thumper. I better behave myself". So, you talk to your co-worker for a moment and go up to your room alone.

This is an example of the grace of God. God's unmerited assistance in helping you obey Him when it is beyond your natural abilities to do so.

Ladies, is this the type of grace you want God to give your husband in these kinds of situations or would you prefer the following type of "grace" (i.e. license). Your husband spends the night with the woman in the bar but he's been going through a really difficult time lately so we'll be understanding, give him some "grace" and not make a big deal out of it. How does that sound? Don't make the mistake of thinking grace means ignoring sin from time to time. That's licentiousness.

For a detailed study on Grace please see the study, "Grace For Living – It Might Not Be What You Think It Is" at: <http://gciweb.org/2011/04/youth-bible-study-materials-michael-r-daily/>

Holding Fast His Name

Holding fast His name means that we are not ashamed to be His witnesses.

Witness: *one who has personal knowledge of something & provides testimony as evidence of a fact or event*

II Corinthians 2:14-16

But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. ¹⁵ For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; ¹⁶ to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things?

The priority when sharing the gospel is the transfer of knowledge or information that the non-christian needs to make a decision for or against Christ. And when we give them this knowledge how will they respond? In one of two ways. For those who are going to become Christians they will respond as if someone had given them a rich bouquet of fragrant flowers. But for those who are going to reject Christ they will respond as if someone had placed before them something dead and rotting.

(I Corinthians 1:18)

For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

I John 5:11-13

And the (your) testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. ¹² He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. ¹³ These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

God has written our testimony for us and it is found in these verses in I John 5. This is the information the non-christian needs to hear.

I Peter 1:23

for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is*, through the living and enduring word of God.

Romans 10:17

So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

It is critical that we share the gospel using God's words, not our words. His words have power, ours do not.

I Thessalonians 2:19-20

For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? ²⁰ For you are our glory and joy.

One of the five crowns God gives for faithful service is given to those who have been faithful in witnessing. This crown is named the Crown of Exultation (Joy).

(II Timothy 1:8-9)

Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, ⁹ who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity,

Romans 1:16

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Acts 1:8

“but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”

I Corinthians 2:1-5

And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. ² For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. ³ I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, ⁴ and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵ so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

Matthew 10:32-33

“Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. ³³ But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.

(Luke 12:8-9)

“And I say to you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man will confess him also before the angels of God; ⁹ but he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God.

Mark 8:38

For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”

(Luke 9:26)

For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and *the glory* of the Father and of the holy angels.

I Peter 3:15

but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;

I Peter 1:13

Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober *in spirit*, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ

I Timothy 4:7

But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness;

For a detailed study on Witnessing please see, “Good Works Witnessing & Evangelism”, at this link:
<http://gciweb.org/2011/04/youth-bible-study-materials-michael-r-daily/>

Appendix - The Teachings of Balaam

The prophet Balaam was hired by the Moabite King Balak to curse Israel but instead Balaam blessed Israel. But afterward, Balaam gave advice to Balak that the best way to hurt Israel would be to draw them into God's disfavor by luring them into sexual relationships with Moabite women which would then lead Israel to worship Moabite gods. References to those who follow the teachings of Balaam occur in the New Testament as well as the Old Testament. The warning is one of false (apostate) prophets and teachers who advocate intermarriage or sexual immorality with the heathen (resulting in compromise and idolatrous worship).

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14 having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children; 15 forsaking the right way, they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness

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(See Numbers chapters 22 to 24 - Balaam blesses Israel)

Numbers 22:1-3

Then the sons of Israel journeyed, and camped in the plains of Moab beyond the Jordan opposite Jericho. 2 Now Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. 3 So Moab was in great fear because of the people, for they were numerous; and Moab was in dread of the sons of Israel.

Numbers 25:1-3

While Israel remained at Shittim, the people began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab. 2 For they invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. 3 So Israel joined themselves to Baal of Peor, and the LORD was angry against Israel.

Numbers 31:14-16

Moses was angry with the officers of the army, the captains of thousands and the captains of hundreds, who had come from service in the war. 15 And Moses said to them, "Have you spared all the women? 16 Behold, these caused the sons of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, so the plague was among the congregation of the LORD.

Deuteronomy 23:3-6

No Ammonite or Moabite shall enter the assembly of the LORD; none of their *descendants*, even to the tenth generation, shall ever enter the assembly of the LORD,⁴ because they did not meet you with food and water on the way when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you. 5 Nevertheless, the LORD your God was not willing to listen to Balaam, but the LORD your God turned the curse into a blessing for you because the LORD your God loves you. 6 You shall never seek their peace or their prosperity all your days.

Jude 1:3-4, 10-13, 16

Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints. 4 For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

10 But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed. 11 Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah. 12 These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted; 13 wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.

16 These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage.



QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Option 3 – Going Wholehearted Part 3*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Revelation 2:13-16*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *II Peter 2:1-2&14-21*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Jude 1:3-4&10-16*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Option 3 – Going Wholehearted Part 3*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Romans 6:14, Hebrews 4:16*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *II Corinthians 9:8& 13-14*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *II Corinthians 2:14-16, I Corinthians 1:18*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

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THEME: *Option 3 – Going Wholehearted Part 3*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I John 5:11-13*

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How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Romans 1:16, II Timothy 1:8-9*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Acts 1:8, I Corinthians 2:1-5*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

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QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Option 3 – Going Wholehearted Part 3*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Peter 1:23, Romans 10:17*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Thessalonians 2:19-20*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Matthew 10:32-33, Luke 12:8-9*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

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THEME: *Option 3 – Going Wholehearted Part 3*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Mark 8:38, Luke 9:26*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Peter 3:15, I Peter 1:13*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Timothy 4:7*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

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