

Wholeheartedness

(appropriate for Mid-Schoolers and older)

Michael R. Daily April 2012 40 minutes

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

In 1984 a movie came out that was very popular. The two main characters in the movie were Mr. Miyagi and Danielsan. Does anyone know the name of the movie? (The Karate Kid). How many of you have seen it?

The movie was about a teenage boy named Daniel who was being harassed by a group of bullies who knew karate. Mr. Miyagi was the maintenance man at Daniel's apartment complex and Daniel figured out that Mr. Miyagi was kind of a secret karate expert. Daniel talked Mr. Miyagi into teaching him karate.

As they began, Mr. Miyagi explained to Danielsan that karate takes commitment and hard work. "Danielsan, you must do everything I say, no questions – Do you understand?" Danielsan said, "Yea, yea, when do I learn how to fight?"

Mr. Miyagi held his head for a moment and then said, "Danielsan, listen to me carefully – walk down right side of road – OK – walk down left side of road – OK – walk down middle of road (clap) – get squashed by truck! Karate takes full commitment – you are either all the way in or all the way out – there is no in between"

And that is what we'll talk about tonight – being wholehearted in the Christian life.

How important is wholeheartedness to God? We know that it is one of the top 5 things on His list of important things. How do we know that? Because God has crowns that He gives for special service in 5 different areas and one of those areas is wholeheartedness. We'll see that later in tonight's study.

Revelation 3:14-19

To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this: 15'I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. 16'So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. 17'Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, 18I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see. 19'Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.

Why would God want you hot? So he can use you to show his glory through you as you help other people. Why would God want you cold rather than lukewarm? If you are cold you are an enemy of God, you wallow in your sin, and you make no bones about it. God can show his glory through you in two ways – first he can use your life to demonstrate the destructive power of sin. Second, he could save you and your changed life would demonstrate his power which would also bring glory to him. But what happens if you are lukewarm or mediocre? You are useless; your life is a zero. That is why God would rather you be hot or cold.

Write on board "wholehearted" and "mediocre". We will be listing attributes of each as we go through the study

Matthew 22:35-38

One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, 36"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" 37And He said to him, " 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' 38"This is the great and foremost commandment.

Being wholehearted means loving God with all your heart, soul, and mind. Some of us love God with all our heart (emotions) but not so much our minds. Others of us love God more with our minds. I tend to be like that. I like to see how science and the bible fit together logically. God wants us to love Him with all of these. Its everything all the time. That is wholeheartedness.

John 12:42-43

Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; 43for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.

Mediocre people don't confess Christ, they don't want to be kicked out of the club or ostracized, they prefer the approval of men instead of the approval of God.

A few years ago I was promoted into a new management position. On the first day of work at my new job I was sitting in my new office. My new secretary, someone I had never met before, came into my office and said, "Hi, I'm Joyce. I responded, "Hi, I'm Mike Daily". The very next thing she said was, "So, are you Mike Daily, the Bible teacher?"

Has that ever happened to you? Every once in a while when you meet a stranger do they say, "Oh, I've never met you before but you're that Christian I've heard about, aren't you?"

The Example of DEMAS

Philemon 1:23-25 - Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, 24as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow workers. 25The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

There they are. Four workers in the ministry. Two of them we know well. Mark and Luke. Writers of gospels. But Demas is right there with them, doing the ministry. This Demas must be a great guy, don't you think?

Colossians 4:14 - Luke, the beloved physician, sends you his greetings, and also Demas.

There he is again, laboring in the ministry along with Luke and Paul. Demas is doing well. But that is not the end of the story of Demas.

II Timothy 4:9-10 - Make every effort to come to me soon; 10for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.

Now what has happened? Demas has deserted Paul. Why? Because he loved this present world.

Mediocre Christians sometimes start strong but because they love this present world more than God they fall into mediocrity like Demas did. They become a discouragement to other Christians.

As I look out at you all I know that some of you are going to become Marks. I know that some of you are going to become Lukes (and Lukettes). But.... I also know that some of you will become Demases. That's a decision that each of you will make at some point one way or the other – and that's your decision.

James 1:5-8

But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. 7For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, 8being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

Mediocre Christians are double-minded. What does that mean? It means they can't make up their mind. One day they want to do things God's way. The next the world's way.

They are unstable.

You can't count on them.

James 4:1-8

What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? 2You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. 3You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. 4You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. 5Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"? 6But He gives a greater grace Therefore it says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE." 7Submit therefore to God Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 8Draw near to God and He will draw near to you Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

The mediocre are unstable and double-minded. They can't make up their mind what they believe. They lust and do not have, they are envious and cannot obtain, they fight and quarrel, they do not believe in the power of prayer, when they do pray they don't receive because it is about satisfying their pleasures, they are friends of the world and are hostile to God – even though they may not think that.

What a terrible way to live, always wanting things that you never get! You don't pray and when you do pray God does not answer because you just want your pleasures taken care of.

The mediocre think that they can have the best of both worlds. Enjoy the fun parts of church activities, maybe meet a nice man or woman to marry, but they still want their worldly fun. But it doesn't work that way. In reality they end up with the worst of both worlds.

Compare this passage (James 4:1-8) to Matthew 6:33

Matthew 6:33

But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Notice what is going on here. If you seek other things instead of seeking God first He will make sure that you never get them or if you do get them you will find them to be unsatisfying. But if you seek Him and His kingdom first he will give you these other things. It's the opposite of what you might expect.

Crown of Righteousness

II Timothy 4:7-8 - I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; 8in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Sometimes if you talk to someone who has lost a child or spouse or someone very close to them - even years later – sometimes you will hear them say, “not a day goes by that I don't think about them” - some days a lot – other days only for a few seconds – but not a day goes by that they don't think about them.

Is that how the 2nd coming of Christ is for you? Not a day goes by that you don't think about it. Sometimes a lot, some days only for a few seconds – but not a day goes by that you don't think about the 2nd coming of Christ?

Or do you go months without thinking about it and when you do think about it you think, “Gosh, if Christ came today, think of all the things I would miss out on”.

It begins to reveal your heart, doesn't it? (One of the 5 Crowns is reserved for those who are wholehearted).

I John 3:2-3

Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. 3And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

Those who look forward to the coming of Christ purify themselves. Purity and wholeheartedness go together.

John 14:21

He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.

Jesus reveals himself to the wholehearted Christian but not to the mediocre Christian. For the mediocre Christian, God is fuzzy and far away – sometimes he is easy to believe in – sometimes not. But for the wholehearted, Jesus reveals more of himself so that the scriptures come alive in such a way that God and the things of God become as real as any physical thing that you can see or touch.

Philippians 4:8

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

Do we have a choice about our thoughts? Yes. What are we to choose to think about? Good things. And what is the most powerful determiner about what we think about? If I were to ask corporate America – Madison Avenue – what would they say? They have learned that the way to influence people's behavior is by influencing their thoughts and the best way to influence their thoughts is to get their message in front of your eyes and ears as much as possible. TV, radio, magazines, movies, music.

"Oh, but Mr. Daily, I can watch anything and it just doesn't affect me". That's not true, it does affect you.

According to James chapter 1 you become deluded. Deluded means you changed but you can't tell that you changed. You think you are OK - but you changed.

James 1:21-25

Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. 22But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. 23For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; 24for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. 25But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

Psalms 101:3 - I will set no worthless thing before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; It shall not fasten its grip on me.

What we put before our eyes affects us – it can even cause us to fall away from the faith. R rated movies. What does the R stand for? Restricted. Even the godless pagans of the world think that this movie is so bad that people should be restricted from seeing it! So, why am I watching it?

"Oh but Mr. Daily, some R rated movies are so good. They are so artistic, they have such a deep, profound message".

Well, too bad for me because I am never going to see them – and yet, somehow, my life will go on.

You are going to have to figure out what you are going to do in this area but you cannot ignore these verses. If you do you may be trading to get the passing pleasures of worldly things by trading away eternal rewards, the crown of righteousness, knowing Christ more intimately, and other things reserved for the wholehearted.

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Wholeheartedness*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Revelation 3:14-19*

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?

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Psalms 101:3*

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