

The Supremacy of God in Daily Living

Ephesians 3:14-21

“Where is God in your daily newspaper or in your talk radio show or the network TV programming or *Time* and *Newsweek* or the theater or the public-school classroom?

John Piper poses that question in his book *The Godward Life*.

He goes on to say, “God is the most important reality in the universe. But he is almost totally ignored.” (John Piper, *The Godward Life*, page 19)

Isn't that true in today's world?!

There was a very slight shift resulting from the happenings of September 11, but for the most part God is almost totally ignored.

What do you think is the response in the heart of God to His being ignored by the world?

Now let me ask you a question I have asked myself:

To what measure do I ignore God in my daily living?

To what measure do you ignore God in your daily living?

And what is God's heart response to that?

How is God ignored in the life of the believer?

First, let's think about what it means to ignore someone. The dictionary definition would say:

“refuse to take notice of or acknowledge, disregard intentionally”

I've seen it pointed out that we can ignore **intentionally** or **accidentally**. What's the difference?

- **Intentionally** is when we are aware of a person and choose to disregard them, take no thought or notice of them.
- **Accidentally** is when you aren't thinking about someone a lot and end up ignoring them.

Keep those differences in mind as we consider how God can be ignored in the life of a believer.

Allow me to share just three of many ways that happens.

- Yielding to sin
- Worrying
- Unfruitfulness

1. Yielding to sin - God makes a way to escape. “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be

tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way to escape also, so that you will be able to endure it" (1 Cor. 10:13).

This can be either intentional or accidental.

2. Worrying – “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Phil 4:6-7).

This is usually accidental; you are not thinking about God.

3. Unfruitfulness – “I am the vine; you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples” (John 15:5, 8).

This can be either intentional or accidental.

Why is God so ignored in the life of a believer?

One of the main reasons is that we don't really know Him! We don't know Him because we don't *seek* to know Him!

We need to know who He is and what He is like!

Too often, we are satisfied with a minimal understanding of the reality of God.

In day-to-day living our minds are filled with thousands of thoughts.

Experts (whoever they are) estimate that the mind thinks between 60,000–80,000 thoughts a day. (*How Many Thoughts Does Your Mind Think in One Hour?* by Remez Sasson) Let's consider we have 72,000 a day. (**Varies by number of waking hours**) That's an average of 3,000 thoughts an hour, 50 thoughts a minute. That's incredible!

We need to guard our hearts and minds against godless thoughts. The dictionary defines “godless” as irreligious, atheistic, and wicked. Any thoughts that don't please God.

“God-less” thoughts are not necessarily evil or wrong thoughts. They are simply thoughts in which God is not a factor. They are God-less thoughts. How much of my 16 waking hours are filled with thoughts toward God, of God, asking His direction and guidance. What if you and I looked closely at our thoughts. Would we find God's fingerprints on them?

It's not often that I find application to my life from reading genealogies in the Bible. But as I was thinking about these things, I was reading in Genesis chapter 5.

Now, keep in mind what we've just spoken about and see if you can see the application.

We'll begin with verse 12. (*Read Genesis 5:12-27.*)

If we had begun with Adam in verse 3, it would have been the same.

In each trio of verses, it speaks first of a man living to a certain age and having a son. Then it speaks of him living another so many years and having other sons and daughters. The third verse tells for how many years the man lived altogether, and then it says he died.

Do you see a difference in one of those trios of verses?

You may say the difference is with Enoch because he didn't die. That's true, but it's not what jumped out at me.

In the second verse of each trio, it says the man "lived" so many years and had sons and daughters. With Enoch, it says he "walked with God." (Amplified: "in habitual fellowship")

I had to ask myself, "Am I just 'living' or am I really 'walking with God?'"

Many of the Psalms were written by David. We often speak of what his son Solomon asked of the Lord, which was.....? Do you know what David asked for?

If you were to ask God for one thing, what would it be?

Let's look at David's request in Psalm 27:4. "One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple."

David's great desire was to live in the presence of the Lord, seeking Him, enjoying His beauty. He didn't ask for a nice chat. He didn't ask for a cup of coffee on the back porch. David wanted to live his **entire life** consciously in the presence of God. No wonder he's called a "man after God's own heart."

I want to pick up on a word Pastor Howie referred to at the end of last Sunday's message. That word is **preeminent**.

Eminent vs preeminent

The difference between "eminent" and "preeminent" in usage is a matter of degree.

Eminent

1. high in rank, or repute; prominent; distinguished: eminent statesmen.

(From <http://dictionary.reference.com>)

Preeminent

eminent above or before others; superior; peerless, surpassing.

(From <http://dictionary.reference.com>)

John Piper has written a number of books having to do with the supremacy of God. He has one on the supremacy of God in preaching, another on the supremacy of God in missions and a couple of books on the supremacy of God in all of life. Supremacy. Being supreme.

What does it mean to be supreme? I looked the word up in the dictionary:

To be supreme means to

dominate,

exercise authority and influence,

have the foremost place,

rise high above.

I'm forced to ask myself:

Is God supreme in my day-to-day living?

Does He dominate?

Do I invite Him to exercise His authority and influence in my life?

Does He have the foremost place in my life or is my life so filled with other things to do that He gets lost in it all?

I heard a statement on Christian radio some time ago that said the Christian life is a preoccupation with God. A preoccupation is a focus that takes priority over everything else going on around me.

Why should I be preoccupied with God?

Why should God reign supreme in my life?

I'd like us to look for some answers in Ephesians 3:14-21.

Ephesians is one of Paul's prison epistles, written while chained to a Roman guard. When one is sitting in prison one thinks of the most important things in life. Paul knew that if the inner man is what he ought to be, the outer man will be taken care of in due time.

We're reading from the *Amplified Bible*, which has added words to give fuller meaning.

1. **God must be supreme because He is God, Father, Creator**

Let's look at verses 14 and 15:

Ephesians 3:14-21 (*Amplified Bible*) - "For this reason [seeing the greatness of this plan by which you are built together in Christ], I bow my knees before the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for Whom every family in heaven and on earth is named – [that Father] from Whom all fatherhood takes its title and derives its name."

Paul says, when I think of the wisdom and scope of God's plan, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth.

God has the right to reign supreme because of who He is. We do not give Him the right; He has the right. When I don't allow Him supremacy in my life, I am going against His purpose and plan for me.

2. **God must be supreme because I need Him to be**

Paul says he prays that from God's glorious unlimited resources He will give mighty inner strength through his Holy Spirit.

You and I are needy people. We need that mighty inner strength that is ours through the Holy Spirit. But how often do we go it alone in our own strength or better said in our own weakness?

Look at verse 16 with me: "May He grant you out of the rich treasury of His glory to be strengthened *and* reinforced with mighty power in the inner man by the (Holy) Spirit [Himself] – indwelling your innermost being and personality." Your innermost being **and personality**.

We need our personality to be strengthened, and perhaps changed, by allowing God to do His work in the inner man.

Listen to what Max Lucado says in his book *Grace for the Moment*. (page 36) (*Read from the book itself.*)

“[God] wants us to be just like Jesus. Isn’t that good news? You aren’t stuck with today’s personality. You are tweakable. Even if you’ve worried each day of your life, you needn’t worry the rest of your life. Where did we get the idea we can’t change? From whence come statements such as, “It’s just my nature to worry” or, “I’ll always be pessimistic. I’m just that way.” ...Who says? Would we make similar statements about our bodies? “It’s just my nature to have a broken leg. I can’t do anything about it.” Of course not. If our bodies malfunction, we seek help. Shouldn’t we do the same with our hearts? Shouldn’t we seek aid for our sour attitude? Can’t we request treatment for our selfish tirades? Of course we can. Jesus can change our hearts. He wants us to have a heart like His.”

3. **God must be supreme because I am His temple**

What does the first part of verse 17 say?

“May Christ through your faith [actually] dwell – settle down, abide, make His permanent home – in your hearts!”

Paul prays that Christ will be more and more at home in your heart as you trust Him.

1 Corinthians 6:19 and 20 says, “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.”

Christ lives in the believer. He lives in me and He lives in you, if you are trusting Christ as Savior and Lord of your life. If I am His temple, then, as Ephesians 3:17 says, Christ should be more and more at home in my heart through faith.

4. **God must be supreme because His great love for me**

Before we go on to the next verses, I want us to think about one of the words we’ll see.

You’re likely familiar with the phrase “I just can’t wrap my head around that!” “Wrap my head around means to comprehend, to understand.

The words comprehend and apprehend come from the Latin *prehendere* meaning “to grasp”. The opossum and the monkey have prehensile tails; the giraffe has a prehensile tongue. They use them to grasp and hold on to something.

- Comprehend means to mentally grasp something
- Apprehend means to lay hold of something for yourself, making it your own.

Verses 17 through 19 speak of God’s great love for us.

“May you be rooted deep in love *and* founded securely on love, that you may have the power *and* be strong to apprehend *and* grasp with all the saints (God’s devoted people, the experience of that love) what is the breadth and length and height and depth [of it]; [that you may really come] to know – practically, through experience for yourselves – the love of Christ, which far surpasses mere knowledge (without experience); that you may be filled (through all your being) unto all the fullness of God – [that is] may have the richest measure of the divine Presence, and become a body wholly filled and flooded with God Himself!”

Paul prays for the Ephesians that their roots would go down deep into the soil of God’s marvelous love. That they would have power to understand, as all God’s people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep His love really is.

That they would experience the love of Christ, though it is so great, they will never fully understand it.

Do you remember those 3-D glasses we would put on to watch a 3-D movie? When you wore them, everything seemed to come to life! It was so realistic!!

How would you like to **live** in 4-D? **Actually, live in it!** Well, you can, and you don’t need special glasses.

You just need a 4-D book. And you have it in your hands this morning. It’s the Word of God. It tells you to live in the 4-D love of God. Let me read again...

“May you be rooted deep in love *and* founded securely on love, that you may have the power *and* be strong to apprehend *and* grasp with all the saints (God’s devoted people, the experience of that love) **what is the breadth and length and height and depth [of it]**; [that you may really come] to know – practically, through experience for yourselves – the love of Christ, which far surpasses mere knowledge.

Do you understand the love of Christ? No! Neither do I. Paul says God’s love surpasses knowledge.

But have you experienced God’s love? Do you experience His love on a daily basis?

We want to know how long God’s love will endure. We want to know how He feels about us when we snap at anything that moves, when our thoughts are gutter level, when our tongue is sharp enough to slice a rock. How does He feel about me then?

Romans 8:39 has the answer. “Nothing in the whole world will ever be able to separate us from the love of God.”

1 John 3:1 tells us that the Father has loved us so much that we are called children of God. And we really are His children! The New International Version reads, “How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!”

God has lavished His love on us. The Bible says He has flooded our hearts with His love. God says, “Here’s my love!”

Are you experiencing His love? Or do you say, “Oh, that’s okay. I’ll just have a little bit when I get up in the morning or before I go to bed.”

You need to allow your day to be filled with the enjoyment of His great love. Think on His love, praise Him for His love, show His love to those around you!

Paul prays that the believers would be rooted deep in the love of Christ:

Roots are for both nourishment and stability

Grounded has to do with the solid foundation on which we build our lives;
founded on the love of Christ

If you're ever tempted to doubt the love of God, reflect on Calvary's cross and the empty tomb! John 3:16

Is this resonating with you?

If not, perhaps you've never taken the first step of trusting the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior. Maybe you've been thinking you should take that step, but you've been putting it off. You can do that today. You can do it right now where you sit. Pastor Howie or I would love to sit down with you and guide you in making that most important decision of your life.

Listen as I read John 3:16-18 from *The Message*: "This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, his one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life. God didn't go to all the trouble of sending his Son merely to point an accusing finger, telling the world how bad it was. He came to help, to put the world right again. Anyone who trusts in him is acquitted; anyone who refuses to trust him has long since been under the death sentence without knowing it. And why? Because of that person's failure to believe in the one-of-a-kind Son of God when introduced to him."

5. God must be supreme to display His great power

Paul says that when you experience the love of Christ, you will be filled with the fulness of life and power that comes from God.

He goes on to speak of God's power in verse 20. "Now to Him Who, by (in consequence of) the [action of His] power that is at work within us, is able to [carry out His purpose and] do superabundantly, far over *and* above all that we [dare] ask or think – infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, hopes or dreams."

If I am basically ignoring God in my everyday living, how can I expect to see His mighty power working within me? And He wants to do far and above what I would even dare to ask or think!

Listen to another excerpt from Max Lucado's book *Grace for the Moment*. (page 90) (*Read from the screen.*)

"...who would have ever thought to ask God for what he gives? Which of us would have dared to say: 'God, would you please hang yourself on a tool of torture as a substitution for every mistake I have ever committed?' And then have the audacity to add: 'And after you forgive me, could you prepare me a place in your house to live forever?' And if that wasn't enough: 'And would you please live

within me and protect me and guide me and bless me with more than I could ever deserve?"

In John 15:5 Jesus says, "Without Me you can do nothing!"

Here in Ephesians 3:20 we find that according to the power that is at work within us, God the Holy Spirit, all things are possible. Listen to what Paul writes:

- God is able to do **all** we ask or think
- He is able to do **above all**
 - He is able to do **abundantly** above all
 - He is able to do **exceedingly** abundantly above all we ask or **even imagine!**

Experience His power by allowing Him to reign supreme in your life!

6. God must be supreme so He will be glorified

Verse 21 closes our passage in Ephesians 3:

"To Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever. Amen – so be it."

The first question of the Shorter Catechism has to do with the purpose of life. The question is asked, *"What is the chief end [purpose] of man?"*

The answer: *"Man's chief end [purpose] is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever."*

Someone has said that the answer could read, "Man's chief end is to glorify God **by** enjoying Him forever!"

God is to be given glory in the life of each believer. He receives that glory as you and I allow him to reign supreme in our day-to-day living. Everything God does for us, He does for His glory.

Colossians 3:1-2 reads like this in the *Amplified Bible*. *"If then you have been raised with Christ [to a new life, thus sharing His resurrection from the dead], aim at **and** seek the [rich, eternal treasures] that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. And set your minds **and** keep them set on what is above – the bigger things – not on the things that are on the earth."*

Allow me to read those verses from a translation called the *Message*. *"Don't shuffle along, eyes to the ground, absorbed with the things right in front of you. Look up and be alert to the things going on around Christ – that's where the action is. See things from His perspective."*

Allowing God supremacy in your day-to-day living is something we know we ought to do. Ask God to make it not just an "ought-to" in your life, rather a "want-to!"

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 - The Great Shema, Hebrew for "hear." This has become the Jewish confession of faith.

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give

you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.”

Do you see that? God is to invade every part of your day!

Our daily living is to be a witness to the reality of God.

- Wake up to God!
- Spend time with Him in silence!
- Have Godward thoughts throughout the day!
- End your day with God!

You're used to seeing Pastor Howie's alliteration, so I'm going to borrow some from Max Lucado.

- waking thoughts
- waiting thoughts
- The same letters that spell SILENT are used to spell LISTEN
- whispering thoughts
- waning thoughts

That requires a focused heart, a listening heart, an obedient heart.

Let's look at our two questions once again:

To what measure do I ignore God in my daily living?

And what is God's heart response to that?

It's time to apprehend, take hold of...grasp...these truths for yourself, making them your own

I'd like to ask you to bow your head and close your eyes for a moment of reflection and response.

Where are you this morning in your day-to-day living? Are you giving the Lord the supremacy in your life?

REFLECT

In what ways are you living on the surface in your relationship with God? How can you begin to go deeper?

“Let your roots grow down into Him, and let your lives be built on Him” (Colossians 2:7).

I encourage you to determine, by God's enabling, to work toward doing that beginning today! Make that commitment in your heart right now!