

# Remove far from me vanity and lies (Quality: Very Good)

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Date: 19 May 1991

Preacher: Simmonds, Peter (1936-1994)

- [ 0 : 00 ] As the Lord may be pleased to help me, I would direct you to the book of Proverbs, chapter 30, and verses 8 and 9.
- The book of Proverbs, chapter 30, verses 8 and 9.
- Remove far from me vanity and lies. Give me neither poverty nor riches.
- Feed me with food convenient for me, lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord?
- Or lest I be poor and steal and take the name of my God in vain. Amen. These are the words of Agur, the son of Jakey, and in so many of the Proverbs, there is a natural understanding and a natural meaning which is a good and right and proper direction for our everyday life.
- [ 2 : 09 ] But underneath of these things, dear friends, there is also something that is spiritual. And I believe this morning we have before us something that is spiritual.
- Something which is the desire and the exercise of those that fear God and those who are taught of the Spirit.
- And how good it is, in a natural way, to have removed from our natural spirit vanity and lies.
- And how good it is, if God, in his providential mercy, grants that to us which we need so that we do not steal to supply a daily need.
- And also, if God has given us plenty in this world, that we are not lifted up with pride and deny God thereby.
- [ 3 : 43 ] So there is a natural side to it. But, dear friends, we want to come to the spiritual side as the blessed spirit may open it up to our understanding.
- living. You see, many of the Lord's dear people know what it is to walk in darkness. They travel much by night.
- And not only do they travel much by night, but they also are called to walk alone. Alone.
- So that in this path in which they walk alone, they feel it.
- They feel to be alone. And they long to know that the path which the Lord is leading them in is the right path.
- [ 4 : 51 ] That it is the path of God's people. that it is the teaching and leading of the Spirit. And this is a blessed thing, dear friends, when you feel to be alone, yet cast upon your God.
- Oh, as creatures, dear friends, we're always looking for props, aren't we? Something to lean on. something to relieve our care.
- Something to take our responsibility. Something for an easier path. That's us, isn't it, by nature. But you see, the Lord won't have that.

He won't have us to settle down, dear friends, upon our leaves. He won't have us to settle down in a path of ease.

He will not permit us to have these props, these idols. He will be first. first. And that's how God in his mercy will deal with us.

[ 6 : 14 ] He'll cause us to walk alone. There may be one here this morning that feels to be alone, walking in a solitary path.

and your question is this, am I in the right way? Is this the way of God's dear people?

Do I know anything of the teaching of the Holy Ghost? Have I been separated from this evil world?

Do I know anything of the life of God in my soul? Have I ever prized? Do I know anything of true worship?

Is the one here like that this morning? Dear friends, have you ever had to pray this prayer in its entirety?

[ 7 : 29 ] vanity? Or in part? Have you? Remove far from me vanity and lies?

Have you? Feed me with food convenient for me? Oh, what a mercy it is, dear friends, if you had to ask the Lord to feed you.

It's the language of a living soul. so that may we be enabled now to come to the text, and that one that may feel to be alone and to question whether they've anything at all, stay with us today, dear friend.

You may find that this text will come to you. oh, may the blessed spirit apply it. Remove far from me vanity and lies.

When God begins the work of grace in your heart, dear friends, it'll make you honest. Oh, yes, it will. It'll make you honest in things spiritual.

[ 9 : 04 ] and it'll separate you. It'll separate you from everything that is unprofitable.

It'll separate you from those things that are foolish, those things that are empty. vanity. In other words, from vanity.

And it'll make you honest in this. You won't want to be deceived, nor be a deceiver. vanity. Now, this is the path of God's dear people, and it is the path that the blessed spirit will lead you in.

And this will be your petition before God, remove far from me. Vanity. Vanity.

Vanity. You may not have used that word, but remove from me, Lord, those things that cannot profit.

[ 10 : 37 ] profit. Now, the spirit will open up to you a little of those things that cannot profit. And we read in that second of Ecclesiastes, those things that cannot profit.

We'll just choose one or two to bring before you this morning. those things that are vanity. Well, the wise man says mirth and pleasure are vanity.

Now, dear friends, the work of grace in your soul will separate you from mirth and pleasure, that is worldly pleasure.

things that cannot profit. Ye cannot serve God and mammon, and we shall prove this, dear friends, as we are brought along in this narrow way, that the foolishness of this world cannot profit us.

us. The pleasures of this life and of this world cannot profit us. Do you know a little separation, dear friends, in your heart from these things?

[ 12 : 11 ] life and others. If you can have the world in one hand and hold religion in another, your religion is not worth anything because God will have the whole heart.

those things that may have appealed to you in your early days and your growing years, the pleasures of this life, the sport of the world and so on, the cinema, the theatre and things like that, the pleasures of this life, the foolishness of them, did they profit you?

God may have used them to teach you, but did they profit? Where are you now, dear friend?

Lord, remove them far from me. They cannot profit. They cannot feed my soul. Oh, it's a solemn matter, you know, when the world is brought into our homes.

Remove far from me vanity. These things are in the home. Oh, may we be taught this prayer by the Spirit.

[ 13 : 52 ] And if God has taught your dear friends, you'll say, Lord, I brought it in, Lord, take it out. You know what I'm speaking about, don't you?

Remove far from me vanity, the vanity of the mirth and the pleasures of this life.

this world. Oh, for a blessed separation from these things. And then the wise man speaks of possessions.

He got to himself great works, I made great works, and built houses, planted me vineyards, and so on. And he goes through everything that you and I are probably engaged in, day by day, or we have had or still have in possession now.

And what does the wise man say? It's all vanity. Now, dear friend, this comes close, doesn't it? the word of God will never have us indolent, lazy, unconcerned.

[ 15 : 21 ] Those that do not work shall not eat, and that's the word of God. I know in this difficult day, there are those that have perhaps been brought to the place of unemployment.

I am fully aware of that, but I believe where the fear of God is in the heart, then there will be that earnest desire to find something to do, and not to sit back and do nothing, and say, well, let the state keep me.

That is not living in the fear of God, dear friends. And also, again, those that through illness may be incapacitated, this is in the hand of God.

I'm not meaning that. But, dear friends, those things that we possess, are they idols to us?

Is it a question with us? Get, get, get. If it is, we know nothing as yet of this prayer before us.

[ 16 : 37 ] remove from me vanity, the vanity of time things, and time and possessions.

Dear friend, everything that we have in this life, everything that God has given us, we must leave. And there's coming a day, dear friends, for us each, an hour, when God shall call us away from these time things and our possessions, and we shall leave them to return no more.

They're vanity, they're of this world. even dear ones, loved ones, are lent to us for time, for an appointed time.

God will then take them. You see, friends, we need something more substantial. These are idols to us.

If we cannot leave them, we cannot be separated from them, and a soul taught by the spirit that is made tender in the fear of God will say, remove from me this vanity, this idol of possessions.

[ 18 : 13 ] God may have favoured you and blessed you with many possessions, and you may, as we term it, be comfortably off.

Where's your heart, friend? Where's my heart in it? These things are not your God, are they?

These things have no saving power, and when the blessed spirit teaches you, dear friends, you'll know that you'll have to leave them, and that in a moment God can remove them from you.

You see, the breath of every man and woman in this chapel to die is in the hand of God. He opens his hand, and we're preserved.

He closes his hand, and we're gone. God, oh, may we be able to leave these things in the hand of God, and to hold his providential mercies with a loose hand, not in unthankfulness, God forbid, in.

[ 19 : 33 ] But with a thankful heart to the God of all mercy, every good and every perfect gift cometh down from God, from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning.

Our friends, we need to pray against idolatry in these things. You see, Hezekiah was left here.

All these things have I gotten of myself. Oh, to hold these things with a loose hand.

Some of you that are now in your the even tide of life, you've passed your three score years and ten.

How is it with you? we can remember walking through a car park some years ago now and feeling so much the weight of indwelling sin, so much the weight of things around us.

[ 20 : 58 ] We felt so dark, so far off from God. And as we walked through this car park, our foot slipped upon rotted leaves.

and you know, though we change and decay in all around I see, oh, thou who changes not, abide with me.

I know it's not in air book, but dear friends, the language will be the language of your soul. If you know a little of the Spirit's teaching here, remove from me vanity.

you see, the life of the Spirit is in this prayer. Lord, don't let me set my affection on things here below.

Don't leave me to have my portion here below. Oh, that my portion may be in heaven.

[ 22 : 22 ] Christ, you see. this is what's in this poor soul's heart. It's Christ. A longing to know him whom to know is life eternal.

There's nothing here for you, is there, dear aged friends? There's nothing here that can satisfy your soul. There's nothing here that can feed you.

There's nothing here that can amuse you. You don't want that, do you? You want something solid, something real, something from God.

to know to know that, these earthly possessions, dear friends, although we would be thankful for God's mercies to us, yet, oh, may we hold them with a loose hand, the vanity of them.

God. And then the wise man speaks of the wisdom, the wisdom of man.

[ 23 : 40 ] And that wisdom, friends, is the earthly wisdom, and not the wisdom of God. Now, that's vanity.

Oh, how earthly wisdom, when not accompanied with grace, is vanity.

What does it do? It lifts up with pride. That's what earthly wisdom will do.

Let me just speak to our dear young friends to illustrate that point. Some of you may be in your teenage years, and you're learning things at school, and you come home with this knowledge, and you may speak to your parents about it, and ask them questions, and their parents may well say to you, well, sorry, I can't help you, I didn't know that, I've never learned that.

What's in your heart when they say that? It's something like this, isn't it? Well, what do you know then, if you don't know that? And you feel lifted up, don't you, because you know something that mother and father don't know.

[ 25 : 19 ] And you perhaps feel sorry for them, that's pride. And earthly wisdom, dear friends, will puff up, so that this or that one, unless accompanied by divine grace, this or that one will look down upon another.

Yet what is that person that has this knowledge? They're vanity, they're men, but still men. They're not God, whatever they know. But I would not decry learning, neither does the word of God.

I certainly wouldn't do so. But oh, may there be the savour of the spirit in these things, sanctified wisdom and ability.

That's what we would have. That the wisdom that is given in a natural way by God may be used to his honour and glory.

Anything else is vanity. And this human wisdom, dear friends, in religion, true religion is more than notion, that is, fleshly wisdom.

[ 26 : 47 ] Something must be known, that is, known by the teaching of the spirit, must be known and felt. And this dear soul here that pleads this, remove from me vanity, is asking for this, Lord, remove from me a head knowledge of religion.

Lord, I want the religion of the Holy Ghost, and I want it in my heart, not in my head, the vanity of head knowledge.

Dear friends, does the word of God stir you up? you hear the truth preached in this pulpit Sabbath by Sabbath?

Does the word ever try you? Does it stir you up? Do you have to go home and retire to your room in secret and bow the knee before God?

Does it search you? Do you good? Do you good? Do you good? Oh, if it does, it'll do you good. It's some of this, feed me with food convenient for me.

[ 28 : 17 ] But we will come to this. Dear friends, if all that the word of God preached in this, this place, if it never enters your heart, but if it goes into your head and puffs you up, you may say, I've been a strict Baptist for 30 years.

I've been a strict Baptist for 60, 70, 80 years. Have you? Have you been a sinner called by divine grace?

Dear friends, do you know anything of your heart? Has God opened up to you the evil there? Has he caused you to be burdened with your sin and shame?

Has he taught you, dear friend, what you are? And where you must go but for sovereign grace? Has he taught you that?

You'll not boast them. You see, pride, pride is in it, and that's vanity. You see, friend, I don't mind what you've got in profession.

[ 29 : 32 ] If you haven't got any possession, it will be worthless to you. You may have been a member of a church for 50 years, but if you've no evidence in your soul, dear friends, of this prayer, remove from me vanity and lies, your religion is not worth anything.

I don't want it. but dear friends, it's the blessed possession of the spirit and the soul, and that is reality, that is life, and the life is expressed in this, remove from me, vanity and lies, the vanity of an empty profession.

Oh, may it be our petition, and then the dear man speaks of silver and gold, vanity of these riches.

Oh, as creatures, dear friends, how we pursue after the treasures of this life.

The old flesh says get, get, get, doesn't it? And we read in scripture that the heart is not satisfied with gold, the more it has, the more it wants.

[ 31 : 16 ] That's vanity. God in his mercy has been very gracious to me in these last few years, in that he has given me more than I need in these providential things.

But you know, when I look back upon my early days, particularly my early married days, we hadn't got any money, you know, and we had to pray a while on.

We had to pray for 25 pounds to pay our bills. They were sweet times. Yes, they were.

Because we saw the hand of God in it. We had intimations of his love and mercy to us.

all things, you know, friends, that we lacked, the Lord provided them.

[ 32 : 40 ] Oh, yes, he did. And we were brought down, as it were, to, as it were, little children in their dependence upon him.

Ah, friends, there's no vanity in that, you know. when you have to creep before him, and ask him to help you again. You feel as though you may weary him.

Lord, I'm here again. I'm hard up. I've got nothing to pay with. Lord, do appear for me. Lord, undertake for me.

God's need to do it. But now, you see, we've got not plenty, but there's enough.

Where's the waiting upon God? You see, you don't need him now, do you? You've got enough. You haven't got enough in the house, you can go to the bank and draw a bit more out.

[ 33 : 52 ] Where's the waiting upon God? You see, the vanity of these things. They separate, it separates from your God, doesn't it?

Silver and gold. Ah, dear friend, you'll pray this prayer, I believe. Lord, I don't want any riches. But Lord, don't leave me so poor that I have to steal just enough that I can pay my way, just enough so that I can see thy hand in it.

And that I can honestly say, Lord, that I don't want these things. They mean nothing to me. For the silver and gold is his, the cattle upon a thousand hills.

he will look after you. Yes, he will. If you have this in your heart, dear friend, remove from me, Lord, the vanity of silver and gold.

He'll uphold you. He'll strengthen you and supply your every name. Ah, the fear in a child of God's heart.

[ 35 : 25 ] The fear of idolatry. The fear of having their portion here below. that will make you a profligate spender.

You won't go out and spend, spend, spend. No. What you will do, dear friends, is see what you've been given as a gift from God. And you'll spend it in his fear.

But the word says, remove far from me vanity and lies.

Well, we've spoken so feebly concerning this vanity, but you, dear friend, I believe if you know this prayer, you'll want the Lord to remove from you everything that's empty, everything that's foolish, everything that cannot profit, remove it from me.

And this is the blessed teaching of the Spirit. Lord, don't let anything come between following thee and a tender walk in thy fear.

[ 36 : 46 ] This is the Spirit. Now, dear friends, friend, you that may have come in this morning wondering whether you're in the right way, do you know what this is?

This language in your heart? Has the Lord separated you from these earthly, worldly things in spirit so that you can say they are not my God?

God, I don't want my portion here, beloved. And now we must come to this before we leave it. The time is going. But remove far from me vanity and lies.

always. Well, dear young friends, always speak the truth. Oh, what a good thing this is where the Lord makes us tender in his fear.

there's not one here this morning including this one in the pulpit that can say they've never told an untruth, never told a lie.

[ 38 : 02 ] And all we may have had to, and I trust we have confessed this before God. And even now, dear friends, under pressure we may even tell a lie today, under the pressure sometimes.

But may God forgive it and keep us tender in his fear. I'm not advocating this, dear friends, far from it. Oh, then it may be removed far from us.

But remove far from me vanity and lies. Ah, friends, this is where we would bring before you the honest soul. one that's made honest by the Spirit.

And they're honest like this, Lord, don't let me be deceived. Lord, don't let me deceive others.

lies, lies, you see. Don't let me believe the lies of the adversary.

[ 39 : 17 ] Satan, you know, is a liar from the beginning. And how we get caught up in all his accusations is a liar from the beginning.

But oh, remove far from me vanity and lies. Oh, then I may not fall under them. And oh, may I not be one that tells lies.

Dear friend, has God made you honest in this? You want to be right in his sight, don't you?

You want your religion to be real, a religion of the Holy Ghost. This is why the Lord's dear people are put in the furnace, friends.

What goes into the furnace? Well, the grace of God, the teaching of God goes into the furnace, and so does the religion of the flesh.

[ 40 : 31 ] Opinion, private interpretation goes into the furnace. Outward profession goes into the furnace.

The secrets of the heart go into the furnace. And this is the desire of an honest soul made so by the Spirit.

Lord, try me and see if there be any wicked way in me. This is what it is to be honest, dear friends.

Keep me. Preserve me. remove far from me vanity and lies. Now, God will put you in the furnace, dear friends, here.

And what will come out? What God has done, God's work will come out of the furnace, and everything else will be burnt up.

[ 41 : 39 ] God's love. And this is what this honest soul will need and desire, dear friend, to know that they have something substantial from the Spirit of God.

Dear friends, if you've got one piece of gold, however small, it's gold still. keep me, Lord, from these lies, deceit, that I may not deceive others, that I may not be deceived myself.

Friends, I wouldn't preach up doubts and fears, but you see, when the Lord teaches us what we are and where we are, opens up to us our wretched nature, our sinful nature.

Dear friends, this will bring fear, fear and trembling, that if God were just, he'd send us to the pit.

And this causes fear and trembling, but oh, this poor soul doesn't want to be deceived, doesn't want things smoothed over, doesn't want lies in doctrine, doesn't want the minister to say, well, it'll be all right with you.

[ 43 : 08 ] You've come to the house of God regularly, two services on a Sunday, sometimes in the week, it's going to be well with you. He doesn't want that. He wants this, tell me, Lord, with thine own mouth that thou hast chosen me.

That's what he wants. remove far from me vanity and lies. It'll make religion real.

You won't rest short of it, dear soul. Say unto my soul, thou art my salvation. Well, the time has gone.

We must leave it. remove far from me vanity and lies. Give me neither poverty nor riches. Feed me with food convenient for me, lest I be full and deny thee and say, who is the Lord?

Or lest I be poor and steal and take the name of my God in vain. May the Lord add his blessing. Amen. conclude our service by singing hymn 1064.

[ 44 : 38 ] How vain are all things here below, how false and yet how fair, each pleasure has its poison too, and every sweet a snare.

ten hundred and sixty four. Ten hundred and sixty four. so vey irresdault please it if every  
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