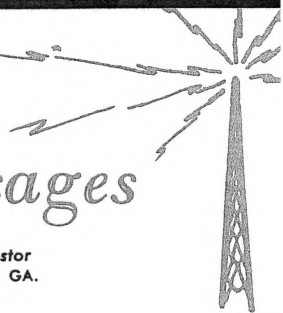




# Baptist hour messages



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## SECURITY AGAINST SINNING

May 4, 1958

The closer one gets to the Lord the more he becomes concerned with a clean, pure life. Fear of lapsing into the old pattern is justified at times, and he looks for those securities that help him from lapsing. These securities are not cocksure dogmatics; rather, they are the hard-earned dividends which come when one honestly wages his battles for God.

To you who are Christ's let me now ask you to count your securities: not stocks and bonds, but these external and internal securities that help prevent your missing the mark for God.

### INTERNAL SECURITIES

A sound knowledge of your own nature is one of your best internal securities. The old admonition, "Know thyself and to thine ownself by true," still is good, solid advice. To know who you are, what you are, what you are for is tantamount to any real service and accomplishment. Such an understanding will reveal the fact that a man has many natures—much like the confession of the Apostle Paul when he concluded that the person he wanted to be he was not, and the one he did not want to be, he was.

To admit that there is a great divide between good intentions and actual performances is to admit a basic honesty. "Let him who thinketh he stands take heed lest he fall" is the admonition aimed, not to willful sinners, but to those who feel they are beyond the point of sinning. This means simply that there is never an inch of latitude in this earthly life to brag about how

secure one is from temptation. It means that one is never ready for sainthood in the Kingdom because Satan doesn't get interested in a person until that person starts maturing in Christian discipleship.

Who runs for a streetcar he has already caught? Neither does Satan! That is why falling back into one's old nature is forever a possibility in this life. Yet, to know one's weakness, to remember where he fell or how he weakened before is to have an

### Baptist Hour Sermon Topics for June

- June 1—The Final Judgment
- June 8—Sinless Perfection: Direction or Deception?
- June 15—The Holy Spirit
- June 22—The Nature of Hell
- June 29—"The Ramparts We Watch"

Dr. John W. Raley  
President, Oklahoma  
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advantage when the temptation is presented the next time.

One need not strengthen his steel-like defenses. It is at the points where the alloy is the weakest that he should post his guards. Satan is not foolish enough to charge straight into the soul's Maginot line; he prefers a faster flank around the weak ends. For instance, to a totally sober person Satan is not going to have much of a temptation by offering him alcoholic beverage. To a completely honest man, the possibilities of cheating are remote. To the pure, Satan may as well save his breath when he suggests that the pure person walk the avenue of impurity.

But do not underestimate him — he has an appropriate temptation for every type of personality and every type of condition. Yet, to know that we are in league with a God Who is all powerful is to rob Satan of his advantage in any fight.

#### THE POWER OF CONSCIENCE

Another internal security against sinning is an acute conscience. This capacity is one of man's bulwarks against falling, especially if he sends his conscience to school. To subject it to the sensitizing, disciplining nurture of Christian discipleship is to equip it with securing dimensions. There are thousands of forces that will dull the cutting edge of conscience, reduce it to an inactive mass. One must ever be alert to these sinister forces if he would keep in tact this capacity for resistance.

Not long ago a large university saw this fact in demonstration. Nine years after a man had graduated from the university he returned his diploma with an accompanying letter which stated, "I do not have the honest right to be an alumnus of this fine school. In my senior year on the final examination I cheated on three courses. Without apology I accepted my diploma in hypocrisy. I did not earn it, therefore, I do not deserve it."

After the board reviewed the man's letter, they returned the diploma to him and said, "Surely anybody who is honest enough to do what you have done has earned the diploma, so we return it to

you." The man returned it the second time contending still that he had not earned it. If today you visited that university, there on the chapel wall you would see the diploma framed with the man's name cut out of it: a poignant reminder of the value of a good conscience.

So long as you feel a sense of nausea the next morning after a night of revelling, just so long is there security in an accusing conscience.

#### WILL POWER

Hear another bastion of inner security: your will power. This, like a high wall that keeps the sea back in its trough, can prevent life's temptations from washing things out to sea. Few victories register as meaningfully as that which comes when a person in forthright will power says a firm "No." Let our young people be told anew that the thrill that comes from sinning isn't half a match for the thrill that comes by resisting!

It is one thing for an alarm clock to go off in the morning; it is something else for one to get out of bed. For a person even now on this Baptist Hour broadcast to hear the alarm that one's will power should be exercised as well as his muscles is one thing; but for that person to will his life a better affair is something else altogether. God has sounded an alarm to multimillions, an alarm that life was in the red danger zone but lacking in firm will power and determination. The alarm was not heeded.

#### EXTERNAL SECURITIES

We mention briefly your external securities against sinning. We mentioned a knowledge of your own nature, an acute conscience, and a strong will power as your internal securities; now look at your equipment from without. First, there is the fellowship of believers, that host of people who are fighting the same kind of battles you are.

It is consoling to know that one is not a lone soldier on the battlefield. He is surrounded by battalions of men and women,

clothed as he is, armed as he is, and faced with the same kind of enemy. This generates assurance and security. And to go us one more, the author of Hebrews reminds that "we are encompassed with a whole cloud of witnesses" as we run this race of life.

The Greek word *koinonia* means a community of believers—sharers in the common bond. A Christian church is understood as a group of united sharers in common, a called-out of this world family in God's service, those who are welded together by a spiritual fusion and a dynamic idea unlike any other group on earth. To belong to this group is no burdensome obligation but a pronounced privilege. What a security to know that if you fall there are many brothers to help you up; if you fail, there are throngs who are willing to lend a helping hand.

#### GUARDIAN ANGELS

Guardian angels help make up your external securities against sinning. This is an old point of theology seldom heard today, but if it were ever true, what has changed its truth today? Without apology I believe it most definitely. God has al-

ways sent representatives on missions of mercy, task forces for special accomplishments. Heralding some momentous news, He has a Gabriel handy for the task.

No, I cannot describe the anatomy of angels nor tell you much about their activities. It is enough to know that deep in the recesses of the heart, one is snatched back from the brink of disaster, guarded in sleep by a constant presence, irked into better performance when shoddiness and mediocrity prevail, inspired to nobler heights when life insists on living in the lowlands of life. Yes, much of this is the act of the Holy Spirit; but if He chooses to work in league with those of his own choosing, such is just another of those external securities.

Then hear the other one: the endless list of divine promises constitute a reservoir of wonderful security. The Bible says that God is faithful, and He will not permit you to be tempted beyond your endurance. There it is! The thermostat of human conduct — God will not let Satan go but so far. There comes a time when God gets enough, when Satan is called off in decisive finality. An so long as that is true, just so long do our defenses stand as everlasting securities against sinning.

## THE SPLENDOR OF GOD

May 11, 1958

Scripture: Psalm 19

All the roads in the Bible eventually lead to God. Whether one starts on the high plateau of mature virtues or in the low valleys of condemning sin, whatever the subject under discussion in the sixty-six books of the Bible, eventually they wind their way to the throne of God. In this sermon, therefore, let us begin this journey with God, looking at His splendor as revealed in many facets of life and revelation.

#### THE SPLENDOR OF HIS BEAUTY

God's splendor is seen in His magnifi-

cent beauty. Whatever else one thinks about God, never let him impute ugliness to God's nature or to His creation. True beauty is elevated above the sordid, vulgar, and profane. It is transcendent and sublime. A few moments taken out of this feverish jig of living to see God's handwriting across the firmament would open our eyes anew to resplendent beauty.

The Genesis account of the creation states that God beheld all that He had made and saw that it was good, a goodness akin to beauty. Moreover, it states that "all things were good—not just the saffron showers of crepe myrtles or the