

# Act Your Age: 4 Keys to Living a Godly Life

My kids love collecting action figures.

We recently came across one that seemed irresistible. The toy is called Invisible Jim. The manufacturer behind Invisible Jim says it encourages children to use their imaginations. The box is decorated with cool slogans and colorful images. The packaging only cost the U.S. manufacturer pennies to make but sold for around \$9.

There's only one problem: Jim isn't in the box. In fact, there's nothing in the packaging. It turns out Invisible Jim is just a gag gift. The colorful, attractive box is empty.

That's the way **sin** is. We are lured in by the attractive packaging, only to discover it was an empty thrill. But no buzz that comes from this age will ever fill us. Because this age, as Peter wrote, is empty (1 Pet. 1:18). It is void of the Spirit's life. This is why Jesus sent the **Spirit** – to save us and redeem us from the empty pursuits of this failed age.

God's **grace** isn't just so we can get our tickets punched and escape hell. Grace teaches us to live a godly life in this present age (Titus 2:11-12). So how do we do this? Let me offer a few helpful suggestions.

## 1. Guard your soil.

During the Japanese nuclear meltdown of 2012, a high level of cesium contaminated the ground. Japan was paralyzed for months due to contaminated soil. You can't grow healthy crops in radioactive soil. In the same way, living a godly life starts with a pure thought life (Phil. 4:8). We must renew our minds in the **Word** (Rom. 12:1-2), and we must choose to dwell on the virtues of the kingdom instead of the vices of this failed

age.

## 2. Exchange old cravings.

Before a newborn baby has any knowledge of food or understands the nature of sustenance, he knows instinctively what it means to be hungry. Likewise, I do not know that God exists because I have seen Him. I know that such a thing must exist because the deep, yawning emptiness in my spirit hungers for His life. Paul told the Galatians to replace the pangs of carnal desire with **spiritual hunger** (Gal. 5:16-18). We need to exchange the old cravings for the new.

## 3. Stay lit.

Years ago, while housesitting for some friends, I saw a little blue flame in their gas fireplace. I didn't know what it was, so I freaked out. I thought my friends had gone on vacation and left their fireplace on. I spent a comical hour huffing and puffing and blowing out the pilot flame. Later, when I called them, they told me that little flame is supposed to stay lit. In the same way, our **passion** for Jesus isn't always a roaring fire. But it is possible for us to stay "lit" so that the Spirit can flip the switch to raging hot through worship and spiritual disciplines (Eph. 5:19). As we give voice to our passion, the Spirit will move on us and fill us to overflowing.

## 4. Don't starve the dog.

Not too long ago, my wife traveled to Montana with my kids and left me with the family puppy. She also left a list on the fridge of all the stuff I needed to do for this puppy.

I read the list. I understood the list. I even memorized the list. But I think you would agree that had I not applied the list, she would have returned to a very messy house and a starving dog. In the same way, we can't just know what to do. We must do it. No matter how much we know, if we fail to apply

Jesus' teaching, we will starve spiritually. Jesus made it clear that the test of genuine **discipleship** was practicing and applying his teachings (Matt. 7:24).

The junkie, the food addict, the shopaholic, the sports fanatic and the sex fiend – they're all just trying to fill the empty box. But as believers, we cannot subsist on the watery swill and the pabulum of this empty age. We must begin to "act our age" – practicing the habits of passion and reflecting the **values** of the kingdom.

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