



On Holiness and Sanctification

Were some watcher or holy one from the bright world above to come among us for a time with the power to diagnose the spiritual ills of church people, there is one entry which I am quite sure would appear on the vast majority of his reports: Definite evidence of chronic spiritual lassitude; level of moral enthusiasm extremely low.

Holy is the way God is. To be holy he does not conform to a standard. He is that standard. He is absolutely holy with an infinite, incomprehensible fullness of purity that is incapable of being other than it is. Because he is holy, all his attributes are holy; that is, whatever we think of as belonging to God must be thought of as holy.

The holy man is not one who cannot sin. A holy man is one who will not sin.

The true Christian ideal is not to be happy but to be holy.

The whole purpose of God in redemption is to make us holy and to restore us to the image of God. To accomplish this He disengages us from earthly ambitions and draws us away from the cheap and unworthy prizes that worldly men set their hearts upon.

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No man should desire to be happy who is not at the same time holy. He should spend his efforts in seeking to know and do the will of God, leaving to Christ the matter of how happy he shall be.

Go to God and have an understanding. Tell Him that it is your desire to be holy at any cost and then ask Him never to give you more happiness than holiness. When your holiness becomes tarnished, let your joy become dim. And ask Him to make you holy whether you are happy or not. Be assured that in the end you will be as happy as you are holy; but for the time being let your whole ambition be to serve God and be Christlike ... although God wants His people to be holy as He is holy, He does not deal with us according to the degree of our holiness but according to the abundance of His mercy. Honesty requires us to admit this.

You cannot study the Bible diligently and earnestly without being struck by an obvious fact – the whole matter of personal holiness is highly important to God!

I cannot think of even one lonely passage in the New Testament which speaks of Christ's revelation, manifestation, appearing or coming that is not directly linked with moral conduct, faith and spiritual holiness.

Christ calls men to carry a cross; we call them to have fun in His name. He calls them to forsake the world; we assure them that if they but accept Jesus the world is their oyster. He calls them to suffer; we call them to enjoy all the bourgeois comforts modern civilization affords ... He calls them to holiness; we call them to a cheap and tawdry happiness that would have been rejected with scorn by the least of the Stoic philosophers.

We have the blessed Holy Spirit present, and we are treating Him as if He were not present at all. We resist Him, disobey Him, quench Him and compromise with our hearts. We hear a sermon about Him and determine to learn more and do something about it. Our conviction wears off, and soon we go back to the same old dead level we were in before. We resist the blessed Comforter. He has come to comfort. He has come to teach. He is the Spirit of instruction. He has come to bring light for He is the Spirit of light. He comes to bring purity for He is the Spirit of holiness. He

comes to bring power for He is the Spirit of power ... We would like to be full of the Spirit and yet go on and do as we please. The Holy Spirit who inspired the Scriptures will expect obedience to the Scriptures, and if we do not obey the Scriptures, we will quench Him. This Spirit will have obedience but people do not want to obey the Lord. Everyone is as full as he wants to be. Everyone has as much of God as he desires to have. There is a fugitive impulse that comes to us, in spite of what we ask for when we pray in public, or even in private. We want the thrill of being full, but we don't want to meet the conditions. We just don't want to be filled badly enough to be filled ... If there is anything in your life more demanding than your longing after God, then you will never be a Spirit-filled Christian. I have met Christians who have wanted to be filled, in a vague sort of way, for many years. The reason they have not been filled with the Spirit is because they have other things they want more. God does not come rushing into a human heart unless He knows that He is the answer and fulfillment to the greatest, most overpowering desire of that life.

We Christians must stop apologizing for our moral position and start making our voices heard, exposing sin as the enemy of the human race and setting forth righteousness and true holiness as the only worthy pursuits for moral beings.

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