



Oceanside URC—Wednesday School of Theology

Holiness #4

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Strive...for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord (Heb. 12:14).

*All page numbers are from J. C. Ryle, *Holiness: Its Nature, Hindrances, Difficulties, and Roots* (London: William Hunt and Company, 1879).

Chapter 3: “Holiness”

- Reflect on how holiness is “practical.”

What is Holiness?

What is holiness *not*? (50)

Ryle goes on to give twelve brief descriptions of what holiness is (51–55)

1. Being of one mind with God
 - How can we grow in this area?
2. Shun sin and keep the commandments
3. Strive to be like Jesus
4. Follow after meekness
5. Follow after self-denial
6. Follow after love
7. Follow after mercy
8. Follow after purity of heart
 - What does this mean for your priorities?
9. Follow after the fear of God

10. Follow after humility
11. Follow after faithfulness in everything
12. Follow after spiritual mindedness
 "...hold things on earth with a very loose hand." (55)

What does all this mean for our struggle with sin? Does sin still exist in us? Can we actually follow after so stridently these qualities?

Why is Practical Holiness Important? (50–65)

1. God commands it
2. This is the end of the gospel
 - What does it mean for us to believe, preach, and teach "the whole Christ, the whole Gospel?"
3. This is the only sound evidence of faith
4. This is the only proof of our love for Christ
5. This is the only evidence that we are children of God
6. This is the way we do good to others
 - Reflect on Ryle's description of the Christian being a "silent sermon." (61)
 - Agree or disagree: "...there is far more harm done by unholy and inconsistent Christians than we are at all aware of." (62)
7. Our comfort depends on holiness
8. Without holiness on earth we are unprepared to enjoy heaven
 - Why does Ryle say, "...heaven would be a miserable place to an unholy man?" (65)

Reflect on the following section from Ryle in terms of Christian living and preaching today:

I have no desire to make an idol of holiness. I do not wish to dethrone Christ and put holiness in His place. But I must candidly say, I wish sanctification was more thought of in this day than it seems to be, and I therefore take occasion to press

the subject on all believers into whose hands these pages may fall. I fear that it is sometimes forgotten, that God has married together justification and sanctification. They are distinct and different things, beyond question, but one is never found without the other. All justified people are sanctified, and all sanctified people are justified. What God has joined together let no man dare to put asunder. Tell me not of your justification, unless you have also some marks of sanctification. Boast not of Christ's work *for you*, unless you can show us the Spirit's work *in you*....I would say it with all reverence, but say it I must,—I sometimes fear if Christ were on earth now, there are not a few who would think His preaching to be *legal*; and if Paul were writing his Epistles, there are those who would think he had better not write the latter part of most of them as he did. But let us remember, that the Lord Jesus *did* speak the Sermon on the Mount, and that the Epistle to the Ephesians contains six chapters and not four. (68–69)

Advice for Pursuing Holiness (71–73)

1. Begin with Christ

2. Abide in Christ