



Oceanside URC—Wednesday School of Theology

Holiness #1

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*...so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.
(Titus 2:10c)*

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

“Introduction”

“I have had a deep conviction for many years that practical holiness and entire self-consecration to God are not sufficiently attended to by modern Christians...” (ix)

- How relevant is Ryle’s statement today?
- How worldly do you think the church has become?

“...sanctification, in its place, and proportion, is quite as important as justification. Sound Protestant and Evangelical doctrine is useless if it is not accompanied by a holy life. It is worse than useless; it does positive harm.” (x)

- Why should sanctification be as important to us as justification?
- In what ways can our lack of holiness cause our doctrine to be useless to us and to the world?

Ryle goes on to give seven “Cautions for the Times on the Subject of Holiness” in the form of questions:

(1) “...is it wise to speak of *faith* as the one thing needful, and the only thing required...in handling the doctrine of sanctification?...that the holiness of converted people is *by faith only, and not at all by personal exertion?*” (xi)

- Is faith necessary for holiness? (Gal. 2:20)
- Is faith the only thing necessary for holiness? (1 Cor. 9:26; 2 Cor. 7:1; Heb. 4:11; 12:1)

This is not just a theoretical discussion, but a practical one. Tullian Tchividjian's recent book, *Jesus + Nothing = Everything*, does this very thing, making justification swallow up sanctification, and turning sanctification into thinking more about your justification.

- "...sanctification is the daily hard work of going back to the reality of our justification" (95)

*See these reviews of the book:

Mark Jones, "Jesus + Nothing = Everything (An Analysis)"

[<http://www.meetthepuritans.com/2011/12/16/jesus-nothing-everything-an-analysis>]

David Murray, "Does Jesus + Nothing = Everything?"

[<http://headhearhand.org/blog/2011/12/12/does-jesus-nothing-everything>]

—, "The Danger of Making of Experience the Norm for Others"

[<http://headhearhand.org/blog/2011/12/13/the-danger-of-making-ourselves-the-norm-for-others>]

—, "Does Jesus Respond to Our Obedience with Love?"

[<http://headhearhand.org/blog/2011/12/14/does-jesus-respond-to-our-obedience-with-love>]

"...the Scriptures nowhere teach us that faith *sanctifies* us in the same sense, and in the same manner, that faith *justifies* us!" (xii)

"It is thoroughly Scriptural and right to say 'faith alone justifies.' But it is not equally Scriptural and right to say 'faith alone sanctifies.'" (xiii)

- What do the following Scriptures say about this?

Romans 4:5 compared with Galatians 5:6

Romans 3:28 with James 2:17

- (2) "...whether it is wise to makes so little...of the many *practical exhortations to holiness in daily life* which are to be found in the Sermon on the Mount, and in the latter part of most of St. Paul's epistles?" (xiv)

- Do the New Testament writers exhort us to holiness generally speaking?
- Do the New Testament writers exhort us to holiness specifically speaking? If so, in what areas?

- (3) "...whether it is wise to use vague language about *perfection*, and to press on Christians a *standard of holiness*, as attainable in this world..." (xv)

- Does Scripture call us to “perfection?” (2 Cor. 7:1; Heb. 4:1; 2 Cor. 13:11)
- Can we reach this? If not, why not? If not, when?

“I must think that those who use [the language of perfection] either know very little of the nature of sin, or of the attributes of God, or of their own hearts, or of the Bible.” (xvii)

(4) “...is it wise to assert...that *the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans* does not describe the experience of the advanced saint, but the experience of the unregenerate man, or of the weak and unestablished believer?” (xvii–xviii)

- Why is this discussion important?
- Why did almost all the Reformers and Puritans view this passage as describing the struggle of the regenerated Christian?

Romans 7:7–13 uses the first person, past tense.

Romans 7:14–8:4 uses the first person, present tense

Romans 5 speaks of justification, then Romans 6 of sanctification, but then in Romans 7 Paul speaks of the real struggle to live a holy life, and then in Romans 8 he reminds us that despite our struggles we are not under condemnation

(5) “...is it wise to use the language which is often used...about the doctrine of “*Christ in us*”?” (xx)

- Does Paul teach that Christ dwells in us? (Rom. 8:10; Gal. 2:20; 4:19; Eph. 3:17; Col. 3:11)
- What errors can we fall into if we overemphasize [and this is what Ryle was warning against] this?

1. (Rom. 8:9–10)

2. (Gal. 2:20)

(6) “...is it wise to draw such a deep, wide, and distinct line of separation between conversion and *consecration, or the higher life, so called...*?” (xxiii)

- How does Scripture divide humanity?
 - Within the category of those converted, what does Scripture say?
 - What is the danger of teaching we can reach a second state of total consecration?
- (7) "...is it wise to teach believers that they ought not to think so much of fighting and struggling against sin, but ought rather to *"yield themselves to God,"* and be passive in the hands of Christ?" (xxvi)
- Where are these kinds of images and metaphors that the New Testament writers use to describe the Christian life found?
 - Holy violence—
 - Conflict—
 - Warfare—
 - Fight—
 - Soldier's life—
 - Wrestling—
 - How do these connect with how you view your own Christian life? How can they correct you if you do not think of yourself in these ways?

"But the plain truth is, that men will persist in confounding two things that differ,—that is, justification and sanctification. In justification the word to be addressed to man is believe,—only believe; in sanctification the word must be, 'watch, pray, and fight,' What God has divided let us not mingle and confuse." (xxvii)

What is Ryle's remedy for his time, which is so relevant for our time? (xxviii)