

Personal Holiness

After Adam and Eve's fall in the garden we not only lost the favor of God but also the purity of our nature, and therefore we need to be both reconciled to God and renewed in our inner man, for without personal holiness we cannot have true fellowship with Him.

"Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord." Hebrews. 12:14.

As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation and behavior; because it is written, **"Be ye holy for I am holy"** 1 Pet. 1:15, 16 .

God's nature is such that unless we be sanctified, there can be no communion between Him and us.

But can persons be sinful and holy at one and the same time? Genuine Christians discover so much carnality, filth, and vileness in themselves that they find it almost impossible to be assured they are holy. Nor is this difficulty solved, as in justification, by recognizing that though completely unholy in ourselves we are holy in Christ, for Scripture teaches that those who are sanctified by God are holy in themselves, though the evil nature has not been removed from them.

"None but the pure in heart will ever see God" Matt. 5:8 .

There must be that renovation of soul whereby our minds, affections and wills are brought into harmony with God. There must be that impartial compliance with the revealed will of God and abstinence from evil which issues from faith and love.

There must be that directing of all our actions to the glory of God, by Jesus Christ, according to the Gospel. There must be a spirit of holiness working within the believer's heart so as to sanctify his outward actions if they are to be acceptable unto Him in whom there is no darkness. True, there is perfect holiness in Christ for the believer, but there must also be a holy nature received from Him.

There are some who appear to delight in the imputed obedience of Christ but make little or no concern about personal holiness. They have much to say about being arrayed in "*the garments of salvation and covered with the robe of righteousness*" (Isa. 61:10), but give no evidence that they are "*clothed with humility*" (1 Pet. 5:5) or that they have read Col 3:12 "*Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other;*"

How many there are today who suppose that if they have trusted in Christ, all is sure to be well with them at the last day even though they neglect striving for personal holiness. There are multitudes of souls being deceived. When their empty faith is examined and tested, what is it worth? It is a powerless, lifeless, fruitless and a very dangerous thing.

The faith of God's elect is "*the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness*" (Titus 1:1). It is a faith which purifies the heart (Acts 15:9), and it grieves over all impurity. It is a faith which produces an unquestioning obedience (Heb. 11:8). They therefore delude themselves who suppose they are daily drawing nearer to Christ and God in heaven while they are following those paths of unholiness and worldliness which lead only to hell. He who thinks to have a relationship with God without striving for personal holiness, makes Him out to be an unholy God, and puts the highest indignity upon Him.

"I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds." Jer 17:10

If you cannot live up to the degree of holiness which the word of God requires, which you should desire and daily pant for, you must never cease ardently to strive and pray for it; for such holy breathings are always acceptable to God as He searches man's heart whence the desire proceeds. But never neglect to crucify your flesh, and never permit it to rule over you. Christ said, "*If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.*" Luke 9:23 "*for without so doing we cannot be His disciples*" Luke 14:27. If we are to be conformed to Christ in glory, how necessary that we first be conformed to Him in holiness:

"He that saith he abideth in him ought himself so to walk even as he walked" 1 John 2:6.

"Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" 2 Tim. 2:19:

"Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body." 1 Cor 6:19-20

Consider the state and value of your immortal soul that was bought with a price by Christ, a soul which certainly is of a more noble nature than this evil perishing world. Why should you grieve the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:30) and allow your soul to be degraded by subjecting it to the corrupt, base, frivolous things and desires of this life?

In Christ, God has set before His people that standard of moral excellence which He requires them to aim and strive for. In Christ's life we behold a glorious representation in our own nature of the walk of obedience which He demands of us. Christ conformed Himself to us by His holy and humble life among us; how reasonable therefore it is that we should conform ourselves to Him in a life of obedience, holiness and humility.