

**Articles and Sermons :: A.W. Tozer ~ Holiness Is Not an Option!**

**A.W. Tozer ~ Holiness Is Not an Option! - posted by crsschk (), on: 2006/9/15 8:15**

**Holiness Is Not an Option!**

*as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." (1 Peter 1:15-16)*

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!

Neither do you have to give long study to the attitudes of modern Christian believers to discern that by and large we consider the expression of true Christian holiness to be just a matter of personal option: "I have looked it over and considered it, but I don't buy it!"

I have always liked the word exhort better than command so I remind you that Peter has given every Christian a forceful exhortation to holiness of life and conversation. He clearly bases this exhortation on two great facts—first, the character of God, and second, the command of God.

His argument comes out so simply that we sophisticates stumble over it—God's children ought to be holy because God Himself is holy! We so easily overlook the fact that Peter was an apostle and he is here confronting us with the force of an apostolic injunction, completely in line with the Old Testament truth concerning the person and character of God and also in line with what the Lord Jesus had taught and revealed to His disciples and followers.

Personally, I am of the opinion that we who claim to be apostolic Christians do not have the privilege of ignoring such apostolic injunctions. I do not mean that a pastor can forbid or that a church can compel. I only mean that morally we dare not ignore this commandment, "Be holy."

**We cannot ignore it**

Because it is an apostolic word, we must face up to the fact that we will have to deal with it in some way, and not ignore it—as some Christians do.

Certainly no one has provided us with an opinion in this matter. Who has ever given us the right or the privilege to look into the Bible and say, "I am willing to consider this matter and if I like it, I will buy it"—using the language of the day.

There is something basically wrong with our Christianity and our spirituality if we can carelessly presume that if we do not like a Biblical doctrine and choose not to "buy" it, there is no harm done.

Commandments which we have received from our Lord or from the apostles cannot be overlooked or ignored by earnest and committed Christians. God has never instructed us that we should weigh His desires for us and His commandment to us in the balances of our own judgment and then decide what we want to do about them.

A professing Christian may say, "I have found a place of real Christian freedom; these things just don't apply to me."

Of course you can walk out on it! God has given every one of us the power to make our own choices. I am not saying that we are forced to bow our necks to this yoke and we do not have to apply it to ourselves. It is true that if we do not like it, we can turn our backs on it.

The record in the New Testament is plain on this point—many people followed Jesus for a while and then walked away from Him.

Once Jesus said to His disciples: "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you" (John 6:53). Many looked at one another and then walked away from Him.

Jesus turned to those remaining and said, "You do not want to leave too, do you?" (6:67).

Peter gave the answer which is still my answer today: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life" (6:68).

Those were wise words, indeed, words born of love and devotion.

### **Forced to make a choice**

So, we are not forced to obey in the Christian life, but we are forced to make a choice at many points in our spiritual maturity.

We have that power within us to reject God's instruction—but where else shall we go? If we refuse His words, which way will we turn? If we turn away from the authority of God's Word, to whose authority do we yield? Our mistake is that we generally turn to some other human—a man with breath in his nostrils.

I am old-fashioned about the Word of God and its authority. I am committed to believe that if we ignore it or consider this commandment optional, we jeopardize our souls and earn for ourselves severe judgment to come.

Now, brethren, I have said that the matter of holiness is highly important to God. I have personally counted in an exhaustive concordance and found that the word holiness occurs 650 times in the Bible. I have not counted words with a similar meaning in English, such as sanctify and sanctified, so the count would jump nearer to a thousand if we counted these other words with the same meaning.

This word holy is used to describe the character of angels, the nature of heaven and the character of God. It is written that angels are holy and those angels who gaze down upon the scenes of mankind are called the watchers and holy ones.

It is said that heaven is a holy place where no unclean thing can enter in. God Himself is described by the adjective holy—Holy Ghost, Holy Lord and Holy Lord God Almighty. These words are used of God throughout the Bible, showing that the highest adjective that can be ascribed to God, the highest attribute that can be ascribed to God is that of holiness, and, in a relative sense, even the angels in heaven partake of the holiness of God.

We note in the Bible, too, that the absence of holiness is given as a reason for not seeing God. I am aware of some of the grotesque interpretations which have been given to the text, "Without holiness no one will see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14b). My position is this: I will not throw out this Bible text just because some people have misused it to support their own patented theory about holiness. This text does have a meaning and it ought to disturb us until we have discovered what it means and how we may meet its conditions.

### **What does holiness really mean?**

What does this word holiness really mean? Is it a negative kind of piety from which so many people have shied away?

No, of course not! Holiness in the Bible means moral wholeness—a positive quality which actually includes kindness, mercy, purity, moral blamelessness and godliness. It is always to be thought of in a positive, white intensity of degree. Whenever it is written that God is holy it means that God is kind, merciful, pure and blameless in a white, holy intensity of degree. When used of men, it does not mean absolute holiness as it does of God, but it is still the positive intensity of the degree of holiness—and not negative.

This is why true Bible holiness is positive—a holy man can be trusted. A holy man can be tested. People who try to live by a negative standard of piety, a formula that has been copyrighted by other humans, will find that their piety does not stand up in times of difficult testing.

Genuine holiness can be put into the place of testing without fear. Whenever there is a breakdown of holiness, that is proof there never was any real degree of holiness in the first place.

Personally, I truly have been affected in my heart by reading the testimonies and commentaries of humble men of God

whom I consider to be among the great souls of Christian church history.

I have learned from them that the word and idea of holiness as originally used in the Hebrew did not have first of all the moral connotation. It did not mean that God first of all was pure, for that was taken for granted!

The original root of the word holy was of something beyond, something strange and mysterious and awe-inspiring. When we consider the holiness of God we talk about something heavenly, full of awe, mysterious and fear-inspiring. Now, this is supreme when it relates to God, but it is also marked in men of God and deepens as men become more like God.

It is a sense of awareness of the other world, a mysterious quality and difference that has come to rest upon some men—*that is a holiness*. Now, if a man should have that sense and not be morally right, then I would say that he is experiencing a counterfeit of the devil.

Whenever Satan has reason to fear a truth very gravely, he produces a counterfeit. He will try to put that truth in such a bad light that the very persons who are most eager to obey it are frightened away from it. Satan is very sly and very experienced in the forming of parodies of truth which he fears the most, and then pawns his parody off as the real thing and soon frightens away the serious-minded saints.

I regret to say that some who have called themselves by a kind of copyrighted name of holiness have allowed the doctrine to harden into a formula which has become a hindrance to repentance, for this doctrine has been invoked to cover up frivolity and covetousness, pride and worldliness.

I have seen the results. Serious, honest persons have turned away from the whole idea of holiness because of those who have claimed it and then lived selfish and conceited lives.

But, brethren, we are still under the holy authority of the apostolic command. Men of God have reminded us in the Word that God does ask us and expect us to be holy men and women of God, because we are the children of God, who is holy. The doctrine of holiness may have been badly and often wounded—but the provision of God by His pure and gentle and loving Spirit is still the positive answer for those who hunger and thirst for a life and spirit well-pleasing to God.

When a good man with this special quality and mysterious Presence is morally right and walking in all the holy ways of God and carries upon himself without even knowing it the fragrance of a kingdom that is supreme above the kingdoms of this world, I am ready to accept that as being of God and from God!

*I Call It Heresy! ~ A.W. Tozer*

**Re: A.W. Tozer ~ Holiness Is Not an Option! - posted by enid, on: 2006/9/15 8:41**

Awesome article. An understatement indeed, but what more can I say? You won't be getting many replies to this one. It stands alone.

Holiness isn't an optional extra. If we palm it off as such, then we are saying that it is unnecessary, and God Himself isn't holy, which He is.

We find holiness almost impossible to comprehend because we pursue it outwardly, rather than seek God to get us to the place of holiness He wants us to get to.

To change to subject briefly, someone once preached about Philippians 4 where it says..whatsoever things are true, noble, just, pure, etc...think on these things. His comment? Is this guy serious, is he for real?

Well, yes. 'This guy', the apostle Paul, was relaying God's message.

In the same way, God is serious about holiness. No doubt we wish He wasn't!

But if He is, and He wants us to be holy, then let's obey Him, seek God for holiness, He will answer, and His name will be glorified. God bless.

Re: - posted by Chi, on: 2006/9/15 13:30

PREPARATION FOR THE RAPTURE by Smith Wigglesworth

I hope this help you, it is not my words for I am not worthy to speak like this when standing alone

Are you ready?

What for?

To come to a place where you will not give way, a place where you will dare believe that God is the same today as He was yesterday and will surely make you satisfied, because he longs to fill you. Those who believe shall be satisfied.

Are you ready?

What for?

To so apply your heart to the will of God, to so yield yourself to the purposes of God, that God will work a plan through your life that has never been before. (I am nothing)

Are you ready?

What for?

To come into such likemindedness with Christ today that you have no more human desire, but you will be cut short from all human bondages and be set free. The shore line must never again know you. Come to God in all the depths of His Fullness, His Revelation, His Power, that you may today be clothed upon with God.

I believe that you believe in the coming of the Lord and the Rapture which is to take place.

This is one of those divine propositions. It is one of those openings to the heart that brings enlargement and conception. It is one of those moments that we enter into by faith to see that we can be so occupied, so changed, so in Christ, so ready, so clothed upon, so filled with Him, that the very breath of the life of that which is causing it would bring about a change.

#### DEAD TO SIN: ALIVE UNTO GOD

As you listen to the Word, do not allow natural to interfere with supernatural evidences. You will never be what God has ordered you to be until you are willing to denounce your own failings, feelings; I mean failings, unbelief, and every human standard.

You must be willing to denounce them so that you might stand firm in a place, complete, believing that you are a new creation in the Spirit; and that God, in a mighty way, can so fill you with LIFE and destroy all that is natural that would interfere with the process of change, until you are alive unto God by the Spirit, ready for the coming of the Lord.

Now, we have here a definite position, as Paul had. Paul received much revelation which was clear to him, but not as clear to others. In fact, Peter said that Paul said many things which are hard to understand. "Nevertheless", Peter said, "we know that they are the Lord."

Paul wrote many things that are hard to understand. Unless you are spiritually enlightened, you will not be able to comprehend the attitude of the place of ascension he had reached,

All your spiritual acquaintances should come into the place of ascension. Always keep in mind that to be conformed to this world is loss, but to be transformed from this world is gain. The transforming is the working of His mighty power in the mind.

The body and the soul can be so preserved in this wonderful life of God that nothing can hinder us from living as those who are dead to sin and alive unto God. We find that sin has been destroyed; disease absolutely put aside, death abolished in the life of the resurrection of Christ in the body!

The Spirit of the Lord is giving us revelation that will teach us a plan which is so supernatural, you will live absolutely in a new creation, if you dare believe. You will go by leaps and bounds into all the treasury of the Most High as you believe.

Nothing will interfere with you but yourself. And I believe God can change even your mind. He can give you much aspiration, holy-inflating life divine in human order, filling you with great ambition for purity, holiness, and transformation.

God often has to cause revolution in the body before He can get the throne in a heart. He causes you to come to death, and then to death, and then to death, so you will see that sin violates or hinders progress, that anything of the natural order is not divine, that you have to have a divine mind (anew mind, anew will), that everything about you must be in the line of consecration or separation unto perfection.

Believe it. Maybe as you examine yourself, you will believe it never could happen in your life. Get your mind off yourself. That is destruction. Get your mind on the Lord, Jesus Christ the one who is who was and who is to come again.

#### Interpretation of Tongues

Weakness may be turned into power, feeble-mindedness into the mind of Christ. The whole body, fitly joined together in the Spirit, can rise and rise until it is an edifice in the Holy Ghost. It is not what it is; it is what it is going to be.

God has made preparation for us to be freed from the law of sin and death. He has gained the victory. He has overcome and vanquished the enemy, and the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. (Indeed he has)

Yes deeper, deeper and higher, higher we are to go; holier, holier and purer, purer we are to be, all until God sets His Seal upon us. We are His forever, bought with price not with silver and gold, but with the precious blood.

Let the Spirit move thee, chasten thee, bring thee to naught. Thou must be chastened by the Lord in order to have the fruits of His holiness. He observes thee today to see if you live by the position, "Except thou die, thou canst not live".

While you are in the very attitude of death, He causes resurrection force to come into thy life until thou dost come out of all things into the living heart; until Christ is over thee, nourishing thee in the mind and in the body, and causing thy spirit to live, until thou dost feel the very breath of heaven breathing upon thee and the wings of the Spirit moving within thee.

#### THE BODY MUST BE CHANGED

No flesh can come into the presence of God. If you do die, a process occurs to get rid of all that is in the body. The very body that you are in must be disposed of. It must come to ashes.

There is no such thing as your body being in the presence of God. But if no flesh can come into the presence of God, then what is going into presence of God? Your body has to give place to a resurrection order, to a resurrection life.

The scriptures speak about dissolving. If your body does not go through the process of death and lose all the elements of earthly tomatoes and such, if it does not get rid of all its earthly acquaintances, but simply goes up, God will cause the old body to be turned into gases, whew.

In that moment, the very nature of Christ, the life of God in you, will be clothed upon with a body that can stand all eternity.

Be ready for a change. You, say "How can I be ready"? Here is the answer;

"For in this we groan," Second Corinthians 5:2 says, there should be a groaning attitude in us. We must reach a place where we see that there is some defect, that there is not a perfect purifying going on in our lives. When we come to that attitude, knowing we are bound, we will groan to be delivered.

What is this deliverance? Shall it come in this present world? Certainly. I am not in heaven yet; I am on the earth.

The very nature that came into you when you were born again is of a spiritual quality of the nature of knowledge. It can understand supernatural things. It has power to compare spiritual things with spiritual things. And only those who are born of God can understand spiritual things. The world that has never been saved cannot understand them.

But the moment we are quickened, born again, a made anew, this nature taking on its supernatural power, it begins traveling, groaning to be delivered from the body. And it will go on, and cry on, and cry on, until the saints will be seen in large numbers, crying, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

END FOR NOW