

Articles and Sermons :: Growth in Holiness by Zac Poonen

Growth in Holiness by Zac Poonen - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2012/9/28 17:38

The Spirit-filled life is a life of growth in holiness. As a man's own life increases in holiness so does his consciousness of the absolute holiness of God. The two go together. In fact, the latter is one of the tests of whether a person really has the former.

Twenty-five years after his conversion, Paul says, "I am the least of the apostles" (1 Cor. 15:9). Five years subsequently, he says, "I am less than the least of all the saints" (Eph. 3:8 KJV). Still a year later, he says, "I am (notice, it is not "I was" but "I am") the chief of sinners" (1 Tim. 1:15).

Do you see his progression in holiness in those statements?

The closer Paul walked with God, the more he was conscious of the corruption and wickedness of his flesh. He recognized that no good thing could be found in his flesh (Rom. 7:18). In Ezekiel 36:26, 27, 31, God says, "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you...Then you will loathe yourselves for all the evils you did." There we see that one proof that we have got a new heart from God is that we loathe ourselves. Only a man who hates and detests his flesh will be able to fulfill the command in Philippians 2:3 to "esteem others as more important" than himself. Having seen his own corruption, he will no longer despise anyone else.

He will also be ready to confess failure immediately and will be willing to call sin, sin. The Spirit-filled man does not merely seek to give others an impression that he is growing in holiness, but will actually be doing so. He will not testify of experiences that supposedly made him holy, or try to convince others of his theology of sanctification. He will have such holiness in his life that others will come to him, of their own accord, and ask him the secret of his life. He will have what J.B. Phillips translates as, "the holiness which is no illusion" (Eph.4:24).

It makes no difference what our doctrine of holiness is. True holiness comes only to the man who seeks after it with all his heart, and not to the one who merely has the correct teaching in his head.

There have been godly men in past centuries (like John Fletcher) whose understanding of the doctrine of holiness led them to believe that they were 'entirely sanctified' and who called their unconscious sins 'mistakes'. There have been other godly men (like David Brainerd) who called their unconscious sins 'sins', and who bemoaned their sinfulness and their lack of devotion to God constantly - throughout their earthly lives. But both these groups of men may have been equally saintly in God's eyes, despite the radical difference in the way they evaluated their own lives. Their different temperaments and their differing understandings of the doctrine of sanctification accounted for their differing estimate of their own hearts. The secret of holiness is discovered not through a study of Greek words and tenses in the New Testament but through a wholehearted and sincere desire to please God. God looks at our hearts, not at our brains!

In any case, any growth in holiness will always be accompanied, as it was with Paul, by an increasing awareness of one's own sinfulness in the sight of God.

Re: Growth in Holiness by Zac Poonen - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2012/9/28 18:10

Quote:
 ----- The Spirit-filled man does not merely seek to give others an impression that he is growing in holiness, but will actually be doing so.

It is wonderful that we all begin as babes and are given great mercy so no matter where we are at in the Lord we can always have mercy and love for others that are growing in this journey of holiness unto the Lord.