

# Growing In Holiness

Growing in holiness after our conversion involves:

- *devoting* or *dedicating* ourselves continually to God for His Holy Spirit's use, purposes and will. Such devoting is one of the means by which we are daily filled and ruled by the Holy Spirit. Without the help of the Holy Spirit, we cannot achieve anything of real everlasting value in this life or the next.
- *separating* ourselves continually each day from *all known sin* and *evil*. Examples of evil are hatred, bitterness, resentment, unforgiveness, jealousy, bad temper, envy, pride, arrogance, self-pity, worry, stealing, adultery, sex before marriage, watching pornographic movies, listening to music which has words promoting any type of evil, not loving others, not attending church regularly, not caring about genuinely poor people, not caring for widowed relatives and so on. We cannot successfully separate ourselves from sin and evil by our own power. We must trust the Holy Spirit to empower us to separate ourselves from our known sins.
- striving by the Holy Spirit's power to live a *pure* life. 1 Timothy 4:12 and 5:22 refer to the importance of living in purity. In Colossians 1:29, Paul refers to "**...striving according to His working which works in me mightily.**"
- receiving *purification* and *cleansing* by the Holy Spirit of our known sins through faith, repentance and confession (see Hebrews 10:22 and 1 John 1:9).

## Practical application of Jesus Christ living in us

One of the most glorious revelations any Christian can have is to realize that the Spirit of Jesus Christ and all His infinite divine abilities are within us. Colossians 1:27 speaks of this wonderful thing: "**To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.**"

Other verses speaking about Jesus Christ living within believers are John 15:4-6, Romans 8:10, 2 Corinthians 13:5, Galatians 2:20 and Ephesians 3:17. Romans 8:10 shows we do not belong to Him unless He lives in us. The Lord Jesus living by His Spirit within us gives us His ability to be devoted to God the Father, to love the Father, love others and keep the flesh under control, and to have His strength and wisdom to face all situations.

Jesus Christ was the only perfect man who has ever lived. Within Him is all of the love, unselfishness, strength and wisdom we will ever need to live our Christian lives. Colossians 2:2-3 reveals Jesus Christ has all of the treasures of God's wisdom and knowledge within Him: "**...of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.**"

In Philippians 4:13, Paul states a truth we should keep before our minds each day: "**I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.**" Paul said these words waiting in an horrendous Roman prison to be tried by the wicked Roman Emperor Nero. If Paul could say these words in such a situation, so should we in lesser troubles. Other similar verses are Colossians 1:29 and Ephesians 3:20.

Jesus Christ lives in heaven at the right hand of the Father (see Acts 7:55 and Romans 8:34). Also, He is omnipresent by His Spirit throughout the universe, holding everything together, as Colossians 1:16-17 and Hebrews 1:3 show. Colossians 1:16-17 says: ***“For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.”*** But as Galatians 2:20 shows, by His Spirit Christ lives within all true believers in a real personal sense.

The New Testament emphasises all believers should live their lives through the Presence, power, love and wisdom of Jesus Christ living within them by His Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 4:17, Paul refers to his ***“ways in Christ”*** – meaning his ways in union with Christ. Ephesians 6:10 says we should ***“be strong in the Lord”***. Romans 16:12 speaks of laboring ***“in the Lord”***. 1 Peter 3:16 comments on ***“good conduct in Christ”***.

## **One reason for living in defeat**

One of the reasons many live defeated Christian lives is they do not know, yet alone live, out of what they are in their union with Jesus Christ. They still *think* and *speak* about themselves in *the same ways they did prior to their conversion*. They concentrate only on the limitations, weaknesses, strengths and successes of their human abilities used independently of Christ.

As a result, they are prone to many different types of unbiblical attitudes such as “Christianised” self-help philosophies, legalistic man-made extra-Biblical rules or trying to obey God by the power of the flesh. Others think they have no choice but to give into temptation all the time, imagining the flesh is more powerful than the Presence of Jesus Christ living within them by His Spirit.

## **The crucial importance of faith and trust**

Before we actually see the outward manifestation of holiness in areas of our lives which were previously full of problems and sin, we must trust that the Lord Jesus has already inwardly given us the gift of Himself Who enables us to become holy in daily practical living.

When we are born-again, God instantly imparts to us His holiness. This is because we receive the Holy Spirit at that time. Although we already have this impartation when we are born-again, this does not mean it will be totally, outwardly manifested at this beginning of our walk with Him. This impartation of God’s holiness must be worked out in our lives in faith, in knowledge of the Scriptures and in trusting co-operation with Him.

## **Falling flat on our faces**

Some argue, “I realise that living a holy life is impossible for a human alone – but if I try as hard as I can and then God helps me, I will succeed.” This is very wrong. It is suggesting that God helps those who help themselves. He does not. He lets them fall flat on their faces.

The Lord Jesus Christ is not interested in patching up our weak spots. He wants us to allow Him to fill and rule us more and more so that He, living within us by His Spirit, can give

us His ability to live a holy life and to overcome individual problems we have that prevent us from being the sort of person He wishes us to be.

With patience, God watches our efforts to live holy lives. He waits for us to fail so badly that we will run to Him and fall on our knees crying. “It is hopeless. I will never live a holy life. I am weak, sinful and have no good in me at all.” When we reach this stage, we are usually ready to begin to allow Him to be our Source of goodness and holiness.

The Scriptures do not tell us to deliberately allow sin to rule our lives, as though this prepares us for being ready for God to be our Source of strength and holiness. Instead, the Scriptures command us to be involved in *active warfare* against sin (see Colossians 1:29, 3:5, 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 and Hebrews 12:4) and command us to strive to live holy lives (see 2 Corinthians 6:16-7:1, 1 Thessalonians 4:4 and 1 Peter 1:15-16).<sup>1</sup> God commands this with the knowledge that as we do, we will learn from our failures to trust not in ourselves. We will learn instead to trust in Him to give us His strength to live holy lives as we daily strive for this.

Nor am I suggesting that we grow in our outward expression of holiness, by only praying for this or by just trusting God to give us His strength to do this. We must also strive for it. But we must learn how to strive for it, resting in His strength and not in our own.

## Putting trust into practice

In everything we do – talking, eating, coping with rejection, playing sport, cleaning our house, doing shopping, doing our job, being a husband, being a wife, being a mother, doing our studies, praying, reading the Bible, evangelising and so on – we must trust the Lord Jesus to give us His strength and wisdom to do these things in the way that He likes.

We might say to God, for example, “Lord, I do not have the wisdom and strength to live each day as You want. Thank You, Lord, for Your power and wisdom within me. Thank You for Your ability which enables me to face this situation. Thank you, Lord, for changing me so that I can act and be the person whom You want me to be. I am sure You are doing this.” It does not matter whether we say these words aloud or just in our thoughts. God hears us either way. Also, it does not matter if we do not say words exactly the same as above.

The above prayer is not a magic formula. It merely expresses the principles of:

- *admitting* to the Lord *our own lack* of strength and wisdom to face our life situations and to endure or overcome each problem in our lives.
- *knowing* that with God, Jesus Christ and His strength and wisdom, we can face any situation, no matter how humanly impossible it appears (see Luke 1:37 and Matthew 19:26).

---

<sup>1</sup> Hebrews 12:14 commands believers: “*Pursue peace with all people and holiness...*” In Greek, the word “*pursue*” here is a form of the word “*dioko*” which in this context means figuratively “strive for, seek after, aspire to” (Bauer, page 201) or “to move quickly and energetically towards some objective” (Louw and Nida, page 209). Also, in Greek, the word “*pursue*” in this verse is in the present tense. The Greek present tense mostly refers to a *continuous* or *repeated* action. Also note this verse is not referring to initial sanctification at conversion but instead relates to the *practical outworkings* of initial sanctification in our daily living. Pursuing peace with all people relates to practical daily living. So in context, the pursuing of holiness must relate to practical living also. So in summary, Hebrews 12:14 teaches believers to pursue or strive after the practical outworkings of initial sanctification in an ongoing practical sense. Present tense forms of the word “*dioko*” are used in 1 Corinthians 14:1 in relation to believers pursuing love and in 1 Timothy 6:11 and 2 Timothy 2:22 in connection with believers energetically pursuing righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience and gentleness in a *practical ongoing* sense.

- *trusting* and *being sure* that the Lord will use His strength and wisdom within us to help us in every situation. We can be sure that He will do this, because He has promised to do this so many times in the written Word of God (see Philippians 4:13, Psalms 62:1-8, 91:1-16 and James 1:5-8) and
- *thanking* Him day by day that He is doing the above. We do not need to plead with Him to do this, because He is more willing to help us than we are willing to allow Him to help us.

We have all of His strength, love and wisdom within us since the time we were born-again of the Holy Spirit. But despite this, we must every hour of every day rely on Him to allow His abilities to express themselves in our thoughts, words, actions and lives. Doing this is no bondage or strain, if we realise that it involves resting in the arms of our Best Friend – the Person who treasures us.

We must remember that when we are trusting the Lord Jesus to empower us to do the Father’s will, sometimes we will feel His Presence and strength, but at other times, we will not. If we sense His Presence, we should thank God. If we do not, we should thank Him also. We should not have the false idea that He is only helping us when we spiritually or physically “feel” His Presence. This is because if we do not feel His Presence and strength, we will wrongly think He is not helping us. We must trust that He is strengthening us because His Word says it, regardless of how we feel.

## **Surrender is a key also**

After conversion, believers must willingly yield or surrender their bodies to God in order to *walk in holiness* in practical daily living. This is even though He sanctified their bodies at their conversion. Romans 6:13, 6:19 and 12:1 are commands to believers to yield their members or body to God. Romans 12:1 says: ***“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.”*** In Romans 6:19, Paul says ***“so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.”***

## **Expressed in obedience to the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit**

Holiness is something which is then expressed in our lives by us through the strength of the Lord Jesus Christ within us (see Philippians 2:13 and Galatians 2:20), obeying the teachings of the Holy Scriptures and obeying His inner guidance more and more. Verses like Matthew 7:21-28, John 14:23-24, 1 Corinthians 7:19 and James 1:22-25 stress the importance of obeying God.

Any guidance that God gives us will never speak contrary to the teachings of the Scriptures.<sup>2</sup>

It is not just praying for His strength and wisdom that God requires. We must also aim to express in our day-to-day thoughts, words and actions these things that we are praying to Him about. For example, it is little use praying, “Lord, I can not be a good husband by my own love, strength and wisdom. I’m trusting You to give me Your love, strength and wisdom to enable me

---

<sup>2</sup> Refer to my book “How to recognize God’s voice” for more details about this.

to be the good husband that You desire. Thank You for doing this”, if we do not every day aim to think and act in agreement with what we are praying. We must not allow anger, bitterness, self-centredness, immorality, drunkenness and unforgiveness to rule our thoughts and actions. This is faith put into obedient action, as James 2:17-26 teaches.

Living a more holy life can be defined as being *daily ruled more by the Holy Spirit*. It is good to pray, believe and trust God that He is ruling us more by His Holy Spirit. But it is wrong to forget that another essential requirement of being more ruled by the Holy Spirit is to become more obedient to the teachings of the Holy Scriptures and to His inner guidance.

One popular teaching emphasizes the importance of praying for the power of the Holy Spirit by God’s unmerited grace to fall on churches and individuals. Associated with this is an emphasis upon getting church members more filled with the Holy Spirit, upon the anointing of the Holy Spirit residing on individuals and in a local church. These are good aims also.

Those, however, who emphasize these things must be careful to remember that growing in our outward expression of holiness does not come by merely praying for or only trusting God for these things. Such outward manifestation also comes from obedience to the teachings of the Bible and to the day-by-day inner guidance of the Holy Spirit. Trust in God and obedience to Him work together. We cannot say we really trust Him, if we are not aiming to obey Him.

## **Being initially sanctified but not living a very holy life**

It is possible to be initially “*sanctified in Christ*” by the Holy Spirit at conversion, but not live a very holy life in thought, feelings, words and actions. Evidence of this is seen in the Apostle Paul’s letters to the Corinthian Church. In 1 Corinthians 1:2, Paul calls all of the Christians in Corinth “...*sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints...*” They were already “*sanctified*” at conversion. But then later in 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 and 2 Corinthians 12:20-21 we see Paul said that many of these sanctified-in-Christ Christians were spiritually immature and were not living very holy lives in practice. As, however, we see in Paul’s warnings in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, 10:1-12 and 2 Corinthians 13:5, it is dangerous to have such a slack attitude.

## **A pitiful view of growing in sanctification**

Multitudes of believers wrongly think that the progressive outworkings of sanctification in their lives refers to progressively giving up willful known sin. They think normal Christianity involves having continual, unrepented deliberate disobediences to God’s known will in their lives every day, with the intention of *possibly* giving up these sins sometime in the future. In practice, what this absurd unbiblical doctrine means is a converted former serial murderer can say, “I am gradually obtaining victory through God’s grace and the Holy Spirit’s power over the sin of murder. I only do it once every 3 months, whereas before becoming a new creation in Christ, I was doing it more regularly. After a number of years of progressively growing in Christ as my sanctification, I should be down to about one murder a year.”

A born-again former paedophile believing in this foolish doctrine would give a testimony like this: “Before becoming a Christian, I used to have sex with little boys whenever I could. But now after growing in Christ for 5 years and having Him as my sanctification, I only have sex with little boys once every 2 months. I am really growing in the victory Christ won for me on the Cross. I believe that by God’s grace in a number of years, I may have cut down to

having sex with only about one boy every 6 months. We all know the Bible says the flesh and Satan are very powerful and that Philippians 3:12 reveals all believers are not perfect in their earthly lives. So God does not expect me to cease committing paedophile acts altogether now.”

No believer in Christ reaches a stage of permanent sinless perfection in this life (see Philippians 3:12, James 3:2 and 1 John 1:8). But God commands us to turn from all known sin by His grace and power *now* and not tomorrow.

In 2 Corinthians 6:16-7:1, Paul said: ***“And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.’ Therefore ‘Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.’ Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”***

In the above, Paul instructs believers to cleanse themselves from *all* filthiness of the flesh and spirit and not just some of it. Also note he says we must do this on the basis of God’s promises recorded in 2 Corinthians 6:16-18. These promises relate to us being God’s Temple and His sons and daughters. Paul is saying that because we are God’s holy Temple and children, we must separate ourselves from *all* sin or uncleanness in our daily practical living.

## **Beware of extremes**

I know some Christians who focus mainly on Scriptures which refer to the victory Jesus Christ has achieved through His death and resurrection and to whom they are “in Him”. They ignore Scriptures, however, which relate to living a holy life in daily experience. As a result, they are often full of head knowledge of Jesus’ death and resurrection and of whom they are “in Him”, but lack any practical growth in holiness.

A minister I know told me of an example of such imbalance. He took over the leadership of a local church from another minister. Some time later, God told him to lovingly tell certain members of his church that they needed to repent of particular sins. God told him also to highlight specific areas of their lives they needed to surrender or yield to Him. They replied that they did not need to be concerned about so-called “negative” things like repentance and surrendering to God. They inferred that an emphasis on repentance and surrender would negate their practice of “positively confessing” Biblical promises about whom they were in Christ. These individuals were concentrating on the Biblical verses about whom they were in Christ to such a degree that they were ignoring other very important Biblical teachings.

I know other Christians who focus mainly on Scriptures which relate to our growing in the outward expression of holiness. They undervalue or lack understanding, however, of Scriptures about Jesus’ death and resurrection and whom they are in Jesus Christ.

## **Wigglesworth and Lake’s words on holiness**

Smith Wigglesworth taught: *“If you expect any revelation of God apart from holiness, you will have only a mixture. Holiness opens the door to all the treasures of God. He must first bring us to the place where we, like our Lord, love righteousness and hate iniquity before He opens up to us these good treasures. When we regard iniquity in our hearts, the Lord will not hear us; and it is only as we are made*

*righteous and pure and holy through the precious blood of God's Son that we can enter into this life of holiness and righteousness in the Son.”*<sup>3</sup>

Dr John G. Lake (1870-1935A.D.) was an early Pentecostal preacher. He had an awesome anointing of the Holy Spirit in his life. Andrew Murray said of Lake: *“The man reveals more of God than any other man in Africa.”*<sup>4</sup> When Lake returned to pastor in Spokane, Washington in the United States, *“100,000 healings were recorded in five years.”*<sup>5</sup> Note also that hundreds of churches were established through Lake's ministry.<sup>6</sup>

Lake said, *“If there is any particular area where as a rule Christians are weak, it is in the consecration of their minds. Christians seem to feel as if they are not to exercise any control over the mind, so it seems to run at random, just like the mind of the world. Real Christianity is marked by the pureness, the holiness of the thoughts of man; and if the kind of Christianity you have does not produce in your mind real holiness, real purity, real sweetness, real truth, then it is a poor brand. Change it right away.”*<sup>7</sup>

## **Holy living must relate to love and glorifying God**

1 Corinthians 13:1-3 stresses that unless what we do is based on love for God and other people, it is useless: *“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become as sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.”* We are totally wasting our time if we attempt to live holy lives without God's love as the foundation.

1 Corinthians 10:31 says we must glorify God in everything we do: *“Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”* Our practical holy living must be based on glorifying God. Otherwise our holy living will become a false end in itself.

## **Leave all your known sins and weights behind**

Hebrews 12:1 is a very important command of the Lord to *every* Christian: *“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us...”*

Two of the keys to growing in holiness and being daily filled by the Holy Spirit are laying aside all known sins and weights. The great old 19<sup>th</sup> century revivalist minister F.B. Meyer wrote:

*“Jesus Christ has brought us with His blood, but, alas. He has not had His money's worth! He paid for all, and He has had but fragment of our energy, time and earnings. By an act of consecration, let*

---

<sup>3</sup> Wigglesworth, “Ever increasing faith”, page 79.

<sup>4</sup> Winkie Pratney, “Revival”, Whitaker, Springdale, 1983, page 190.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, page 191.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Dr John G. Lake, “Spiritual hunger, the God men and other sermons”, Christ For All Nations, Dallas, 1978, page 45.

*us ask Him to forgive the robbery of the past, and let us profess our desire to be henceforth utterly and only for Him – His slaves, His chattels, owning no master other than Himself.*

*As soon as we say this He will test our sincerity, as he did the young ruler's, by asking something of us. He will lay His finger on something within us which He wants us to alter, obeying some command, or abstaining from some indulgence. If we instantly give up our will and way to Him, we pass the narrow doorway into the Chamber of Surrender, which has a southern aspect and is ever warm and radiant with His presence because obedience is the condition of manifested love (John 14:23).*

*This doorway is very narrow, and entrance is only possible for those who will lay aside weights as well as sins. A weight is anything which, without being essentially wrong or hurtful to others, is yet a hindrance to ourselves...Sin is that which is always and everywhere wrong, but a weight is anything which may hinder or impede the Christian life without being positively sin. And thus a thing may be a weight to one which is not so to another. Each must be fully persuaded in his own mind. And wherever the soul is aware of its life being hindered by the presence of any one thing, then, however harmless in itself, and however innocently permitted by others, there can be no alternative; it must be cast aside.”<sup>8</sup>*

A weight to you may not be a weight to me. For example, playing soccer may be a weight to me but not to you. Soccer is not sinful, but if it acts as a weight which holds me back from running freely in the call of God in my life, it is better I give it up. If it is not a weight to you, you can play it and glorify God through it. What are the weights that are holding you back? Are you willing to give them up in faith to the Lord?

## **When cleanliness is unhealthy**

Ephesians 5:5, Philippians 3:19, Colossians 3:5 and Matthew 6:24 refer to idols in relation to greed, our stomachs and even God-given material things. Weights can easily develop into sinful idols. The following is an example:

In September, 1983, I read a newspaper article about a lady in Sussex, England. She had a spotless family home, utterly devoid of dust and clutter. The walls and furniture shone greatly. Everything was in its allotted place.

For 31 years, this lady started cleaning at nine in the morning continuing until teatime. Shopping, cooking the meals and other chores had to be fitted in later. Everyday, she followed a gruelling ritual of cleaning, washing and polishing in strict order.

Attempts to change her behaviour with psychotherapy, drugs and electric shock treatment had all failed. The lady was an intelligent person who could even joke about her cleaning. But if she ever tried to stop her ritual, she suffered hysteria or deep depression. She was devastated by the thought of there being any mess in the house. She lived in constant *fear* of burglars, not because of danger to herself or her family, but in case the burglars untied the house.

She rarely had visitors because her cleaning schedule would have to be altered. She was not sure if there was a fire in the house, whether she would be able to leave the house until she had finished the cleaning.

She would not allow her son to have friends home in case they messed up the house. Also, when her son was small, he couldn't play. This was because she was always putting his toys away.

---

<sup>8</sup> F.B. Meyer, "The Blessed Life", Christian Publications, Harrisburg, pages 5 and 20.

As the years went by, this cleaning ritual was making her increasingly tired. At one time, she tried having part-time work but she coped terribly. She would stay up all night to finish the housework.

Once she tried living in another house which had many nooks and crannies. This resulted in her becoming suicidal and suffering a mental breakdown causing her to spend two years undergoing psychiatric treatment.

She had worn out a multitude of vacuum cleaners. She also had one spare one, just in case. When she goes on holiday, she thoroughly cleans her hotel rooms also.

She stated that when she was first married and had a place of her own, she wanted to make it perfect. She said that she wondered if her life had been a waste of time.

We may laugh about the above example. But we need to ask the Holy Spirit to reveal if we have any idols ourselves which we must abandon. Such idols prevent us from growing in holiness.

## Errors about growing in holiness

There have been many errors taught throughout the history of the Church about growing in holiness. Below are some of the main ones:

- The *ascetic view* wrongly taught that we can grow in holiness by totally suppressing our bodily desires for food, a comfortable bed, sex in marriage, comfortable clothes and so on. This view is based on misinterpretations of verses like Romans 8:16-17, 1 Corinthians 7:25-40, 9:25-27, Colossians 1:24 and 1 Peter 4:1. Paul attacked this ascetic view in Colossians 2:20-23: ***“Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations – do not touch, do not taste, do not handle, which all concern things which perish with the using – according to the commandments and doctrines of men? These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.”***

Here is an example of the ascetic view in relation to sex in marriage. Gregory I (Pope from A.D. 590-604) taught it was sinful for a husband and wife to enjoy having sexual intercourse with each other.<sup>9</sup> In the Middle Ages, the Catholic church theologians, Peter Lombard and Gratien taught that the Holy Spirit left the room when a married couple engaged in sexual intercourse.<sup>10</sup> Such teaching was contrary to God’s teachings as shown by Hebrews 13:4, 1 Corinthians 7:1-5, Proverbs 5:15-19 and Song of Solomon 6:1-10, 7:1-9 and 8:3).

- The *meriting legalistic view* falsely teaches we can grow in holiness as an earned reward for our good works and obedience to Him. A similar but more subtle legalistic error is the view we can merit initial sanctification as a reward for our faith and repentance. Faith and accompanying repentance receive initial sanctification by God’s grace but do not merit it.
- Another type of legalistic view suggests we can grow in holiness by following *various man-made religious rules and traditions* which are not found in the Bible. God despises every

---

<sup>9</sup> John T. Noonan Jr, “Contraception”, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1966, pages 187-188.

<sup>10</sup> Tim and Beverly La Haye, “The Act of Marriage”, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1976, page 98.

sermon, every doctrine and every book which teaches that people can become more devoted to Him by following man-made rules and traditions.

- The *self-help view* wrongly teaches that we can grow in holiness by our own mere willpower and self-determination.
- The *extremely passive view* says we will grow in holiness only if we cease taking any personal responsibility for this ourselves. This view teaches we should enter a state of being in which we are supposedly so resting in God and in Christ that our will no longer exists and any actions are regarded as sinful or legalistic or at least unnecessary. This mystical view concentrates only on the passive aspects of our faith but ignores the fact that Holy Spirit-empowered saving faith is also active (see James 2:14-26).

### Bible Study Questions

1. What does growing in holiness after conversion involve?
2. What is the practical relevance of Jesus Christ living in believers by His Spirit?
3. Explain the importance of trusting in Jesus Christ in relation to growing in holiness.
4. Does God help those who help themselves?
5. Do the Scriptures instruct us to deliberately allow sin to rule our lives as a preparation for God being source of holiness?
6. Which verses command us to be involved in active warfare against sin?
7. Which Bible verses instruct us to strive to live holy lives?
8. What practical principles are involved in trusting the Lord Jesus to give us His strength and wisdom to live as He likes?
9. If we sometimes do not feel the Lord Jesus helping and empowering us, does this definitely mean He is not doing this?
10. What do Romans 6:13, 6:19 and 12:1 teach about our physical bodies?
11. Why is it wrong to only pray and trust God that He is ruling and filling us daily by His Spirit and do nothing else?
12. Which verses in 1 and 2 Corinthians reveal that numerous members of the Church at Corinth were initially sanctified by God but were not living very holy lives in practice?
13. What is wrong with the view that the progressive outworkings of sanctification refers to believers thinking they may just possibly give up their deliberate known sins in future?
14. What will be the result of the error of just being full of head knowledge about Jesus' death and resurrection and whom we are in Him?
15. Relate 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 and 10:31 to our practical holy living.
16. What does Hebrews 12:1 command us?
17. What is a weight referred to in Hebrews 12:1?
18. Explain some of the errors we can fall into in relation to growing in holiness.