

Study Guide for JC Ryle's Holiness
by Joe Holland

Introduction to Holiness

Ryle, in his introduction, concedes that he wrote *Holiness* to address several misunderstandings that had developed concerning the doctrine of sanctification. He also notes that excessive history or reference to people or books is unnecessary. We will follow his suggestion highlighting the seven “questions” he asks, concluding with some questions concerning them.

False View of Sanctification

1. Sanctification that is dependent on a passive faith
2. Sanctification that places little or no emphasis on biblical imperatives to holy living
3. Perfectionism
4. Sanctification that sees Romans 7 as a passage describing Paul's unconverted life
5. An over-realized doctrine of union to Christ that leads to antinomianism
6. Higher life Christianity
7. “Let go and let God” theology

Questions for Reflection

1. Given the various wrong views of sanctification with which Ryle was interacting, what did Ryle hope would be the end effect of his book on the prevailing view of the doctrine of sanctification?
2. What was Ryle's method of argumentation for addressing each of the above mentioned wrong views?
3. How was his argumentation different for number 4?
4. What does Ryle mean by the term “old paths”?

Chapter 1 – Sin

1 John 3:4 - Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.

Outline

1. What is sin?
 1. *Definition* – a vast moral disease
 2. *Origin* – the natural corruption flowing from the Fall
 3. *Extent* – pervading all men and all parts of a man
 4. *Guilt* – can't know how bad it is but we approach the truest estimation in the Cross
 5. *Deceitfulness* – pretends to be a small and light thing
2. Sin seen like this, should make us:
 1. Humble ourselves
 2. Thank God for the gospel
3. A thorough understanding of the sinfulness of sin provides the antidote to:
 1. Vague Theology
 2. Liberal Theology
 3. Ceremonial Christianity
 4. Perfectionism
 5. Low views of personal holiness

Questions

1. Why begin a discussion on holiness with the topic of sin?
2. If sin were an illness, what kind of illness would it be?
3. Is Ryle too harsh when he calls a young child a young “sinner”? What does he mean?
4. Explain Ryle's illustration of man being like a fallen temple.
5. If we sin so much, then why does Ryle say we cannot know the full extent of the guilt of our sin? Why is the cross the closest approximation?
6. How would you argue someone into sinning?
7. What is the right response to understanding sin's sinfulness? What does it look like?
8. How is a right understanding of sin an antidote to vague theology?
9. How is a right understanding of sin an antidote to liberal theology?
10. How is a right understanding of sin an antidote to ceremonial Christianity?
11. How is a right understanding of sin an antidote to perfectionism?
12. How is a right understanding of sin an antidote to a low view of personal holiness?
13. Is it correct to say, “A right view of sin is the answer to theological error.”? Or do we need to assume something more?

Chapter 2 – Sanctification

*John 17:17 Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.
1 Thessalonians 4:3 - For this is the will of God, your sanctification;*

Outline

1. The Nature of Sanctification – An inward work of the Holy Spirit making a man practically godly in life
2. The Marks of Sanctification
3. The differences between Justification and Sanctification
 1. Where they agree
 2. Where they disagree
4. Application
 1. Let anyone who calls himself a Christian yet has not concern for Sanctification realize his perilous position.
 2. Test your own salvation by your progress in sanctification.
 3. Begin sanctification with Christ.
 4. Work at sanctification continually.
 5. Don't expect too much sanctification before heaven.
 6. There is no shame in making much of holiness; holiness = happiness

Questions

1. If sanctification is a natural and necessary result of salvation, then why is it so misunderstood?
2. Is it possible for a person to be justified and not very sanctified? What would that person's life be like?
3. Do you agree with Ryle that a sanctified man can have violent conflicts within him? Why would someone with a faulty view of sanctification want to disagree with Ryle's assessment?
4. How is it possible for sanctification in a man to please God but not contribute toward that man's justification?
5. Would it be an appropriate evangelism question to ask someone, “When you appear before the throne of God and God asks you to show him his work in your life, what will you show him?”
6. Is sanctification an “appetizer” of heaven?
7. What is the error of monasticism in terms of sanctification?
8. Why does Ryle use the word “habitual” in all of his positive marks of Sanctification?
9. If Jesus were to preach in in our pulpit would we consider him a legalist or a libertine and why? What about Paul?
10. How would you explain to someone the differences between active and passive graces?
11. What is the difference between Justification and Sanctification? Is it really that big of a deal?
12. Is the holies man the happiest man? Why?

Chapter 3 – Holiness

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

Outline

1. The Nature of True Practical Holiness
 1. Holiness is the habit of being of one mind with God
 2. Holiness shuns sin and desires to keep every commandment
 3. Holiness strives to follow the example of Christ
 4. Holiness cultivates the passive graces
 5. Holiness pursues temperance and self-denial
 6. Holiness practices love and brotherly kindness
 7. Holiness practices mercy and benevolence
 8. Holiness is exemplified in purity of heart
 9. Holiness follows after the fear of God
 10. Holiness follows after humility
 11. Holiness follows after faithfulness in the duties of life
 12. Holiness follows after spiritual mindedness
2. Importance of Practical Holiness
 1. God commands it
 2. Holiness is the purpose for which Christ came into the world
 3. Holiness is the evidence of saving faith
 4. Holiness is the evidence of love for Christ
 5. Holiness is the evidence of being sons of God
 6. Holiness contributes to the good of others
 7. Holiness produces present comfort
 8. Holiness prepares us for heaven
 9. Application
3. A Word of Advice – If you want to be holy...
 1. Begin with Christ
 2. Go to Christ
 3. Abide in Christ

Questions

1. If you were to summarize, into one sentence, the nature of holiness, what would it be?
2. What did you most expect to find in Ryle's list on the nature of holiness?
3. What was on Ryle's list that you did not expect?
4. If holiness is so great, not equal in every man, and, in part, contingent on our own works, then why does it produce such a deep humility rather than encourage pride?
5. Why does Ryle include “faithfulness in the duties of life” as a characteristic of holiness?
6. What is spiritual mindedness? What are the challenges to being spiritually minded.
7. In short, what is holiness' stance towards sin and God?
8. Why don't we say that the purpose for which Christ came is holiness?
9. What does Ryle have against deathbed “conversions”?
10. How could we use Ryle's concept of “holiness as evidence” in Christian discipleship?
11. What is wrong if someone's life motto is, “I try not to do anything that would hurt anyone else.”? How would Ryle respond to them?
12. What is Ryle's point on holiness equipping us for heaven?
13. Why does Ryle finish the chapter the way he does?

Chapter 4 – The Fight

1 Timothy 6:12 - Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

Outline

1. True Christianity is a fight
 1. It is a fight against
 1. The Flesh
 2. The World
 3. The Devil
 2. It is a necessary fight
 1. A fight of absolute necessity
 2. A fight of universal necessity
 3. A fight of perpetual necessity
2. True Christianity is the fight of faith
3. True Christianity is a good fight
 1. It has the best of generals
 2. It has the best of helps
 3. It has the best of promises
 4. It has the best of issues and results
 5. It does good to the soul
 6. It does good to the world
 7. It ends in a glorious reward
4. Application
 1. To those who struggle for the fight of the word: Join Christ's army
 2. To those who are tried soldiers of Christ, remember:
 1. to put on the whole armor of God
 2. to keep from civilian affairs
 3. to beware of insincere soldiers
 4. Balaam, Judas, Demas, and Lot's wife
 5. the eye of Christ is upon us
 6. the countless soldiers who have fought before us
 7. time is short

Questions

1. How well do we fight the three enemies that Ryle mentions?
2. What is the danger of thinking that Christianity is not a fight?
3. What is the danger of thinking that not every Christian is involved in a fight?
4. What is the danger of thinking that the fight does not occur perpetually?
5. Why is faith so important to Christian warfare?
6. How effective is Ryle at illustrating the Christian fight by comparing earthly warfare to heavenly warfare?
7. Why is Christian warfare so good?
8. How does a proper view of Christian warfare affect our Christian living?
9. How does a proper view of Christian warfare specifically affect biblical manhood?

Chapter 5 – The Cost

Luke 14:28 - For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?

Outline

1. The Cost of being a Christian
 1. Self-Righteousness
 2. Sins
 3. Love of ease
 4. Favor of the World
2. The Importance of Counting the Cost – The example of those who did not
 1. The first generation of Israelites in the wilderness
 2. Some of the hearers of Jesus
 3. King Herod
 4. Demas
 5. Hearers of famous evangelical preachers
 6. Some under the influence of evangelical revivals
 7. Some children of religious parents
3. Some Hints – Count and Compare
 1. Profit and Loss
 2. Praise and Blame
 3. Friends and Enemies
 4. Life now and Life to come
 5. The pleasure of sin and the happiness in God's service
 6. The trouble of true Christianity and the trouble of the grave
 7. The number that turn to Christ and the number that turn away from Christ
4. Application
 1. Does your religion cost you anything?
 2. Consider the cost God paid to save your soul.
 3. If you have counted the cost then persevere to the end.

Questions

1. Summarize the chapter and why Ryle thinks it is so important to “count the cost”.
2. Which of the four things being a Christian costs us are the hardest for you to give up?
3. Ryle summarizes counting the cost as losing several things. Conversely, what would a man look like who has counted the cost?
4. Is Ryle intending to say that you cannot be a Christian if you do not count the cost?
5. Why does Ryle inveigh against revivals?
6. What would be a modern class of people who would be prone to not counting the cost?
7. Of the seven things that Ryle asks his readers to count and compare, which are we most prone to compare rightly and which are we most prone to underestimate?
8. If you were going to paint Christianity in the most cost counting way, how would you present it? Why should someone then want to become a Christian?
9. How should counting the cost be a part of: our personal worship, our discipleship of others, our conversations with our children, our evangelism, our marriages?
10. How does the cross make sense of the cost of Christianity?

Chapter 6 – Growth

2 Peter 3:18 - But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

Outline

1. The Reality of Religious Growth
 1. Growth in grace is the evidence of spiritual health
 2. Growth in grace is the only way to be happy in religion
 3. Growth in grace is the only way to be useful to others
 4. Growth in grace pleases God
 5. We are accountable before God to grow in grace
2. The Marks of Growing in Grace
 1. Increased Humility
 2. Increased Faith and Love
 3. Increased Holiness of Life and Conversation
 4. Increased Spiritual Taste and Thoughts
 5. Increased Charity
 6. Increased Zeal and Diligence
3. The Means of Growing in Grace
 1. The Private Means of Grace
 2. The Public Means of Grace
 3. Watchfulness
 4. Caution of Company kept
 5. Regular Communion with the Lord

Questions

1. What similarities do you see between this chapter and past chapters? Why the particular emphasis of this chapter?
2. How do men convince themselves that growth in grace is not necessary?
3. What would be the various responses of those who live and work around a man who showing an increase in the marks of growing in grace?
4. Is growing in grace a work of man or a work of God?
5. What does Ryle mean by living below our privileges?
6. What is the least utilized means of growing in grace?
7. Which is more important, the private means of grace or the public means of grace?
8. Is Ryle too pietistic in talking about communion with the Lord?
9. Why does he conclude the chapter talking about suffering?
10. If you were to judge your spiritual health by this chapter, what would it be?

Chapter 7 – Assurance

2 Tim 4:6-8 - 6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

Outline

1. An assured hope is a scriptural thing
2. A believer may never arrive at this assured hope, and yet be saved
3. Reasons why an assured hope is exceedingly to be desired
 1. It provides present comfort
 2. It tends to make a Christian an active working Christian
 3. It tends to make a decided Christian
 4. It tends to make the holiest Christians
4. Probable causes why an assured hope is never attained
 1. A defective view of the doctrine of Justification
 2. Slothfulness about growth in grace
 3. An inconsistent walk in life
5. Application
 1. If you are not a Christian, learn from the privileges and comforts of a Christian and come to Christ
 2. If you are a Christian and do not have an assured hope, then resolve today to seek it.

Questions

1. Is assurance a biblical doctrine? Where would you go in the Bible to prove it?
2. Why have some people in the past denied the doctrine of assurance?
3. Is assurance necessary for salvation? Why or why not?
4. What does Ryle mean when he says, "Faith is life... Assurance is more than life."
5. How can assurance help a Christian face life's difficulties? Name a few examples.
6. Does assurance make a man work more or less in Christian duties? Why or why not?
7. Ryle calls a neglect of pursuing assurance the "main secret" of Christian failure. Do you agree?
8. What are the main errors that cause a lack of assurance?
9. Which error have you been prone to in your growth as a Christian?
10. How would you counsel a doubting Christian who comes to you seeking assurance of salvation?

Chapter 8 – Moses

Hebrews 11:24-26 - By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.

Outline

1. What Moses gave up
 1. Rank
 2. Pleasure
 3. Riches
2. What Moses chose
 1. Suffering & Affliction
 2. The Company of a Despised People
 3. Reproach & Scorn
3. The Principle which Moved Moses – Faith
4. Practical Lessons
 1. To be saved, one must make the same choice as Moses
 2. Nothing but faith will enable you to choose God over the world
 3. Men who are worldly and ungodly lack faith
 4. The secret of doing great things is faith

Questions

1. What three things did Moses give up?
2. What three things did Moses chose?
3. What about Moses' life made these choices so stark?
4. What does Ryle think is the “secret” to Moses' ability to make these choices? Do you agree?
5. How does faith affect the way we see things? Why is this?
6. Are rank, pleasure, and riches always things we give up for Christianity?
7. Are suffering, meager company, and reproach always things we must chose for Christianity?
8. How can you tell you've given up possible pleasures?
9. What are the things that a man in Kosciusko must chose between in terms of faith?
10. How does Moses' choice serve as a diagnostic tool for judging our or someone else's conversion?
11. What does Ryle mean when he says that only faith can enable godly living?
12. How should this view of faith affect our evangelism?
13. How do Christian's generally attempt great works for God? What are wrong with these attempts according to Ryle?

Chapter 9 – Lot – a beacon

Genesis 19:16 - But he lingered. So the men seized him and his wife and his two daughters by the hand, the Lord being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city.

Outline

1. Lot was a believer (2 Peter 2:7, 8)
 1. He was just and righteous
 2. He grieved over the sin around him
2. Lot Lingered
3. The Reasons Lot Lingered
 1. Lot's poor decisions
 1. He made a wrong decision in early in life
 2. He mixed with sinners when there was no reason for doing so
 2. Remember Lot's poor decisions when you are:
 1. Choosing a dwelling place or residence
 2. Choosing a call or profession in life
 3. Choosing a spouse
 4. Offered a situation on a railway(?)
4. The Fruit of Lot's Lingered
 1. Lot did no good among the inhabitants of Sodom
 2. Lot helped none of his family towards heaven
 3. Lot left no legacy

Questions

1. How did Ryle's explanation of Lot's life change your view of Lot?
2. Define what Ryle means by “lingering”.
3. What would a lingering Christian look like today?
4. Is there gray area between lingering and holiness or is it a stark contrast?
5. What is the root of lingering in a Christian?
6. According to Ryle, what two mistakes did Lot make that lead to his lingering?
7. What are the modern day examples of this mistakes?
8. How can we keep ourselves and those we love from making these mistakes?
9. Why does he caution against working on a Railway?
10. How do you think Ryle would advocate cultural interaction and evangelism?
11. Do you think Ryle would advocate missions? How would a missionary guard against lingering?
12. Why does Ryle make such a strong connection between lingering and ineffectiveness in society, family, and enduring legacy?
13. Do you believe Ryle when he says, “Lingering is the sure destruction of a happy Christian!”? What are you willing to do about it?

Chapter 10 – A Woman to be Remembered

Luke 17:32 - Remember Lot's wife.

Outline

1. The religious privileges which Lot's wife enjoyed
2. The sin which Lot's wife committed
 1. What “looking back” revealed about Lot's wife
 1. It revealed the true character of Lot's wife
 2. It told of disobedience in Lot's wife
 3. It told of proud unbelief in Lot's wife
 4. It told of secret love of the world in Lot's wife
 2. Types of people that look back
3. The judgment which God inflicted upon her
 1. The certainty of hell
 1. God must punish sin because of his nature
 2. God will punish sin as well as have mercy
 3. The Lord Jesus spoke about hell
 4. There is no heaven without hell
 2. Questions for self reflection
 1. Are you careless about the second coming?
 2. Are you lukewarm, and cold in your Christianity?
 3. Are you halting between two opinions, and disposed to go back to the world?
 4. Are you secretly cherishing some besetting sin?
 5. Are you trifling with little sins?
 6. Are you resting on religious privileges?
 7. Are you trusting to your religious knowledge?
 8. Are you making some profession of religion, and yet clinging to the world?
 9. Are you trusting that you will have a deathbed repentance?
 10. Do you belong to an evangelical congregation?

Questions

1. Why do people falsely think that religious privileges contribute towards salvation?
2. What does Ryle mean when he says, “Nothing so hardens the heart of man as a barren familiarity with the sacred things?”
3. Why was Lot's wife judged for so “little” a sin as “looking back”?
4. Why does Ryle particularly warn particular classes of people about “looking back”?
5. What is worldly Christianity's view of salvation?
6. What is worldly Christianity's view of Christian living?
7. What is worldly Christianity's view of hell?
8. Explain what Ryle means when he says, “Once let the old doctrine about hell be overthrown, and the whole system of Christianity is unsettled, unscrewed, unpinned and thrown into disorder.”
9. Why don't we talk more about hell?
10. Is there an inappropriate way to talk about hell?
11. Can we scare people too much about hell?
12. How do we present hell in light of the work of Jesus Christ?
13. What does Ryle have against deathbed conversions?

Chapter 11 – Christ's Greatest Trophy

Luke 23:39-43 - 39 One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" 40 But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." 42 And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." 43 And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

Outline

1. Christ's power and willingness to save sinners
2. If some are saved in the very hour of death, others are not
3. The Spirit always leads saved souls in one way
 1. See how strong this man's faith was
 2. See what a right sense of his own sin he had
 3. See what brotherly love he showed his companion
4. Believers in Christ when they die are with the Lord
5. The eternal portion of every man's soul is close to him
6. Application
 1. That the humble-hearted and contrite sinner would repent and believe
 2. That the proud sinner would be warned
 3. That the professing believer would seek the same evidence of saving faith
 4. That those mourning over a departed believer would be comforted
 5. That the aged servant in Christ would believe that their salvation is near

Questions

1. Why does Ryle call this man Christ's greatest trophy? What was so apparently difficult about saving the thief on the cross?
2. In reading of the thief's depravity and Christ's sovereign mercy, how should it affect our view of ourselves and our view of God?
3. What does this example teach us about whether baptism is necessary for salvation or not?
4. Would you say men are more or less prepared to die today than they were 100 years ago? Why?
5. What does Ryle mean when he says, "Once for all, let me say, that as a general rule, nothing is so unsatisfactory as deathbed evidences. The things that men say, and the feelings they express when sick and frightened, are little to be depended on."?
6. How should we counsel someone who is putting off dealing with the Lord till later in life?
7. What do you think of Ryle's exhortation when he says, "When we have carried you to your narrow bed, let us not have to hunt up stray words and scraps of religion, in order to make out that you were a true believer."?
8. What evidence do we have that the thief was truly converted?
9. What views have you heard concerning the "intermediate state"?
10. What do we learn from this passage concerning the time between our death and the second coming?
11. If someone asked you what was the best thing about heaven, how would you respond?
12. Respond to Ryle's statement: "We are apt to talk and think, even about believers, as if death were a long journey, as if the dying saint had embarked on a long voyage. It is all wrong, very wrong! Their harbor and their home is close by, and they have entered it."
13. To what kinds of people would this passage be most instructive and comforting?

Chapter 12 – The Ruler of the Waves

Mark 4:37-40 - 37 And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. 38 But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" 39 And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. 40 He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?"

Outline

1. Following Christ will not prevent our having earthly sorrows and troubles
2. The Lord Jesus Christ is truly and really Man
 1. Are you poor and needy?
 2. Are you alone and neglected?
 3. Are you misunderstood, misrepresented, slandered, and persecuted?
 4. Does Satan tempt you, and offer horrid suggestions to your mind?
 5. Do you ever feel great agony and conflict of mind?
3. There may be much weakness and infirmity, even in a true Christian
4. The power of the Lord Jesus Christ
 1. Study it in His works of creation
 2. Study it in His works of providence
 3. Study it in the miracles worked by our Lord Jesus Christ
 4. Study it in particular as placed before you this day
5. How tenderly and patiently the Lord Jesus deals with weak believers
6. Application
 1. To unbelievers who know nothing of Christ's person or work
 2. To believers who want to love Christ more

Questions

1. What is your favorite type of book of the Bible? Why?
2. How could you benefit from reading the Gospels again?
3. What is the error of health and wealth preaching? What damage does it do to souls?
4. Name a time that God's good instrument of affliction in your life brought spiritual growth.
5. Why are we more prone to deny the humanity of Christ than the deity?
6. What do we lose in a poor view of the humanity of Christ?
7. What sympathy is there to be found in the humanity of Christ?
8. Why are we so scared to find weakness and sin in ourselves?
9. How would the church be different in they believed Ryle's exhortation, "Learn to be moderate in your expectations from your own heart. Contend to the death for the truth, that no man is a true Christian who is not converted and is not a holy man. But allow that a man may be converted, have a new heart and be a holy man, and yet be liable to infirmity, doubts and fears."
10. Why does Ryle offer the invitation, "I invite all who profess to call themselves Christians to take large view of Christ's power."
11. Do you agree with Ryle's assessment of the church when he says, "Alas, there is a painful absence of the Master's mind among man of his disciples. There are few churches, I fear, in the present day, which would have received Peter into communion again for many a long year after denying the Lord." Should the church study the tenderness of Christ?

Chapter 13 – The church which Christ builds

Matthew 16:18 - And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Outline

1. A building
2. A Builder
3. A foundation
4. Perils implied
 1. Do not marvel at the enmity of the gates of hell
 2. Be prepared for the enmity of the gates of hell
 3. Be patient under the enmity of the gates of hell
 4. Do not be cast down by the enmity of hell
5. Security asserted
6. Application
 1. Are you a member of the one true church?
 2. If you are not a believer, come and join the one true church today.
 3. Members of the one true church, strive to live holy lives.

Questions

1. What is the church of which Christ speaks in Matthew 16:18?
2. What is the difference between the visible church and invisible church?
3. Should we have denominations? Why or why not?
4. What are the commonalities that makes a church apart of the one true church?
5. Would Ryle agree with John Calvin when he said, “You cannot have God as your Father without the church as your mother”?
6. Why does Ryle particularly note that it is Christ who builds the church?
7. What is so special about the way in which Christ builds his church?
8. When Jesus said, “On this rock will I build my church”, to what rock was he referring? What is the foundation of the church?
9. Why is the church always at war?
10. In what ways is the global church warring with Satan today?
11. In what way is our local church warring with Satan today?
12. What promises give the church motivation to continue her warfare?
13. Does history prove the insecurity or the security of the church?
14. What implication does this chapter have for how we talk to prospective new members about joining our church?
15. Why should this chapter encourage you, as a member of the true church, to lead a holy, courageous, and joyful life?

Chapter 14 – Visible Churches Warned

Revelation 3:22 - He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Outline

1. Jesus speaks to churches about doctrine, practice, warning, and promise
2. Jesus knows the works of the church
 1. The works of the impenitent and unbelieving, and will punish them
 2. The works of his own people, and weighs them
 3. The works of his own people, and rewards them
3. Jesus makes a promise to the man that overcomes
 1. Moses overcame the love of pleasure
 2. Micaiah overcame the love of ease
 3. Daniel overcame the fear of death
 4. Matthew overcome the love of money
 5. Peter and John overcame the fear of man
 6. Paul overcame the love of man's praise
4. Application
 1. Warning to those who are living only for the world
 2. Warning to the formalists and self-righteous
 3. Warning to careless members of the church
 4. Warning to everyone who wants to be saved
 5. Warning to everyone who professes to be a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ

Questions

1. What are the most important tasks that a church is supposed to be about?
2. Does our church define itself by “doctrine, practice, warning, and promise” or by secondary issues? Are there areas where we could do better in advocating the important things?
3. What distinction is Ryle trying to make when he compares the church as corporate business to the church as personal business? Could this lead to error?
4. Respond to this statement, “The works of a professing Christian are of great importance. They cannot save your soul. They cannot justify you. They cannot wipe out your sins. They cannot deliver you from the wrath of God. But it does not follow because they cannot save you, that they are of no importance. Take heed and beware of such a notion. The man who thinks so is fearfully deceived.”
5. How should Jesus's knowledge of our works discourage us?
6. How should Jesus's knowledge of our works encourage us?
7. Articulate, from previous chapters, Ryle's view of a Christian's need to fight.
8. What must a Christian man overcome in his fight against sin?
9. Is our victory uncertain?
10. How is formalism a danger to the church and to an individual's soul?

Chapter 15 – Lovest Thou Me?

John 21:16 - He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep."

Outline

1. Love is the peculiar feeling of a true Christian towards Christ
 1. Love to Christ is the inseparable companion of saving faith
 2. Love to Christ is the mainspring of work for Christ
 3. Love to Christ is the point on which to dwell when teaching a child about Christ
 4. Love to Christ is the common meeting place for believers of all kinds
 5. Love to Christ is the distinguishing mark of souls in heaven
2. The peculiar marks of love to Christ made known
 1. If we love a person, we think about him
 2. If we love a person, we love to hear about him
 3. If we love a person, we love to read letters from/about him
 4. If we love a person, we want to please him
 5. If we love a person, we like his friends
 6. If we love a person, we are jealous about his name and honor
 7. If we love a person, we talk to him
 8. If we love a person, we want to be always with him
3. Questions for Application
 1. Do you love Christ?
 2. If you don't love Christ it is because you have no sense of your eternal debt paid
 3. If you do love Christ
 1. Rejoice in this good evidence of saving faith
 2. Tell others about him

Questions

1. What is the difference between love and belief?
2. What is the difference between love and duty? What is the difference between a nurse in a hospital tending to a sick patient and a mother at home tending to a sick child?
3. How would you respond to someone who said, "I love Jesus like I love the Atlanta Braves. I'm his biggest fan!"?
4. How would you define true, abiding love to Jesus Christ?
5. Section 1 questions
6. Section 2 questions
7. Where should love to Christ fit into our evangelism?
8. Where should love to Christ fit into our discipleship of others?
9. Where should love to Christ fit into our own spiritual disciplines?
10. How do I increase my love for Christ?

Chapter 16 – Without Christ

Ephesians 2:12 - Remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

Outline

1. When can it be said that a man is without Christ?
 1. When he has no head knowledge of him
 2. When he has no heart faith in him
 3. When the Holy Spirit's work cannot be seen in his life
2. What is the actual condition of a man without Christ?
 1. Without God
 2. Without Peace
 3. Without Hope
 4. Without Heaven
 5. Without life, strength, safety, foundation, friend in heaven, righteousness
3. Application
 1. Examine yourself and ask, "Am I without Christ?"
 2. If you are without Christ, come to Christ today
 3. If you are with Christ, be a thankful man

Questions

1. What must a man know about Jesus in order to be saved?
2. Why is "head knowledge" looked down upon in the church?
3. What role should head knowledge play in Christian Education?
4. What role should head knowledge play in evangelism and missions?
5. What must a man feel in order to be saved?
6. Why is "heart faith" looked down upon in the church?
7. Why should we stress the necessity of religious affections?
8. Would people who know you in the world know that you have a "heart faith" in Christ?
9. What are the works of the Holy Spirit?
10. How does the Holy Spirit make a Christian man different?
11. Why should men be terrified to be without God?
12. Do you believe Ryle when he says, "Every man has a conscience within him, which must be satisfied before he can be happy"?
13. What is the hope of the unbeliever?
14. Why does an unbeliever think he has right to heaven?
15. Why does an unbeliever think he would be happy in heaven?
16. This chapter is particularly evangelistic. Describe Ryle's evangelistic method.
17. How should this chapter motivate and instruct our evangelism?

Chapter 17 – Thirst Relieved

John 7:37-38 - On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'"

Outline

1. A Case Supported: Spiritual thirst is the deepest craving of a man's soul
2. A Remedy Proposed: Satisfaction of spiritual thirst in Jesus Christ alone
 1. A man must come to Christ
 2. A man must really come to Christ
 3. A man must remember that simple faith is all that is required
3. A Promise Held Out: Abiding satisfaction found in Christ
 1. An abundant supply of everything necessary for the relief of soul thirst
 2. Become a source of blessing to the souls of others
 1. Rivers to others while they live
 2. Rivers to others when they die
 3. Rivers to others long after they die
 4. Rivers in their daily conduct and life
4. Application
 1. Do you know anything of spiritual thirst?
 2. Are you currently spiritually thirsty?
 3. Have you come to Christ and found relief?

Questions

1. Why does Ryle say that spiritual thirst is the deepest craving of a man's soul?
2. Why don't all unbelievers have deep spiritual thirst?
3. What is true about someone who has this spiritual thirst?
4. How can religion keep a man from coming to Christ?
5. How can good intentions keep a man from coming to Christ?
6. Discuss what Ryle means by "simple faith".
7. Were you moved to consider anything new when considering Ryle's discussion of the promises of God?
8. If the rivers of living water in a believer do not rescue the believer from doubts and trials then what do they do?
9. Do you agree with Ryle, that God makes *every* believer a blessing to someone else?
10. Name some men and their influence on your own growth as a Christian who fit into the four categories that Ryle describes as the blessings of the rivers of the believer.
11. How can we encourage spiritual thirst in the lost?
12. How do we recognize spiritual thirst in the lost?
13. What do we do when the spiritually thirsty come to us looking for relief?

Chapter 18 – Unsearchable Riches

Ephesians 3:8 - To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ

Outline

1. “I am less than the least of the saints”
2. “Grace was given to preach”
 1. The ministerial office is a scriptural institution
 2. The ministerial office is a most wise and useful provision of God
 3. The ministerial office is an honorable privilege
3. “The unsearchable riches of Christ”
 1. in Christ's person
 2. in the work of Christ
 3. in the offices which Christ fills
 4. in the names and titles which are applied to Christ
 5. in the characteristic qualities, attributes, dispositions and intentions of Christ's mind towards man
4. Application
 1. What are your thoughts about yourself? Have you found out that grand foundation truth that you are a sinner, a guilty sinner in the sight of God?
 2. What do you think of the ministers of Christ?
 3. What do you think of Christ himself?

Questions

1. Do you think that Paul was the least of all the saints? Why or why not?
2. Why did Paul think he was the least of all the saints?
3. Should every Christian believe himself, truly to be the least of all the saints?
4. Why does Ryle say, “The more real grace men have in their hearts, the deeper is their sense of sin.”
5. What is wrong with the Roman Catholic view of the ministry?
6. What is wrong with the Quaker view of the ministry?
7. Why should you pray for ministers?
8. How can you preach something that is unsearchable?
9. What is so great about Christ's person?
10. What is so great about Christ's work?
11. What is so great about the offices which Christ fills?
12. What is so great about the names and titles applied to Christ?
13. What is so great about the characteristic qualities, attributes, dispositions and intentions of Christ's mind towards man?
14. Do you find Ryle's application questions at the end of the chapter useful for yourself? For your conversations with others? Why?

Chapter 19 – Wants of the Times

1 Chronicles 12:32 - Of Issachar, men who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, 200 chiefs, and all their kinsmen under their command.

Outline

1. Our times require a bold and unflinching maintenance of the truth of Christianity and the authority of the Bible
 1. The fact of Jesus Christ
 2. The fact of the Bible
 3. The fact of the effect of Christianity upon the world
2. Our times require distinct and decided views of Christian doctrine
3. Our times require an awakened and livelier sense of unscriptural and soul-ruining character of Roman Catholicism
4. Our times require a higher standard of personal holiness, and an increased attention to practical religion in daily life
5. Our times require more regular and steady perseverance in the old ways of getting good for our souls
 1. Pray more heartily in private
 2. Read our Bible more in private
 3. Cultivate the habit of more private meditation and communion with Christ
6. Application
 1. Would you understand what the times require of your own soul?
 2. Would you understand what the times require of you in reference to the souls of others?
 3. Would you understand what the times require of you in reference to the church?

Questions

1. What kind of habits mark a man who understands the times?
2. Are we still told, as Ryle notes of his own day, that no educated person, “can really believe supernatural religion, or the plenary inspiration of the Bible, or the possibility of miracles”?
3. What does Ryle propose should be our response to cultural atheism?
4. What are the benefits of having distinct and decided views about Christian doctrine?
5. Are there any pitfalls of being decisively doctrinal?
6. What is wrong with having a religion of all negatives and no positives?
7. Do you think the evils of Roman Catholicism deserved to be on this list?
8. Do you think that Roman Catholicism is still something to fight against?
9. Ryle laments the proliferation of public religion without the increase of personal holiness. Is that still a problem today?
10. How would you accommodate Ryle's list of unholy activities to today's societal vices? (“*They see no harm in such things as card-playing, theater-going, dancing, incessant novel reading and Sunday traveling, and they cannot in the least understand what you mean by objecting to them!*”)
11. What does Ryle mean by “perseverance in the old ways of getting good for our souls”?
12. Why does Ryle say, “But while we are thankful for the increase of public religion, we must never forget that, unless accompanied by private religion, is of not real solid value, and may even produce most mischievous effects”?
13. Would you add any other wants of our times?

Chapter 20 – Christ is all

Colossians 3:11 – Christ is all

Outline

1. Christ is all in the counsels of God
 1. Christ was with God before Creation
 2. Christ was active in Creation
 3. Christ was revealed at the first sin as the hope of salvation
 4. Christ was incarnate when the world had sunk in sin
 5. Christ will return as King when sin is finally fully cast out of the world
 6. Christ will judge the world at the last judgment
2. Christ is all in the Bible
 1. Christ crucified is set forth in every OT sacrifice
 2. Abel looked to Christ in offering a better offering than Cain
 3. Enoch prophesied about Christ before the flood
 4. Abraham looked to Christ when he dwelt in tents in the land of promise
 5. Jacob, when he lay dying, spoke of Christ to his sons
 6. Christ was the substance of the ceremonial law given through Moses
 7. The miracles in the wilderness pointed to Christ
 8. The judges were all types of Christ
 9. David was a type of Christ
 10. All the prophets spoke of Christ
 11. The whole New Testament is full of Christ
3. Christ is all in the religion of all true Christians
 1. Christ is all in a sinner's justification before God
 2. Christ is all in a sinner's sanctification before God
 3. Christ is all in a sinner's comfort in time present
 4. Christ is all in a sinner's hopes to come
4. Christ will be all in heaven
5. Application
 1. Learn the utter uselessness of Christless religion
 2. Learn the enormous folly of joining anything to Christ in salvation
 3. Learn to apply directly to Christ for salvation
 4. Learn to deal with Christ as if we believed he was all

Questions

1. Why is it important to talk about Christ's existence before the incarnation?
2. Why is it important to talk about Christ's existence after the resurrection?
3. Ryle proposes Christ as the key to unlocking the mysteries of the Bible. What does he mean by this? Do you agree?
4. Is Christ the main point of every Bible passage?
5. What would be most Christians' responses to the question, "What is the main point of the Bible?"
6. It is possible to be a Deist and not a Christian? Explain.
7. What are the dangers of Christo-monism?
8. How does Christ epitomize heaven?
9. How have you grown through this study of *Holiness*?