

‘Holiness: the Good Life!’ Heb. 12:14

Introduction: Question: *do we have any part in our growing in Christlikeness?* Heb. 12:14 talks about striving for holiness. The word ‘striving’ suggests a couple of things: one, that it takes diligence and effort and second, that it is a lifelong task.

I. Holiness: what is it?

A. Holiness is the good life. The word holy, in various forms, occurs over 600 times in the Bible! To be holy is to be morally blameless. It is to be separated from sin and thus _____ to God. It depicts one who is countercultural because they are living for God, not for the media’s applause. To live a holy life then is to live by faith in the promises of God as one seeks to live like Christ, to live in conformity to the Scriptures. It means to be set apart.

B. Holiness is based on the character of God. Reginald Heber in his classic hymn, ‘*Holy, Holy, Holy*’ quotes the phrase from Rev. 4:8. It is the only word used to describe God that is repeated like this.

C. He says to us to: ‘be holy as I am holy.’ God is holy, He is transcendent- meaning He is above everyone and everything else, Thus His love is a holy love, His mercy is a holy mercy. Like Isaiah in Isa. 6, in awe and fear and trembling, we fall before Him, realizing He is eternal, infinite, pure, holy, and we are not. *illus. disciples in Mark 4:40,41*

II. How do we ‘strive, pursue, chase after’ holiness?

A. First it all has to begin with God. By the grace of God we must respond in faith, and by _____ alone, to His message of repentance and forgiveness and new life in Christ. That’s justification.

B. J C Ryle, in his classic work: ‘*Holiness*’. Remember that God is pleased to work thru means. God has ordained the means as well as the ends. The person who wants to grow spiritually must use the means that God has provided. What are these?

1. First, there are private means. Perhaps, think of them like tools. Don’t worship the tools; use them to accomplish what God designed them to do. This would include prayer, reading and studying the Scriptures and then pondering them so you can apply them. The person who doesn’t take pains with these things, should not be surprised if he sees little growth in his life.

2. Second, there are public means of growth. This would include things like being involved in a local church, being baptized, taking the Lord’s Supper, joining with God’s people in praise and regular Sunday worship, getting together with a friend to study the Word together.

3. I could mention other things, like watching our conduct in the little matters of everyday life, developing friends who can encourage you to grow, keeping short accounts with God by regularly confessing any known sin and then asking for the Holy Spirit to empower you once again, because sin has a way of short-circuiting God’s power in your life.

Conclusion:

A. Let it be very clear, God has called every Christian to a holy life. There are no exceptions to this. And gladly the apostle John tells us that when we are not holy, when we blow it in some way, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus, who prays for us and helps us. Also, the Bible says that we are to be holy as God is holy. Not as your cousin _____ is holy but compare yourself with Jesus.

B. So, in this new year, may each of us seek to keep growing, spiritually, intellectually and so on. You can never have too much faith or too much love or too much zeal. Let us forget the things that lie behind and press on into the things before us. And no matter what our culture might say, you can be sure there is no danger of any of us becoming too holy. May you have a Christ-centered New Year!