

HOLINESS

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The concept of holiness may have been lost among contemporary Christians and churches. The other relevant word is reverence.

Why is there this great desire among some churches today that everything must be modern and therefore modernised? Even traditional hymns are sung off-beat with a wrong rhythm and tempo or, to put it into common parlance, jazzed up!

As it has been seen, there have been developments in the churches since the last 1950s by which the old values have been replaced by secularism, pride, a modernism which includes the claim that praise is self-expression and that there is a need for using worldly methods and that many Christians apparently should rejoice in self-glory.

There are growing numbers of churches and house meetings that are 'doing their own thing' and there are thousands of meetings for Christians where people do that which is right in their own eyes.

There is drama, alleged speaking in tongues, miracles, pop music, jumping up and down and so-called Christian festivals, such as Greenbelt and Spring Harvest advertising for Buster Keaton lookalikes, movie moguls, ventriloquists, stunt men, dancers competitions, Punch and Judy shows, Marilyn Monroe lookalikes, beauty contests, trapeze artists and the like. There are quizzes on two soap operas, Eastenders and Coronation Street, and praise competitions, find the best Christian Rock Band competition, a competition for the best young female dancing worship group and a prize for the most dramatic personal testimony. There is even a catwalk fashion show including the modelling skimpy swimwear with slogans like 'Girls must be even more daring this year'.

The Bible commands us to be holy. The Lord says, "Be ye holy". "Why?" you may ask. And the Lord replies, "Because I am holy". That answer is sufficient. Consider Psalm 93 verse 5 as another example, The testimonies are sure, holiness belongs to God's house. Holiness must be the major factor in all worship wherever it is.

The dictionary says that sanctification is an act of God's grace by which man's desires are purified and exalted so that he becomes holy. It is the process of the Christian being separated from the things of the world and its defilement so that he can become separated from evil, as well as every appearance of evil (1 Thessalonians 5. 22), and be separated unto God.

Worship must always be holy. In Exodus 40. 10ff. the people of God had to sanctify the altar so that it was holy. In fact the text says most holy, undefiled from any blemish. It had to be clean and untainted. In Exodus 19 Mount Sinai had to be cordoned off so that it could be holy and no defilement could be found. God was about to give the Decalogue to Moses.

Sanctification can be performed by people themselves. Exodus 19.22 says, 'Let the priests also, which come near to the Lord, sanctify themselves.'

To bring this into the 21st century, do Christians want to be sanctified and be separated from the world and its methods?

Remember the text, 'Love not the world or the things of the world. If you love the world and its standards, the love of God is not in you.' (1 John 2. 15). Can you say that pop music and rock

music are sanctified and holy? Can you say that worship with disco lights and potentially erotic dancing is holy?

The Lord told Moses to go to the people and sanctify them (Exodus 19. 10). Presumably he told them again of the holiness of God and what was required by God so that the people could please Him and come into the fullness of Divine blessing.

There is hypocrisy sanctification. Isaiah 66. 17 talks of the people who say that they are sanctified and then violate the Scripture.

There are people today who say that they are the Lords but do not obey Him. They still indulge in worldly and secular pursuits often in the name of Christian worship. And many young Christians go to pubs and get inebriated. They dance to rock music in their places of worship and some girls dress like tarts which encourages more young men. and older men, to come to church. Is this holiness? Is this what God wants?

The Father sanctified the Son. In John 17.19, the Lord said, ‘ For their sakes I sanctify myself that they might be sanctified through the truth.’ This is an important verse. The Christian is sanctified through the truth.

If holiness is ‘ Come ye out from among the them (the world and the secular) and be separate,’ and it is the truth then that is part of the process of sanctification.

However, carnal Christians can be sanctified. Paul in his first epistle to the Corinthians writes to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus and calls them yet carnal as they are besieged with arguments, envy and divisions among themselves. They are not spiritual. They are carnal. Carnal Christians have the world and the secular in them. They are not truly spiritual or mature Christians. They are carnal (1 Corinthians 3.3).

It is essential that all Christians follow sanctification. The first epistle to Peter chapter 1 calls upon all believers to be sanctified and obedient to God and in every manner of conversation. Every manner. And, of course, conversation here means way of life. In all and every avenue of our life, we are in all things to be holy and obedient to God.

It may seem strange but God calls the sanctified to be perfect. Hebrews 10.14, ‘ For by one offering He hath forever perfected them that are sanctified.’ The word perfect is really the word sincere which means without wax. This was a term was used in ancient times when a marble or stone column showed a crack and, if it was high up, unscrupulous builders would fill the hole with wax. Without wax, without any falsity, is the meaning of sincere and perfect here.

Sanctification is a change of nature in the believer and an elimination of anything in their life which is against God. This would include pride, self-glory and the secular things of the world.

Are the following two comments below relevant?

To the young Christian fellow, destroy those girlie magazines, stop smoking, give up your recreational drugs and bad language.

To the young female Christian, stop making a god of that handsome pop singer whom you fancy like mad, stop wearing revealing clothes and flirting, stop thinking of your beauty and the money you spend on make-up and clothes.

To all Christians of whatever age they are to be separated from the world and its methods and fashion.

As the New Testament states persons professing to be Christians and not following holiness and separation from the world will not see the Lord by which that they will not appreciate and see the Lord in His beauty while living here, (Hebrews 12,14),

We are not saved so that we can do what we like. We are not saved to introduce into worship what we want. We do not take our preoccupation with rock music into church. Because young people dance at parties that is no reason to perform dancing in worship.

Can you imagine the holy Lord Jesus playing in a rock band? Can you imagine the Lord sanctioning dancing in worship with girls sexily dressed?

Would the Holy Saviour support one of these Christian festivals with Buster Keaton lookalikes and all these other secular and worldly things?

If the Lord appeared at one of these modern meetings in a local church or place used for worship or at a so-called Christian festival one would hope that everyone would remain silent and listen to Him.

Furthermore, when one becomes a Christian one experiences new birth. If anyone is in Christ all things are to be new; old things must pass away. As 1 John 5.1 says the evidence of new birth is that your life is now the life of faith. Faith expresses itself in life, growth and faithfulness and, it must follow. that faith must show itself in your lifestyle. The Lord Jesus said that we are in the world but we must not be a part of the world. In other words, we must not be worldly. We must not copy the style of the world or its standards, That is New Testament teaching.

The true believer does that which is righteousness, that is to say what is right in God's sight. (1 John 2.29). He does that does what is right in God's sight. (3 John 11). And if we have the grace of God we know that we must deny ungodly things and that we must live righteously (Titus 2. 11-12),

1 John 5. 14 goes further when it says, Whosoever is born of God overcomes the world. In Galatians 5. 16 we are to have victory over the flesh, the things in our lives which are neither spiritual nor holy, and 1 John 4.4. says we must have victory over false teachers and false doctrine.

Rock n' roll, or rock music, originated in the 1950s. The expression rock 'n'roll refers to sexual activity and usually illicit sexual activity or promiscuity. Rock is secular; it is of the world. It is not spiritual. It is not holy. It is of the flesh and not of the Spirit of God.

Disco dancing or disco lights of the equivalent being used in any meeting is secular. It is of the world.

Going to a party and losing inhibitions or getting drunk is secular. It is of the world and the of the flesh. It is not holy.

Calling a Christian meeting a party would also be wrong.

And Christian festivals advertising for tightrope walkers, movie moguls, Buster Keaton lookalikes, having competitions, fashion shows or entertainments is of the world. It is not holy.

So-called musicals which deal with the life of Christ and present him as a clown or an idiot or have a song saying that the Lord Jesus is just a man is unholy.

We can all quote the verse that God does not look at the outward appearance (1 Samuel 16.7) and people have interpreted this as it does not matter what you wear even in a Christian meeting. You can go in torn jeans and Tee shirts with inappropriate slogans printed thereon.

In the first chapter of Peter's second epistle, he exhorts us to add virtue to our faith and then knowledge followed by temperance which is self-control and there must also be patience and all these things add up to godliness.

Virtue is moral excellence, goodness and, in the case of the female, chastity. Girls and women dancing in worship in mini skirts or see-through dresses and creating sexual desire is not virtue or chastity. Remember the one who tempts another to sin shares the responsibility for the resultant sin. Baasha caused the people of Israel to sin is one example (1 Kings 16.13)

As the gifts of prophecy, that is foretelling the future, miraculous healing worked by a believer, and speaking in tongues ceased with the completion of Holy Scripture. The alleged use of these temporary gifts today is also or, at the least, suspect. Of course, God can heal if it is His Will, but it is His doing and not the work of a mere mortal. The nonsense that until you are baptised in the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues you are not a complete believer, or not a believer at all is a serious error and false doctrine as Romans 8 proves.

In modern worship today there is jumping up and down, the raised hand or hands, noise, rock music and the rest.

Godliness means self-control. In quietness and confidence is our strength (Isaiah 30.15). Be still in the Presence of the Lord (Psalm 37.7) for, where He is, holiness must be present.

We must be separate from the world. We have to be sanctified, set apart from the world and its influences.

But people will complain. It is old fashioned and people will not worship God this way with all these restrictions. We have to move with the times. We have got to get people in ! In human terms, one can have some sympathy with this notion. I wish my loved ones came under the sound of the Gospel and be saved.

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