



Challenging Christians to Pray

Prayergram®

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Why Evangelicals Shun Holiness?

Is there something inherently and intrinsically wrong with the soul of modern evangelicalism? The whole fabric of its belief system has changed or is being changed. It seems some Christians have lost their core Biblical values and are drifting further into total apostasy and compromise. In a society increasingly pluralistic and secular in its moral view there is a deep yearning for spiritual coherence to help us find our proper niche. Many well intentioned people are asking how they can hold onto pure Biblical values that make them increasingly unpopular in a permissive and changing world. Biblical values are not based on European or American cultures. There is only one kind of holiness, the holiness of Jesus Christ. When we give Him a chance to manifest His holiness in us, the world will know the reality of Him who is the expressed image of God. We won't go very far in Christian development if we are technical about holiness living. As Christians, we are to be not numbskulls but holy men/women fully consecrated and passionate people of God.

We're more fascinated today with physical growth rather than spiritual growth. Self worship is in, and true worship of God is out. Whatever happened to Christian purity—that old-fashioned concept that smacks of wholesome living and unimpeachable integrity? The quality of integrity has fallen on hard times among Christians as well as non-Christians worldwide. What has happened that we no longer believe in the human conscience? The whole of humanity is on cruise control, loves to sin and rebel, trapped in lies and hypocrisy, unable to see the danger that lies ahead. Does purity mean anything to God? Of course it does. History is replete with examples of people and nations who allowed permissiveness and lack of

morality to go unchecked. God does not tolerate a split-level moral universe. Christians need to be careful when they start embracing whatever moral and social changes that come down the pike in the name of so-called religious tolerance.



Matthew Skariah

Personal sanctity has become a rare commodity today. Jeremy Taylor's book *Holy Living and Holy Dying* was never a Christian bestseller. The religious world is busy—busy with promoting health and wealth, entertaining ourselves, or attending retreats and seminars for the enrichment of our stressed out life. We are “into” holistic or New Age theology, or the gifts of the Spirit, or user-friendly gospel, or self-fulfillment, looking slim, or maintaining a lavish lifestyle—all for Jesus, of course. In the midst of all these frenzied activities, evangelicals find no time for soul-searching and prayer. No wonder we often feel like our lives are under duress. Until we take time to rest in God, we will continue to feel empty. Let the Lord fill our tank, fix our flats, map our trip and give us a much needed spiritual tune up. The modern-day religious innovators have retained the cross as the symbol of God's love but have denied its efficacious sacrifice. They have ever so cunningly manufactured a social gospel to provide cover and false hope to a generation of pleasure lovers who actually don't love God passionately. Oh, yes, we've the right theology but wrong living. It is like saying that 'lab test was successful but the patient died.' Preachers who used to preach about the cross and holy living now shamelessly sell vitamin pills and beauty products on television.

It's no exaggeration to say that the word 'holiness' has become one of the most irritating words among evangelical Christians today. Whenever the subject of holiness comes up, they shrug

their shoulders and raise their eye-brow and say that it is all about the 'doctrine of works,' not realizing that God invites His people to greatness through holiness. God has commanded us to be 'holy because He is holy.' But if we're truthful, we need to admit that holiness is a rare virtue these days and it is often misunderstood or vehemently opposed. God expects that we be pure, holy and virtuous. He not only expects us to be holy but also makes holiness possible by the power of His redemptive work on the cross. We take too many short-cuts in biblical purity and expect to remain godly in an ungodly world. The path of unrighteous conduct will not usher in a God-honoring atmosphere.

There is a "divine presence" in the world that so many people could not grasp and what man cannot grasp he rejects. A carnal Christian must be a terrible grief to our Lord. When we lose the sight of the holiness of God, we become hard, dogmatic and fearful and confused. If we are reverential and loving toward God, we become fruitful and loving toward other people. Look at the religious landscape of the world today and see how cantankerous, rebellious, boastful and unholy we have become. I hear people often say, "Oh, don't pay any attention to holiness because no one really cares about such 'puritan taboos,' because it is not relevant in today's enlightened society." The fact that it doesn't matter much to us may mean that it matters much to God. Nothing is a light matter when it comes to God. Holiness walk is a love walk and don't try to take it out of the realm of agape love. To me, intimacy with God brings a holy fear. God is not my pal. I love Him because He is my Savior and I fear Him because one day He is going to be my judge. When Christ becomes Lord and Master of our lives, slowly and surely we begin to live a life of ineffable order and holiness. In my humble estimation, the modern church needs a 'holy invasion.' Many Christians have salvation but they lack intimacy with God. Even the so-called holiness movements of the past are now caught up in the carnival atmosphere of cultural cleavage and compromise. Love for Christ ignites purity and purity capsulate perpetual victory in the life of the believer. The young people today scoff at holiness messages because their parents, or elders or teachers have been reluctant, ashamed or unwilling or unable to transmit the heart of God to them. If adults are not walking in biblical holiness, then how can they expect young people

to walk in holiness? Rebellion breeds rebellion.

C. S. Lewis said so profoundly, "*None can give to another what he does not possess.*" The early apostles cried "*Come out from among them and be ye separate, says the Lord,*" and "*live in the Spirit,*" is now superseded by the psychobabble of the new apostles, "Come join the carnival of the world, and win the world by being worldly and irreverent." Today when I see the irreverence among modern-day worshippers, I want to weep a flood of tears. God will not acquit those who misuse and traduce His holy name. The Psalmist David said, "*Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his hill; for the LORD our God is holy*" (Psalms 99:9).

Is it any wonder, then, that the debilitated state of many evangelicals does little to curtail the rapidly worsening moral depravity and corruption of our nation, and the world? Just imagine, with all the preaching on radio and television in America, today, we have not put one dent on the moral pollution and social disintegration. What does that tell us? It tells us that we do not practice what we preach for reasons unknown. "*Salt is good; but if the salt have lost its savior, wherewith shall it be seasoned?*" (Luke 14:34). Harnack, the historian and theologian, said that the Church influenced the world, most, when it was most unlike the world. Christians today no longer take Biblical holiness seriously. The World is their model, and supernaturalism has become anathema to their liberated mind. The religious world has robbed Him of His imperial majesty, His eternal Deity and all His miracles. They have cunningly manufactured a user-friendly religion for themselves, a convenient gospel as they put it, for this politically correct and culturally diverse age in which we live. We have clearly and irretrievably lost our morals. We are on the verge of a moral collapse. As the people of God, we can no longer afford to be quiet when every sacred institution in America is under attack by those who want to silence Christians from the arena of public discourse. It is very obvious that an "elitist minority" tries to overrun an 'apathetic Christian majority.'

The forces of whitewashing within the church, however, are more subtle, and therefore, often more dangerous. When a Christian seeks after worldly recognition, and assiduously attempts to build a colossal image of him before men of power and prestige, the glory departs from him.

For God declares, “My glory will I not give to another ...” (Isaiah 42:8). We’re fascinated with sin; we shamelessly lift our eyes in delighted inquisitiveness. Sin attracts us but does not bother us; it raises our curiosity but does not offend us. We can ponder its various intricacies, and it does not create a heart-wrenching concussion. We can watch it on television and go to sleep at night and no one will ever know the difference. But when the Master sees it, He weeps. Beloved, the Spirit of God is grieved because we have forsaken the God of glory as the prophet Jeremiah said, “For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water” (Jeremiah 2:13).

Jeremiah was speaking to God’s people as they turned their back on Him, the holy One of Israel. We lament the deterioration of morality in our nation, but at the same token Christians participate in the same act of rebellion and defiance against God as the world does. God honors those who tremble at His Word. For example, in Ezra’s day there was such an awesome move of God

among the people that many “trembled at the words of the God of Israel” (Ezra 9:4). We read His Word but do not reverence His holy name. No wonder Charles Finney said, “It is sinful to teach the Bible without moral application.” Believers, let us step aside and let the fashions, thrills and popularity of the world go by. Let’s remain steadfast and sure. Stand true to God and to the highest and best! Remember, personal holiness is the foundation of all moral excellence. The holiness lifestyle should be engraved into the DNA of every true believer.

Thomas Carlyle, the 18th century Scottish poet and essayist was profound when he said, “Holy living is the best argument that tells for God in age of fact.” Philip Henry was right to the point when he wrote: “Holiness in us is the copy or transcript of the holiness that is in Christ.” Please allow me close this article with the profound words of Emmons: “Real holiness has love for its essence, humility for its clothing, the good of others as its employment, and the honor of God as its end.”

SPEAKING CANDIDLY by Matthew Skariah

God supplies our needs not grudgingly but in full measure. We live naturally supernatural. Isn’t it better to trust in God than trust in man? God’s blessings manifest in obedient people. Our joy comes from what we give, not what we accumulate. It is a joy to depend upon Jehovah God, the Provider and Patron of this ministry, the Reservoir of our lives who is always on time with manna from on high.

Long ago, I ceased to care about the opinions of those who advocate or promote a hypothetical faith. I know my Lord by personal experience, and not by hearsay or second hand faith. Suffice it to say, there is a loving God who cares for His children. God will do great things for us if we depend on Him. We shall always have our Lord’s assistance and provision. He is the divine facilitator and enabler.

Do not attempt to micro-manage God’s

affairs! Do not hinder others from entering into His provision! When we live by His divine provision day by day, then we learn to lavish God’s blessings on others.

I want to be a delight to my heavenly Father. I am His possession, and He is orchestrating and carrying out His enterprises through me. I’m completely His. I am comfortable with who I am. My Savior means all the world to me and I love Him with all my heart and soul. The work He has called me to do is not about status, or building temples but intercession, standing in the gap for my brothers and sisters the world over. I will wait for the gracious help of God, for He will, I am absolutely certain, help me finish well. One thing I ask of the Lord that He would let me die on my knees, and I am positive that my humble request will be granted!

LIVING NATURALLY SUPERNATURAL

*The Lord’s
call to
“faith living”
is clear,
uncompromising
and
unrelenting.*

Punchline
by Matthew
Skariah

SPIRITUAL KINSHIP

When we speak about the Church, we do not speak in terms of mega-churches, or country-churches. When we speak about Christians, we do not speak in terms of educated Christians, wealthy Christians, poor Christians, Black Christians, Caucasian Christians, Brown Christians—we are Christians—brothers and sisters in Christ, bound for heaven and united by a glorious faith. The cross is no ones private property. It belongs to us all. Jesus is a Savior without borders.

In sports, we have superstars; in politics, we have super politicians; in Hollywood, we have movie stars, but in Christianity we have followers of Christ. In fact, we don't even use the word SUPER when it comes to defining Christians or Christianity! Can you imagine Christians running around and calling themselves *super-Christians*? That would be a contradiction in terms. Those who are washed in the blood of the Lamb are our brothers and sisters regardless of their color, social or economic status. *Our kinship is spiritual, not biological.*

The true Christian always maintains his faith in God and remains oblivious to all earthly fame and fortunes. He has a special affinity to Christ and an undying devotion to his Lord and Master. He is never shy or squeamish about standing up for his Savior. He humbly trusts the issues to God and trusts in His infinite wisdom without any admixture of doubt.

But on the other hand, the carnal man is impressed with his own impression. The most influential people in the world are not those who clamor for attention, but those who practice unbridled humility in their daily lives. *What we have in Christ is so sacred, divine and so regal. Let's guard it with every fiber of our being!*

Voice from the Past

Holy is the way God is. To be holy He does not conform to a standard. He is the standard. He is absolutely holy with an infinite, incomprehensible fullness of purity that is incapable of being other than it is. Because He is holy, His attributes are holy; that is, whatever we think of as belonging to God must be thought of as holy.

God is holy with an absolute holiness that knows no degrees, and this He cannot impart to His creatures. The holiness of God can and does

impart to His children. He shares it with them by impartation and by impartation, and because He has made it available to them through the blood of the Lamb, He requires it of them. No honest man can say "I am holy," but neither is any honest man willing to ignore the solemn words of the inspired writer, *"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."*

A.W. Tozer (1897-1963)

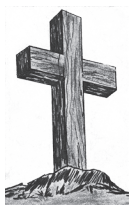
A 20th-century prophet, Pastor/Author of 36 books

Prayer navigates us through the celestial city where we find intimacy with the living God. In prayer, there's no browsing, no chat-room, no surfing, no cyberspace interactions. It is just us and God. It is heavenly interaction pure and simple.

Oswald Chambers, the prolific devotional writer was so profound when he said, *"Climbing in the spirit is accomplished by kneeling, and not by running; by surrender, and not by determination."*

SPEAKING
PRAYERFULLY

Matthew
Skariah



The WPB Ministries

PRAYER IS THE MIGHTIEST FORCE — 2 Chronicles 7:14



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