

# Holiness: It's Fruit

by G. Campbell Morgan

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*Holiness is a life of usefulness, characterized by a God-centered, not self-centered, attitude, and a transformed outlook on wealth, love, and relationships.*

**Scripture:** Romans 3:15, 2 Corinthians 5:17

**Topics:** "New Creation", "Holiness"

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## Description

G. Campbell Morgan emphasizes that being 'in Christ' transforms a person into a new creation, where the old self and its desires pass away, making way for a life centered on God. He contrasts the characteristics of a Christian with those of a non-Christian, highlighting that true holiness manifests in selflessness, a new perspective on the world, and a commitment to righteousness. Morgan asserts that holiness is not an elite privilege but the expected norm for all believers, enabling them to live out their faith actively and purposefully. He concludes that holiness is essential for being a vessel of God's work, as it allows believers to be used effectively for His purposes in the world.

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## Transcript

THE WORDS, "he is" , WHICH APPEAR IN OUR BIBLES ARE supplied, and do not exist in the actual text. Our revisers have suggested an alternative reading, "there is a new creation." I venture to adopt that partially, omitting the words "there is," and reading the text thus, "Wherefore if any man is in Christ, a new creation, the old things have passed away; behold, they are become new. But all things are of God." The phrase "a new creation" is thus placed in apposition to the phrase "\*in Christ"; and is an exposition of it. If any man is in Christ, he is therefore a new creation.

What then is the difference between that new man, and the man he was before? It is expressed on the negative side in the words "The old things are passed away." The apostle is careful at this point not to create the possibility of a false impression. "The old things are passed away; behold they," the same things, "are become new." What, then, is the difference on the positive side? "All things are of God." In his letter to the Romans, when dealing with man in his sin, by citation from the Psalms, the apostle describes the attitude of the sinner in the words, "There is no fear of God before their eyes." Let us put the final sentences of that description into immediate opposition to my text.

Their feet are, swift to shed blood;

Destruction and misery are in their ways;

And the ways of peace they have not known;

There is no fear of God before their eyes--Romans 3:15-18

If any man is in Christ a new creature; the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new.

But all things are of God--II Corinthians 5:17, 18

The contrast is graphic. By bringing together these two passages we see exactly what the difference is, or ought to be, between the Christian man and the man who is not yet a Christian.

In this fourth study of our series on the subject of holiness we are to consider its fruit. In his Roman letter Paul charged his readers, "Have your fruit unto sanctification," that is, "Have your fruit unto holiness." What is that fruit? What are the manifestations of holiness of character?

Holiness results in the passing of all the distinctive excellencies of Christianity from the realm of theory into that of experience. The ideal which we have seen and admired will become the real in actual life, in the measure in which we are holy in character.

I am conscious that such a statement may make it appear as though holiness were the privilege of the few, rather than the possible experience of all who share the life of Christ. There are one or two simple things which therefore need to be clearly stated at this point. First there can be no holiness save by the work of the Holy Spirit in the life. Second, granted the work of the Spirit, the normal Christian life is holy life, and the measure in which we fail of holiness is the measure in which we fail of Christianity. Yet here again extreme care is necessary. I would not have that misinterpreted to the discouragement of any struggling soul. I do not deny your Christianity any more than I deny my own, because neither you nor I have yet realized the character of holiness in all its fulness; yet you will admit, if you think carefully, that the measure in which we lack holiness is the measure in which we lack the true normal Christian character. Holiness is not the preserve of an aristocracy in the family of God, in our ordinary sense of that word "aristocracy." The whole family of God is an aristocracy, or ought to be. Aristocracy, what does it mean? Forgive me if I am elementary enough to remind you that the root significance of the word is best strength. That is what an aristocracy ought to be, and the best strength of the world ought to be the Christian men and women of the world. Holiness as a blessing, second or otherwise, is not the privilege of a select or elect few. It is the normal life of the Christian, according to the purpose and power of God. Holiness is not ultimate perfection. Holiness is the condition which makes it possible for us to "grow up in all things into Him, which is the Head." Holiness is not perfection of consummation. It is simply health in the spiritual life.

Our text indicates a line and suggests a method by which we may understand the fruit of holiness. "If any man is in Christ, a new creation; the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new." He will still live in the same house, in the same city, with the same people; following the same profession, the same business, but everything will be changed. The old things are passed away, because he is himself a new creation. If the old things have been made new because the man in Christ is made new, and his vision is therefore new, what are the new things? The whole change is summarized in the words of the apostle, "All things are of God." Let us now inquire quite simply how that works out.

The first change is one of personal consciousness. In order that we may see the difference, let us consider a man who is not yet a Christian--and I do not propose taking that man on the lowest level, that is, measuring by the ordinary standards of observation; I desire rather to look at the man of the world, the man who is not a Christian, on the highest level attainable by him. What are the dominant notes in the consciousness of such a man? May I rapidly state them and then dwell on each for a moment or two. Love of self, admiration of the world, passion for ownership of goods, great love for kindred and friends, patriotism.

Now, "if any man is in Christ, a new creation; the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new. But all things"--these very things--"are of God."

Love of self. I begin there because that is the root principle of all godless life. If I talk of admiration of the world, passion for the ownership of goods, love for kindred and friends, patriotism, we are all ready to admit that all these things are admirable; but the most selfish man is ever ready to denounce selfishness in other people. I am increasingly impressed with the fact that selfishness is a hateful thing to the mind of humanity, unregenerate or regenerate, and yet it is the master passion of all life apart from Jesus Christ. It has many means of expression, self-indulgence, self-consideration, self-consciousness, but the man of the world is inevitably self-centered. All the circles are drawn around self; the home, society, the nation, the world.

Admiration of the world. That always means admiration of something in the world that is a little out of reach. The man in the slum gazes occasionally on the man who lives in the West End, and admires--however much he professes not to--his luxury, and would obtain it if he could, notwithstanding all he declares to the contrary. The man who is higher in the social scale looks still a little higher, and admires what he sees. There is an old proverb, which I quote, and leave you to think about when you are alone, "A nod from a lord is breakfast for a fool." There is a great deal of philosophy in it. Men look a little up, and a little further up; and will scheme and plan, and even put their wealth at the disposal of kings in order that it may be said that they are the companions of kings. Kings see the glory of the world and forevermore are seeking for that enlargement of empire that ministers to pride. Come with me back to the desolate wilderness, and look at one lone Man facing the great foe of the race, who showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and offered to give Him all if only He would give him homage. That temptation in the wilderness was the dragging out into clear daylight of the perpetual methods of Satan. Men everywhere are admiring the world.

Passion for the ownership of goods. I need not in this particular age dwell on that. It is the driving force of this feverish age. The mere Passion for possession has caused war. That is an ultimate statement, which I do not now stay to deal with more fully. No one denies that a man of the world desires power.

Love of kindred and friends. That is a gracious and beautiful thing, I freely admit; and it exists among men of the world quite apart from Christianity.

Patriotism. That is love of fatherland, love of one's own country, the love which calls forth the long letters about lost ideals and new ideals, and the necessity for teaching our children the fact that they must sacrifice themselves for the making of their country.

Now at once I may be challenged, by those who in astonishment inquire if I intend to affirm that holiness means that these things cease? Let us be perfectly clear about this. I mean only, but I mean certainly exactly, what the apostle says, "If any man is in Christ, a new creation; the old things are passed away;

behold, they are become new; but all things are of God."

To begin at the center. The man in Christ Jesus is no longer self-centered, but God-centered. Let the writer of this letter tell us his own experience in language we have quoted so often, and never perhaps yet perfectly understood, "I have been-crucified with Christ; yet I live." I have not lost my identity, but it is changed. My personality has not ceased to be, but it is remade. "I live" is the declaration of the positive immediately following the affirmation of the negative. Let us still be careful, for the apostle continues, "Yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me." That is true of the normal Christian life. That is the central thing in holiness. In order to bring men to that the words of Jesus were perpetually severe. "If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." We quote that searching word and even sing it, but it does not bite, and burn, and break us as it ought to do. That word ought to put every one of us on the cross. "Let him deny himself." The Christian man is a man who at the center of his own being is no longer enthroned, having dominion over his own life, but a man who has put Christ on the throne. That is the fundamental difference.

Then as to the world this selfsame writer says, "the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Does that for a single moment mean that he had lost interest in the world, and the affairs of the world? Nay verily, for this is the man who interprets for the Christian Church, and for all time, if we will but listen to it, the agony of the world, "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain." Here, then, is the difference. Holiness of character means, first of all, the circumferencing of the life around the center, Christ, and then that the world is seen as it really is. Tinsel is known as tinsel, and the touch of decay is seen on all the glory that men admire. Nevertheless, behind the false the true glory is discovered. The Christian man is the man who has lost his admiration for the coronet because he is conscious of the aching brow on which it rests. The Christian man has no eyes for the purple, because the eyes of his heart see the broken heart underneath it. It was Henry Ward Beecher who said that Paul had no love for Greek art because he did not describe a Greek temple in any of his epistles. I do not believe that for a moment. I think he was a master of architecture. If you study his description of the building of the Christian Church it is the language of a man who knew a great deal about architecture. When Pausanias came to Athens he described the temples and buildings, and wrote of the culture and poetry; but only one brief, palpitating account is given by Luke of Paul in Athens, and this is it. "His spirit was in a paroxysm as he beheld the city full of idols." The Christian man does not withdraw himself from the world, has not lost his sense of beauty in the world; but he sees the world's agony, and is so busy attempting to deal with it that he has no admiration for the glitter and tinsel of the things wherewith the men of the world, hungry all the time for God, are attempting to satisfy themselves. His admiration for the world is over.

Ownership of goods. The Christian man believes that Christ knew exactly what He was talking about when He said to His disciples, "Lay not up for yourselves treasure upon the earth"--mark the fine satire of Jesus--"where moth and rust doth consume, and thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." The Christian man has lost his passion to own goods for the sake of the power such possession gives him, because the possession of Christ gives him a new and beneficent power. The Christian man will no longer devote himself wholly, absolutely, utterly, to the work of amassing wealth simply to possess it. That does not mean for a single moment that the Christian man will not be a successful man of business; that he is to count himself somehow doing wrong if his enterprises succeed. It does mean that the Christian man will never deviate one hair's breadth from the line of rectitude in order to make wealth; and it does mean that when he has made it he says forevermore, This is the means by

which I may lay up treasure in heaven. "Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when it--the mammon--"shall fail, they"--the friends you have made--"may receive you into the eternal tabernacles." If you are wealthy men, and Christian men, your wealth is your opportunity to make a fortune, only the dividends are postponed to the other side. What are the dividends? Men and women you have helped. Souls that by the proper use of your wealth you have uplifted. Boys and girls you have delivered from that hell of time and eternity to which they were going but for your help. To put the whole case into a sentence, the man of the world amasses wealth until wealth holds him; the Christian man may be successful in business, but he forevermore holds his wealth in trust for his Lord. That is the difference.

Concerning the love of kindred and friends, many people are troubled by the words of Jesus, "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me." "If any man cometh unto Me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." Does this mean that the life of holiness is a life of hardness, a life out of which all human affection passes? To ask the question is at once to have a negative reply. Jesus Himself so loved the will of God that He said, "Who is My mother, and who are My brethren? . . . Whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, he is My brother, and sister and mother." Yet, in His dying agony, with the awful passion of the world's redemption breaking His heart, He thought of His mother, and handed her over to John to love her and take care of her. He Who did that does not mean that we are to cease to love father or mother, wife or children, brothers or sisters. The man of the world for the love of the one whom he loves will in the hour of crisis often do the sinful thing; but the Christian man will not allow love of father or mother, wife or child, to make him disloyal to his Lord and to truth. That is the difference.

What of patriotism? Does the Christian man cease to be patriotic? By no means, but he has a new outlook on national life and national greatness. He insists that "righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people." The Christian man forevermore lives there. He does not care at all how big the empire may be, but he does care enormously whether it be pure. I am going a step further than that. The Christian man in the fulness of Christian experience ceases to be particularly anxious about the national greatness of his own people in his passion or the national greatness of all peoples. When leaving His disciples, Jesus Christ said, "All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and disciple the nations." The Christian man recognizes the right of the other nations as well as that of his own. He cannot have any interest in anything that goes to the making of his own nation if by making that nation great some weaker people is harmed and hurt and downtrodden. "He made of one every nation of men." Jesus Christ to-day loves as devotedly, as passionately, as perfectly the nation lowest in the scale of civilization as the highest: the German as much as the Englishman, the Boer as much as the Briton. The measure in which we are Christian men is the measure in which we climb this height of the recognition of the oneness of humanity, and entertain a great love for it.

What has all this to do with holiness? Everything, because it has to do with righteousness. There will be no righteousness in our dealing with men unless there be this holiness of character, the tides of the Christ life surging through the life of His child, creating His consciousness in the presence of all these things. The old things are passed away. No longer self-centered but Christ-centered, therefore the master passion of the life not to please self but to please Him. The old things are passed away, therefore no longer admiration of that which is superficial in the glory of the world, but the recognition of the tremendous beauty and glory of the world that God has made, together with recognition of its pain and suffering; and an earnest desire to hold out a helping hand to those who need. No longer a passionate desire to amass a fortune; but

diligence in business in order that there may be possession of wealth to use for the glory of God in the good of humanity. No longer that inordinate love of kindred and friends that will permit us to do the wrong thing; but a tender love of kindred and friends, the outcome of devotion to Jesus Christ, so strong that no wrong thing can be done even for father or mother, wife or child. No longer patriotism that sings songs of war and of the greatness of one nation, but the great world-interest that takes all men into its heart and seeks to make great its own nation in order that it may uplift and ennoble the nations of the world.

As I understand the teaching of the New Testament, this is holiness. It is that inward grace of character which is not weak, soft, anaemic, able only to sing songs of spiritual experience and to see visions of the heaven which is not yet. It is that inner refinement of heart and life and soul which comes from the indwelling Christ, and makes the life strong in its relationship to the world.

That leads me to my final word. Holiness is a life of usefulness. The unalterable and unchanging purpose of God is the accomplishment of His purposes through His people. That is rendered possible through holiness of character. Cleansed vessels are the vessels that Jehovah makes use of. "Be ye clean ye that bear the vessels of the Lord," was the word of the Hebrew prophet. "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, And touch no unclean thing," is the word of the Christian apostle. It is through holiness of character that I become a vessel ready to the hand of God for the accomplishment of His will. Surrendered instruments are those which He employs. Not only is it true that clay cannot say to the potter, What formest thou? It is true that the instrument through which he will form and fashion the clay must be plastic in his hand even as the clay is. Believing souls He trusts. The measure of my confidence in Him is the measure of His confidence in me. Let me put that in this form. Are you a man that God can trust? You are if you are a man who can trust God. Trust, again let me remind you, is not merely singing the song that declares your confidence, but it is the life of obedience that relies on God. "He made known His ways unto Moses," gave him the program of events; "His acts unto the children of Israel"; they had to wait and walk step by step. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." Has God ever told you a secret, something in your inner life that has become a flaming, fiery passion? You spoke of it and the world crucified you for doing it. The men to whom God has whispered His secrets of ultimate purpose and present plan are men absolutely at His disposal, and they have had to suffer in the world, but by their suffering the Kingdom is coming. If I want to find a highway along which God is moving toward ultimate victory I shall follow the tracks where I discover the blood of martyrs. He can tell me His secret only as I trust Him wholly.

Holiness is the work of the Spirit. When I am willing, He baptizes me into union with the life of Christ. He seals me as the property of God. He anoints me for all service. The ultimate argument for the holy life is not the perfection of life, but the fact that life being rendered perfect, becomes God's instrument in the world. That, I think, is the final appeal. In the light of that appeal my heart says,

Lord Jesus, I long to be perfectly whole,

I want Thee forever to live in my soul;

Break down every idol, cast out every foe:

Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

That, not merely that I may be whiter than snow, but that through me may flow the river, and from me may flash the light, and by me may be exercised the very power of Christ for the lifting of men and the bringing

in of His Kingdom.

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