

How to Get Holiness

by Samuel Logan Brengle

To get the blessing of a clean heart, you must work together with God, see your need of the blessing, confess it, believe that it is for you, and consecrate your all to Him.

Scripture: Malachi 3:10, Matthew 5:8, John 4:47-50, Romans 12:1-2, 2 Corinthians 6:2, Ephesians 3:20, Philippians 4:19, Hebrews 11:1, James 4:7, 1 John 3:15

Topics: "Holiness", "Faith and Consecration"

Description

Samuel Logan Brengle emphasizes the partnership between God and man in achieving holiness, likening it to farming where both divine and human efforts are essential. He outlines the steps necessary for receiving the Holy Spirit and a clean heart, including recognizing one's need for cleansing, confessing sins, believing in the possibility of holiness, and fully consecrating oneself to God. Brengle encourages believers to act now, without delay, and to approach Jesus with a sincere heart, ready to give all for the blessing of sanctification. He reassures that God's love and desire for our holiness surpass our failures and doubts, urging us to trust in His promises.

Transcript

God never raises a crop of potatoes or a field of wheat or a bushel of oats without man's help. He takes men into partnership with Him in such matters, He furnishes the sunshine and the air, the rain and the dew, the day and the night, the fruitful seasons, the busy, burrowing little earthworms and insects which keep the lungs of the earth open so that it can breathe, and He gives life to the seed, so that it may grow. Man must prepare the ground, plant the seed, keep down the weeds, and gather in the harvest. Men sometimes think that they are doing it all, but they are quite mistaken in this. Our loving Heavenly Father has been preparing the earth for thousands of years for every potato that grows, and He ceaselessly works, by day and by night, to help man to raise his crops.

And so it is in matters that concern our souls. God and man must work together, both to save and to sanctify. God never saves a sinner without that sinner's help, and usually the help of some other folks as well, who preach or pray, or write and sing, or suffer that he may be saved. Ages before we were born, God provided the means of salvation for all. Angels and prophets spoke God's truth. Jesus came and showed us God's love, and died for our sins; the Holy Spirit was given, the blessed Bible was written, and all things were made ready.

But now, the sinner must hear the truth for himself, must repent, must confess his sins and give them up, and must ask God for pardon, and believe, before he can be saved. And for a sinner to expect salvation without doing this would be as big a piece of folly as for a farmer to expect a crop of potatoes without having planted them.

And so, to get the priceless gift of the Holy Spirit -- a clean heart -- we must work together with God. On God's side, all things are ready, and He waits and longs to give the blessing; but before He can do so, we must, with His help, get ourselves ready; we must do our part, which is very simple, and easily within our power to do.

1. We must see our need of the blessing, and to see this need, we must be clearly justified. No sinner has his spiritual eyes open to see the need of a clean heart. He is blind to these things. He may have dreadful hatred in his heart, but so long as he restrains himself, and does the person he hates no harm, he thinks he is a very good sort of fellow. He cannot see that in the eyes of God he is a murderer, for does not God say, 'Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer'? (I John iii. 15.) He may have lust in his heart, but so long as he does not commit adultery, he flatters himself that he is quite respectable in God's sight, in spite of the fact that Jesus says that the look of lust is adultery.

The first thing, then, is to be well saved, and so fully in the light of God's smile that we can see our need of cleansing.

2. We must not try to hide the need, but frankly confess it. Let me ask you, do you know that you are saved? You say, 'Oh, yes, I know that I have given my heart to God, and I feel that my sins have been forgiven and my life has been changed, and I feel that I am saved just now.'

Good, but do you know that your heart is clean? Are all the roots of bitterness gone? Do you bear patiently the faults of others? Do you bear meekly, and with a forgiving spirit, the unkindness of others? Do you love God with all your heart and soul and mind, and your neighbor as yourself? Do you feel that all malice and pride, and jealousy and envy, and evil and filthy desire, and unholy ambition and unbelief, and all foolish things have been taken out of your heart, and that the Holy Spirit has His own way in you all the while? Remember that holiness has to do with the heart, and that, as Solomon says, 'Out of the heart are the issues of life.' It is at the heart that Jesus looks, and He says, 'Blessed are the pure in heart.'

Now, if your heart is not clean, do not be afraid or ashamed to say so, but frankly tell your Heavenly Father the whole truth about the matter.

3. The next thing is to believe that the blessing is for you. Of course, if you do not believe that you can be cleansed from envy and jealousy, and quick temper and all sin, and be kept pure and good all the time, you will not seek for it.

Satan will surely do all he can to discourage you, and make you doubt the possibility of holiness for yourself. He will tell you that it is for other people, but not for you. But he might as well tell you that the sun shines for other people, but not for you! Our Heavenly Father 'maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.' He is no respecter of persons. Bless His holy Name! And He offers His full salvation to all who will take it.

Satan will tell you that your disposition is so peculiar, or your circumstances at home, or at school, or in the shop, or mine, or mill, are so disagreeable that you cannot hope to be holy.

Your disposition may be peculiar, but God will take all the sin out of it, so that where it is now peculiarly impatient and jealous, and envious and lustful, and bad, it will be peculiarly good and patient, and loving and generous, and humble and chaste. A highly-strung, quick-tempered girl got sanctified, and it made her gentle like Jesus. A proud, ambitious young fellow whom I know got a clean heart, and he was made humble and self-sacrificing, until his friends hardly knew him.

As for your circumstances, holiness will make you their master instead of their servant. The other day, I wanted a hole in the hard rubber cap of the fountain-pen with which I am writing these words, so I heated a pin, and burned the hole right through. If the pin had been cold, I should probably have broken either the pin or the cap, and should certainly have failed to make that hole. Holiness will make you hot enough to burn your way through your circumstances. 'Our God is a consuming fire,' and holiness is God in you.

Satan may tell you that you have failed so often that God will not now give you the blessing. That is a lie of the devil's. Don't believe it. Your mother might treat you in that way, but God won't, for 'God is love.' He knows all about your failures, and pities you, and loves you still, and wants to give you the blessing far more than you want to receive it. Peter failed again and again during the three years he was with Jesus, and finally there was an awful failure during that sad hour when he cursed and swore that he did not know Him; but in spite of it all, Jesus loved him, and within a few weeks of that time, Peter got the blessing, and we find him winning three thousand souls in a single day.

Again, Satan may tell you that if you do get the blessing, people will not believe that you have it. Well, suppose they do not, what then? Will you refuse to believe God because people will not believe you? If you get the blessing, and live in the joy and sweetness and power and glory of it, they will have to believe you sooner or later, just as people have to believe there is fire in the stove when they feel it.

To get the blessing, you must resist the devil, and believe that it is for you.

4. You must believe that it is for you now. It is astonishing how sinners wish to put off the time of salvation, and it is even more astonishing how saved people put off seeking a clean heart until some other time. The devil and their evil hearts of unbelief keep saying, 'Some time, but not just now.' But the dear Lord in mercy keeps whispering, 'Behold, now is the accepted time. Behold, now is the day of salvation.' 'Today, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.' Nothing grieves the Holy Spirit and hardens the heart like this delay of unbelief.

5. The next thing to do is to come to Jesus for the blessing, with a true heart, holding back nothing, but giving your all to Him for time and eternity. that He may give His all to you. At this point there must be no hypocrisy, no double-dealing, no half-heartedness, no holding back part of the price. The Lord offers us the biggest blessing this side of Heaven. He offers us perfect cleansing from sin, perfect victory over the devil, and the Holy Spirit to dwell in our clean hearts to teach and guide and comfort us; but in exchange He asks us to give Him our little all.

How infinitely and hopelessly foolish shall we be if we are so selfish or tearful or unbelieving as to refuse! It is as though a king should offer a poor beggar garments of velvet and gold in exchange for rags, diamonds in exchange for dirt, and a glorious palace in place of a cellar or garret. How foolish would the beggar be who should insist on keeping a few of his rags, a little handful of his dirt, and the privilege of going back to his cellar now and again. until the king finally withdrew all the splendid things he had offered! And yet so foolish, and more so, are they who try to get this blessing from God, while refusing to consecrate their all and obey Him fully.

The Lord's word to us on this point is, 'Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house; and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.' (Mal. iii. 10.) It is no little blessing, but an overflowing one that the Lord means to give you.

When Jonathan Edwards, one of God's mighty men of the past, was but a boy student, he wrote as follows in his diary:

'I have this day solemnly renewed my covenant and dedication. I have been before God, and given myself and all that I am and have to Him, so that I am not in any respect my own, and can claim no right to myself -- to this understanding, to this will, these affections; and have no right to this body -- to this tongue, these hands, these feet; no right to these senses. I have given every power to God, so that for the future I will claim no right to myself.'

Does such a life seem unattractive to you? Someone has written:--

'A cathedral window seen from without is dull and meaningless; but enter, and the light of heaven streaming through it glorifies it with every beauty of form and color. Consecration to God for service may seem dull enough when seen from without, but enter into that experience, and the light of the Divine Love streaming through it shall glorify your life with a beauty and blessedness which are Heaven's own.'

To make such a consecration we may have to go over it several times, and assure ourselves that we have given all, and that we mean it with all our heart. But, having done this, until we can look up into the face of Jesus without a doubt, and sing --

My all is on the altar, I'm waiting for the fire -- we may be sure we are near the blessing.

If we thus give ourselves to God, there is but one thing more to do; that is, to take it by faith, and wait patiently on Him for the witness of the Spirit that it is done.

A nobleman whose son was sick came to Jesus, 'and besought Him that He would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death. Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe. The nobleman saith unto Him, Sir, come down ere my child die. Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.' (John iv. 47-50.) The next day when he got home, he found his boy well. Hallelujah! That is the kind of faith that walks off with the blessing.

Jesus will not fail you at this point, if you patiently look to Him, and hold fast your faith.

Again and again I have seen people burst into the light when they have consecrated their all, and believed in this way. Some time ago in a Holiness Meeting, the penitent form was full of seekers, among whom were several earnest young men. I asked one of them who seemed to be the most deeply in earnest, 'Do you now give yourself and your all to God?'

'Yes, I do,' said he.

'Well, whose man are you, then?' I inquired.

'I am the Lord's.'

'Can you trust the Lord to sanctify His own man?'

'Yes, I can.'

'When?'

'Now!' and he burst into the holy joy of faith, and began to praise the Lord at once; and several others got the blessing that morning in the same way.

You too, my brother, my sister, you can have the blessing just now, if you thus meet the conditions.

Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees, And looks to that alone; Laughs at impossibilities, And cries, It shall be done.

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