

Intoxicated With Babylon-Chapter Five

by Steve Gallagher

Steve Gallagher emphasizes the importance of pursuing holiness as a central requirement for believers, contrasting it with cultural influences and misunderstandings of the concept.

Duration: 9:42

Scripture: Leviticus 11:44, Matthew 5:48, 2 Corinthians 7:1, Ephesians 4:22-24, 1 Thessalonians 4:7, Hebrews 12:14, 1 Peter 1:15-16

Topics: "Babylon"

Description

In this video, Steve Gallagher discusses the importance of holiness in the Christian life. He emphasizes that holiness is not a popular concept in today's society, but it is still a central requirement for believers. Gallagher explains that God calls us to strive towards holiness and to repent of sin. He also highlights the idea that our time on earth is a testing ground and a preparation for eternity, where we will be used by God in ways we cannot fully comprehend.

Transcript

The following interview was originally recorded for the Purity for Life radio broadcast. For additional interviews with Steve Gallagher and podcasts of the Purity for Life program, visit our website at PureLifeMinistries.org. Steve, as we continue our discussion about your book, *Intoxicated with Babylon*, we're talking today about the command from God, be holy as I am holy. A.W. Tozer said, we have learned to live with unholiness and have come to look upon it as the natural and expected thing.

Now, you talk about in your book, looking back into the 1900s, that holiness really used to be the expected thing. T.O. There was a time in the church when there was such a biblical standard amongst God's people that there was almost like a peer pressure to live a godly and holy life. There just were things that you didn't do, you know, you didn't go out drinking or dancing or, you know, even things that we consider normal nowadays, like wearing makeup or jewelry, things like that.

But there were just things that Christians knew were not appropriate, and it was understood across the entire church world that this was the way it was. And that had an impact, even though you're talking about how it was in the church, that had an impact all across our culture. You look at 1940s America, where there was still a significant influence towards at least some level of morality because of what the church believed and practiced.

I believe because of the level of consecration that was in the church in those days, that there was still a great deal of spiritual power at work in our country. But as that level of holiness has dissipated over the last 50, 60 years, so also has the power to go with it. Well, Steve, whatever happened to that concept of holiness in the church then? I believe there's a couple of different factors that have come into play.

First of all, theologically, some people took exception to that term. I know that there were those who, under the name of holiness, took it to extremes, you know, to where they lived a rigid lifestyle and so on and were very legalistic. But that was really a very small portion of those who were trying to live a holy life before God.

For the most part, most Christians who were endeavoring to live a holy life were doing it with a sincere heart and an earnest desire to live a godly life. But some people took an exception to that and over time they were able to demonize the term holiness in much the same way the liberal press has demonized the term abstinence in our day. You know, so now it's almost a term that is politically incorrect within the church.

You just don't hear about holiness anymore. And that's a terrible tragedy amongst God's people. The other thing that came into play was simply television and all the other different things that lured Christians into the world.

And you know, that in itself caused that separation from the world to disintegrate until, you know, really the church has become just one step away from the world. Well, Steve, regardless of our current understanding of holiness, which obviously based on what you've said is limited or whether it's in vogue or out of vogue, the fact still remains, doesn't it, that holiness is still a central requirement of being a true believer? Absolutely. You know, as you mentioned, God said, you shall be holy for I am holy.

And the book of Hebrews even says, without holiness, no one will see the Lord. And we have to ask ourselves if we really believe what the Bible says. You know, we have so watered it down and just kind of ignored statements that are very clear-cut commandments because we don't want to live by them.

So we've just kind of in our minds created a different gospel that is without any requirements or expectations from this holy God. And the problem with that is that when we stand before this holy God, all of that is going to be shown for what it really is. Well, Steve, before we get into a discussion about how we achieve holiness or how we pursue holiness in our lives, perhaps we should just stop here and define what it is.

What is holiness? Let me say what holiness isn't, first of all. Holiness is not sinless perfection. When we're talking about holiness, we're talking about a spiritual condition where a person has become consecrated to the Lord to such a degree that he has an intimate, vibrant relationship with Jesus Christ, that there is no outward, ongoing sin in his life, that there is no attachment to the world, that there is a true flow of God's love through his life.

I think that that describes what holiness is. I wonder, Steve, if one of the reasons that we have kind of discarded the concept of holiness is because when we hear things like that, there is no sin. We just can't meet up to that.

Yeah, you know, if someone gets that idea in their mind that God is demanding sinless perfection, then it can be overwhelming and demoralizing, and the person just feels like, what's the point? There's no way I

can ever arrive at that place. But that really isn't what God expects. So really, is it right to say, then, that holiness is something that God wants us to be pursuing? Yes, holiness is something that we're pursuing, and the Bible uses the term sanctification to describe that process whereby God is extracting the sin and the selfishness and the pride out of our inner being and replacing it with his person.

And as that exchange is going on, there is a growing in this process of becoming holy. I guess you could say it this way, Mike, that holiness is the goal, and sanctification is the process to lead us to that goal. So, the pursuit of holiness really is just simply the process of sanctification.

Steve, you said in your book that separating oneself from the world does not necessarily bring a person into holiness. It puts that believer in a position of being made holy. Can you explain what you mean by that? Well, we all know about these different groups that are completely separated from the outside, you know, like the Amish and some Mennonite groups and so on, German Baptist groups, where they are a community unto themselves and there are no connections with the outside world or very, very little.

But that does not make you a holy person, you know, and I have been around some of these folks and there is like a refreshing innocence because of that separation. But the separation is unto God. It's not enough to just be disconnected from the carnal world around us.

We have to be connected to the Holy Spirit, to Jesus Christ, and that is what true holiness is. Steve, one of the great misunderstandings that you talk about is this idea that holiness is a transactional thing, that it's just going to happen automatically. When I die, the Lord's just going to make me holy.

What place does actual holy living play into our preparation for the end of our life in this world? That concept that you just mentioned has been propagated over the years by those who are seemingly frantically trying to maintain their life in this world, you know, feel no expectation from God to change and so on. And so they've kind of devised this entire scenario where they can just live like a devil, basically, and then one day they die and go to heaven because they said a prayer and went forward at an altar call one time. And that is decidedly not what the New Testament teaches.

It is very, very clear in Scripture that we are being, first of all, tested during our time here in the sense that we're going to prove out where our heart lies, you know, and the reality of our commitment to Christ. And secondly, that we are also being prepared for the eternal life, that we are being trained on this earth to be used by God in the eternal realm in ways that we don't even understand. You know, these are things that are beyond our comprehension, and yet it seems to be the case that God is doing a definite work inside of us here to prepare us for something in the hereafter.

Steve, what would you say to the individual that may be listening who has a sight of the holiness of God, and when they look at themselves, they quite frankly just see how unholy they are. What word of encouragement might you have for them? Well, that's a great thing, really, because that's exactly what happens. When you see the Lord, you realize how far you are away from His standard and the way that He is.

But there is a freedom in that, because God loves sinners. He really does love us, and all He asks of us is to fight. That's all He's asking is to strive towards holiness, to do our best to live a life pleasing to Him, and to do our utmost to repent of sin and to turn away from the things of this world and to turn to Him.

As long as we are in that battle, God is pleased with our lives. Amen. Steve Gallagher, thanks so much for talking to us about the need to be holy as He is holy.

I'm happy to be here.

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