

Pseudo-Holiness

Introduction

A. The classical forms of pseudo-holiness are easy to recognize.

1. Occult holiness (modern Gnosticism)
2. Mystical holiness (religious pantheism)
3. Sacramental holiness (Roman Catholicism)
4. Ascetic holiness (Monasticism)

B. Perhaps the best approach we could take to this subject- would be that of a practical development so that we may be warned regarding our own daily life. It is not enough to be sincere - we must know and practice truth.

I. The Necessity of a Correct Basis.

A. The Biblical Basis - The Person of God Known by the Word of God.

But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation, because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy.
(I Peter 1:15,16)

B. The Non-Biblical Basis.

1. Religious experience (including the conscience).

Observation: A serious problem here has to do with the transitory nature of experience coupled with the variety of standards due to culture and change.

2. Religious rules.

Observation: Too often our rules are man-made. When the Word of God is stated in regulation form - that is not a "rule" but a commandment. It is quite easy to obey "rules" without obeying God.

II. The Necessity of Correct Characteristics.

A. The Biblical Characteristic: Progressive Transformation through the Work of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die. But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.
(Romans 8:12,13)

B. The Non-Biblical Characteristics.

1. The holiness of external separation.

Observation: It is not enough to "walk away" from sin - the problem must be cured within. God has provided transformation.

2. The holiness of perfectionism.

Observation: This views holiness as an eradication of the sin principle. The work of God is looked upon as instantaneous.

III. The Necessity of a Correct Methodology.

A. The Biblical Methodology: Faith Which Works by love.

For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love. (Galatians 5:6)

B. The Non-Biblical Methodology.

1. The human effort of religious works.

Observation: We can no more make ourselves holy than we can save ourselves. Only God can deal with sin.

2. The human effort of religious words.

Observation: The formalism of religious affirmations may bring vicarious satisfaction - but not inner transformation.

IV. The Necessity of a Correct Goal.

A. The Biblical Goal: The Glory of God.

What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. (I Corinthians 6:19,20)

B. The Non-Biblical Goals.

1. Personal fulfillment.

Observation: Because of our creation in the image of God there is a deep longing, although perverted, in the heart of every person for holiness. Too often the Christian will seek a deeper walk with God - for selfish reasons. True fulfillment is a by-product - never the goal.

2. Personal success.

Observation: Many times personal holiness is held up as a necessary requirement for a successful Christian life. While this is true - our own success, even though spiritual, can never be the goal. We have been created and redeemed to glorify God.

Conclusion: True holiness is a deep longing for God.

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