

A Growing Desire to be Holy



Jim Cymbala June 6, 2020

Holy, separated living isn't preached about much anymore because we fear it might offend and not be visitor-friendly. But when the Spirit starts his work, we will *always* have a new desire for holiness and a quest for Christlikeness. "As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy'" (1 Peter 14-16).

The world *holy* speaks of separation and purity. It must be important to God, for he tells us that "without holiness no one will see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14). Holiness is not a list of do's and don'ts; rather, it is Christlikeness. As the Spirit works, we will have an increased desire to be holy like Christ. What else would the Holy Spirit do but impart his own nature into our lives?

Once we trust Christ for salvation, God will begin to mold and shape us. Many experience a radical change when they first come to know Christ, but over time a battle between the flesh and the Spirit takes place. The apostle Paul wrote, "For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want" (Galatians 5:17). Paul was writing to the saints in Galatia, but he acknowledged that they, like him, had to overcome a carnal undertow from inside that pulled against the Spirit's purposes.

Paul was not the only one who cautioned about sinful practices in the lives of believers. John reminded us of this truth: "My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One" (1 John 2:1). John's intention was plain — to inspire God's people not to practice unrighteousness but to practice Christlike living. The Holy Spirit brings new sensitivity and conviction to us if we are really living under his control. Behavior, words, and attitudes that are unholy cause a reaction from the Spirit, who is holy.

When you surrender your life to Christ, the Holy Spirit will lovingly send out cautions, warnings, and red alerts to keep you following his example.

Jim Cymbala began the Brooklyn Tabernacle with less than twenty members in a small, rundown building in a difficult part of the city. A native of Brooklyn, he is a longtime friend of both David and Gary Wilkerson.

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