

# Outer Life of Holiness

by Dougan Clark

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*The outward life of holiness is characterized by a consistent and deliberate walk with God, marked by fewness of words, quietude of manner, and continual prayerfulness, faith, and joy.*

**Scripture:** Exodus 20:1, Proverbs 25:11, Ecclesiastes 5:2, Matthew 5:1, Philippians 2:14, 1 Thessalonians 5:16, Hebrews 12:29, 1 Peter 1:15, 1 Peter 3:4

**Topics:** "Christian Morality", "Sanctification"

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## Description

Dougan Clark emphasizes the importance of living a holy life based on the universally recognized standard of Christian morality, the Ten Commandments. He clarifies that both the justified and entirely sanctified individuals are obligated to adhere to this standard, with sanctification being reflected in both inward and outward differences. The outward life of holiness is characterized by few words spoken with grace, quietude of manner, silent submission in the face of injustice, and continual prayerfulness, faith, and joy. It also involves refraining from complaining about the imperfections of others and giving glory to God rather than oneself.

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## Transcript

On page 24 of his little book on the Holy Ghost, the author and present writer observes: "The outward walk of the justified and of the sanctified should be precisely alike. The difference is within." Whilst this is true so far as the standard of conduct is concerned, yet it requires, as a practical remark, to be somewhat modified, or at least explained.

The decalogue given to Moses upon Sinai, and expounded by the Saviour in the Sermon on the Mount, constitutes the universally recognized standard Of Christian morality. And, therefore, all Christians whatever be the state of grace which they may individually enjoy, are required to regulate their lives by this Divine standard. The entirely sanctified man cannot violate one of the Ten Commandments without forfeiting his sanctification, and it is equally true that the Justified man cannot transgress one of these commandments without forfeiting his justification. Both alike are under obligation to live up to the requirements of the decalogue, and if both do so their outward lives wilt certainly be very similar.

It will be seen that there is no ground whatever for the flimsy excuse for sin, which is sometimes tacitly or openly put forward by professing Christians, that I do not profess to be sanctified. I do not claim any high experience or any peculiar sanctify, and therefore it cannot reasonably be expected that I should live so pious or holy a life as my neighbor, who makes a much higher profession than myself.

This specious and fallacious reasoning has its origin with the father of lies. God commands all His children to be holy. No Christian can evade the obligation to obey His command. You will be judged not by the profession you make, but by the standard of Christian living which God has set before you. And that standard I repeat is the same for all Christians.

Sin is sin -- and God will make no compromise with it. "He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity," with any allowance or tolerance. "He will by no means clear the guilty. Our God is a consuming fire." May He consume thy sin -- and mine, my reader, now; so that he may not consume both us and our sin in the hereafter. Amen.

But while all this is true and important, nevertheless the heart that is wholly sanctified will so impress itself upon the outward life that there will be important differences between the justified and the entirely sanctified -- even outwardly and manifested -- well as the more important differences which are inward and hidden. Holiness of heart will be sure to exhibit itself to a greater or less degree in the outward walk and conversation. It is too blessed and too precious a thing to be kept concealed in the heart where its seat is. "What is in you will out."

As a rule the outward life of holiness is characterized by fewness of words. Moreover these words are uttered, not flippantly nor heedlessly but with becoming seriousness and deliberation. Not that the conversation of the wholly sanctified is marked by hypocritical sanctimoniousness. Far from it. It may be and often is cheerful, and under right circumstances even playful. But it is seldom that holy men and women are justly to be classed among the talkatives. But when they do speak their words are with grace, seasoned with salt, and almost always to the edification of the right minded hearer. "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a basket of silver." "The words of the wise are as goads."

The outward life of holiness is often distinguished by quietude of manner and the absence of emotionality. Emotional experience is by no means without value. Indeed a religion which is destitute of feeling is almost sure to terminate in formality, and coldness and deadness. But on the other hand, a religion which is all or chiefly emotion, is too apt to run into extravagance, and wild-fire, and fanaticism. Emotional experience is generally marked by superficiality. The stony ground hearers received the word with joy, but they had no root. Now it is perfectly true that the joy of holiness, the peace of God, the delight of the Lord, is the highest and deepest form of gladness of which the human spirit is susceptible. But its very deepness causes it to flow with an unruffled surface, and the calmness and quietness which pertain to a soul that is anchored in God.

The outer life of holiness shows itself by silent submission when the individual is unjustly reproached, or reviled, or censured -- when he is attacked in his reputation by the tongue of slander, or defrauded in business transactions -- in short under circumstances when unregenerate men and even unsanctified Christians are prone to fill the air with their clamors and to be loudly rehearsing their wrongs, and seeking to inflict vengeance upon the perpetrator. Then the sanctified man or woman "holds still, and leaves his cause in God's hands."

Of course there are limits to the preceding remark. It may be necessary and right at times, and the proper time must be determined by a holy discretion, with Divine guidance, to sharply rebuke the evil-doer, and to expose the malice and wickedness of unprincipled opponents, but often the holy man will abide in quietness, render not railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing, and will exercise toward the evil-doer that charity which seeketh not her own, and thinketh no evil.

This quietness of manner includes the absence of spiritual hurry, or agitation or turmoil. It was Dr. Chalmers, I think, who wrote in his diary something about having been "bustled out of his spirituality." The remark is very suggestive in these days of restlessness -- of eager activity -- and of running to-and-fro, even in works of Christian activity or benevolence.

The sanctified man or woman is not given as a rule to much speaking about his or her own actions. If transactions of a noticeable character have taken place they are not forward to tell of their own share in these transactions. They speak little of what they have done, but much of what has been done for them -- little of what they have given, much of what they have received -- and even this needs to be done with such discretion that the glory may be given to God and none to themselves.

The outer life of holiness does not complain of the imperfections of others. We know that we are all surrounded every day by those who exhibit marked defects of character in one way or another, and if we allow such things to fret and worry us we may easily lose our own experience without in the least profiting those with whose faults we are so impatient. Think of the infinite patience of Christ. How long he has borne with thee and me, and how much we need His forbearance still.

The outward life of holiness is characterized by continual prayerfulness, continual faith, and continual joy. As we have remarked elsewhere, "The sanctified alone know what it is to pray without ceasing. They perhaps exhibit in their prayers less agonizing and more resting than others; less struggling and more believing; fewer importunate requests, and more joyous thanksgivings. But none are oftener on their knees either in the closet or in the public assembly, whether for themselves or others, than the sanctified believers in Jesus. "And their faith measures up to their prayers, and their joy measures up to their faith."

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