

HOLINESS IS THE EVIDENCE OF THE WORK OF GOD IN THE HEART AND LIFE OF THE BELIEVER

By Brother Mike Sutherland

Turn in your Bibles to *2 Corinthians 5:17* :

¹⁷Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. *2 Corinthians 5:17*

Now turn in your Bibles to *Exodus 3:2-5*:

²And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush *was* not consumed. ³And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. ⁴And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here *am* I. ⁵And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest *is* holy ground. *Exodus 3:2-5*

The very first time holiness is mentioned in the Bible it is in relation to the presence of God. The very first time holiness is mentioned in the Bible it is also in relation to fire. Our God is a consuming fire. The reason the bush in Exodus was not burned up is because of the presence of the holiness of God. I believe the bush could well be a type of the lost sinner in hell that will burn and never be burned up. The fire of God is the presence of both his judgment and his light. The light of his holiness exposes the hidden things of darkness and the fires of his holiness brings forth the fiery judgment of hell and the lake of fire upon the hidden things of darkness. The very first time fire appears in the Word of God it is in relation to judgment (*Genesis 19:24*). The very first time hell is mentioned in our Bibles is in relations to fire (*Deuteronomy 32:22*). Hell is the eternally burning flame of God's wrath and holiness. According to *Lamentations 3:21-23*, it is only through the mercies of God that we are not consumed of that fire.

²¹ This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. ²² *It is of* the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. ²³ *They* are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. *Lamentations 3:21-23*

We are living in a day when professing believers not only commit abominations, but they take pleasure in those that do. We cannot revel in our sin and expect the presence of God in our lives and in our church. There can be no holiness in our lives without the presence of God. If we are not permanently indwelt by the holiness of God through the regenerating presence of God the Holy Ghost, then we will suffer the fires of hell. It is the holiness of God that protects us from the fires of hell. When Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were in the furnace in Daniel chapter 4, they were not touched by the fire because of the presence of the holiness of the Son of God. You'll not have the fire of God in your soul if you quench the fire of God's holiness through your sin. If you are on

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fire for the Lord, someone is going to notice that burning bush and they are going to stop, look and listen. The holiness of God speaks to lost sinners through the holiness of God's separated believers and God's separated churches. It is the fire from the burning bush and not the burning bush itself that is the source of the power of God. The holiness of God abides in an eternal fire that burns the lost sinners, but does not burn them up. For saved people, it is the holy fire of God at the judgment seat of Christ that will burn up all our works that were done in the power of the flesh and self righteousness. It is the fire of God that will burn up all of our titles and boasting at the judgment seat of Christ. In this present life, it is the fires of the indwelling holiness of God that will burn away all of our darkness that stops the light of the Lord Jesus Christ from shining forth as a beacon from our souls to a lost and dying world. Let us read *Leviticus 11:44-45*, *Leviticus 20:7-8*, and *1 Peter 1:13-23*:

⁴⁴ For I *am* the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I *am* holy; neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. ⁴⁵ For I *am* the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I *am* holy. *Leviticus 11:44-45*

⁷ Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I *am* the LORD your God. ⁸ And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: I *am* the LORD which sanctify you. *Leviticus 20:7-8*

¹³ Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; ¹⁴ As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: ¹⁵ But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; ¹⁶ Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. ¹⁷ And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning *here* in fear: ¹⁸ Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; ¹⁹ But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: ²⁰ Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, ²¹ Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. ²² Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: ²³ Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. *1 Peter 1:13-23*

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Turn in your Bibles to *2 Corinthians 13:5*:

⁵Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? *2 Corinthians 13:5*

Today, we have a lot of professing believers that are reprobates that have a form of godliness, but inwardly they are ravaging wolves that go about as lions seeking what sheep they may devour. *Jude 18-19* says;

¹⁸How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. ¹⁹These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. *Jude 18-19*

They are children of the Devil that are doing the Devil's work(s).

Today, I want you to examine your life over the last several months, or since you have been saved and I want you to ask yourself this question: Would you be ashamed at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for his saints? What we know as the 'blessed hope', or the rapture of the saints, is given in the context of holiness. We are to be looking in holiness for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible says this in *2:10-15* and *1 Thessalonians 4:1-7*:

¹⁰Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. ¹¹For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, ¹²Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; ¹³Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; ¹⁴Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. ¹⁵These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee. *Titus 2:10-15*

¹Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort *you* by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, *so* ye would abound more and more. ²For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. ³For this is the will of God, *even* your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: ⁴That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; ⁵Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: ⁶That no *man* go beyond and defraud his brother in *any* matter: because that the Lord *is* the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. ⁷For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. *1 Thessalonians 4:1-7*

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In the same context of the rapture is *1 Thessalonians 5:22* which says that we are to abstain from all appearance of evil.

I would also like for you to examine yourself today to see if your conduct has hindered your friends and family from coming to salvation. Turn in your Bibles to *Psalms 51:7-13* and *Psalms 139:23-24*:

⁷ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. ⁸ Make me to hear joy and gladness; *that* the bones *which* thou hast broken may rejoice. ⁹ Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. ¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. ¹¹ Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. ¹² Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me *with thy* free spirit. ¹³ *Then* will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee. *Psalms 51:7-13*

²³ Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: ²⁴ And see if *there be any* wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. *Psalms 139:23-24*

Ask the average unsaved person that is not affiliated with a church if they think professing “Christians” should lie, cheat, steal, drink alcohol, curse, commit adultery, watch filth on the internet and television, live together out of wedlock and you will quickly be told NO. Yet many in the so-called Christian church who claim to be Christians experience no Holy Ghost conviction when they daily commit these sins. I have a problem with that because the Bible says that they which participate in such behaviour without chastisement are bastards and not sons. Put in plainer words, the Bible says that they are unsaved, unsaved, unsaved. The Bible says in *Hebrews 12:6-8*:

⁶ For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. ⁷ If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? ⁸ But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. *Hebrews 12:6-8*

The other problem I have with someone who says that they are a Christian and continues to live in sin week after week and month after month is this: If they can continue to live in their sin and get by with it without God killing them, then either the Word of God is a lie or they are not saved. Which do you think I would pick? According to *1 Corinthians 5:5* and *1 John 5:16* there is a sin unto death. If you continue in open sin proclaiming yourself to be saved, why hasn't God killed you yet? It could quite possibly be that you are not saved. Most people today would expect you to believe they are saved regardless of their life screaming: “Hey I am going to hell”. What does your conduct say about your profession? It would be the greatest of tragedies for you to have sit on the pews of fundamental Bible believing churches and then to be told by the Lord Jesus Christ to get out of His sight because he never knew you. Many years ago a survey was done that asked what people's

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favorite Bible verse was. The overwhelming favorite then was *John 3:16*. In recent years that survey was repeated and the overwhelming favorite was *Matthew 7:1* which says: Judge not, that ye be not judged. What a sad commentary on the state of today's American Christianity. It is clear from the context of Matthew chapter 7 that there is no wholesale command not to judge. Verses 2-5 clearly indicate that hypocritical judgment is in view. Christians are to judge righteous judgment. The sad thing is that most of the time when this verse is quoted it is coming straight through Satan's mind into your mouth. What is the greater tragedy is that Matthew chapter 7 is the chapter in the New Testament that has the strongest condemnation of false professors. Matthew chapter 7 is a condemnation of the religionists that go about to establish their own righteousness by working in and through the church. They do religious works in the power of their flesh and expect heaven in return, or at least not to be cast into hell. The Lord Jesus Christ himself will say I never knew you. Let's read a little more of it in context:

¹³ Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: ¹⁴ Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. ¹⁵ Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. ¹⁶ Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? ¹⁷ Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. ²⁰ Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. ²¹ Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? ²³ And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. *Matthew 7:13-23*

Based upon Matthew chapter 7 it is my judgment that most folks in American churches are false professors. How are we to discern false professors and false prophets if we are not to judge. The rule is context, context, context. Never pull a verse out of context especially to justify your sin. It may work with men, but the Lord Jesus Christ will see right through it every time. A verse pulled out of context is a pretext for sin and false doctrine. There are a lot of preachers and titled doctors of the law and doctors of the scriptures that are going to bust hell wide open too. *Isaiah 5:13-14* says:

¹³ Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because *they have* no knowledge: and their honourable men *are* famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst. ¹⁴ Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend

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into it. *Isaiah 5:13-14*

Another thing that amazes me is the Christian parents who will tolerate the most ungodly conduct out of their own children and even defend them in their sin. I am not talking about those Christian parents who were saved after their children were grown even though there is much application for them in what I am saying. What I am talking about is Christian parents who raised their children in a Christian home and yet once those children become adults, the parents will allow those children to participate in what is condemned as sin by the Word of God. Mothers are usually the greater offender in this area even though fathers are guilty of it many times. A man has abdicated, or given up, his God given responsibility to put sin out of his home if he yields to a wife's insistence that an adult or minor child's sin be tolerated in his home. To shirk this responsibility is sin. Sin should never be tolerated by a Christian man in his own home. It is a bad testimony and the yielding of the sanctity of the home to Satan. When you yield to Satan in your home, then he becomes the master of your home. If you say that you are a Christian and tolerate sin in your home, then you are guilty of hypocrisy. Known sin in the home will quench the work of the Holy Ghost in lost family members and will create division in the home. Known sin will limit what the Holy Ghost could do with you both inside and outside your home. Known sin will grieve the Holy Ghost which will lead to discontent, strife, and sometimes even hatred. **IN SHORT, TO TOLERATE SIN IS SIN ITSELF.** If you tolerate sin in your home then you become a partaker of that sin. Paul told Timothy in *1 Timothy 5:22*: Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure. The Holy Ghost abides in purity. Soul winning is an issue of purity. The apostle John also said that if you receive sin into your house, then you become a partaker in that sin. *2 John 6-11* says:

⁶And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it. ⁷For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. ⁸Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. ⁹Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. ¹⁰If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: ¹¹For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds. *2 John 6-11*

Notice the use of the phrases "commandments", "transgresseth", "doctrine of Christ", and evil deeds. What the Holy Ghost is saying through John is that if you invite into your house those that walk not after the commandments or that transgress and abide not in the doctrine of Christ that you become a partaker in their evil deeds. Allowing those transgressors into your home is like inviting Satan, or an antichrist into your home. To allow such like into your home is to bed down with the Devil. Note also that those who abide in sinful behaviour "hath not God". In plainer words, they are NOT SAVED. *Ephesians 5:7* says: "Be Not ye therefore partakers with them". We are to have no

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fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them (*Ephesians 5:11*). These verses are very powerful especially if you consider that they occur in the longest passage in the New Testament dealing with relationships and holiness in the church, in our lives individually, and in our family life. Read it for yourself in Ephesians 4 and 5 where we find 65 verses. Paul is saying the very same thing John is in *2 John* except he has added quite a few more details. You cannot make exceptions for your family members. We have two sons who will not bring their shack ups with them into our homes because they know we will not put up with it. They also know that we believe that their behaviour is ungodly. God has always required holiness and separation for his people. It was required before the cross in the law and the commandments to the people of Israel. It was required by the Lord Jesus Christ for the people of the church after the cross. It will be required of God's people in the tribulation. *Revelation 18:4-5* says:

⁴ And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. ⁵ For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. *Revelation 18:4-5*

You should not allow your children to rest in the delusion that they are saved if they continue in open sin such as drug and alcohol use, fornication, adultery, sodomy, pedophilia, and pornography because if the rapture takes place and your children have been under conviction of the Holy Ghost they are without hope in the tribulation. To accept such behaviour is to accept the very real possibility that your children are on their way to hell if you do not make a conviction bringing stand based on the holiness of God. Here is the warning from the word of God:

⁶ Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; ⁷ And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, ⁸ In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: *2 Thessalonians 1:6-8*

⁷ For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way. ⁸ And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: ⁹ Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, ¹⁰ And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. ¹¹ And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: ¹² That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. *2 Thessalonians 2:7-12*

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As a parent, or a soul winner, you cannot trust somebody else's profession of salvation. Only them and the Holy Ghost know for sure that they are saved. The only thing that you can possibly believe is the fruit of repentance in their lives and even that can be deceptive. It is especially true today that the proof of salvation is in the walk and not in the talk. If you are a parent that has a child in open sin, it is best to assume that they are lost and prepare a course of action based upon that assumption. Do not worry about offending them. If they are lost, is it better to offend them than to let them die in their sin and go to hell. If they are saved and they get offended, they will get over it. Most Christian parents in America who think their children, including adult children, are saved are in bad need of a reality check. Never, never get upset when a person questions whether or not one of your professing children is saved. Never, never argue with a person, especially a child, whether they are saved or use the expression "you know you are saved" when they are doubting their salvation. When you do either of those you are hindering either the correcting work or the convicting saving work of God the Holy Ghost. Only them and God the Holy Ghost know for sure that they are saved. If you enter yourself into the mix, you are guilty of usurping the ministry of God the Holy Ghost. It is God the Holy Ghost that does the drawing and convicting. It is God the Holy Ghost that does the conversion. It is God the Holy Ghost that does the regeneration, or resurrection. It is God the Holy Ghost that gives the assurance of salvation. You put yourself in the place of God the Holy Ghost when you argue with someone "that they know they are saved" regardless of whether their life screams that they are on their way to hell fire and damnation. If there is no fruit, then they are not rooted in the tree of life. If you are in open sin, you cannot convince me that you are saved. If you are having constant doubts about whether you are saved do not tell me that the devil is making you doubt your salvation. The Devil would never do that if he knew you were lost.

There are several things that worldly churches do in the area of evangelism. These are the fruits of unholy saved people, unsaved church members, and unholy churches. Here they are:

1. Sending forth unsaved and unholy seed bearers.
2. Sending forth unholy saved seed bearers who lack the spiritual discernment of how to deal with lost folks because they have grieved the Holy Ghost.
3. Using corruptible seed (in other words any book but the King James Bible)
4. Lack of knowledge of the scriptures dealing with salvation.
5. No conviction of the Holy Ghost.
6. No presentation of faith and repentance.
7. Refusing to forsake canned salvation plans when it is obvious that the Holy Ghost is leading in a different direction. The Romans Road does not work in many cases.
8. No push for a public confession of faith. Saved folks are not ashamed of the Gospel.

The word repent in its different forms is used in the New Testament 64 times in 54 verses. The message we get from these facts should be that God is very serious about this doctrine of repentance. In fact God is so serious about repentance that He says "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish". The three absolute essentials in salvation are faith, repentance, and public confession. That

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is the message of the Lord Jesus Christ to the unsaved. The message to the unrepentant saved sinner
is get right with God before he kills your physical body