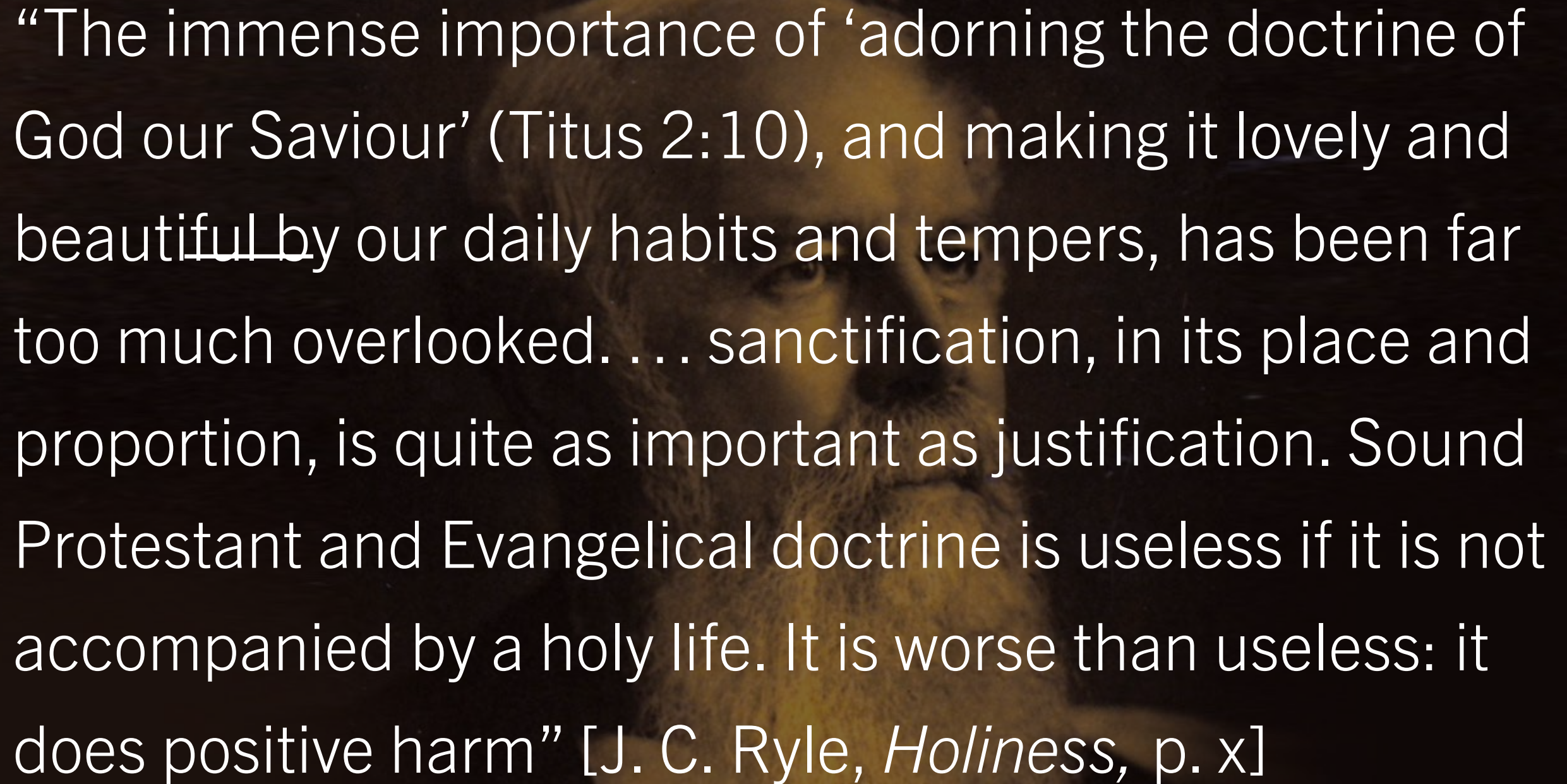
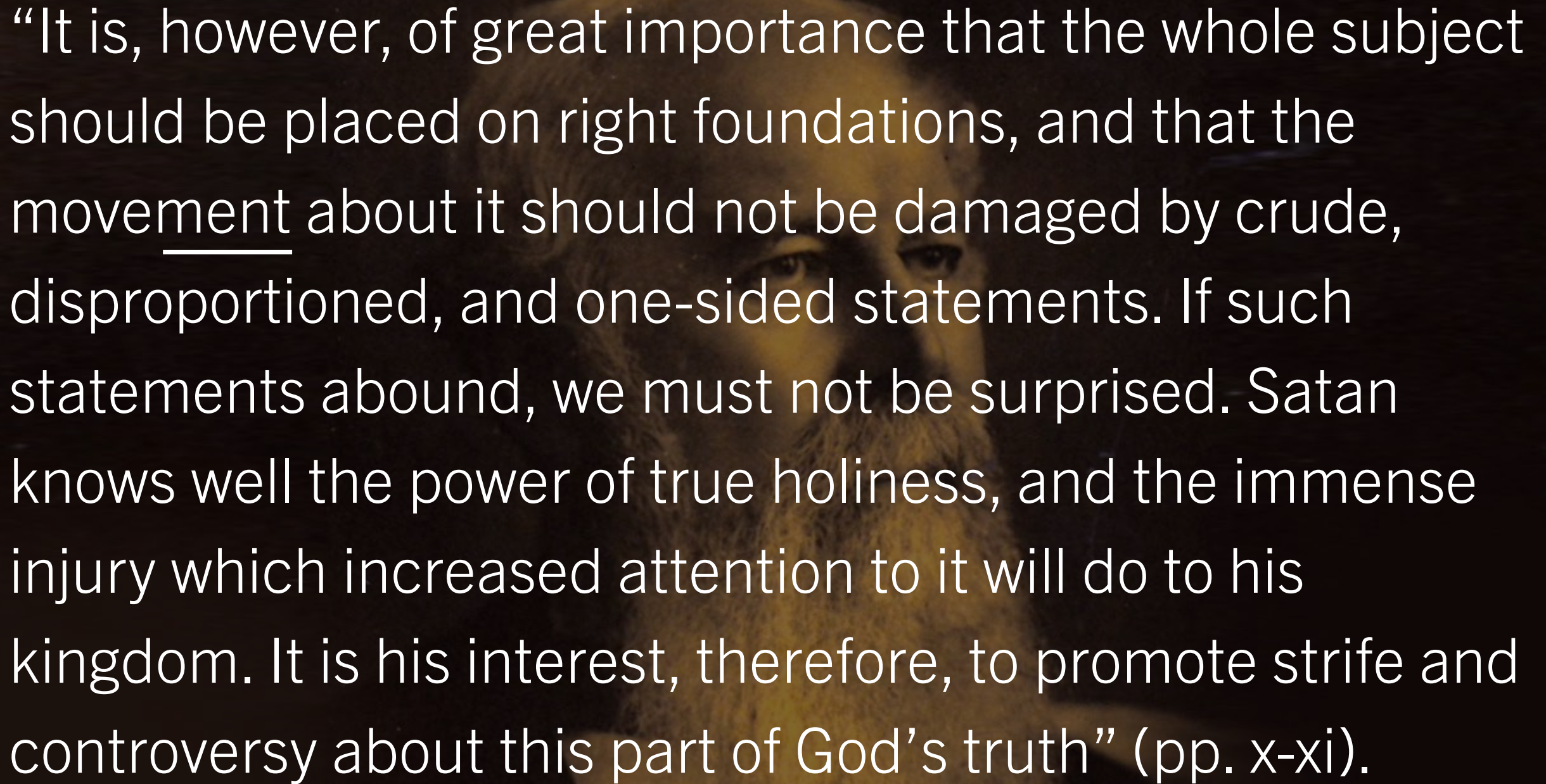


**THREADING
THE
SANCTIFICATION
NEEDLE**



“The immense importance of ‘adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour’ (Titus 2:10), and making it lovely and beautiful by our daily habits and tempers, has been far too much overlooked. . . . sanctification, in its place and proportion, is quite as important as justification. Sound Protestant and Evangelical doctrine is useless if it is not accompanied by a holy life. It is worse than useless: it does positive harm” [J. C. Ryle, *Holiness*, p. x]



“It is, however, of great importance that the whole subject should be placed on right foundations, and that the movement about it should not be damaged by crude, disproportioned, and one-sided statements. If such statements abound, we must not be surprised. Satan knows well the power of true holiness, and the immense injury which increased attention to it will do to his kingdom. It is his interest, therefore, to promote strife and controversy about this part of God’s truth” (pp. x-xi).



- Is sanctification all of man or all of God?
- Is sanctification a gradual process or should I expect radical bursts of growth?
- Is sanctification automatic or do I need to put some effort into it?
- Is sanctification something that I can attain with perfection in this life or should I settle for a certain level of unholiness?

AREAS OF DEBATE

- Does sanctification reach perfection in this life?
- Does sanctification typically feature a post-conversion crisis of some kind—either a “baptism of the Spirit” or a “point of surrender”?
- What is the right word to describe a believer’s role in sanctification?
- Can I better achieve sanctification by isolating myself from the world?



DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE?

“Christians do not automatically experience sanctification on earth simply because they have been made new creatures in Christ. On the divine side, it requires provision for the Christian spiritual need; on the human side, it requires appropriation.”

1. SANCTIFICATION BEGINS AT CONVERSION

And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God (1 Cor. 6:11, NKJV).

1. SANCTIFICATION BEGINS AT CONVERSION

“Believers stand in the realm of the holy before God by virtue of Christ’s atoning work and the Spirit’s work in setting them apart. The order of the words also supports the notion that sanctification here is definitive and positional, for otherwise it is unlikely that Paul would place sanctification before justification” (Schreiner, *1 Corinthians*, TNTC, pp. 123-124)

1. SANCTIFICATION BEGINS AT CONVERSION

- Aorist passive—something decisive took place
- It took place at the same time we were justified
- Everyone justified is sanctified
- If God sanctified those He justified, *don't you think there will be divine activity toward that end?*

2. SANCTIFICATION IS A WORK IN PROGRESS

“For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren,” (Heb. 2:11, NKJV).

For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified (Heb. 10:14, NKJV).

2. SANCTIFICATION IS A WORK IN PROGRESS

-
- Paul calls the Corinthian church “sanctified” and then goes on to correct their errors!
 - God began something at conversion that He will bring to completion [ἐπιτελέω] (Phil. 1:6)

3. OUR UNION WITH CHRIST MAKES ONGOING SANCTIFICATION POSSIBLE

And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth (John 17:19, NKJV).

By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all (Heb. 10:10, NKJV).

3. OUR UNION WITH CHRIST MAKES ONGOING SANCTIFICATION POSSIBLE

- Our union with Christ in His death & resurrection happened at conversion (Rom. 6)
- Christ was made our sanctification (1 Cor. 1:30)
- Paul's conclusion in 1 Corinthians 1:31:
He who glories, let him glory in the Lord

3. OUR UNION WITH CHRIST MAKES ONGOING SANCTIFICATION POSSIBLE

“Are not men in danger of undervaluing and underrating the immense blessedness of conversion? Are they not, when they urge on believers the ‘higher life’ as a second conversion, underrating the length, and breadth, and depth, and height, of that great first change which Scripture calls the new birth, the new creation, the spiritual resurrection?”

(Ryle, *Holiness*, pp. xxiv-xxv)

4. SANCTIFICATION OF OUR SPIRITS REACHES PERFECTION AT DEATH

“...to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect [τελειόω]” (Hebrews 12:23, NKJV)

5. SANCTIFICATION OF OUR BODIES REACHES COMPLETION (GLORIFICATION) AT CHRIST'S COMING

“who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.” (Philippians 3:21, NKJV)

“Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” (1 John 3:2, NKJV)

6. GOD, NOT US, SANCTIFIES

“To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus” (1 Cor. 1:2, NKJV)

“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Thess. 5:23, NKJV)

“For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren,” (Heb. 2:11, NKJV)

6. GOD, NOT US, SANCTIFIES

The verb *sanctify* in the kinds of contexts we are investigating is active if God is the subject or passive if believers are the subject.

Example: “for their sakes I **sanctify** myself that they also may **be sanctified**” (John 17:19, NKJV)

7. WE ARE COMMANDED TO PURSUE SANCTIFICATION

“Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:” (Heb. 12:14, NKJV)

“For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality;” (1 Thess. 4:3, NKJV)

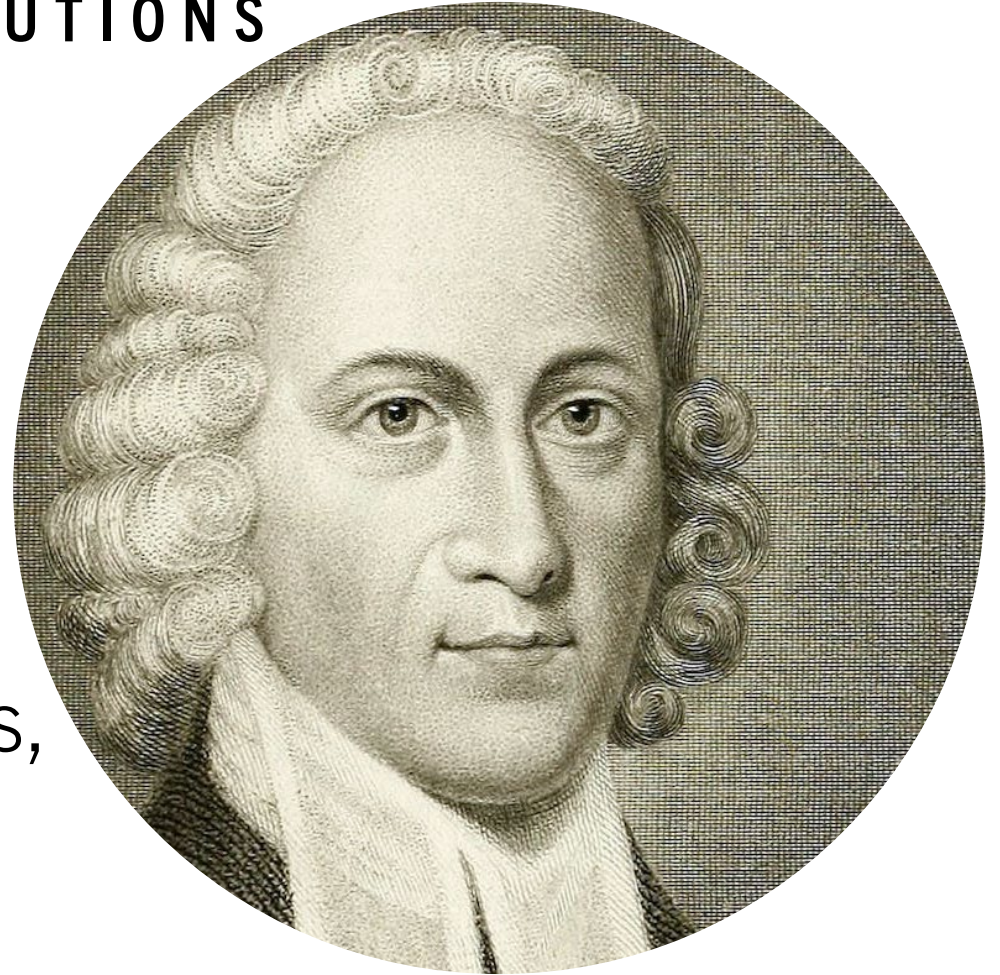
7. WE ARE COMMANDED TO PURSUE SANCTIFICATION

“The most important part of this process is the specific application of the Scripture to specific life situations. We are prone to vagueness at this point because commitment to specific actions makes us uncomfortable. But we must avoid general commitments to obedience and instead aim for specific obedience in specific instances”

(J. Bridges, *Pursuit of Holiness*, p. 104)

PREFACE TO J. EDWARDS' 70 RESOLUTIONS

“Being sensible that I am unable to do anything without God’s help, I do humbly entreat him by his grace to enable me to keep these Resolutions, so far as they are agreeable to his will, for Christ’s sake.”



THE BIBLICAL BALANCE

“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”

(Phil. 2:12–13, NKJV)



**8. OUR HOPE OF COMPLETE SANCTIFICATION
COMPELS US TO SEEK SANCTIFICATION**

“And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.”
(1 John 3:3, NKJV)

9. WE ARE SANCTIFIED AS WE EMBRACE TRUTH AND
DEFEAT SIN IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.”
(John 17:17, NKJV)

“For if you live according to the flesh you will die;
but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of
the body, you will live.” (Romans 8:13, NKJV)

10. GOD DISCIPLINES US TO FOSTER HIS HOLINESS IN US

“For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness.”

(Heb. 12:10, NKJV)

10. GOD DISCIPLINES US TO FOSTER HIS HOLINESS IN US

When through the deep waters I call you to go,
The rivers of sorrow shall not overflow,
For I will be with you your troubles to bless
And **sanctify to you your deepest distress.**

“IT IS ESSENTIALLY
A WORK ABOUT
SANCTIFICATION IN
THE BELIEVER’S
LIFE”
(2020 REVIEW
POSTED ON
BANNER OF TRUTH
WEBSITE)

