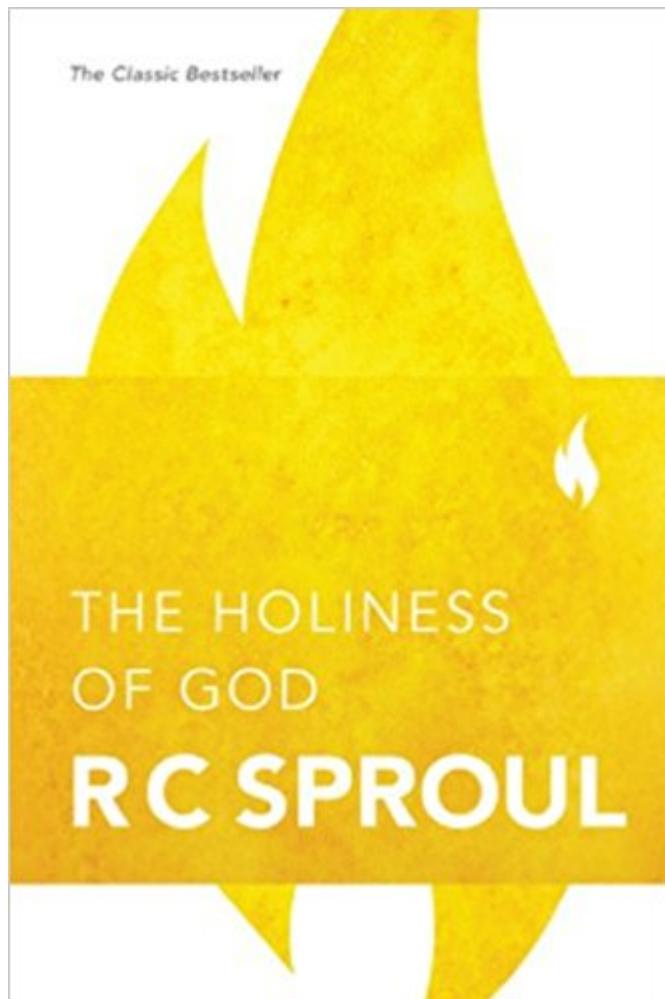


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# The Holiness Of God



## Synopsis

Central to God's character is the quality of holiness. Yet, even so, most people are hard-pressed to define what God's holiness precisely is. Many preachers today avoid the topic altogether because people today don't quite know what to do with words like "awe" or "fear." R. C. Sproul, in this classic work, puts the holiness of God in its proper and central place in the Christian life. He paints an awe-inspiring vision of God that encourages Christian to become holy just as God is holy. Once you encounter the holiness of God, your life will never be the same.

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## Customer Reviews

I left these six messages wanting more. I was given these tapes by my minister to help me prepare for a 12-week class on Holiness. Little did I know how much of an impact these would have on me. Since I spend about 2 hours a day driving, I have been able to listen to the series some 5 times. My seventeen-year-old was also moved by Mr. Sproul's insight on the 'otherness' of God. Through this series, I have come to learn that Holiness is more than just pure living. Instead, I came to a greater appreciation and respect for God's ineffable attributes. Also, read the book. I'm reading it for a second time and cannot put it down. Thank you Mr. Sproul for your heart and your ability to teach on such a difficult subject --Ligonier Website --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

Every Christian who is serious about his or her growth needs to read The Holiness of God. I profited greatly from this book. (Jerry Bridges, author of The Pursuit of Holiness) When I first heard R. C.

Sproul's teaching on the holiness of God, it brought me face-to-face with the awful splendor of God's majestic holiness in a new and fresh way. I was smitten with the realization that holiness is not merely a peripheral attribute of God; it is at the core of all He is and does. I realized then that this was precisely the message the church of our generation urgently needed and still needs today. Nearly a decade after I first heard this series, the message still challenges my thinking and rekindles my heart. (John MacArthur, pastor of Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, California)

This book by Sproul was definitely worth my time to read. It was quite interesting. I'm not a prolific reader, so finishing this book showed that I enjoyed it. Some chapters I got a fair amount more out of than others. I did read it over several months, so that could have had an impact as far as the reading flow and full enjoyment went. It had thought provoking aspects to it, and also showed more of God's nature of holiness than I considered before reading this book. Some of the aspects of His holiness might kind of shock some readers that are not that familiar with the bible. But, sometimes I think we need to be shocked a bit out of our complacency about God, while still being guided and instructed in a biblical and godly way. This book does that well. I thought the ending of it was a little abrupt, though. I do recommend the book to those wanting to know more about this particular subject, especially if they have done little to consider God's holiness. But, I do want to say it is not nearly as enthralling, well thought out, and organized as Sproul's "Chosen By God", which I would give 5 stars. "Chosen By God" is an excellent book that anyone, who has any interest at all in truly understanding election and predestination, would get so much out of and enjoy. Those topics aren't scary. They are beautiful! Check it out! :-)

I have been pondering the idea that in order to properly understand God's revealed word--the Scriptures--one needs to fully understand what the holiness of God is. This book nailed it down for me. Lacking a full knowledge of God's holiness will lead anyone to believe and contend that God can be brought down to our level of thinking; hence, interpreting His revelation by way of our own filters of how things should be instead of what God has ordained and why He has so ordained. Granted our puny minds could never fully understand God's mind, however, not having any idea will inevitably lead to a liberal interpretation of Him and His revelation in Scripture. That said, I believe Dr Sproul's book is not only thought provoking but well supported by Scripture references. Book was well written and free of typos. I purchased the e-book. Read in one day. I would confidently recommend to any Bible student of God's Holy Scriptures. I gave it a Four not because it was in

error but rather because I feel it could have been more exhaustive on the subject. P.S. It is difficult to love the ONE you love if you do not know how He truly thinks. Enjoy!!!

This is an amazing book on the holiness of God. It was recommended by my pastor and I can definitely see why. Dr. Sproul challenges the reader to consider their view of God. If He is not the holy God of the Bible then he is an idol made up in the reader's mind. I have highlighted so many passages in the book to reread and review. The last two chapters were a little more difficult and I didn't get as much out of them, but I'm sure it was just my lack of understanding. For the most part, this book was highly readable and understandable. Every Christian who truly wants to know God in the fullness of His glory should read this book. It is destined to become a classic.

Consider the following two scenarios. In the first, a pastor in an Evangelical church sings the entire song of Ariel, from the Disney movie "The Little Mermaid", during a sermon in order to make a point. As he sings along, word for word, with the soundtrack playing through the speakers, the audience howls with laughter. Or a second scenario, where a Christian school enthusiastically shows a video of a short play to its entire assembly of students, in which a boy playing God the Father talks to the angels in heaven about how he is going to send Jesus into the world. So what's the problem? The problem is not so much in what was done, but in what was omitted. It seems that Evangelicalism has become so comfortable in the presence of God because, after all, we do now have access through Jesus Christ, that we are setting ourselves up for distortions which have the potential of actually, through sheer trivialization, changing our understanding of the gospel itself into something foreign to the pages of Scripture. We certainly do have access, because of Christ, into the presence of the Father, and the apostle Paul does encourage us to enter boldly into His presence. But we often take this as license to do so in a cavalier manner as if we were marching into the boss's office on blue jean Friday. We become, in Sproul's words, "Unitarians of the Second Person of the Trinity." And this is to show a total disregard for that attribute of God's character which the Bible elevates above all the others. The Hebrew practice of repetition functions as the English practice of underscoring, or using boldface or an exclamation mark. When Jesus says, "Truly, truly, I say unto you," by His use of repetition He wants us to pay special attention. When it comes to the attributes of God, there is only one that is elevated to the third level of repetition, and that is "holy." God is never described as "love, love,"

love. or "mercy, mercy, mercy." But He is described as "holy, holy, holy." Well, what is holiness? We tend to think of it as "moral purity," and while this is one of its meanings, when applied to God, Sproul teaches us that a more primary meaning is that of

"otherness," and of

"transcendence." We do have points of similarity with God because we are made in His image, but nevertheless the reality that the difference between us and God is not merely one of degree but also one of kind must never be forgotten. When we are called to be holy, we are called to be not only morally pure but also to be "other" to God, for God's special purposes.

Sproul gives example after example of Biblical characters who had encounters with God. And their experiences had something in common: a sense of crisis. Indeed, in Isaiah's case it was actually a sense of personal disintegration as he encountered the blazing glory of the Holy One. To be sure, God acted in mercy to restore each of them, but the point is that His mercy, His grace, and the rightness of His judgements was magnified to the nth degree in the understanding of these restored sinners after their traumatic encounter with His holiness. A proper response to the holiness of God is not quaking in servile fear, at least not for the one who is in Christ, but it should involve reverence and a hushed sense of awe when coming into His presence. And this ought to be foundational to our posture before God. You cannot ignore that without distorting your portrayal of God. If you downplay God's holiness, He will inevitably become more like us. If He becomes more like us, the concept of His righteous wrath against sin becomes unintelligible. Our own sinfulness, the idea that every one of our sins is an act of cosmic treason against God, becomes trivialized. We may continue to use the words, but they are emptied of their Biblical meaning. We may even continue to use the language of

"substitutionary atonement," but it will be reduced to a slogan. I know this from experience, because as a young man I would in my prayers hurriedly thank God for sending Jesus to die for my sins. And I felt guilty for saying it so abruptly because I knew that I didn't really mean it, not in the depths of my soul, but I knew that I had to say it. I would argue that a trivialization of the holiness of God puts us on the road to religious pluralism because it brings God down and it raises man up. It becomes intelligible to speak of

"good people" who, though they have never heard of Jesus, will likely end up in heaven. This is because our default position is to conceive of a God closer to what you would expect to hear from Oprah: God as a kindly grandfather who loves

everybody as they are. > than to what the Bible itself says, that God is a consuming fire. I am convinced that inerrancy is the watershed issue of the day in the church today, much as the person of Christ was the watershed issue of the early church and the work of Christ was that of the sixteenth century. Nevertheless, the holiness of God is a chronic issue that is constantly with us and likely lurked in the background of each of the firestorm issues listed above. And this is because our default position as fallen human beings is Pelagianism, the belief that we can get to heaven simply by living good lives. The holiness of God flies in the face of this self-assurance, and so we shield ourselves from it. We are uncomfortable in the presence of the Holy and so we like Peter in the New Testament, say > Depart from me, for I am a sinful man. > There is a sense in which the unbeliever should be made to feel profoundly uncomfortable in the presence of God, and we don't help, in this regard, when we bend over backwards to make our churches > "comfortable" to seekers. We have removed the pulpit and replaced it with a stage, the sanctuary has become the auditorium, and the congregation has become the audience. In short, as Sproul points out, we have lost our sense of sacred space and sacred time. The old cathedrals that in our day may be more museums than centers of worship nevertheless do invoke such a sense. They cause one to whisper and hush simply by their scale and loftiness. They help to bring one into contact with the holy, with the > "other", in a way that we have forgotten when the minister greets the congregation as if he were welcoming them into his living room. Now we don't need cathedrals to create sacred space and sacred time, but we ought to be aware that we are entering the house of God and act accordingly. R.C. Sproul has helped the church in many ways throughout his career by making complex issues accessible to lay people. But if I had to single out one issue, I would say without hesitation that his legacy is a burning desire to reawaken the church to the holiness of God so that our worship and everything about our Christian lives may take on a new depth, a new richness, and a new urgency as with reverence and awe, we live every moment before the face of God.

R. C. Sproul is one of the greatest Bible teachers of our day. I first bought this book some years ago and was so blessed by his view of God that I could not put the book down until I finished it. Of course I almost finished it at the book store standing reading it at the shelf. I knew I had to have this book. Now I give this book to young preachers that I know, because there is one thing we need in our day and that is a proper view of God. R.C has done a wonderful job. The God most people have in their mind is not the God of the bible, but a god they have created in their own mind. Until we get

a clear view of the true God, the God of the Bible, we will never have a clear view of ourselves. We don't hear this God preached from most pulpits across our land today, but this is the only God there is and this God is the one we must answer to. Get this book and read it.

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