

J. C. Ryle Quotations Pt. 2

Pastor James Foley – Shared Sunday, January 8, 2023

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for joining us! Whether you are here in person or joining via the livestream you are most welcome! Please have a Bible at the ready and be prepared to take notes as you like. We have much to cover in a short space of time.

The 2022 ABM will take place on Sunday, January 22, following the Sunday Service (w. January 29 as a backup). A slate of candidates qualified to stand for election—for the Offices of Deacon and Trustee—has been posted in the Fellowship Hall. If your name appears on said list, please notify the Pastor of your intentions. Thank you!

SETTING THE STAGE

NOTE 1 – We are in the midst of a multi-part series founded upon the insights of author J. C. Ryle (1816–1900). I can think of no better way to begin the New Year than by considering the musings of this giant of the faith! Please feel free to review the opening edition of this series online at www.NewLifeBarre.org, with Part 1 highlighting Ryle’s commentary on matters of faith, repentance, sin and scriptural holiness.

NOTE 2 – This morning I would like to consider excerpts from his writings that touch upon the following topics: **a)** the place of Scripture in Christian life and living; **b)** the place of prayer; and **c)** seasons of adversity in the faith. It is my joy to share the following with you. Let us begin...

SCRIPTURE

Ryle has much to say re: Scripture and its place in the life of the Christian...

QUOTE – “Let us strive, every year we live, to become more deeply acquainted with Scripture.”

QUOTE – “Next to praying there is nothing so important in practical religion as Bible reading. By reading that book we may learn what to believe, what to be, and what to do; how to live with comfort, and how to die in peace.”

NOTE 1 – I have said the following many times as your Pastor. Should God grant me more years in this place, and should He tarry, you will hear the following many times more: I could spend the remainder of my ministry doing nothing but calling you to give yourself to Scripture and to prayer, and it would not be a waste of time! Let us consider...

2 Timothy 3:16–17 (NIV)

16 All Scripture is God-breathed [i.e., inspired] and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

AS ANOTHER AUTHOR HAS PENNED...

QUOTE – “This Book contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler’s map, the pilgrim’s staff, the pilot’s compass, the soldier’s sword, and the Christian’s character. Here paradise is restored, Heaven opened, and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand object; our good is its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently, and prayerfully. It is given you in life and will be opened in the judgment and will be remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labor, and will condemn all who trifle with its sacred contents.”

Q1. Yet are we dedicated to the reading of the Word?

Q2. To what degree are you given to the study of Scripture?

NOTE 2 – Ryle shared the following centuries ago. His remarks remain timeless and timely..

QUOTE – “I fear we are in danger of forgetting that to HAVE the Bible is one thing, and to READ it quite another.”

QUOTE – “Knowledge of the Bible never comes by intuition. It can only be obtained by diligent, regular, daily, attentive reading.”

QUOTE – “Let us read our Bibles in private more, and with more pains and diligence. Ignorance of Scripture is the root of all error, and makes a person helpless in the hand of the devil. There is less private Bible reading, I suspect, than there was fifty years ago. I never can believe that so many men and women would have been ‘tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine,’ some falling into skepticism, some rushing into the wildest and narrowest fanaticism, and some going over to Rome, if there had not grown up a habit of lazy, superficial, careless, perfunctory reading of God’s Word. ‘You do err not knowing the Scriptures’ (Matt. 22:29). The Bible in the pulpit must never supersede the Bible at home.”

NOTE 3 – Of course, it is one thing to both own and read the Bible. It is quite another to put it into practice...

QUOTE – “Happy is that man who possesses a Bible! Happier still is he who reads it! Happiest of all is he who not only reads it, but obeys it, and makes it the rule of his faith and practice!”

James 1:22

22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

Matthew 7:24–27

24 “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

PRAYER

Ryle also speaks to the place of prayer in Christian living. We would do well to heed his words...

QUOTE – “Whatever other means of relief we use, let us pray. The first Friend we should turn to ought to be God. The first message we should send ought to be to the throne of grace.”

NOTE 1 – I revel in the means of relief God has provided for us (e.g., spouses, friends, a prayer chain, leaders, etc.). Such certainly have their place in our moments of need! Yet should they supplant the Lord? How often we are quick to call upon others, only coming to God after we have exhausted every other option. Again...

QUOTE – “Whatever other means of relief we use, let us pray. The first Friend we should turn to ought to be God. The first message we should send ought to be to the throne of grace.”

Hebrews 4:14–16

14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. 16 Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

NOTE 2 – As was touched upon last week, Ryle saw a deep connection between personal prayer and holiness. Let us consider anew a quotation from last week, along with a new excerpt...

QUOTE – “Praying and sinning will never live together in the same heart. Prayer will consume sin, or sin will choke prayer.”

QUOTE – “What is the reason that some believers are so much brighter and holier than others? I believe the difference, in nineteen cases out of twenty, arises from different habits about private prayer. I believe that those who are not eminently holy pray little, and those who are eminently holy pray much.”

NOTE 3 – Ryle also saw a deep connection between prayer and the effective “advancement” of gospel ministry...

QUOTE – “It is not always those who have the most eminent gifts who are the most successful laborers for God. It is generally those who keep up closest communion with Christ and are most constant in prayer.”

QUOTE – “Why is it that there is so much apparent religious working and yet so little result in positive conversions to God—so many sermons, and so few souls saved—so much machinery, and so little effect produced—so much running here and there and yet so few brought to Christ? Why is all this? The reply is short and simple: there is not enough private prayer. The cause of Christ does not need less working, but it does need among the workers more praying. The most successful workmen in the Lord’s vineyard are those who are, like their Master, often and much upon their knees.”

Luke 5:16 (Emphasis Mine)

16 . . . Jesus **often withdrew** to lonely places and **prayed**.

NOTE 4 – Similarly, Ryle saw prayer as a means by which all could participate in the advancement of the gospel...

QUOTE – “Prayer is one of the best and most powerful means of helping forward the cause of Christ in the world. Not all believers have money to give to missions. Very few have great intellectual gifts or extensive influence among men. But all believers can pray for the success of the Gospel—and they ought to pray for it daily.”

Luke 10:2 (Emphasis Mine)

2 He told them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. **Ask** the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

NOTE 5 – Let us conclude this section of the sermon with the following point re: prayer...

QUOTE – “Our prayers may be weak, stammering, and poor in our eyes. But if they come from a right heart, God understands them. Such prayers are His delight.”

Proverbs 15:29 (Emphasis Mine)

29 The Lord is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayer of the **righteous**.

ADVERSITY

As was noted last week, Ryle was a man who faced grave personal misfortunes and tragedy (e.g., health issues, loss of familial wealth causing political misfortune, the loss of three wives, etc.). Successfully navigating such seasons of adversity gave rise to wisdom that continues to resonate in 2023. Please consider...

QUOTE – “There are no lessons so useful as those learned in the school of affliction.”

NOTE 1 – Ryle saw divine wisdom and real benefit in seasons of adversity...

QUOTE – “Sicknesses, losses, crosses, anxieties and disappointments seem absolutely needful to keep us humble, watchful and spiritual-minded. They are as needful as the pruning knife to the vine and the refiner’s furnace to the gold.”

QUOTE – “Trouble is the pruning-knife which Christ employs in order to make us fruitful in good works. The harvest of the Lord’s field is seldom ripened by sunshine only. It must go through its days of wind, rain and storm.”

QUOTE – “By affliction Christ shows us our emptiness and weakness, draws us to the throne of grace, purifies our affections, weans us from the world, and makes us long for heaven.”

QUOTE – “Trials are intended to make us think, to wean us from the world, to send us to the Bible, to drive us to our knees.”

QUOTE – “Affliction is one of God’s medicines. By it He often teaches lessons which would be learned in no other way. By it He often draws souls away from sin and the world, which would otherwise have perished everlastingly. Health is a great blessing, but sanctified disease is a greater. Prosperity and worldly comfort are what all naturally desire; but losses and crosses are far better for us, if they lead us to Christ. Thousands at the last day, will testify with David, ‘It is good for me that I have been afflicted’ (Psalm. 119:71).”

Psalm 119:71

71 It was good for me to be afflicted
so that I might learn your decrees.

Q1. Who among us either enjoys or gladly anticipates suffering?

Q2. Yet who has come to understand that pain does have benefit?

NOTE 2 – Let us both consider and aspire to the attitude of the apostle Paul...

2 Corinthians 12:7b–10

7 . . . in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 9 But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. 10 That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

NOTE 3 – I do revel in the truth posited in the following selection...

QUOTE – “Your trials, crosses, and conflicts are all temporary.”

Psalm 34:19

19 The righteous person may have many troubles,
but the Lord delivers him from them all.

NOTE 4 – Lastly, let the afflicted remember the following...

QUOTE – “Faith in the Lord Jesus is the only sure medicine for troubled hearts.”

SUMMATIONS

As we enter 2023, let us consider Ryle’s words re: Scripture, prayer, adversity and the cost of following Christ. May these quotations function as seed that finds the good soil of your heart, bearing fruit for time and eternity!

Q. Would you stand with me as we close our service?

We are going to close with worship. This is your opportunity to commit or recommit to the Lord.

POST (P.W.) – Those who wish to linger or receive prayer may feel free to do so. As we depart from this place...

CONCLUSION

NOTE 1 – Feel free to give either in person or online at www.NewLifeBarre.org

NOTE 2 – Feel free to participate in our “beyond-Sunday” ministries (MM, WM, CYC, Study)

NOTE 3 – Women’s Ministry this Tuesday at 6:30pm. Men’s Breakfast this Saturday from 9–10:30am

NOTE 4 – Lastly, our Week of Prayer & Fasting is scheduled for January 16–20. Sign-Up Sheet in the F. Foyer

Numbers 6:24–26

24 The Lord bless you

and keep you;

25 the Lord make his face shine on you

and be gracious to you;

26 the Lord turn his face toward you

and give you peace.