

J. C. Ryle Quotations Pt. 3

Pastor James Foley – Shared Sunday, January 15, 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. Before we dismiss the children and volunteers...

The 2022 A.B.M. will take place on Sunday, January 22, following the Sunday Service (w. January 29 as a backup). The 2022 Annual Report will be distributed TODAY to the voting membership of the assembly. Please take the time to read through said report and bring it with you to the A.B.M.

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). Please feel free to review previous installments of this series online at www.NewLifeBarre.org, with previous segments highlighting his musings on faith, repentance, sin, holiness, Scripture, prayer, affliction and adversity.

NOTE 2 – This morning I would like to consider excerpts from his writings that touch upon the following topics: **a)** participation in the local church; **b)** the mission of the Church; and **c)** healthful fellowship amongst the saints. It is my joy to share the following with you. Let us begin...

THE LOCAL CHURCH

Ryle, like all great expositors of Scripture, was a proponent of the local church. He recognized that the church was critical in both the personal spiritual development of believers and the effective advancement of the gospel! Let us consider the following bits of wisdom offered by Ryle re: the church and your function within it. Consider...

NOTE 1 – J. C. Ryle had quite a bit to say re: preparation for church attendance and spiritual “readiness”...

QUOTE – “It must not content us to take our bodies to church if we leave our hearts at home.”

QUOTE – “Let us bear these rules in mind every Sunday morning before we go to hear the Word of God preached. Let us not rush into God’s presence careless, reckless, and unprepared, as if it mattered not in what way such work was done. Let us carry with us faith, reverence, and prayer. If these three are our companions, we shall hear with profit and return with praise.”

KEY 1 – I posit showing up on Sunday is vital. After all, Scripture offers the following call (Heb. 10:24b–25, NIV): “24 . . . let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, 25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” However, I deem it far better to show up prepared to engage the Lord and to be engaged by Him!

Q1. What might such a preparation look like? ELABORATE

Q2. What might such a preparation truly yield? ELABORATE

NOTE 2 – Moreover, Ryle gives sage advice concerning the church and its smooth operation...

QUOTE – “Our Lord has many weak children in his family, many dull pupils in his school, many raw soldiers in his army, many lame sheep in his flock. Yet he bears with them all, and casts none away. Happy is that Christian who has learned to do likewise with his brethren.”

FYI 1 – This is a call for us to practice mercy, grace and patience with one another—a truly biblical call...

Ephesians 4:1–3

1 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. 2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

Colossians 3:12–15a

12 Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. 15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace.

FYI 2 – Stick around long enough in any church body and someone will do you wrong. This thing only works when the people of God are willing to remember and/or heed the biblically-informed wisdom of Ryle. I would add the following quotation from Joe Castleberry (President of Northwest University)...

QUOTE – “I occasionally see posts complaining about the faults of church people. After a lifetime in the church, I am still singing the old chorus, ‘I love the thrill that I feel when I get together with God’s wonderful people.’ Of course there are sinners in church. They are the people it’s there for. Churches that are not attracting sinners are not doing their job. Unfortunately, the saints aren’t perfect. But by what theology would we expect them to be? I’ve been mistreated by many a saint, but you won’t see me complaining about it. I’m just glad that God has not disqualified me for my own many errors. Perhaps it is best to adjust our expectations and examine ourselves rather than [lament] the faults of others. . . . Anyone who confesses Jesus as Lord is family to me.”

NOTE 3 – Lastly, Ryle offers the following admonition...

QUOTE – “Let us be very careful that we never exalt any minister, or sermon, or book, or friend above the Word of God.”

KEY 2 – In this era of celebrity Christians, pastors, authors, song-writers, worship leaders, etc., this resonates! What folly it is to elevate anything or anyone above the Word of God and the Christ who inspired it. It is an aspect of human nature that we must resist—an aspect that was evident even in the Early Church...

CONSIDER...

1 Corinthians 3:1–7, 21–23

1 Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ. 2 I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. 3 You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans? 4 For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not mere human beings?

5 What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. 6 I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. 7 So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. . . . 21 So then, no more boasting about human leaders! All things are yours, 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, 23 and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.

THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

Ryle had much to say concerning the mission of the Church and the Great Commission of its Founder and Head...

Q. What is our mission (i.e., individually and collectively)?

Matthew 28:18–20

18 Jesus . . . said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Mark 16:15–16

15 He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. 16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”

NOTE 1 – Consider Ryle’s remarks on Christians who do NOT participate in the mission...

QUOTE – “The highest form of selfishness is that of the man who is content to go to heaven alone.”

QUOTE – “We know but little of true Christianity, if we don’t feel a deep concern about the souls of unconverted people.”

NOTE 2 – I pray that we are not such a people. Rather, may our desire(s) reflect that of Christ Jesus. Remember...

QUOTE(S) – “Happy indeed is that church whose members not only desire to reach heaven themselves, but desire also to take others with them.” As Ryle notes, “A converted man will not wish to go to heaven alone.”

KEY – Herein I must interject with a quotation from C. H. Spurgeon...

QUOTE – “If sinners be damned, at least let them leap to Hell over our dead bodies. And if they perish, let them perish with our arms wrapped about their knees, imploring them to stay. If Hell must be filled, let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions, and let not one go unwarned and unprayed for.”

NOTE 3 – Ryle adds some vital insights on our role in winning the lost and making disciples...

QUOTE – “Let your Christianity be so unmistakable, your eye so single, your heart so whole, your walk so straightforward, that all who see you may have no doubt whose you are, and whom you serve.”

QUOTE – “A Christian is a walking sermon. They preach far more than a minister does, for they preach all week long.”

Q. What of the winning and discipling of our own children? Connection(s)...

QUOTE – “The parent who tries to train without setting a good example is building with one hand, and pulling down with the other.”

QUOTE – “Children are very quick observers; very quick in seeing through some kinds of hypocrisy, very quick in finding out what you really think and feel, very quick in adopting all your ways and opinions. You will often discover that, as the father is, so is the son.”

FELLOWSHIP OF THE SAINTS

Lastly, Ryle speaks to our companions and the peers we have for the journey of life...

NOTE 1 – He understood that we need peers for the journey and are not to “go it alone.” What type of friend(s) are we to look for? What should we look for in peers as we seek to promote the gospel and contend for the faith? Please note the following (i.e., simple and summary)...

QUOTE – “Let us seek friends that will stir up our prayers, our Bible reading, our use of time, and our salvation.”

NOTE 2 – You see, there is value in having friends who can bring benefit into your life. Why do you think a) David had Jonathan; b) Jesus chose the Twelve; c) the disciples were sent out two-by-two (cf. Mark 6:7) and so forth? It is because godly friends and/or peers can make all the difference in Christian life and living.

KEY – As we prepare to close, consider this ancient bit of OT wisdom...

Ecclesiastes 4:9–12

9 Two are better than one,
because they have a good return for their labor:
10 If either of them falls down,
one can help the other up.
But pity anyone who falls
and has no one to help them up.
11 Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm.
But how can one keep warm alone?
12 Though one may be overpowered,
two can defend themselves.
A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

SUMMATIONS

As we enter 2023, let us consider Ryle's words re: the local church, the mission of the Church, the peril of compromise and the necessity of godly peers for the journey of life. May these quotes function as seed that finds the good soil of your heart, bearing fruit for both 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 – Lastly, our Week of Prayer & Fasting is scheduled for January 16–20. Sign-Up Sheet (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.