

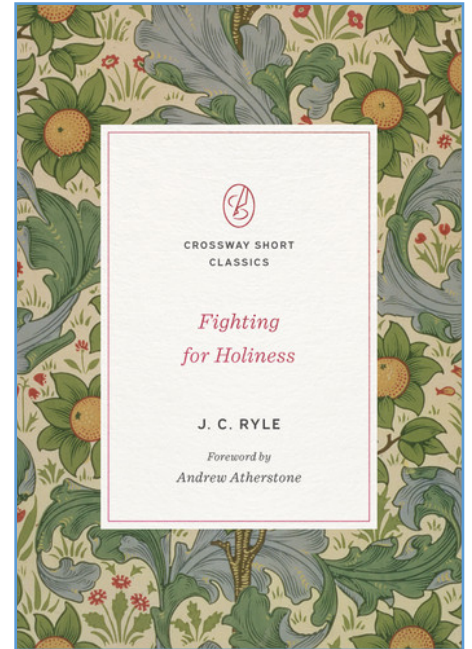
Spiritual complacency is deadly. In a fallen world where our hearts naturally drift toward comfort and ease, J.C. Ryle's *Fighting for Holiness* was written to help us see the need to fight and to assist us in that fight. Originally published under the provocative title *Are You Fighting?*, Ryle grabs our attention immediately with the urgent call that Christianity isn't passive.

He writes, "We must fight. There are no promises in the Lord Jesus Christ's Epistles to the Seven Churches, except to those who 'overcome.' Where there is grace, there will be conflict. The believer is a soldier. There is no holiness without warfare. Saved souls will always have been found to have fought a fight."

In this short, powerful tract, Ryle reminds us that true holiness is not merely a theological concept to affirm, but a reality to fight for each day. Every Christian must contend relentlessly against the flesh, the world, and the devil. Ryle does not allow us to entertain comfortable illusions about the Christian life; instead, he pushes us toward active, biblical living.

This very short book matters because, as Ryle compellingly argues, there is no neutral ground in spiritual warfare. We either fight or we lose. Many of us might be tempted to settle into patterns of spiritual laziness, or perhaps even discouragement over continual struggle. Ryle reminds us that ongoing conflict against sin is a sign of genuine faith. If you feel weary or complacent in your spiritual walk, the invigorating clarity of Ryle's shepherding exhortations will be helpful.

Recently, I have taught many of you in the church (in BUILD, Wellspring, and Student Ministries) on Paul's exhortation to Timothy to "train yourself for godliness" (1 Tim 4:7). I made extensive use of Ryle's book in the preparation for that series, quoted from it, and highly recommend it as follow-up reading to drive home the lessons taught there.



Suggested One-Month Reading Plan
Avg 2 pages per day

Week 1: Monday 6/2 - Sunday 6/8

Forward, 8 pages
Series Preface, 3 pages
Biography of J. C. Ryle, 2 pages

Week 2: Monday 6/9 - Sunday 6/15

Pages 25 - 43, 19 pages

Week 3: Monday 6/16 - Sunday 6/22

Pages 43 - 60, 17 pages

Week 4: Monday 6/23 - Sunday 6/29

Pages 60 - 74, 15 pages

Reading this book personally renewed my resolve and vividly reminded me that holiness is not accidental: it must be intentionally pursued by grace, in the strength and power that God provides. When we win, it will have been due to God powerfully at work in us (Col 1:29, Phil 2:13, Eph 6:10, Gal 2:20, 2 Pet 1:3). It is God's victory; He has provided you and me all we need to win. And yet, victory will never be passive—we must fight. "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us" (Rom 8:37). My prayer for us as a church is that we would embrace this fight wholeheartedly—individually and together—knowing that, in Christ, our victory is certain.

The great news is that the book is short. It can be read by many in an hour or less. Every person in our church would benefit from making the time this June to sit down and read it. Consider reading it with a roommate, spouse, or smallgroup. I'm excited to see the effect of this book widely read and practiced by Grace Bible Church.

Your pastor-elder,
Jacob Hantla