

Personal Holiness and Obedience

Lesson #5

Memory Verse: 1 Peter 1:15-16

but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."

We are to be holy in every aspect of our conduct. Holiness must be cultivated into every sphere of life. It is not to be compartmentalized into certain “religious” areas of our life. Holiness is a way of life that affects everything we do, rather than mere conformity to a list of rules.

I. The Definition and Scope of Holiness

What is holiness and what does it mean to be holy? Who is called to be holy? To what extent should a person be holy? Let’s find out.

A. The word holy in the simplest definition means “separate”.

1. Read 1 Peter 2:9 and answer the following questions.

a. What type of race, priesthood, and nation are Christians? _____

b. Whose possession are believers? _____

c. For what purpose did God separate believers to Himself? _____

d. What did God separate Christians from in order that they live in “*His marvelous light*”? _____

2. According to 2 Corinthians 6:17, from what are believers to separate themselves?

B. Holiness implies obedience to God by calling for living morally pure lives.

1. According to 2 Corinthians 7:1, what are believers to do? _____

2. How did Paul desire to present Christians before the Father (2 Corinthians 11:2)?

C. Holiness is for all people.

1. What are the consequences for not being holy in the sight of God (Hebrews 12:14)?

2. According to 1 Peter 1:15-16, how much of our behavior should be holy? _____

II. The Necessity and Purpose of Holiness

Why are we to be holy? What purpose does it serve? Let's examine the reasons why holiness is critical in the life of the believer in Jesus Christ.

A. Holiness is God's command to be obeyed.

1. What command is given in 1 Corinthians 15:34 regarding the relationship between holiness and sin? _____

2. In 2 Corinthians 7:1, believers are charged with "*perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*" According to the text, how does one accomplish this? _____

3. How is holiness described in 1 Timothy 5:22? _____

Imagine for a moment that God possessed omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence, but without holiness. Such a one could not longer be described as God. Holiness is the perfection of all His other attributes: His power is holy power; His mercy is holy mercy; His wisdom is holy wisdom. It is His holiness more than any other attribute that makes Him worthy of our praise.¹

B. Holiness is God's character to be emulated.

1. According to 1 Peter 1:15-16, why must we be holy? _____

2. Read the following verses and summarize how God's holiness is described.

a. Revelation 15:4 _____

¹ Jerry Bridges, *The Pursuit of Holiness*, (Colorado Springs, CO.: Navpress, 1996), 25.

- b. Exodus 15:11 _____
- c. 1 Samuel 2:2 _____

C. Holiness makes the gospel attractive.

1. In Titus 2:9-10, why did Paul urge bondslaves to be joyfully obedient to their masters in everything? _____

2. How does holiness allow the believer to be a light to the world (Philippians 2:14-16)? _____

Sound evangelical doctrine is useless if it is not accompanied by a holy life. It is worse than useless: it does positive harm. It is despised by keen-sighted and shrewd men of the world, as an unreal and hollow thing, and brings religion into contempt.²

D. Holiness brings joy.

1. What type of joy experienced by God's holy ones is described in Psalm 16:11? _____

2. How is joy related to obedience (John 15:10-11)? _____

3. God intends the Christian life to be a life of joy not drudgery. Anyone who would like to experience true joy must walk in holiness. According to Romans 14:17, what three qualities must those in the kingdom of God possess? _____

III. God's Role in the Pursuit of Holiness

The pursuit of holiness is that inward spiritual work which the Lord Jesus Christ works in us (through the Holy Spirit), when He calls us to be a true believer and throughout our lives thereafter. He separates us from our innate love of sin and the world and puts a new principle into our hearts.

² J.C. Ryle, *Holiness: Its Nature, Hindrances, Difficulties, & Roots*, (Moscow, ID.: Charles Nolan Publishers, 2001), xvi.

A. God gives believers knowledge that they were created to be holy.

1. What does Ephesians 2:10 teach us about God's role in the holiness of the believer?

2. According to Romans 8:29 and Ephesians 1:4, to what are believers predestined and chosen? _____

B. God gives believers freedom from slavery to sin.

1. How does one become "*freed from sin and enslaved to God*" (Romans 6:17-23)? _____

2. Who sets sin's captives free (John 8:36)? _____

C. God gives believers a discontentment with their own holiness.

1. What was Paul's attitude toward his flesh (Romans 7:24)? _____

2. What was David's attitude toward his sin (Psalm 22:2-3)? _____

D. God gives believers holy aspirations.

1. Why do believers desire holiness instead of practicing a lifestyle of sin (1 John 3:9)?

2. Why are believers driven to obey Christ (John 14:15)? _____

IV. Our Role in the Pursuit of Holiness

What is true practical holiness from our perspective? How do we cultivate holiness in our lives for the glory of God?

A. The pursuit of holiness requires knowing and loving Scripture.

1. Believers are sanctified (i.e. made holy) through the Word of God, because it is _____ (John 17:17).

2. For what reason does the psalmist say that he has treasured God's Word in his heart (Psalm 119:11)? _____

3. What should be the believer's attitude toward the Bible (Psalm 1:2)? _____

4. Read Psalm 19:7-11. How are each of the following described and what impact do they have on a person's life.
- The law of the Lord (v.7)? _____
 - The testimony of the Lord (v.7)? _____
 - The precepts of the Lord (v.8)? _____
 - The commandment of the Lord (v.8)? _____
 - The fear of the Lord (v.9)? _____
 - The judgments of the Lord (v.9)? _____
 - How desirable are all of these things (v.10) and why are they so desirable (v.11)?

B. The pursuit of holiness requires praying and working in harmony with God.

- According to Job 14:4, can anyone become holy by their own willpower? _____

- Since a believer cannot do it by his own willpower, how must he pray to God to work in him (Psalm 51:10)? _____

God works in us and with us, not against us or without us.³

C. The pursuit of holiness requires a radical commitment to obedience and a desire to flee from worldliness.

- According to Philippians 4:8, on what should the believer's mind dwell? _____

- Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-20 and answer the following questions.
 - What types of people do not inherit the kingdom of God (vv.9-10)? _____

 - How are Christians different from those who are on the path to hell (v.11)? _____

³ John Owen, *The Works of John Owen, Volume VI, Temptation and Sin*, (Carlisle, PA.: Banner of Truth, 1967), 20.

- c. How can a believer know where to draw the line between right and wrong in gray areas (v.12)? _____
- d. How should the believer view his body (v.13)? _____

- e. Who owns the body and will raise the body (v.14)? _____
- f. Why should the believer flee immorality (vv.15-18)? _____

- g. Who bought us, owns us, and therefore deserves to be glorified by us (vv.20-21)?

- D. The pursuit of holiness requires striving to be like Jesus Christ.
1. According to Romans 8:29, to what has the believer been predestined? _____

 2. Whose life should a believer's life reflect (1 John 2:6; 1 Peter 2:21; 1 Corinthians 1:11)? _____

 3. According to 1 John 3:3, why should the believer strive for holiness? _____

V. Personal Application

- A. Jesus said, "*My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work*" (John 4:34). How can you pray to God for growth in personal holiness and obedience?

- B. What are some ways in which you can be more vigilant about walking in separation from the sinful world in order to keep yourself from being defiled by it? _____

