

Holiness-Quotes, Devotionals, Illustrations

Leviticus 11:44

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QUOTES ON HOLINESS

The Hebrew word for **holiness** is **kadesh** which means something which is cut off, separate or set apart. It describes that which is anti-secular (secular = of or relating to the worldly or temporal), in a category all its own. Kadesh describes something that is elevated out of the sphere of what is ordinary. The New Testament word **hagios** also means set apart, separate and so in a class by itself. It follows that for believers (saints or "holy ones") the call to be holy is a call to be separated from common use and set apart, or reserved, for special use. In both Old and New Testaments the term is applied to things, persons, and pre-eminently to God Himself.

A beautiful illustration of the inherent idea of separation that is found in the word **holiness** comes from the world of nature...

In the forests of northern Europe and Asia lives little animal called the **ermine**, known for his **snow-white fur in winter**. He instinctively protects his white coat against anything that would soil it. Fur hunters take advantage of this unusual trait of the ermine. They don't set a snare to catch him, but instead they find his home, which is usually a cleft in a rock or a hollow in an old tree. They smear the entrance and interior with grime. Then the hunters set their dogs loose to find and chase the ermine. The frightened animal flees toward home but doesn't enter because of the filth. Rather than soil his white coat, he is trapped by the dogs and captured while preserving his purity. For the ermine, purity is more precious than life. (**Ed**: O, that we all had the mindset of the ermine in winter!) (H G Bosch [Our Daily Bread](#). Copyright RBC Ministries. Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

A. W. Tozer on holiness

Were some watcher or holy one from the bright world above to come among us for a time with the power to diagnose the spiritual ills of church people, there is one entry which I am quite sure would appear on the vast majority of his reports: Definite evidence of chronic spiritual lassitude; level of moral enthusiasm extremely low.

Holy is the way God is. To be holy he does not conform to a standard. He is that standard. He is absolutely holy with an infinite, incomprehensible fullness of purity that is incapable of being other than it is. Because he is holy, all his attributes are holy; that is, whatever we think of as belonging to God must be thought of as holy.

The holy man is not one who cannot sin. A holy man is one who will not sin.

The true Christian ideal is not to be happy but to be holy.

The whole purpose of God in redemption is to make us holy and to restore us to the image of God. To accomplish this He disengages us from earthly ambitions and draws us away from the cheap and unworthy prizes that worldly men set their hearts upon.

The true Christian ideal is not to be happy but to be holy.

Real faith invariably produces holiness of heart and righteousness of life.

No man should desire to be happy who is not at the same time holy. He should spend his efforts in seeking to know and do the will of God, leaving to Christ the matter of how happy he shall be.

Go to God and have an understanding. Tell Him that it is your desire to be holy at any cost and then ask Him never to give you more happiness than holiness. When your holiness becomes tarnished, let your joy become dim. And ask Him to make you holy whether you are happy or not. Be assured that in the end you will be as happy as you are holy; but for the time being let your whole ambition be to serve God and be Christlike.

... although God wants His people to be holy as He is holy, He does not deal with us according to the degree of our holiness but according to the abundance of His mercy. Honesty requires us to admit this.

You cannot study the Bible diligently and earnestly without being struck by an obvious fact—the whole matter of personal holiness is highly important to God!

I cannot think of even one lonely passage in the New Testament which speaks of Christ's revelation, manifestation, appearing or coming that is not directly linked with moral conduct, faith and spiritual holiness.

Christ calls men to carry a cross; we call them to have fun in His name. He calls them to forsake the world; we assure them that if they but accept Jesus the world is their oyster. He calls them to suffer; we call them to enjoy all the bourgeois comforts modern civilization affords... He calls them to holiness; we call them to a cheap and tawdry happiness that would have been rejected with scorn by the least of the Stoic philosophers.

We have the blessed Holy Spirit present, and we are treating Him as if He were not present at all. We resist Him, disobey Him, quench Him and compromise with our hearts. We hear a sermon about Him and determine to learn more and do something about it. Our conviction wears off, and soon we go back to the same old dead level we were in before. We resist the blessed Comforter. He has come to comfort. He has come to teach. He is the Spirit of instruction. He has come to bring light for He is the Spirit of light. He comes to bring purity for He is the Spirit of holiness. He comes to bring power for He is the Spirit of power... We would like to be full of the Spirit and yet go on and do as we please. The Holy Spirit who inspired the Scriptures will expect obedience to the Scriptures, and if we do not obey the Scriptures, we will quench Him. This Spirit will have obedience—but people do not want to obey the Lord. Everyone is as full as he wants to be. Everyone has as much of God as he desires to have. There is a fugitive impulse that comes to us, in spite of what we ask for when we pray in public, or even in private. We want the thrill of being full, but we don't want to meet the conditions. We just don't want to be filled badly enough to be filled... If there is anything in your life more demanding than your longing after God, then you will never be a Spirit-filled Christian. I have met Christians who have been wanting to be filled, in a vague sort of way, for many years. The reason they have not been filled with the Spirit is because they have other things they want more. God does not come rushing into a human heart unless He knows that He is the answer and fulfillment to the greatest, most overpowering desire of that life.

We Christians must stop apologizing for our moral position and start making our voices heard, exposing sin as the enemy of the human race and setting forth righteousness and true holiness as the only worthy pursuits for moral beings.

Dwight L. Moody (See "[Why God Used Dwight L. Moody](#)" by R. A. Torrey) once said that...

A holy life will make the deepest impression. Lighthouses blow no horns, they just shine.

"It is a great deal better to live a holy life than to talk about it. We are told to let our light shine, and if it does we won't need to tell anybody it does. The light will be its own witness. Lighthouses don't ring bells and fire cannon to call attention to their shining—they just shine."

Hudson Taylor, famed missionary to China wrote:

"We are not only to renounce evil, but to manifest the truth. We tell people the world is vain; let our lives manifest that it is so. We

tell them that our home is above and that all these things are transitory. Does our dwelling look like it? O to live consistent lives!"

Andrew Murray wrote taht...

The great test of whether the holiness we profess to seek or to attain is truth and life will be whether it be manifest in the increasing humility it produces. In the creature, humility is the one thing needed to allow God's holiness to dwell in him and shine through him. In Jesus, the holy one of God who makes us holy, a divine humility was the secret of his life and his death and his exaltation; the one infallible test of our holiness will be the humility before God and men which marks us. Humility is the bloom and the beauty of holiness.

Sammy Tippit in his small but pithy and convicting book **Fire in Your Heart (index)** writes the following about holiness...

We must learn that God is holy. If we are to experience the manifest presence of God's glory, we must repent. When Isaiah saw the glory of God in the Temple, he was driven to brokenness, confession, and repentance. Too many in the West desire to know the manifest love of God without the manifest holiness of God. We have lost the message of repentance. Now the church in the West is the sleeping Giant. The church in the East sends a strong message: The Repenters must repent!

Many have attached themselves to the church without becoming "repenters." We have preached a gospel without a distinct call for repentance. But throughout the Scriptures we are admonished to repent and believe. John the Baptist preached and baptized with a "baptism of repentance" prior to the ministry of reconciliation of Jesus... (excerpt from **part I**)

Historian **J.C. Ryle** listed seven characteristics of the messengers during the Great Awakening of the eighteenth century:

- 1 They taught the supremacy of Holy Scripture.
- 2 They preached the total corruption of human nature.
- 3 They taught that Chris's death upon the cross was the only satisfaction for man's sin.
- 4 They preached the doctrine of justification by faith.
- 5 They taught the universal necessity of heart conversion and new creation by the Holy Spirit.
- 6 They spoke of God's eternal hatred against sin and of God's love for sinners.
- 7 They preached that there was an inseparable connection between true faith and personal holiness. They never allowed for a moment that any church membership or religious profession was the least proof of a man being a Christian if he lived an ungodly life.

These awakeners continually cried, "No fruit, no grace." Jonathan Edwards believed that "every experience of God could be counterfeited except those with an insight into His holiness."

An insight into the **holiness of God** will always produce a life-style of repentance. When one enters upon this **highway called holiness**, it does not mean that he is perfect. It does mean that he is walking down a road of change. Repentance means a change of heart or a change of mind. Throughout the Christian life we should be continually changed, or conformed, into the image of Jesus Christ...

See some of **C H Spurgeon's** sermons relating to the topic of **revival**...

- 2 Chronicles 35:2 [Cheer Up, My Comrades](#)
- Jonah 2:7 [The Fainting Soul Revived](#)
- Isaiah 52:20 [The Great Revival](#)
- Amos 3:3 [Preparation For Revival](#)
- Amos 9:13 [A Revival Sermon](#)
- Habakkuk 3:2 [Spiritual Revival. The Want Of The Church](#)

John Brown, 19th-century Scottish theologian:

"Holiness does not consist in mystic speculations, enthusiastic fervors, or uncommanded austerities; it consists in thinking as God thinks, and willing as God wills."

English Puritan **Thomas Brooks** observed that holiness was not a natural condition for human beings

Ah, sirs, holiness is a flower that grows not in Nature's garden. Men are not born with holiness in their hearts, as they are born

with tongues in their mouths: holiness is a divine offspring: it is a pearl of great price, that is to be found in no nature but a renewed nature, in no bosom but a sanctified bosom.

R. J. Stewart

Holy has the same root as wholly, it means complete. A man is not complete in spiritual stature if all his mind, heart, soul, and strength are not given to God.

Erwin W. Lutzer

Although we become Christians instantaneously by faith in Christ, knowing God and developing faith is a gradual process. There are no shortcuts to maturity. It takes time to be holy.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones - Holiness is not something to be received in a meeting; it is a life to be lived and to be lived in detail.

Nathanael Emmons

Holiness has love for its essence, humility for its clothing, the good of others as its employment, and the honor of God as its end.

Richard Shelley Taylor

Holiness is inwrought by the Holy Spirit, not because we have suffered, but because we have surrendered.

Oswald Chambers

It is quite true to say, "I can't live a holy life," but you can decide to let Jesus make you holy.

The destined end of man is not happiness, nor health, but holiness. God's one aim is the production of saints. He is not an eternal blessing machine for men; he did not come to save men out of pity; he came to save men because he had created them to be holy.

The holy man is the most humble man you can meet.

The holiest person is one who is most conscious of what sin is.

Martin Luther

When God purifies the heart by faith, the market is sacred as well as the sanctuary.

Richard Baxter (Puritan) wrote that holiness is...

Nothing else but the habitual and predominant devotion and dedication of soul, and body, and life, and all that we have to God; and esteeming, and loving, and serving, and seeking Him, before all the pleasures and prosperity of the flesh.

Blaise Pascal

The serene, silent beauty of a holy life is the most powerful influence in the world, next to the might of the Spirit of God.

Jerry Bridges

It is time for us Christians, to face up to our responsibility for holiness. Too often we say we are "defeated" by this or that sin. No, we are not defeated; we are simply disobedient. It might be well if we stopped using the terms victory and defeat to describe our progress in holiness. Rather we should use the terms obedience and disobedience.

Faith and holiness are inextricably linked. Obeying the commands of God usually involves believing the promises of God.

Thomas Carlyle

The old word for holy in the German language, heilig, also means healthy. And so heilbronn means holy-well, or healthy-well. You could not get any better definition of what holy really is than healthy—completely healthy.

John Flavel

What health is to the heart, that holiness is to the soul.

William Jenkyn wrote that...

There is nothing destroyed by sanctification but that which would destroy us.

C H Spurgeon...

I believe that great holiness sets us free from the love of this world and makes us ready to depart. By great holiness I mean great horror of sin and great longing after perfect purity.

The further a man goes in lust and iniquity the more dead he becomes to purity and holiness; he loses the power to appreciate the beauties of virtue or to be disgusted with the abominations of vice.

When we quit the King's highway of holiness, the King's protection is no longer guaranteed us.

Holiness is another word for wholeness of soul and life.

We see everywhere persons who know more than they practise, and have more conceit than industry, more doctrine in the head than holiness in the life. Let such men serve us as beacons.

Luther says, "Holiness consisteth not in a cowl (hooded robe worn especially by a monk), nor in a garment of grey. When God purifies the heart by faith, the market is sacred as well as the sanctuary."

William Gurnall has a pithy description of holiness...

Pray not only against the power of sin, but for the power of holiness also. A haughty heart may pray against his sins, not out of any inward enmity to them, or love to holiness, but because they are troublesome guests to his conscience. His zeal is false that seems hot against sin, but is key-cold to holiness. A city is rebellious that keeps their rightful Prince out, though it receives not his enemy in.

Say not that thou hast royal blood in thy veins, and art born of God, except thou canst prove thy pedigree by daring to be holy.

G. Campbell Morgan has several quotes on holiness:

Holiness is not exemption from conflict, but victory through conflict.

Holiness is not freedom from temptation, but power to overcome temptation.

Holiness is not the end of progress, but deliverance from standing still.

A T Pierson - The eagle is built for a solitary life. There is no bird so alone; other birds go in flocks—the eagle never, two at most together, and they are mates. Its majesty consists partly in its solitariness. It lives apart because other birds can not live where and as it lives, and follow where it leads. The true child of God must consent to a lonely life apart with God, and often the condition of **holiness** is separation.

William Law - The best way for anyone to know how much he ought to aspire after holiness is to consider not how much will make his present life easy, but to ask himself how much he thinks will make him easy at the hour of death."

Robert Murray McCheyne - Study universal holiness of life. Your whole usefulness depends on this, for your sermons last but an hour or two, your life preaches all the week. If Satan can only make a covetous minister a lover of praise, of pleasure, of good eating, he has ruined your ministry. Give yourselves to prayer, and get your texts, your thoughts, your words from God. Luther spent his best three hours in prayer.

George Swinnoek - Sow holiness and reap happiness

Anonymous - Holiness is the habit of being of one mind with God

Live so that the preacher can tell the truth at your funeral!

Thomas Brooks - True holiness makes a man divinely covetous

H A Ironside - The secret of Christian holiness is heart occupation with Christ Himself

D L Moody - A holy life will produce the deepest impression. Lighthouses blow no horns; they only shine! -

J C Ryle - There is no holiness without a warfare.

Duncan Campbell - A baptism of holiness, a demonstration of godly living is the crying need of our day.

John Brown - Holiness does not consist in mystic speculations, enthusiastic fervours, or uncommanded austerities; it consists in thinking as God thinks, and willing as God wills.

Revival is always marked by an overwhelming sense of Christ's presence in the church. For example, if Jesus were to physically

make His presence known, Sunday after Sunday there would be... A heightened awareness of Holiness with confession, repentance, and restitution.

Thomas Boston - Holiness is a constellation of graces.

Horatius Bonar wrote that holiness "extends to every part of our persons, fills up our being, spreads over our life, influences everything we are, or do, or think, or speak, or plan, small or great, outward or inward, negative or positive, our loving, our hating, our sorrowing, our rejoicing, our recreations, our business, our friendships, our relationships, our silence, our speech, our reading, our writing, our going out and our coming in—our whole man in every movement of spirit, soul, and body."

Pray with **Robert Murray M'Cheyne** "Lord, make me as Holy as a pardoned sinner can be."

Joel Beeke wrote...

I once read of a missionary who had in his garden a shrub that bore poisonous leaves. At that time he had a child who was prone to put anything within reach into his mouth. Naturally he dug the shrub out and threw it away. The shrub's roots, however, were very deep. Soon the shrub sprouted again. Repeatedly the missionary had to dig it out. There was no solution but to inspect the ground every day, and to dig up the shrub every time it surfaced. Indwelling sin is like that shrub. It needs constant uprooting. Our hearts need continual mortification.

Develop a scriptural formula for holy living. **Here is one possibility drawn from 1 Corinthians. When hesitant over a course of action, ask yourself:**

Does this glorify God? (1Co 10:31)

Is this consistent with the lordship of Christ? (1Co 7:23)

Is this consistent with biblical examples? (1Co 11:1)

Is this lawful and beneficial for me—spiritually, mentally, physically? (1Co 6:9, 10, 11, 12)

Does this help others positively and not hurt others unnecessarily? (1Co 10:33; 8:13)

Does this bring me under any enslaving power? (1Co 6:12)

Let Scripture be your compass to guide you in cultivating holiness, in making life's decisions, and in encountering the high waves of personal affliction.— Reformation and Revival 4:2 (Spring 1995) p. 88

John Owen warns us that "We must be exercising [mortification] every day, and in every duty. Sin will not die, unless it be constantly weakened. Spare it, and it will heal its wounds, and recover its strength. We must continually watch against the operations of this principle of sin: in our duties, in our calling, in conversation, in retirement, in our straits, in our enjoyments, and in all that we do. If we are negligent on any occasion, we shall suffer by it; every mistake, every neglect is perilous."

A W Pink - Everything in Scripture has in view the promotion of holiness.

Calvin - God sets us apart as a peculiar people for himself; then we ought to be free from all pollutions. And he quotes a sentence which had been often repeated by Moses. For as the people of Israel were on every side surrounded by heathens, from whom they might have easily adopted the worst examples and innumerable corruptions, the Lord frequently recalled them to himself, as though he had said, "Ye have to do with Me, ye are Mine; then abstain from the pollutions of the Gentiles." We are too ready to look to men, so as to follow their common way of living. Thus it happens, that some lead others in troops to all kinds of evil, until the Lord by His calling separates them.

F F Bruce - Christian holiness is not a matter of painstaking conformity to the individual precepts of an external law code; it is rather a question of the Holy Spirit's producing His fruit in the life, reproducing those graces which were seen in perfection in the life of Christ.

Low and distorted views of **sin** reap low and distorted views of holiness. **J C Ryle** wrote that..

Wrong views about holiness are generally traceable to wrong views about human corruption. If a man does not realize the dangerous nature of his soul's diseases, you cannot wonder if he is content with false or imperfect remedies.

Hugh Morgan rightly associated holiness with effective service writing that...

Holiness is the most effective way of influencing unconverted people and creating within them a willingness to listen to the preaching of the gospel" (Mt 5:16; 1Peter 3:1,2).

Although **sin** is the antithesis of **holiness**, it behooves all who would desire to pursue His holiness to pay heed to **J H Jowett's** sobering description of **sin**:

Sin is a blasting presence, and every fine power shrinks and withers in the destructive heat. Every spiritual delicacy succumbs to its malignant touch... Sin impairs the sight, and works toward blindness. Sin benumbs the hearing and tends to make men deaf. Sin perverts the taste, causing men to confound the sweet with the bitter, and the bitter with the sweet. Sin hardens the touch, and eventually renders a man "past feeling." All these are Scriptural analogies, and their common significance appears to be this--sin blocks and chokes the fine senses of the spirit; by sin we are desensitized, rendered imperceptive, and the range of our correspondence is diminished. Sin creates callosity. It hoofs the spirit, and so reduces the area of our exposure to pain.

Holiness gives evidence of your Justification and Election, and fosters assurance. **B. B. Warfield** wrote that

Sanctification is but the execution of the justifying decree. For it to fail would be for the acquitted person not to be released in accordance with his acquittal.

As **John Owen** says Holiness fits you for heaven (Rev 21:27, Heb 12:14)...

There is no imagination wherewith man is besotted, more foolish, none so pernicious, as this—that persons not purified, not sanctified, not made holy in their life, should afterwards be taken into that state of blessedness which consists in the enjoyment of God. Neither can such persons enjoy God, nor would God be a reward to them. Holiness indeed is perfected in heaven: but the beginning of it is invariably confined to this world. God leads none to heaven but whom He sanctifies on the earth. This living Head will not admit to dead members.

Vance Havner told the following story...

F. B. Meyer was visiting in a Scottish home. It was washday, and the clothes were on the line. It began to snow, and soon the clothes did not look so white against the background of the snow. When Meyer remarked about it, the old Scottish landlady cried, "Mon, what can stand against God Almighty's white!" When Isaiah saw the Lord in His holiness, he saw himself in his sinfulness and the people in their wickedness. A sense of God brought a sense of sin.

Spurgeon said, "Holiness is not the way to Christ; Christ is the way to holiness." Better still, Christ is our holiness.

John Henry Newman wrote, "Those who make comfort the great subject of their preaching seem to mistake the end of their ministry. Holiness is the great end. Comfort is a cordial but no one drinks cordials from morning to night." Happiness is not the chief end of our faith. God would make us holy and then we shall be happy with His joy. There is all the difference in the world between the happiness of this age (which ought to be spelled "happen-ness," since it depends on what happens) and the joy of the Lord.

Oswald Chambers

Instantaneous And Insistent Sanctification "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly." 1Thes 5:23-note, 1Thes 5:24-note
When we pray to be sanctified, are we prepared to face the standard of these verses? We take the term sanctification much too lightly. Are we prepared for what sanctification will cost? It will cost an intense narrowing of all our interests on earth, and an immense broadening of all our interests in God. Sanctification means intense concentration on God's point of view. It means every power of body, soul and spirit chained and kept for God's purpose only. Are we prepared for God to do in us all that He separated us for? And then after His work is done in us, are we prepared to separate ourselves to God even as Jesus did? "For their sakes I sanctify Myself." The reason some of us have not entered into the experience of sanctification is that we have not realized the meaning of sanctification from God's standpoint. Sanctification means being made one with Jesus so that the disposition that ruled Him will rule us. Are we prepared for what that will cost? It will cost everything that is not of God in us. ([Ref](#))

A W Tozer Quotes on Holiness

Go to God and have an understanding. Tell Him that it is your desire to be holy at any cost and then ask Him never to give you more happiness than holiness. When your holiness becomes tarnished, let your joy become dim. And ask Him to make you holy whether you are happy or not. Be assured that in the end you will be as happy as you are holy; but for the time being let your whole ambition be to serve God and be Christlike.

God cannot change for the better. Since He is perfectly holy, He has never been less holy than He is now and can never be holier than He is and has always been. Neither can God change for the worse. Any deterioration within the unspeakably holy nature of God is impossible. Indeed I believe it impossible even to think of such a thing, for the moment we attempt to do so, the object about

which we are thinking is no longer God but something else and someone less than He.

Holy is the way God is. To be holy He does not conform to a standard. He is that standard. He is absolutely holy with an infinite, incomprehensible fullness of purity that is incapable of being other than it is. Because He is holy, all His attributes are holy; that is, whatever we think of as belonging to God must be thought of as holy.

Every man is as holy as he really wants to be.

... although God wants His people to be holy as He is holy, He does not deal with us according to the degree of our holiness but according to the abundance of His mercy. Honesty requires us to admit this.

You cannot study the Bible diligently and earnestly without being struck by an obvious fact—the whole matter of personal holiness is highly important to God!

F B Meyer has several quotes on holiness...

Jesus is within (our) spirit, which has been regenerated by the Holy Ghost; but in too many cases He is limited to a very small corner of our nature, and exercises but a limited power over our life. There needs to be an anointing, an enthroning, a determination that He shall exercise His power over the entire Temple of our Being; the spirit, which stands for the Holy of Holies; the soul, for the Holy Place; the body, for the outer court. **Holiness** or **Sanctification** is not a quality or attribute which can be attributed to us apart from the indwelling of the Holy One. If we would be holy, we must be indwelt by Him who is holy. If we would have holiness, we must be infilled by the Holy One. But there must be no limiting of His power, no barrier to His control, no veiling or curtaining of His light. The veil, if such there be, must be rent in twain from the top to the bottom. (Our Daily Homily comment on 2Kings 11:12)

2Chronicles 20:21 He appointed singers unto the lord, that should praise the beauty of **holiness**. Dost thou praise the beauty of **holiness**? Is holiness beautiful to thee? Art thou in love with it as it is presented in the glorious Lord? Canst thou turn from the noise and anxiety of life's battle to dwell on the loveliness of God and of the devout life, and to praise Him whose mercy endureth forever? It is a rare accomplishment, acquired only through the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. In each of us there should be the priest-side of character as well as the warrior: the love for what is beautiful in holiness as well as for the strong and active in service. (Our Daily Homily comment on 2Chronicles 20:21)

Holiness is wholeness--that is, the whole-hearted devotion of a whole nature to God, the consecration of every power to His service. This leads us to lean hard on God, and to seek His companionship and fellowship. (F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk)

Earth is linked with heaven... By daily fellowship and **holy thought**. — We should practice the sense of God's presence, often stopping ourselves amid our ordinary avocations and interests to say, aloud when possible, "God is near, God is here." In all likelihood we are daily living amid the glories of the eternal world; but our eyes are blinded. Oh that by humility and purity we may become more sensitive, and awake to the things that are unseen and eternal! Lord, open our eyes, that we may see! (2Kings 6:17). (Our Daily Homily comment on Genesis 28:12)

The urgent demand for holiness. — The ordinary processes of life are not necessarily clean because they are natural. The foul heart may vitiate the most natural functions. We must bring the thought of God into the simplest, the commonest, and the most secret acts. Nothing is outside his jurisdiction. Though hid from sight, yet He is ever near the child of God. His grace, and blood, and cleansing, are always requisite, and ever ready. Amidst and after every act, incident, and episode of life, we should be quiet before God, considering if we have aught to confess, and asking to be ever kept from staining our white robes. (Leviticus 15:7)

Leviticus 19:2 I am the Lord your God. - This is the refrain of the entire chapter; count how many times it recurs. Evidently the

thought of God should ring out in our lives, as a perpetual chime. Sometimes as an inspiration to duty. We should seek to be **holy** because He is **holy**. "Imitators of God." Or as a remonstrance (an earnest presentation of reasons for opposition or grievance) against yielding to temptation. Lo, God is in this place; his pure eye is upon me: how can I do this great wickedness! Or as an incentive to liberality. We can afford to be generous to the poor and hireling, because we are children of so great and rich a parent. Or as a reason for merry and gentle kindness. How can we act otherwise than lovingly, when his love encompasses us with its persuasive bands? Thus the perpetual consciousness of God becomes the source of **holy** and happy living. But how may it become ours? We may make many resolutions, only to break them. We forget after our most definite purposing. There is no help but in the **Holy Spirit**, whose office it is to teach us all things, and bring all things to our remembrance. He is able also to help our infirmity: "for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." In the morning let the thought of God's presence with you in your secret closet sink well into your heart. Wait till his presence is made real to you, and you cry, Lo, God is here. Then entrust yourself to the Holy Spirit, asking Him to keep you in the current of the love and thought of God. Reckon on Him to do so. Now and then in the course of daily duty stop and remember God. Thus you will live in his fear and love all the day long.

Leviticus 22:4 - He shall not eat of the holy things till he be clean. The holy things referred to here are the offerings made by Israel to Jehovah, a part of which was presented to God in fire, and the rest partaken of by the priests and their families. None, however, might feed on them whilst ceremonially unclean. This suggests some useful precautions for ourselves, if we would fully enjoy the privileges and blessings attending the worship of the holy God. We must be clean before we can enjoy the private reading of the Word of God. — We would wash our hands, soiled with the dust and grime of toil, before opening an exquisitely printed copy of the Scriptures; how much more should we seek cleansing at the hands of Christ before we feed on the holy things of Scripture! We must be clean before entering the House of God. — It is a holy habit for each intending worshipper to be quiet before leaving the house on the Lord's day; or to use carefully the moment of the bent head at the commencement of the public service, in order that the soul may be made clean from any contracted stain, and resolve henceforth to abstain from all evil. We must be clean before partaking of the Lord's Supper. — There we feed upon the bread of God; and as we wash our hands before we sit at the table of a friend, so should our hearts be cleansed ere we partake of the emblems of the body and blood of Christ. Holiness becomes God's house. Those that ascend the hill of the Lord must have clean hands and a pure heart. The reason why religious exercises do not profit you, may lie in your failure to comply with this demand. "He shall not eat of the holy things until he be clean." (Our Daily Homily)

J I Packer in his book "Rediscovering Holiness" wrote that...

The focus of health in the soul is humility, while the root of inward corruption is pride. In the spiritual life, nothing stands still. If we are not constantly growing downward into humility, we shall be steadily swelling up and running to seed under the influence of pride.

E. M. Bounds exhorts us to...

Study universal holiness of life. Your whole usefulness depends on this.

John Owen wrote that...

Some would have moral virtue to be holiness, which (as they suppose) they can understand by their own reason and practice in their own strength... Gospel truth is the only root whereon Gospel holiness will grow.

He leads none to heaven but whom He sanctifies on the earth. This living Head will not admit of dead members.

There is no imagination wherewith man is besotted, more foolish, none so pernicious as this—that persons not purified not sanctified, not made holy in their life, should afterwards be taken into that state of blessedness which consists in the enjoyment of God. Neither can such persons enjoy God, nor would God be a reward to them. Holiness indeed is perfected in heaven: but the beginning of it is invariably confined to this world.

Richard Cudworth explains that holiness is...

not... the mere performance of outward duties of religion, coldly acted over, as a task; not our habitual prayings, hearings, fastings, multiplied one upon another (though these be all good, as subservient to a higher end); but I mean an inward soul and principle of divine life (Romans 8:1-see notes, Ro 8:2, 3, 4, 5), that spiriteth all these.

Leonard Ravenhill

The greatest miracle that God can do today is to take an unholy man out of an unholy world, and make that man holy and put him back into that unholy world and keep him holy in it.

Thomas Case (Puritan) writes that...

It is no small advantage to the holy life to "begin the day with God." The saints are wont to leave their hearts with Him over night, that they may find them with Him in the morning. Before earthly things break in upon us, and we receive impressions from abroad, it is good to season the heart with thoughts of God, and to consecrate the early and virgin operations of the mind before they are prostituted to baser objects. When the world gets the start of religion in the morning, it can hardly overtake it all the day.

Thomas Brooks

Oh Christians! you must look as well to your spiritual wants as to your spiritual enjoyments; you must look as well to your layings out as to your layings up; you must look as well forward to what you should be, as backward to what you are. Certainly that Christian will never be eminent in holiness that hath many eyes to behold a little holiness, and never an eye to see his further want of holiness.

C. H. Spurgeon had much to say about **holiness**... here are a few his quotes...

Though you have struggled in vain against your evil habits, though you have wrestled with them sternly, and resolved, and re-resolved, only to be defeated by your giant sins and your terrible passions, there is One who can conquer all your sins for you. There is One who is stronger than Hercules, who can strangle the hydra of your lust, kill the lion of your passions, and cleanse the Augean stable of your evil nature by turning the great rivers of blood and water of his atoning sacrifice right through your soul. He can make and keep you pure within. Oh, look to him!

Holy desires are grace in the blade, and the heavenly Husbandman will cultivate them till they come to the full corn in the ear. God-fearing men desire to be holy, to be useful, to be a blessing to others, and so to honor their Lord. - Faith's Checkbook

If we divide ourselves between God and mammon, or Christ and self, we shall make no progress. We must give ourselves wholly to holy things, or else we shall be poor traders in heavenly business; and at our stock-taking, no profit will be shown. Faith's Checkbook

I believe the holier a man becomes, the more he mourns over the unholiness which remains in him.

A father's holy life is a rich legacy for his sons.

When filled with holy truth, the mind rests.

Holiness is a good thing, and this He will work in us freely. Victory over evil tendencies, strong tempers, and evil habits, He will gladly grant, and we ought not to remain without it.

The Holy Spirit brings me life and all that life requires. All else without the dew of the Spirit is less than nothing to me: I hear, I read, I pray, I sing, I go to the table of communion, and I find no blessing there until the Holy Ghost visits me. But when He bedews me, every means of grace is sweet and profitable.

THE fear of the Lord is the beginning and the foundation of all true religion. Without a solemn awe and reverence of God, there is no foothold for the more brilliant virtues. He whose soul does not worship will never live in holiness.

Soldiers of Christ, gird on your armor. Strike home in the name of the God of holiness, and by faith grasp His salvation. Let not this day pass without striking a blow for Jesus and holiness.

THESE things cannot be parted—abiding in obedience and abiding in the love of Jesus. A life under the rule of Christ can alone prove that we are the objects of our Lord's delight. We must keep our Lord's command if we would bask in His love. If we live in sin, we cannot live in the love of Christ. Without the holiness which pleases God, we cannot please Jesus. He who cares nothing for holiness knows nothing of the love of Jesus. Conscious enjoyment of our Lord's love is a delicate thing. It is far more sensitive to sin and holiness than mercury is to cold and heat. When we are tender of heart and careful in thought, lip, and life to honor our Lord Jesus, then we receive tokens of His love without number. If we desire to perpetuate such bliss, we must perpetuate holiness. The Lord Jesus will not hide His face from us unless we hide our face from Him. Sin makes the cloud which darkens our Sun: if we will be watchfully obedient and completely consecrated, we may walk in the light, as God is in the light, and have as sure an abiding in the love of Jesus as Jesus has in the love of the Father. Here is a sweet promise with a solemn "if." Lord, let me have this "if" in my hand; for as a key it opens this casket. Faith's Checkbook

Let us not this day sow to our flesh, for the harvest will be corruption, since flesh always tends that way; but with holy self-conquest let us live for the highest, purest, and most spiritual ends, seeking to honor our most holy Lord by obeying His most gracious Spirit. What a harvest will that be when we reap life everlasting! What sheaves of endless bliss will be reaped! What a festival will that harvest be! Lord, make us such reapers, for thy Son's sake.

You will not gain holiness by standing still. Nobody ever grew holy without consenting, desiring, and agonizing to be holy. Sin will grow without sowing, but holiness needs cultivation. Follow it; it will not run after you. You must pursue it with determination, with eagerness, with perseverance, as a hunter pursues his prey.

The bloom of the hawthorn or White May looks like snow out in the country, but near the vast city or along the roadside its virgin whiteness is sadly stained. Too often contact with the world has just such an effect on our piety. We must make our way to the far-off garden of Paradise to see holiness in its unsullied purity, and meanwhile we must be much alone with God if we would maintain a gracious life below

While the Christian religion is an internal thing, there is no religion in the world which shows itself so much externally

There can be no such thing as perfect happiness till there is perfect holiness.

I would sooner be holy than happy if the two things could be divorced. Were it possible for a man always to sorrow and yet to be pure, I would choose the sorrow if I might win the purity, for to be free from the power of sin, to be made to love holiness, is true happiness.

A faith which works not for purification will work for putrefaction. Unless our faith makes us pine after holiness, it is no better than the faith of devils, and perhaps it is not even so good as that. A holy man is the workmanship of the Holy Spirit.

We say of a river that it runs to the south, although there may be eddies along the banks which run in an opposite direction to the main stream. Still, these are inconsiderable matters. The main stream of the Thames is running constantly toward the sea, and we speak not untruthfully when we say that it is so. And the main stream and set of the current of the life of a child of God runs toward that which is right and true and holy, both toward God and man. If it is not so with you, you do not know the Lord. You need to be born again...

Of all the griefs the church ever feels, the keenest is when those who once stood in her midst dishonor the name of Christ by unholy living.

Did you ever see a bush burn, and yet not be consumed? Did you ever see a spark float in the sea, and yet not be quenched? Many persons here are, to themselves, just such wonders. They are living godly lives in the midst of temptation, holy in the midst of impurity, serving God in spite of all opposition. They are strange things!

If your religion does not make you holy, it will damn you. It is simply painted pageantry to go to hell in.

Holiness is better than morality. It goes beyond it. Holiness affects the heart. Holiness respects the motive. Holiness regards the whole nature of man. A moral man does not do wrong in act; a holy man hates the thought of doing wrong. A moral man does not swear, but a holy man adores. A moral man would not commit outward sin; a holy man would not commit inward sin. And if committed, he would pour forth floods of tears.

"While the Austrian general was staying at the Hotel de Ville, upon the Grand Canal at Venice, I lodged at the same house, and as often as I passed his rooms, whether during the day or at night, I encountered two sentries on guard at the door. My heart said to itself, whenever the King of kings deigns to make a chamber of my spirit, let me set holiness and devotion to be sentries at the entrance. When our Beloved visits us He must not be disturbed. Ill thoughts must be repulsed, and carnal desires kept at a distance. With drawn swords let watchfulness preserve the sanctity of Immanuel's rest. "I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes and by the hinds of the field that ye stir not up nor awake my love, till he please." "For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died;" (2 Cor 5:14)

"In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD"—Zechariah 14:20 HAPPY day when all things shall be consecrated, and the horses' bells shall ring out holiness to the Lord! That day has come to me. Do I not make all things holy to God? These garments, when I put them on or take them off, shall they not remind me of the righteousness of Christ Jesus, my Lord? Shall not my work be done as unto the Lord? Oh, that today my clothes may be vestments, my meals sacraments, my house a temple, my table an altar, my speech incense, and myself a priest! Lord, fulfill thy promise, and let nothing be to me common or unclean.

Let me in faith expect this. Believing it to be so, I shall be helped to make it so. As I myself am the property of Jesus, my Lord may take an inventory of all I have for it is altogether His own; and I resolve to prove it to be so by the use to which I put it this day. From morning till evening, I would order all things by a happy and holy rule. My bells shall ring: why should they not? Even my horses shall have bells: who has such a right to music as the saints have? But all my bells, my music, my mirth shall be turned to holiness and shall ring out the name of "The Happy God." - Faith's Checkbook

There is nothing which my heart desires more than to see you, the members of this church, distinguished for holiness. It is the Christian's crown and glory. An unholy church! It is of no use to the world and of no esteem among men. Oh, it is an abomination, hell's laughter, heaven's abhorrence. And the larger the church, the more influential, the worse nuisance does it become when it becomes unholy. The worst evils which have ever come upon the world have been brought upon her by an unholy church

In proportion as a church is holy, in that proportion will its testimony for Christ be powerful

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swear, but a holy man adores. A moral man would not commit outward sin; a holy man would not commit inward sin. And if committed, he would pour forth floods of tears.

There can be no such thing as perfect happiness till there is perfect holiness.

A faith which works not for purification will work for putrefaction. Unless our faith makes us pine after holiness, it is no better than the faith of devils, and perhaps it is not even so good as that.

In holiness God is more clearly seen than in anything else, save in the person of Christ Jesus the Lord, of whose life such holiness is but a repetition

Spurgeon commenting on the truth that God "saved us and called us with a **holy calling**" (2 Timothy 1:9-see note) wrote that...

The apostle uses the perfect tense (completed action at a point in time in the past with continuing effect/result) and says, "Who hath saved us." Believers in Christ Jesus are saved. They are not looked upon as persons who are in a hopeful state, and may ultimately be saved, but they are already saved. Salvation is not a blessing to be enjoyed upon the dying bed, and to be sung of in a future state above, but a matter to be obtained, received, promised, and enjoyed now. The Christian is perfectly saved in God's purpose; God has ordained him unto salvation, and that purpose is complete. He is saved also as to the price which has been paid for him: "It is finished" was the cry of the Saviour ere he died. The believer is also perfectly saved in his covenant head, for as he fell in Adam, so he lives in Christ. This complete salvation is accompanied by a holy calling. Those whom the Saviour saved upon the cross are in due time effectually called by the power of God the Holy Spirit unto holiness: they leave their sins; they endeavour to be like Christ; they choose holiness, not out of any compulsion, but from the stress of a new nature, which leads them to rejoice in holiness just as naturally as aforesaid they delighted in sin. God neither chose them nor called them because they were holy, but he called them that they might be holy, and holiness is the beauty produced by his workmanship in them. The excellencies which we see in a believer are as much the work of God as the atonement itself. Thus is brought out very sweetly the fulness of the grace of God. Salvation must be of grace, because the Lord is the author of it: and what motive but grace could move him to save the guilty? Salvation must be of grace, because the Lord works in such a manner that our righteousness is forever excluded. Such is the believer's privilege—a present salvation; such is the evidence that he is called to it—a holy life. (Morning and Evening)

Spurgeon commenting on Jesus' command to "**sanctify** them through Thy truth" (John 17:17) reasoned that...

Sanctification begins in regeneration. The Spirit of God infuses into man that new living principle by which he becomes "a new creature" in Christ Jesus (Ed note: He is "positionally" holy in Christ at this point in time). This work, which begins in the new birth, is carried on in two ways—mortification, whereby the lusts of the flesh are subdued and kept under; and vivification, by which the life which God has put within us is made to be a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. This is carried on every day in what is called "perseverance," by which the Christian is preserved and continued in a gracious state, and is made to abound in good works unto the praise and glory of God; and it culminates or comes to perfection, in "glory," when the soul, being thoroughly purged, is caught up to dwell with holy beings at the right hand of the Majesty on high. But while the Spirit of God is thus the author of sanctification, yet there is a visible agency employed which must not be forgotten. "Sanctify them," said Jesus, "through thy truth: thy word is truth." The passages of Scripture which prove that the instrument of our sanctification is the Word of God are very many. The Spirit of God brings to our minds the precepts and doctrines of truth, and applies them with power. These are heard in the ear, and being received in the heart, they work in us to will and to do of God's good pleasure. The truth is the sanctifier, and if we do not hear or read the truth, we shall not grow in sanctification. We only progress in sound living as we progress in sound understanding. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." Do not say of any error, "It is a mere matter of opinion." No man indulges an error of judgment, without sooner or later tolerating an error in practice. Hold fast the truth, for by so holding the truth shall you be sanctified by the Spirit of God. (Morning and Evening)

Spurgeon comments on the relationship of **faith and true holiness** writing that...

You will never find true faith unattended by true godliness; nor will you ever discover a truly holy life which does not have at its root a living faith based upon the righteousness of Christ. Woe to those who seek one without the other! There are some who cultivate faith and forget holiness. These may be very high in orthodoxy, but they shall be very deep in condemnation, for they

hold the truth in unrighteousness. There are others who have strained after holiness of life, but have denied the faith, like the Pharisees whom the Master said were 'whitewashed sepulchers.' We must have faith, for this is the foundation; we must have holiness of life, for this is the superstructure. We need the superstructure of spiritual life if we would have comfort in the day of doubt. But do not seek a holy life without faith, for that would be to erect a house which can afford no permanent shelter, because it is not founded on a rock.

Spurgeon relates holiness to election:

Some say, "It is unfair for God to choose some and leave others." Now, I will ask you one question: Is there any of you here who wishes to be holy, who wishes to be regenerate, to leave off sin and walk in holiness? "Yes, there is," says someone. "I do!" Then God has elected you. But another says, "No, I don't want to be holy; I don't want to give up my lusts and my vices." Why should you grumble, then, that God has not elected you? For if you were elected, you would not like it, according to your own confession.

J. C. Ryle has some pithy comments on the need for saints to "pursue holiness"

"I do not know what others may think, but to me it does seem clear that heaven would be a miserable place to an unholy man. It cannot be otherwise. People may say in a vague way they "hope to go to heaven," but they do not consider what they say. There must be a certain "meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light." Our hearts must be somewhat in tune. To reach the holiday of glory, we must pass through the training school of grace. We must be heavenly-minded and have heavenly tastes in the life that now is, or else we will never find ourselves in heaven in the life to come." (read entire sermon "Holiness")

I doubt, indeed, whether we have any warrant for saying that a man can possibly be converted without being consecrated to God. More consecrated he doubtless can be, and will be as his grace increases; but if he was not consecrated to God in the very day that he was converted and born again, I do not know what conversion means. ([See J. C. Ryle's book *Holiness considered by many as the best book on the Christian life ever written other than The Book!*](#)),

F B Meyer says that

Holiness is wholeness--that is, the whole-hearted devotion of a whole nature to God, the consecration of every power to His service. This leads us to lean hard on God, and to seek His companionship and fellowship. (Our Daily Walk, Feb 18th)

J. Vernon McGee has these helpful comments on the not too popular topic of "**holiness**":

"Holy" does not mean sinless perfection, a condition impossible in this life (1Jn 1:8, 9, 10). Holiness is that is very misunderstood. To the average person, holiness means to assume a very pious attitude, to become almost abnormal in everyday life. It is thought to be a superficial thing. My friend, the Lord wants you to be a fully integrated personality. He wants you to enjoy life and have fun—I don't mean the sinful kind of fun, but real delight and enjoyment in the life He has given to you. Holiness is to the spiritual life what health is to the physical life. You like to see a person who is physically fine, robust, and healthy. Well, holiness is to be healthy and robust spiritually. Oh, how we need folk like this today!"

In an excellent synopsis of what **holiness** looks like and why it is imperative for believers, **J C Ryle** writes that

"(a) Holiness is the habit of agreeing with the mind with God, in accordance as we find His mind described in Scripture... (b) A holy person will endeavor to turn away from every known sin, and to keep every known commandment... (c) A holy person will strive to be like our Lord Jesus Christ... (d) A holy person will pursue meekness, endurance, gentleness, patience, kindness, and control of their tongue... (e) A holy person will pursue self-control and self-denial... (f) A holy person will pursue love and brotherly kindness... (g) A holy person will pursue a spirit of mercy and benevolence towards others... (h) A holy person will pursue purity of heart... (i) A holy person will pursue the fear of God... (j) A holy man will pursue humility... (k) A holy man will pursue faithfulness in all the duties and relationships in life... (l) Last, but not least, a holy person will pursue spiritual mindedness." (Read Holiness by J. C. Ryle for discussion of each point and practical application)

Pastor Ray Stedman writes

"When I was younger, most people thought of holiness as grimness. I did not like "holy" people... Holy people never smiled and never enjoyed anything. In fact, if they did enjoy anything, they felt guilty about it!... They looked like they had been soaked in embalming fluid. They were grim and dull; they frowned on anything that was fun or pleasurable. But that is not holiness. I like the good English word wholeness, which also derives from the same root [Ed. note: New Unger's Bible Dictionary" says it is "from Saxon, 'halig,' 'whole,' 'sound"... it is moral wholeness... with reference to persons, places & things") Everybody wants to be a

whole person... to have together all the parts which were intended to be there, and to have them functioning as they were intended to function... The Old Testament speaks about "the beauty of holiness" {1Chr 16:29, 2Chr 20:21, Ps 29:2, 96:9}, the inner attractiveness that is apparent when someone begins to function inwardly as he or she was intended. What this says is that God is designing beautiful people! That is what he wants. And not merely outwardly beautiful people like those we see on television, but inwardly beautiful people. He is more interested in inward beauty, in making admirable, trustworthy, strong, loving, compassionate people -- having all the qualities which make for inner beauty. That is what God calls wholeness, and that is his will for you." (Read Pastor Stedman's complete message [Handling your Sex Drive](#))

In the Booklet [Why Would Anyone Want To Be Holy](#) we read that...

"The key to living a holy, Christ-like life is not simply to attend church, try harder, read the Bible, or take a stand against Satan and his lies--as important as all those actions are. The key is this: We are to live the Christian life the way we began it--depend on God's grace and place all our hope and trust in Him. [Ed Note: Jehovah MeKeddeshem, the LORD Who Sanctifies] The apostle Paul put it this way, "Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him" (Col 2:6-note)... In a footnote in *The Discipline of Grace* (NavPress, 1994), author Jerry Bridges writes, "I am aware that a vast number of professing Christians display little or no commitment to spiritual growth or discipleship, and for them the Christian life is no more than the mere formalities of attending church and avoiding scandalous behavior" (p.233)... What do you think? Do you agree with him? Are you assessing your own degree of passion for spiritual growth and discipleship? Are we coasting through life without examining our attitudes and actions in the light of God's Word? Do we view ourselves as pretty decent individuals who don't do any of the "big" sins that get people tossed into jail or out of churches? It's easy to begin to coast spiritually. After all, growth requires hard work. It means sacrificing some short-range "want to's" for some long-range "need to's" that will honor the Lord. There are no quick fixes. Mountaintop spiritual thrills are followed by valleys of spiritual battles and even crushing failures. Becoming holy and Christ-like takes a lifetime. Summarize in your own words the key ways that holiness is to be evidenced in your daily life. What is your greatest struggle right now in your pursuit of holiness? What is God telling you to do as you rely on Him? Take a few moments to pray and respond to what God has said in His Word." ([Ref](#))

R. C. Sproul (from his book "The Holiness of God") reminds us that

"Only once in sacred Scripture is an attribute of God elevated to the third degree. Only once is a characteristic of God mentioned three times in succession. The Bible says that God is holy, holy, holy. Not that He is merely holy, or even holy, holy. He is holy, holy, holy. The Bible never says that God is love, love, love, or mercy, mercy, mercy, or wrath, wrath, wrath, or justice, justice, justice. It does say that He is holy, holy, holy, the whole earth is full of His glory." [**Ed note:** Hebrew repeats words for emphasis or to show degrees of comparison. E.g., if you said a stone was big it would mean one thing but if in Hebrew you said the stone was "big big", you would mean it was a really big stone. And if it was big, big, big, it would mean that it was really big, a veritable gigantic boulder. And so the triplicate "Holy" signifies God is "really holy". A familiar verse is Isaiah 26:3 "The steadfast of mind Thou will keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in Thee." where "perfect peace" is literally "shalom, shalom" or "peace, peace".]

Bob Deffinbaugh writes that

Holiness is the choice to march to the beat of a different drum... The desires which characterize the fallen world we live in once dominated us. These desires are themselves to be rejected and replaced by new desires. This is what holiness is all about—not just doing what God wants, but desiring those things in which He delights. ([Deffinbaugh: A Call to Holiness](#))

Augustine said

Let the acts of the offspring indicate similarity to the Father.

John Calvin reminds of the obvious truth that

No one leads a holy life except he is united to God. [Ed note: specifically to **Jehovah MeKeddeshem** Who makes His people holy!]

Chuck Colson in his book "Loving God" observed that

Holiness is the everyday business of every Christian. It evidences itself in the decisions we make and the things we do, hour by hour, day by day.

Jerry Bridges in his book [The Pursuit of Holiness](#) makes the following observations:

"Our first problem is that our attitude towards sin is more self-centered than God-centered. We are more concerned about our own "Victory" over sin than we are about the fact that our sin grieves the heart of God. We cannot tolerate failure in our struggle with sin chiefly because we are success oriented, not because we know it is offensive to God... the pursuit of holiness is a joint venture

between God (Ed note: **Jehovah Mekeddeshem**) and the Christian. No one can attain any degree of holiness without God working in his life, but just as surely no one will attain it without effort on his own part. God has made it possible for us to walk in holiness. But He has given to us the responsibility of doing the walking; He does not do that for us... holiness is a process, something we never completely attain in this life. Rather, as we begin to conform to the will of God in one area of life, He reveals to us our need in another area. That is why we will always be pursuing - as opposed to attaining - holiness in this life... The idea of exactly how to be holy has suffered from many false concepts. In some circles, holiness is equated with a series of prohibitions - usually in such areas as smoking, drinking & dancing. The list of prohibitions varies depending on the group. When we follow this approach to holiness, we are in danger of becoming like the Pharisees with their endless lists of trivial do's and don'ts, and their self-righteous attitude. For others, it means a particular style of dress and mannerisms. And for still others, it means unattainable perfection, an idea that fosters either delusion or discouragement about one's sin. All of these ideas, while accurate to some degree, miss the true concept. To be holy is to be morally blameless. It is to be separated from sin and, therefore, consecrated to God. The word signifies "separation to God, and the conduct befitting those so separated." (Jerry Bridges excellent and practical book [The Pursuit of Holiness](#) is highly recommended).

Pastor Bruce Goettsche (The Holiness of God - Isaiah 6:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8) gives a semi-humorous (but sadly true) description of how most Evangelicals often envision **Holiness**

"Have you ever gone fishing in a polluted river & hauled out an old shoe, a tea kettle, or a rusty can? I get a similar sort of catch if I cast as a bait the word holiness into the murky depths of my mind. To my dismay I come up with such associations as: thinness, hollow-eyed gauntness, beards, sandals, long robes, stone cells, no sex, no jokes, hair shirts, frequent cold baths, fasting, hours of prayer, wild rocky deserts, getting up at 4 A.M., clean fingernails, stained glass, self-humiliation. But that is not what God is calling us to. He is calling us to a Christ-like living. We are to be set aside for the service of the Lord. The person who is living the life of holiness will be humbly aware of their forgiveness and yet diligent in seeking to eliminate any trace of sin from their lives. They will be people who are constantly saying, "Here am I Lord," use me and lead me as you deem best... The person who has begun to understand God's holiness is a person who is changed. The idea of an unchanged Christian is a contradiction in terms. If you are not pursuing holiness, ([Heb 12:14](#)) there is a good chance you are not a child of God... no matter how long you have been in the church. (Read Eph 5:1-see notes, Eph 5:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 ; see also Wayne Barber's sermon on Eph 5:1ff)

Walter Kaiser in his book "Quest for Renewal" writes that in all Old Testament revivals:

"There was a deep sense of sin and an overpowering desire to separate themselves from it and from all its sponsoring causes. Such divinely induced anxiety and agonizing conviction of sin needs no prompting or psychological maneuvering. The work is uniquely that of the Holy Spirit. The failures of the past, even those that have been forgotten, suddenly become so real and so painfully present that no amount of comfort or personal rationalization will assuage the terrible pressure of individual guilt and heartbreak. Accordingly, so spontaneous and thorough should be the conviction and simultaneous hatred of sin that there will be no need to plead with men and women to make any decisions."

Someone has characterized the average professing Christian's **pursuit of holiness** as follows:

"Some professing Christians spend the first six days of each week sowing their wild oats, then they go to church on Sunday and pray for a crop failure."

There is a myth that exists that says we can live comfortably in our world of faith and then flirt with the world. God calls us to another standard."

W. S. Plumer - "We never see sin aright until we see it as against God... All sin is against God in this sense: that it is His law that is broken, His authority that is despised, His government that is set at naught... Pharaoh and Balaam, Saul and Judas each said, 'I have sinned'; but the returning prodigal said, 'I have sinned against heaven and before thee'; and David said, 'Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned.'"

Whatever else the professing Christian church may be known for today—great crowds, expensive buildings, big budgets, political clout—it's not distinguished for its holiness. Bible-believing evangelical Christians make up a sizable minority in the United States, but our presence isn't making much of an impact on society. The salt seems to have lost its saltiness, and the light is so well hidden that the marketplace is quite dark. Eight times in Scripture, God said to His people, "Be holy, for I am holy!" This is one of the major themes of Leviticus, a book that teaches us how to avoid sin and how to grow in holiness.

J C Ryle - "**Holiness** will show itself in all their conversation, in humility, spiritual-mindedness, patience, meekness and love. There will be something that can be seen. The true work of the **Holy** Spirit cannot be hidden." (Ryle, J. C. Mark)

Dave Roper commenting on "**holiness**" writes "I don't know what comes to your mind when you hear the word '**holy**,' but initially I had a very distorted idea. I thought in terms of hair shirts and hermits like Simon Stylites, who spent his life sitting on a pole to

isolate himself from the world. Someone who is isolated, withdrawn, who has no contact with reality--that is the picture which often comes to mind when we think of **holiness**. But this passage indicates, rather, that **holiness** is conformity to the character of God; it is being godlike. "Be holy," God said, "because I am **holy**." In the character of God, you see everything you have ever wanted out of life. There is love, compassion, grace, and justice. There is strength, courage, mercy, self-control, poise, power-- everything that we as men and women have ever desired. That is what **holiness** is--being like God-- and that is what God calls us to." (Read his full message [A Secular Salvation](#))

Raymond Ortlund makes an interesting observation regarding what it means to **'be holy'** writing that

The logical coherence of our passage tells us what holiness is. Look at verse 14: "As obedient children" That's it. That's holiness. Holy people are God's obedient children. Holiness obeys the Word of God because he's our good Father in heaven who has secured us forever in his love. Through Christ, God has adopted us rebels as his own children. He has poured out upon us family privilege - constant access to him in prayer, for instance. He's preparing a place for us in his eternal home. As obedient children, therefore, we embrace holiness not as a degraded slavery or a hands-off prudishness or stained glass religiosity or a culture of respectability. Holiness cannot be any of these distortions, because holiness radiates from the being of God our gracious Father. "Be holy, because I am holy." Look at the true saints of history. They've had rich human personalities. They were not herded into a one-size-fits-all narrowness. They're the people in history you'd really like to hang out with, like Augustine and Edwards and C. S. Lewis and Eric Liddell. Holiness is a human being so obeying God as Father that the family resemblance begins to show. Holiness is God's personality beautifying your personality. (From a sermon on 1Peter 1:13-note, 1Pe 1:14-note, 1Pe 1:15, 16)

A W Tozer commenting on 1 Peter 1:15, 16 ("be holy as I am holy" - see expository notes on 1 Peter 1:15; 1 Peter 1:16) wrote that...

The Holy Spirit is first of all a moral flame. It is not an accident of language that He is called the Holy Spirit, for whatever else the word holy may mean it does undoubtedly carry with it the idea of moral purity. And the Spirit, being God, must be absolutely and infinitely pure. With Him there are not (as with men) grades and degrees of holiness. He is holiness itself, the sum and essence of all that is unspeakably pure.

No one whose senses have been exercised to know good and evil but must grieve over the sight of zealous souls seeking to be filled with the Holy Spirit while they are yet living in a state of moral carelessness or borderline sin. Such a thing is a moral contradiction. Whoever would be filled and indwelt by the Spirit should first judge his life for any hidden iniquities; he should courageously expel from his heart everything which is out of accord with the character of God as revealed by the Holy Scriptures.

At the base of all true Christian experience must be a sound and sane morality. No joys are valid, no delights legitimate where sin is allowed to live in life or conduct. No transgression of pure righteousness dare excuse itself on the ground of superior religious experience. To seek high emotional states while living in sin is to throw our whole life open to self deception and the judgment of God. "Be ye holy" is not a mere motto to be framed and hung on the wall. It is a serious commandment from the Lord of the whole earth. "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into heaviness" (James 4:8-9). The true Christian ideal is not to be happy but to be holy. The holy heart alone can be the habitation of the Holy Ghost.

Warren Wiersbe recounted the following experience as an example of the trivialization of **holiness**...

"We will stand and sing hymn 325," announced the worship leader, " 'Take Time to Be Holy.' We will sing verses one and four." If I had been sitting with the congregation instead of on the platform, I might have laughed out loud. Imagine a Christian congregation singing "Take Time to Be Holy" and not even taking time to sing the entire song! If we can't take the time (less than four minutes) to sing a song about holiness, we're not likely to take time to devote ourselves to "perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (see notes [2Corinthians 7:1](#)).

Happiness, not **holiness**, is the chief pursuit of most people today, including many professed Christians.

Holiness in the Biblical sense means to be untouched by the normal, the routine, or the ordinary, which is marred by imperfection, corrosion and decay. Holiness means to be set aside for God's special purposes. We're to be set apart and different, not blending in with the crowd, yet not being different for the sake of being different.

John Newton (Amazing Grace) admitted: "I am not what I might be, I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I wish to be, I am not what I hope to be. But I thank God I am not what I once was, and I can say with the great apostle, "By the grace of God I am what I am."

Quietists downplay or totally disregard the believer's effort necessary in the pursuing of holiness (just "let go & let God") and thereby risk promoting spiritual irresponsibility and apathy. On the other hand, **Pietists** can tend to overemphasize human effort and thereby inflame people's pride or lapse into legalism

Sanctification does not primarily mean perfection (although some would disagree with this statement) but instead refers to separation. Separation from sin is now the direction of our lives, and someday separation from sin's pull & sin's pleasure. Sanctification is both an event and a lifelong process as discussed in the **Three Tenses of Salvation**. Sanctification should not be confused with false standards of holiness, adopted by those who, like the Pharisees, attempt to be holy through external means, or who, like the Stoics, have a passionless devotion to duty, or who, like monks, isolate themselves from the world, or who, like quasi-Christian psychologists, replace sanctification with introspection, self-analysis, and improvement of one's self-image. True holiness begins with a love for Christ Himself. That's what compels you toward greater sanctification.

A W Tozer - THE HOLY NATURE OF OUR FAITH

Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. HEBREWS 12:14

The Bible specifically commands us to follow holiness. It is to be our constant ambition. One way to advance in this pursuit of holiness is to accept chastisement and work with God as God works in us.

Holiness is godlikeness, for only God is absolutely holy. All other holy beings are holy in relative degrees. Scripture tells us of the holy angels who will come with Jesus; but even those holy angels have their holiness from another source; it is not native to them. They reflect the glory of God, and that is their holiness. We learn also that holy men of God spoke as the Holy Spirit moved them. Though the word "holy" is the same, for the Holy Spirit it means absolute, uncreated holiness. For the holy man who spoke, it means a derived holiness that comes from God.

God said, "Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:16). I am so glad He did not say, "Be ye holy as I am holy," for this would be one of the most impossible, discouraging, disheartening commandments possible. The focus is, be ye getting holy, becoming holy and relative holy, because I am absolute holiness. What does "holy" mean? As I see it, "holy" has two aspects to it. It has what someone called the numinous quality, and then it has the moral quality.

A W Tozer - A Disturbing Verse

Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. —Hebrews 12:14

The word holy is used to describe the character of angels, the nature of heaven and the character of God. It is written that angels are holy and those angels who gaze down upon the scenes of mankind are called the watchers and holy ones.

It is said that heaven is a holy place where no unclean thing can enter in.

God Himself is described by the adjective holy—Holy Ghost, Holy Lord and Holy Lord God Almighty. These words are used of God throughout the Bible, showing that the highest adjective that can be ascribed to God, the highest attribute that can be ascribed to God is that of holiness, and, in a relative sense, even the angels in heaven partake of the holiness of God.

We note in the Bible, too, that the absence of holiness is given as a reason for not seeing God.... This text does have a meaning and it ought to disturb us until we have discovered what it means and how we may meet its conditions.

The divine antidote for the satanic poison of sin is holiness.... Holiness is an attribute of God and a requirement of the people of God.

A W Tozer - True Holiness IS Positive

It shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it. —Isaiah 35:8

What does this word holiness really mean? Is it a negative kind of piety from which so many people have shied away? No, of course not!

Holiness in the Bible means moral wholeness—a positive quality which actually includes kindness, mercy, purity, moral blamelessness and godliness. It is always to be thought of in a positive, white intensity of degree. Whenever it is written that God is holy it means that God is kind, merciful, pure and blameless in a white, holy intensity of degree.

When used of men, it does not mean absolute holiness as it does of God, but it is still the positive intensity of the degree of holiness—and not negative.

This is why true Bible holiness is positive—a holy man can be trusted. A holy man can be tested. ICH065–066

[The Holy Spirit] is an infinite force that makes our life powerful, and enables us to accomplish all for which we are called as the disciples of Christ. It is power over sin, power over self, power over the world ... power to be, to do.

Holy is Who You Are and are to strive to be)-

On May 28, 1972, the Duke of Windsor, the uncrowned King Edward VIII, died in Paris. On the same evening, a television program recounted the main events of his life. Viewers watched film footage in which the duke answered questions about his upbringing, his brief reign, and his eventual abdication. Recalling his boyhood as Prince of Wales, he said: "My father [King George V] was a strict disciplinarian. Sometimes when I had done something wrong, he would admonish me, saying, 'My dear boy, you must always remember who you are.'" It is my conviction that our heavenly Father says the same to us every day: "My dear child, you must always remember who you are." Let us constantly remind ourselves of who we are [in Christ.] (John Stott, *The Message of Romans*. InterVarsity, 1994);

A W Tozer - God Always Acts Like Himself

Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the LORD our God is holy. —Psalm 99:9

God always acts like Himself wherever He may be and whatever He may be doing. When God became flesh and dwelt among us He did not cease to act as He had been acting from eternity. "He veiled His deity but He did not void it." The ancient name dimmed down to spare the helpless eyes of mortal men, but as much as was seen was true fire.

Christ restrained His powers but He did not violate His holiness. In whatsoever He did He was holy, harmless, separate from sinners and higher than the highest heaven.

Just as in eternity God acted like Himself and when incarnated in human flesh still continued in all His conduct to be true to His holiness, so does He when He enters the nature of a believing man. This is the method by which He makes the redeemed man holy.

We can only become holy through the holiness of God.

A W Tozer - Holiness for Tainted Souls

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. —Proverbs 9:10

We come into the presence of God with tainted souls. We come with our own concept of morality, having learned it from books, from the newspaper and from school. We come to God dirty ... and do nothing about it! If we came to God dirty, but trembling and shocked and awestruck in His presence, if we knelt at His feet and cried with Isaiah, "I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips" (Isaiah 6:5), then I could understand. But we skip into His awful presence. We're dirty, but we have a book called *Seven Steps to Salvation* that gives us seven verses to get us out of our problems. And each year we have more Christians, more people going to church, more church buildings, more money—and less spirituality and less holiness. We're forgetting "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14). I tell you this: I want God to be what God is: the impeccably holy, unapproachable Holy Thing, the All-Holy One. I want Him to be and remain

Lay aside the garments that are stained with sin
And be washed in the blood of the Lamb;
There's a fountain flowing for the soul unclean;
Oh, be washed in the blood of the Lamb.

A W Tozer - Holiness and Worship First

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; ... That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. — Titus 3:5, 7

To teach that the filling with the Holy Spirit is given to the Christian to provide "power for service" is to teach truth, but not the whole truth. Power for service is but one effect of the experience, and I do not hesitate to say that it is the least of several effects. It is least for the very reason that it touches service, presumably service to mankind; and contrary to the popular belief, "to serve this present age" is not the Christian's first duty....The primary work of the Holy Spirit is to restore the lost soul to intimate fellowship with God through the washing of regeneration....God wants worshipers before workers; indeed the only acceptable workers are those who have learned the lost art of worship. It is inconceivable that a sovereign and holy God should be so hard up for workers that He would press into service anyone who had been empowered regardless of his moral qualifications....Gifts and power for service the Spirit surely desires to impart; but holiness and spiritual worship come first.

Oh, Lord, where has the hunger for holiness gone? Remind us of the priority of holiness and spiritual worship. Amen.

A W Tozer - The horrible travesty we have in America today is Christianity without holiness. If you say you accept Jesus, and then go raise hell, you have not accepted Jesus at all. You are a deceived man. You are no better off than if you had never heard of God. The very first qualities of Christianity are holiness, purity, right living, **right thinking** and **right longing**. But we have a Christianity today that has no holiness in it. The Son of God was a holy Son. The Father is the holy Father in heaven. And the Holy Ghost is the Holy Ghost. Our Bible is the Holy Bible, and the Church is called the holy Church. Heaven is a holy heaven, and the angels are holy angels. **Therefore, we ought to take seriously the biblical doctrine of spirituality and holiness. Evangelical churches have fallen so far into the gutter in the day in which we live.** (And He Dwelt Among Us)

A W Tozer - What Would Jesus Do?

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another. —Colossians 3:16

I have known people who seemed to be terrified by God's loving desire that we should reflect His own holiness and goodness. As God's faithful children, we should be attracted to holiness, for holiness is God-likeness—likeness to God!

God encourages every Christian believer to follow after holiness. Holiness is to be our constant ambition—not as holy as God is holy, but holy because God is holy. We know who we are and God knows who He is. He does not ask us to be God, and He does not ask us to produce the holiness that only He Himself knows. Only God is holy absolutely; all other beings can be holy only in relative degrees.

The angels in heaven do not possess God's holiness. They are created beings and they are contented to reflect the glory of God. That is their holiness.

Holiness is not terrifying. Actually, it is amazing and wonderful that God should promise us the privilege of sharing in His nature.

To know Christ is the way to grow in holiness. Christianity is ... the religion of the divine example.... Ask yourself ... what would [Jesus] do if He were here? Nothing else will so surely lead us into the way of holy living.

A W Tozer - Holiness: unpopular subject

The true church understands that it must live a disciplined life. Although our High Priest loves us in spite of our weaknesses and failures, He encourages us to be a holy people because He is a holy God. Holiness may be an unpopular subject in some churches, but holiness in the Christian life is a precious treasure in God's sight.

What I say here may hurt, but I say it anyhow. We have lived with unholiness so long that we are almost incapable of recognizing true holiness. The people of God in the churches of Jesus Christ ought to be a holy people. But ministers have largely given up preaching Bible-centered sermons on holiness. Maybe they would not know what to do with hearers who fell under the convicting power of God's Word. Preachers today would rather give their congregations tranquilizers.

Leviticus 11:44–45; Deuteronomy 7:6; Titus 2:11–14 from Jesus Is Victor!

A W Tozer - God Sees All, Knows All

To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. —Revelation 2:7

We have lived with unholiness so long that we are almost incapable of recognizing true holiness. The people of God in the churches of Jesus Christ ought to be a holy people. But ministers have largely given up preaching Bible-centered sermons on holiness. Maybe they would not know what to do with hearers who fell under the convicting power of God's Word. Preachers today would rather give their congregations tranquilizers....

Our Lord is a holy Lord, and His eyes are as a flame of fire. His X-ray eyes can see right through everything! We can hide nothing from God. He sees all and knows all. But apparently we have a hard time with that fact—preachers and lay people alike. We seem to think our respectability should be accepted by our Lord as spirituality. JIV061–062

The basic principle in a spiritual life lies in its control. The Holy Spirit works to bring the Christian to refuse the further reign of self and to choose the sovereignty of Christ over his life by yielding to Him as Lord.

You cannot get power from God until you receive holiness.

A W Tozer - What Does Holiness Really Mean?

What does this word holiness really mean? Is it a negative kind of piety from which so many people have shied away?

No, of course not! Holiness in the Bible means moral wholeness—a positive quality which actually includes kindness, mercy, purity, moral blamelessness and godliness. It is always to be thought of in a positive, white intensity of degree. Whenever it is written that God is holy it means that God is kind, merciful, pure and blameless in a white, holy intensity of degree. When used of men, it does not mean absolute holiness as it does of God, but it is still the positive intensity of the degree of holiness—and not negative.

This is why true Bible holiness is positive—a holy man can be trusted. A holy man can be tested. People who try to live by a negative standard of piety, a formula that has been copyrighted by other humans, will find that their piety does not stand up in times of difficult testing.

Genuine holiness can be put into the place of testing without fear. Whenever there is a breakdown of holiness, that is proof there never was any real degree of holiness in the first place.

Personally, I truly have been affected in my heart by reading the testimonies and commentaries of humble men of God whom I consider to be among the great souls of Christian church history.

I have learned from them that the word and idea of holiness as originally used in the Hebrew did not have first of all the moral connotation. It did not mean that God first of all was pure, for that was taken for granted!

The original root of the word holy was of something beyond, something strange and mysterious and awe-inspiring. When we consider the holiness of God we talk about something heavenly, full of awe, mysterious and fear-inspiring. Now, this is supreme when it relates to God, but it is also marked in men of God and deepens as men become more like God.

It is a sense of awareness of the other world, a mysterious quality and difference that has come to rest upon some men—that is a holiness. Now, if a man should have that sense and not be morally right, then I would say that he is experiencing a counterfeit of the devil.

Whenever Satan has reason to fear a truth very gravely, he produces a counterfeit. He will try to put that truth in such a bad light that the very persons who are most eager to obey it are frightened away from it. Satan is very sly and very experienced in the forming of parodies of truth which he fears the most, and then pawns his parody off as the real thing and soon frightens away the serious-minded saints.

I regret to say that some who have called themselves by a kind of copyrighted name of holiness have allowed the doctrine to harden into a formula which has become a hindrance to repentance, for this doctrine has been invoked to cover up frivolity and covetousness, pride and worldliness.

I have seen the results. Serious, honest persons have turned away from the whole idea of holiness because of those who have claimed it and then lived selfish and conceited lives.

But, brethren, we are still under the holy authority of the apostolic command. Men of God have reminded us in the Word that God does ask us and expect us to be holy men and women of God, because we are the children of God, who is holy. The doctrine of holiness may have been badly and often wounded—but the provision of God by His pure and gentle and loving Spirit is still the positive answer for those who hunger and thirst for a life and spirit well-pleasing to God.

When a good man with this special quality and mysterious Presence is morally right and walking in all the holy ways of God and carries upon himself without even knowing it the fragrance of a kingdom that is supreme above the kingdoms of this world, I am ready to accept that as being of God and from God! (from I Call It Heresy)

A W Tozer - Holiness: commanded

You cannot study the Bible diligently and earnestly without being struck by an obvious fact—the whole matter of personal holiness is highly important to God!

Neither do you have to give long study to the attitudes of modern Christian believers to discern that by and large we consider the expression of true Christian holiness to be just a matter of personal option: “I have looked it over and considered it, but I don’t buy it!”...

Personally, I am of the opinion that we who claim to be apostolic Christians do not have the privilege of ignoring such apostolic injunctions. I do not mean that a pastor can forbid or that a church can compel. I only mean that morally we dare not ignore this commandment, “Be holy.”...

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does ask us and expect us to be holy men and women of God, because we are the children of God, who is holy. The doctrine of holiness may have been badly and often wounded—but the provision of God by His pure and gentle and loving Spirit is still the positive answer for those who hunger and thirst for the life and spirit well-pleasing to God.

Leviticus 19:2; 2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 Peter 1:14–16 I Call It Heresy! (Tozer Topical Reader)

A W Tozer - God: His holiness

Neither the writer nor the reader of these words is qualified to appreciate the holiness of God. Quite literally a new channel must be cut through the desert of our minds to allow the sweet waters of truth that will heal our great sickness to flow in. We cannot grasp the true meaning of the divine holiness by thinking of someone or something very pure and then raising the concept to the highest degree we are capable of. God's holiness is not simply the best we know infinitely bettered. We know nothing like the divine holiness. It stands apart, unique, unapproachable, incomprehensible and unattainable. The natural man is blind to it. He may fear God's power and admire His wisdom, but His holiness he cannot even imagine.

Only the Spirit of the Holy One can impart to the human spirit the knowledge of the holy....

1 Samuel 2:2; Isaiah 6:3; Ephesians 1:17; Revelation 4:8 The Knowledge of the Holy, (Tozer Topical Reader)

A W Tozer - Holiness—Something Beyond

According as he hath chosen us ... that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. —Ephesians 1:4

Genuine holiness can be put into the place of testing without fear. Whenever there is a breakdown of holiness, that is proof there never was any real degree of holiness in the first place.

Personally, I truly have been affected in my heart by reading the testimonies and commentaries of humble men of God whom I consider to be among the great souls of Christian Church history.

I have learned from them that the word and idea of holiness as originally used in the Hebrew did not have first of all the moral connotation. It did not mean that God first of all was pure, for that was taken for granted!

The original root of the word holy was of something beyond, something strange and mysterious and awe-inspiring. When we consider the holiness of God we talk about something heavenly, full of awe, mysterious and fear-inspiring. Now, this is supreme when it relates to God, but it is also marked in men of God and deepens as men become more like God.

Holiness is not a condition wrought in us. It is simply the Holy One in us ruling, filling.

A W Tozer - BE YE HOLY!

But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. —1 Peter 1:15-16

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Brethren, we are still under the holy authority of the apostolic command. Men of God have reminded us in the Word that God does ask us and expect us to be holy men and women of God, because we are the children of God, who is holy. The doctrine of holiness may have been badly and often wounded—but the provision of God by His pure and gentle and loving Spirit is still the positive answer for those who hunger and thirst for a life and spirit well-pleasing to God.

A W Tozer - Holiness Is Not an Option!

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You cannot study the Bible diligently and earnestly without being struck by an obvious fact—the whole matter of personal holiness is highly important to God!

Neither do you have to give long study to the attitudes of modern Christian believers to discern that by and large we consider the expression of true Christian holiness to be just a matter of personal option: “I have looked it over and considered it, but I don’t buy it!”

I have always liked the word exhort better than command so I remind you that Peter has given every Christian a forceful exhortation to holiness of life and conversation. He clearly bases this exhortation on two great facts—first, the character of God, and second, the command of God.

[In the New Testament] the emphasis is not upon happiness but upon holiness. God is more concerned with the state of people’s hearts than with the state of their feelings.

A W Tozer - Spiritual Twins: Holiness and Happiness

But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings: that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. 1 Peter 4:13

I want to bring you my postulate that most present-day Christians live sub-Christian lives. As a result, Christianity has been watered down until the solution is so weak that if it were poison it would not hurt anyone and if it were medicine it would not cure anyone! Most Christians are not joyful persons because they are not holy persons, and they are not holy persons because they are not filled with the Holy Spirit, and they are not filled with the Holy Spirit because they are not separated persons. The Spirit cannot fill whom He cannot separate, and whom He cannot fill, He cannot make holy, and whom He cannot make holy, He cannot make happy! My postulate further insists that the average modern Christian is not Christlike. The proof of this is apparent in the disposition that we find among the children of God. They have moral weaknesses and suffer frequent defeats. They have a dulled understanding and often live far below the standard of the Scriptures and thus outside the will of God. To be honest, let us admit that the application of the gospel is being pulled down to the standard of the most carnal, the cheapest saintling hanging on by the teeth anywhere in the kingdom of God!

A W Tozer - Happiness; Holiness: first need

No man should desire to be happy who is not at the same time holy. He should spend his efforts in seeking to know and do the will of God, leaving to Christ the matter of how happy he shall be.

For those who take this whole thing seriously I have a suggestion: Go to God and have an understanding. Tell Him that it is your desire to be holy at any cost, and then ask Him never to give you more happiness than holiness. When your holiness becomes tarnished, let your joy become dim. And ask Him to make you holy whether you are happy or not. Be assured that in the end you will be as happy as you are holy; but for the time being let your whole ambition be to serve God and be Christlike.

1 Chronicles 16:25–29; Romans 6:11–19; 2 Corinthians 7:1 Of God and Men (from Tozer Topical Reader)

A W Tozer - Joy; Holiness: basis for joy; Holy Spirit: filling

I repeat: Most modern Christians live sub-Christian lives! Most Christians are not joyful persons because they are not holy persons, and they are not holy persons because they are not filled with the Holy Spirit, and they are not filled with the Holy Spirit because they are not separated persons. The Spirit cannot fill whom He cannot separate, and whom He cannot fill, He cannot make holy, and whom He cannot make holy, He cannot make happy!

2 Corinthians 6:17–18; Ephesians 5:18–19; 1 John 1:6–9 I Talk Back to the Devil, (from Tozer Topical Reader)

A W Tozer - SHARING GOD’S NATURE

Precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature. 2 Peter 1:4

Our heavenly Father disciplines us for our own good, “that we might be partakers of his holiness” (Hebrews 12:10). God’s motives are always loving! I have known people who seemed to be terrified by God’s loving desire that we should reflect His own holiness and goodness. As God’s faithful children, we should be attracted to holiness, for holiness is Godlikeness—likeness to God! God encourages every Christian believer to follow after holiness. We know who we are and we know who God is. He does not ask us to be God and He does not ask us to produce the holiness that only He Himself knows. Only God is holy absolutely: All other beings can be holy only in relative degrees. Actually, it is amazing and wonderful that God should promise us the privilege of sharing in His

nature. He remembers we were made of dust. So He tells us what is in His being as He thinks of us: "It is My desire that you grow in grace and in the knowledge of Me. I want you to be more like Jesus, My eternal Son, every day you live!"

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A W Tozer - Holiness is a Moral Flame

[God] hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling ... according to his own purpose and grace. —2 Timothy 1:9

One of the most telling blows which the enemy ever struck at the life of the Church was to create in her a fear of the Holy Spirit. No one who mingles with Christians in these times will deny that such a fear exists. Few there are who without restraint will open their whole heart to the blessed Comforter. He has been and is so widely misunderstood that the very mention of His name in some circles is enough to frighten many people into resistance.... Perhaps we may help to destroy its power over us if we examine that fire which is the symbol of the Spirit's Person and presence.

The Holy Spirit is first of all a moral flame. It is not an accident of language that He is called the Holy Spirit, for whatever else the word holy may mean it does undoubtedly carry with it the idea of moral purity. And the Spirit, being God, must be absolutely and infinitely pure. With Him there are not (as with men) grades and degrees of holiness. He is holiness itself, the sum and essence of all that is unspeakably pure.

Holiness is Christ, our Sanctification, enthroned as Life of our life. It is Christ, the Holy One, in us, living, speaking, walking.

A W Tozer - Personal Holiness

But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. —1 Peter 1:15–16

You cannot study the Bible diligently and earnestly without being struck by an obvious fact—the whole matter of personal holiness is highly important to God!

Neither do you have to give long study to the attitudes of modern Christian believers to discern that by and large we consider the expression of true Christian holiness to be just a matter of personal option: "I have looked it over and considered it, but I don't buy it!"...

Personally, I am of the opinion that we who claim to be apostolic Christians do not have the privilege of ignoring such apostolic injunctions. I do not mean that a pastor can forbid or that a church can compel. I only mean that morally we dare not ignore this commandment, "Be holy."...

But, brethren, we are still under the holy authority of the apostolic command. Men of God have reminded us in the Word that God does ask us and expect us to be holy men and women of God, because we are the children of God, who is holy. The doctrine of holiness may have been badly and often wounded—but the provision of God by His pure and gentle and loving Spirit is still the positive answer for those who hunger and thirst for a life and spirit well-pleasing to God.

Pursuing Holiness Read: Romans 6:14-23

Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord. —Hebrews 12:14

We often see surveys that ask people if they are happy, satisfied with their work, or enjoying life. But I've never seen an opinion poll that asked, "Are you holy?" How would you answer that question?

One Bible dictionary defines holiness as "separation to God and conduct fitting for those separated." Author Frederick Buechner said

that when writing about a person's character, "nothing is harder to make real than holiness." He adds that "holiness is not a human quality at all, like virtue. Holiness is . . . not something that people do, but something that God does in them."

Romans 6 presents the stunning gift that God gives us through faith in Christ: "We were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (v.4). The pursuit of holiness occurs daily as we yield ourselves in obedience to the Lord instead of following our old ways of self-gratification. "Now you are free from the power of sin and have become slaves of God. Now you do those things that lead to holiness and result in eternal life" (v.22 nlt).

Are you becoming more holy? By God's grace and power, the answer can be a resounding "Yes! More and more each day."

Father, I want to cooperate with You in Your work of changing me to become more like Jesus. Help me to walk in Your ways. Without Your work in me, nothing of lasting value will occur in my growth in holiness.

The choice to pursue holiness is a matter of life or death.

INSIGHT: In Romans 6:23 we are shown the great contrast between earned wages and the gift of grace. All that we are capable of earning (wages) is death, but in Christ (the gift of God) we are offered payment for our sins and life forever. By David McCasland

Happiness And Holiness - Read: 1 Peter 1:13-21

Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord. —Hebrews 12:14

At Harvard University, you can take a course in happiness. This popular class helps students discover, as the professor states, "How to get happy."

That's not a bad idea. In fact, the Bible even suggests on several occasions the importance of being happy or joyful. Solomon tells us that God grants happiness to us as a privilege (Eccl. 3:12; 7:14; 11:9).

Sometimes, though, we take the search for earthly happiness too far. We see it as the most important pursuit, and even believe that our happiness is God's highest goal for us. That's when our thinking gets confused.

God's Word tells us that true happiness comes by keeping God's law (Ps. 1:1-2; Prov. 16:20; 29:18). God demands holiness and has called us to live a holy life—one that exemplifies His moral character (1 Thess. 4:7; 2 Peter 3:11). In Peter's first letter we read, "As He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, 'Be holy, for I am holy'" (1 Peter 1:15-16).

When we face decisions about the way we should act or how we should live, we must keep in mind that God's command is not "Be happy," but "Be holy." True joy will come from a holy, God-honoring life. By Dave Branon

In all I think and say and do,
I long, O God, to honor You;
But may my highest motive be
To love the Christ who died for me. —D. De Haan

There is no true happiness apart from holiness and no holiness apart from Christ.

Happy and Holy - A boy who had just listened to a long sermon walked out of church with a big frown on his face. His father had pulled his ear during the service to keep him from fidgeting. "What's the matter, Johnny?" asked one of the deacons. "You look so sad." The frustrated young fellow responded quickly, "I am. It's hard to be happy and holy at the same time."

This boy was probably expressing the feelings of many young Christians, and perhaps many adults as well. They have the idea that if they are to be good, they can't possibly be happy. The nineteenth-century South African minister Andrew Murray corrected that misconception. He said, "Holiness is essential to true happiness; happiness is essential to true holiness. If you would have joy, the fullness of joy, an abiding joy which nothing can take away, be holy as God is holy. Holiness is blessedness... If we would live lives of joy, assuring God and man and ourselves that our Lord is everything, is more than all to us, oh, let us be holy! ... If you would be a holy Christian, you must be a happy Christian. Jesus was anointed by God with 'the oil of gladness,' that He might give us the 'oil of joy.' In all our efforts after holiness, the wheels will move heavily if there be not the oil of joy."

The joy of Christ should ring through our souls in our most holy moments. We're on the road to spiritual maturity when we've learned that happiness and holiness are not enemies, but friends. —D. C. Egner ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

The Importance of How Read: Numbers 4:17-32 |

Assign to each man his work and what he is to carry. Numbers 4:19

While attending Bible college, my friend Charlie and I worked for a furniture store. We often made deliveries accompanied by an interior decorator who talked with the people who had purchased the furniture while we brought it from the truck into the house. Sometimes we had to carry the furniture up several flights of stairs in an apartment building. Charlie and I often wished we had the decorator's job instead of ours!

During Israel's 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, three clans from the priestly tribe of Levi—the Kohathites, Gershonites, and Merarites—were assigned the job of transporting the Tent of Meeting (tabernacle). They put it up, took it down, and carried it to the next place, then repeated the process again and again. Their job description was simple: "Carry the things assigned to you" (see Num. 4:32).

All of us can choose our attitude toward the tasks we're given.

I wonder if these "custodians" ever envied the "clergymen" who offered sacrifices and incense using the holy articles in the sanctuary (vv. 4-5,15). That job must have looked much easier and more prestigious. But both assignments were important and came from the Lord.

Many times we don't get to select the work we do. But all of us can choose our attitude toward the tasks we're given. How we do the job God gives us is the measure of our service to Him.

Father in heaven, our work in life often causes us to wonder if we are accomplishing anything worthwhile. Give us eyes to see the importance of the tasks You have given us so that we may honor You by the way we do them.

Humble work becomes holy work when it's done for God.

He Leads Me Read: Psalm 23 |

He leads me beside the still waters. —Psalm 23:2

In Istanbul, Turkey, in 2005, one sheep jumped off a cliff and then nearly 1,500 others followed! In the end, about one-third of them died. Not knowing which way to go, sheep mindlessly follow other members of the flock.

No better word picture than sheep can be found to illustrate our need for a trustworthy leader. We are all, Isaiah wrote, like sheep (Isa. 53:6). We tend to go our own way, yet we desperately need the sure direction of a shepherd.

Psalm 23 describes the trustworthiness of our Good Shepherd. He cares for us (v.1); He provides for our physical needs (v.2); He shows us how to live holy lives (v.3); He restores us, comforts us, heals us, and bountifully blesses us (vv.3-5); and He will not abandon us (v.6).

What a comfort to know that God gently but firmly leads us! He does so through the urging of the Holy Spirit, the reading of His Word, and through prayer. God is the reliable leader we need.

In acknowledgment of our dependence on the Lord, we can say with the psalmist, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters."

Like sheep that sometimes wander from the flock
In tangled paths of life to lose their way,
I need my Shepherd's hand and watchful eye
To keep me always, lest I go astray. —Sanders

The Lamb who died to save us is the Shepherd who lives to guide us.

INSIGHT: Today's familiar and beloved psalm has brought comfort and hope to many. And well it should. This psalm celebrates all that the Good Shepherd does for His sheep. The greatest benefit comes in the last verse: We will "dwell in the house of the Lord forever" (v.6). God does so much to provide for and care for His sheep. However, there is an implicit idea in this text that should not be overlooked: Sheep follow their shepherd. The blessings and comfort of this psalm do not come to sheep that do not follow the Shepherd. As Jesus reminds us, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me" (John 10:27). By David Egner

The Growth Chart - Read: 2 Peter 3:10-18 |

Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. —2 Peter 3:18

If my family ever moves from the house where we live now, I want to unhinge the pantry door and take it with me! That door is special because it shows how my children have grown over the years. Every few months, my husband and I place our children against the door and pencil a mark just above their heads. According to our growth chart, my daughter shot up 4 inches in just 1 year!

While my children grow physically as a natural part of life, there's another kind of growth that happens with some effort—our spiritual growth in Christlikeness. Peter encouraged believers to “grow in the grace and knowledge” of Jesus (2 Peter 3:18). He said that maturing in our faith prepares us for Christ's return. The apostle wanted Jesus to come back and find believers living in peace and righteousness (v.14). Peter viewed spiritual growth as a defense against teaching that incorrectly interprets God's Word and leads people astray (vv.16-17).

Even when we feel discouraged and disconnected from God, we can remember that He will help us advance in our faith by making us more like His Son. His Word assures us that “He who has begun a good work in [us] will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:6).

Dear God, I invite Your Holy Spirit
to mold me into the person You want me to be.
Empower me to keep reaching for
the holiness I see in Jesus.

Spiritual growth requires the solid food of God's Word.

INSIGHT: The exhortation to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord” is the end goal of every believer (2 Peter 3:18; cf. John 17:3; Eph. 1:17; Col. 1:10; 3:10; 1 John 5:20). God wants us to grow and not to remain spiritual infants (1 Peter 2:2). By Jennifer Benson Schuldt

DOWN A MINE SHAFT Robert Morgan

Today I'd like to begin a series of sermons that some preachers would view as homiletic suicide—preaching through the Old Testament book of Leviticus. I happen to like Leviticus, but I'll admit that it is a recently acquired taste. As I've been studying for this series of messages in recent months, I've developed a much greater love and appreciation for Leviticus. This book will never be our favorite book in the Bible. It doesn't have the loftiness of Ephesians, the practicality of Proverbs, or the engaging narrative of the Four Gospels. It doesn't contain inspiring poetry like the book of Psalms, nor intriguing information about the last days like the book of Revelation. It's just—well, it's just Leviticus. But it has a vitally important message that we have got to hear and heed.

I feel like a man leading a tour down a mineshaft. Think of the book of Leviticus as a diamond mine or a gold mine. If you were to study the surface of the earth above a gold or diamond mine, it would appear unremarkable. Perhaps it would be boring terrain or difficult to traverse. To really see the wealth of this land, you have to descend into the depths and chip away at the rock; and there you would find the jewels. For reasons known only to Himself, the Lord put gravel on the surface of the earth, readily available to all.

But He put diamonds and rubies down in the bowels of the earth to be found by those who really dig for them. Bible study sometimes resembles mining; and for the next several weeks, I'd like to take you down the mine shaft of Leviticus to see some of the diamonds and rubies that it contains.

There's more than meets the eye to Leviticus. This morning's message is simply a survey of the theme of the book of Leviticus as a whole, and tonight's message will be a survey of its remarkable plan and outline. These are the introductory studies for us into Leviticus.

The first thing to notice is that Leviticus is simply an unbroken continuation of the book of Exodus. In the book of Exodus, we read about Moses, the Man of God, delivering the children of Israel out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, and into the desert on their way to the land God had promised to give them. Their first major stop was at Mount Sinai. There God called Moses to the top of the mountain to receive the Ten Commandments. Moses was also given a rather lengthy set of instructions for the building of a portable worship center called the Tabernacle. As we progress through the book of Exodus, we read of the construction of this

Tabernacle; then notice how the book of Exodus ends:

Then the cloud covered the Tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the Tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle. Whenever the cloud was taken up from above the Tabernacle, the children of Israel would go onward in all their journeys. But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not journey till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the Lord was above the Tabernacle by day, and fire was over it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys. Now the Lord called to Moses, and spoke to him from the Tabernacle of meeting, saying... (Exodus 40:34 – Leviticus 1:1).

...and what God said to Moses here at Sinai from the Tabernacle of Meeting is our book of Leviticus. In other words, this book is basically a continuation of the book of Exodus, telling us what happened while the Israelites were encamped at Mount Sinai. Here at Sinai, God was going to tell the Israelites two things in the book of Leviticus: First, that He was a **holy** God; and second, He had delivered them from Egypt that they might be His **holy** people, His priestly nation to the world.

The theme of Leviticus is: Be holy, for I am holy.

Why is it called Leviticus? Well, that wasn't its original title. The Hebrew name of the book is simply the first word of the book, which is one word in Hebrew but three words in English: "And He called..." When the Old Testament was translated into Greek, into the Septuagint Version, the translators choose to call this book λευιτικον (Leutikon) which meant "Pertaining to the Levities." The Levites were the descendants of the patriarch Levi (one of the sons of Jacob) who served as the priests of Israel. Much of Leviticus pertains to the priesthood, and so this title stuck. It was carried over into the Latin Vulgate and then into our English translations. The book of Leviticus contains 27 chapters serving as the bridge between the books of Exodus and Numbers.

A Monotonous Book

First, Leviticus is, quite frankly, a monotonous book. In fact, it has a reputation of being the dullest, most boring book in the entire Bible. My friend, Neil Gilliland, calls it "One Hundred and One Ways to Kill a Bull." You know as well as I do that a good many people decide they're going to read through the Bible and they make good progress until they come to Leviticus. Then they get bogged down. It has a lot of repetitious language and rather tedious information to sort through. But there's a second thing I want to say about Leviticus.

A Meaningful Book

I'd like to convince you today that Leviticus is a meaningful book. The best thing I ever read about Leviticus was a quote by J. Sidlow Baxter who said: "Obviously, (Leviticus) was not meant just to be read, but to be studied." He goes on to say, "It yields little of its treasure as a mere reading; but a reasonable concentration transforms it into one of the most intriguing articles in Scripture."

Do you realize: (1) Leviticus was the first book studied by Jewish children. (2) It is quoted about forty times in the New Testament. (3) There are parts of the New Testament, particularly in the book of Hebrews, that cannot be understood without knowing something of the book of Leviticus.

A Methodical Book

Third, the book of Leviticus is a methodical book. Its theme is very easy to find, and its outline is easy to detect. It is an organized, well-structured, well-arranged, methodical book. Let's deal first with the great theme of Leviticus, and then tonight I want to show you its remarkable outline.

The theme of Leviticus, as I have indicated, is holiness. The holiness of God, and the holiness that God requires of us. We see this in several ways. First, the word holy occurs over and over in Leviticus—95 times! Let me give you some examples:

Leviticus 10:1ff: Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. So fire went out from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord. And Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the Lord spoke, saying: 'By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; and before all the people I must be glorified.'"

There you have the theme of Leviticus in a nutshell. By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy. That meant Nadab and Abihu, and that means you and me. No one can approach God or know Him or serve Him without regarding Him as holy. Look down at verse 10 in the same chapter. What does God desire for you and me? ...that you may distinguish between holy and unholy, and between clean and unclean.

That's exactly what's wrong with our world today. People have lost the ability to distinguish between the holy and the unholy, between what's right and what's wrong. Do you remember the old story of the boys who broke into a department store one night? They didn't steal anything; they just changed all the price tags. The next morning, fur coats were selling for a buck and a half, while little pieces of costume jewelry were priced at thousands of dollars. The value of everything was reversed. We're living in an age in which the devil has changed the price tags on everything, and moral values have been reversed in this world.

To be a Christian with a sense of morality is viewed as being bigoted and blighted and puritanical and extreme; but to have an open attitude toward same-sex marriage and an "anything goes" society is to be healthy, unbiased, and open-minded.

This was why the ancient rabbis taught Leviticus to Jewish children at a very early point in their synagogue education—to help them know from their earliest days the difference between right and wrong. The purpose of Leviticus is to give us a sense of the holiness of God that we might be able to distinguish between holy and unholy, between the clean and the unclean.

Look at the next chapter—Leviticus 11:45: For I am the Lord who brings you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.

Turn over to Leviticus 14, a chapter devoted to the theme of leprosy. Here we have a set of instructions for the doctors—who were the Levites—to detect cases of leprosy. Look at the way the chapter ends in Leviticus 14:54ff: This is the law for any leprous sore and scale, for the leprosy of a garment and of a house, for a swelling and a scab and a bright spot, to teach when it is unclean and when it is clean. This is the law of leprosy.

We bring value judgments into every arena of life, don't we? We have to make value judgments and moral decisions constantly. The book of Leviticus is designed to teach us true holiness that we might make the best judgments possible.

Look at verse 31 of the next chapter—Leviticus 15:31: Thus you shall separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness when they defile My Tabernacle that is among them.

In other words, God Himself intended to dwell among the children of Israel. He was going to live with them, to be their God, to walk in their midst. Therefore they had to reflect His holiness.

Leviticus 19:1ff says: And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: 'You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.'"

Leviticus 20:7-8 says: Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am the Lord your God. And you shall keep My statutes and perform them: I am the Lord who sanctifies you.

Lev 20:26: And you shall be holy to Me, for I the Lord am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be Mine.

This is the theme of Leviticus—holiness.

God is holy, and since He is our God, we must reflect His holiness in our lives.

That brings us an important question. What does the word "**holy**" really mean? This is a word that occurs nearly 700 times in the Bible. Some theologians say that all of God's moral attributes can be summed up in two words: Love and Light. God is Love and God is Light. Holiness would be another word for Light.

At its very root, the word holy means separate, distinct, different, and set apart from all other. When Senator Albert Gore died in 1998, I drove past the airport. There were many planes there. Military planes, commercial jet liners, all the small planes that are usually there, cargo jets, and etc. Air Force Two—the Vice President's plane—was there. But President Clinton had come to Nashville for the funeral, and there was no mistaking Air Force One. It was separate, distinct, and different from all the others. It was huge—a specially modified Boeing 747. It had a security parameter all around it, and anyone trying to approach it would be stopped. It was separate, distinct, different, and set apart from all the rest.

That is the root meaning of the term holiness—separate, distinct, different, and set apart from all the rest. But this word has a particular moral application when it comes to God. It means that He is separate, distinct, different, and set apart from everything else in the universe because of the absolute and utter absence of evil within Him.

Herbert Lockyer put it this way:

As the absolutely Holy One, God is free from evil and hates and abhors sin. He is glorious in holiness—holiness being the most sparkling jewel in His crown. As His power makes Him mighty, so His holiness makes Him glorious. God possesses intrinsic holiness. He is holy in His nature. As light is the essence of the sun, so holiness is God's very being. God is absolutely distinct from all His creatures, and above them in infinite majesty. He is holy in all His ways... As the sun cannot darken, so God cannot act unrighteously. He is the Holy One. Holiness is His inward character—not merely a trait of His Being, but His very essence.... From the dateless past, He has been free from all moral impurity and is therefore morally perfect.[1]

Holiness is God's infinite and unchangeable moral excellence which He eternally wills and maintains.

The first time the word "**holy**" occurs in the Bible is in Exodus 3:5 when Moses turns aside to see the burning bush in the desert. A voice thundering from the bush said: "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground."

Just as there is a security perimeter around Air Force 1, there is a holiness perimeter around God Himself. There is a zone of holiness and everything unholy that enters that zone is instantly and constantly consumed by the blazing purity of His holiness. It's just like flying into the sun. How long would you or I last if we were on a spaceship flying into the sun? How long before we were consumed? How long before we were burned up in its intense heat and light?

Why was Moses commanded to remove his sandals? Have you ever tried to walk barefoot across blistering sand, rocky ground, and prickly terrain? You have to do so very slowly and carefully. God didn't want Moses rushing carelessly into this holiness perimeter. He needed to approach the holiness of God slowly, very cautiously and with great fear and trembling.

Exodus 15:11 says: Who is like You, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?

1 Samuel 2:2 says: No one is holy like the Lord, for there is none besides You, nor is there any rock like our God.

Isaiah 40:25 says: "To whom then will you liken Me, or to whom shall I be equal?" says the Holy One.

1 Chronicles 16:10 says: Glory in His holy name.

1 Chronicles 16:29 says: Worship the Lord in the beauty of His holiness.

Psalms 93:5 says: Holiness adorns Your house, O Lord, forever.

Habakkuk 2:20 says: The Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him.

Revelation 15:4 says: Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name for You alone are holy.

Revelation 4:8 says: The four living creatures... do not rest day or night, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!"

The book of Leviticus is the book in the Bible that establishes the foundation for this great central column of biblical truth – the doctrine and the reality of the holiness of God. Can you imagine a truth more needed by our generation? Our generation has lost all sense of the concept of God's holiness. The idea of the blazing, blinding fire of God's moral purity and holiness might as well be on the backside of the universe as far as today's society is concerned.

The theme of Leviticus is that God is holy, and His holiness is to be the standard of our conduct and behavior. His holiness is the moral foundation of our lives. Be ye holy, for I am holy. Holiness is not a standard to which God conforms. Holiness is that which God is, and everything else in the universe must conform to that standard or it is ruined. Everything in the universe is good as it conforms to God's holiness and everything in the universe is evil as it does not. The holiness of God provides the basis for moral absolutes in the universe—and this is the very truth that is under such attack in our world today.

It's remarkable to see what has happened to America since World War II. We've just commemorated the 60th anniversary of D-Day, when Allied troops began the liberation of Europe from Hitler's Nazis. At that time, there was a consensus in America that there was

a universal, absolute moral standard of right and wrong, and that sense of good and evil is what propelled those boys across the cliffs of Normandy. By the same token, the very heart of Nazi Germany rejected all such standards.

Adolf Hitler rejected the idea of a personal God who decreed absolute truth. One of the reasons he hated the Jews was because they represented transcendent monotheism—the belief in an eternal yet personal God. By killing the Jews, Hitler thought could eradicate those who had ‘invented’ God.” Hitler rejected biblical authority and as a result He and all Nazi Germany rejected all sense of absolute moral standards. So morality became fluid. It could become whatever a man or a society wanted it to be. It became relative. It became unhinged and detached from any absolute, infinite, divine standard.

And now, sixty years later, this is exactly the philosophy being espoused by our modern American culture, and those who dare stand up in opposition are called “right-wing religious extremists.”

The other day I bought a clock. The directions told me not to try to set the clock. I was only to put in a battery and push a little button. Something within the clock sent out signals to Colorado Springs to the US Naval Observatory. I pushed the little button, and within a couple of minutes the hands of my clock started moving all by themselves as if by magic. It was almost spooky. My clock automatically synchronized itself to the absolute standard of the master clock operated by the U.S. Government.

What if I gathered a group of people in the room and said, “What time do you think it is? What time do you want it to be? There’s no absolute standard. We can set this clock however we want. Time is relative, so if we want it to be midnight right now—no problem.”

Our society has disconnected itself from the absolute standard of the holiness of God, and we’re heading down the same slippery slope that doomed the morality of Nazi Germany. The problem is that we have lost the message of the book of Leviticus. God is holy, and His holiness is the basis of our conduct and morality.

That is Leviticus in a nutshell. If there was ever a need for a generation to rediscover a great biblical theme, it is for our generation to rediscover the concept of the holiness of God. One way of doing that is to descend into the mineshaft of Leviticus, for there we find the diamond of God’s holy character.

A Messianic Book

And that brings me to the final point in today’s message, Leviticus is a Messianic book—it is all about Atonement, all about Divinely-engineered Sacrifices and Offerings, all about the Reconciling Savior. Leviticus gives us a series of sacrifices; it tells us of the power of the shedding of the blood of the burnt offerings which point toward the Lord Jesus Christ, sinless and pure, who took upon Himself our sins and imputed to us His holiness that we might stand before God.

This is Leviticus. In the very heart of the book—at the very center of Leviticus—is the description of the Day of Atonement in chapter 16. And the purpose of Leviticus is to show us how a Holy God can provide atonement through the divinely-appointed sacrifice that we might be reconciled to God and be made holy in His sight.

This is Leviticus. God is holy, and the moral excellence of His pure and infinite holiness is like the blinding, burning, blazing sun. We could no more stand in His presence than we could stand on the surface of the sun itself. But Jesus Christ—God’s perfect sacrifice—offered Himself for us, in our stead, in order to present us holy and blameless and above reproach in His sight. He it is who makes us holy. And He is our atoning sacrifice.

Romans 3:21ff, basing its truths on the foundations of Leviticus, says: But now righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law (i.e., the book of Leviticus) and the Prophets (i.e., Moses) testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory (holiness/purity) of God, and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in His blood.

This is Leviticus. That’s the language of Leviticus. The book of Leviticus provides the deep moral and biblical foundations for the book of Romans and it gives us the historical and moral and biblical underpinnings for my salvation and for yours. Oh, that we might see God in all His holiness. Oh, that we might see ourselves in all our sinfulness. Oh, that we might see how Jesus Christ—by His atoning sacrifice—washes away our sinfulness and clothes us in His holiness that we might be reconciled to God for eternal life!

John Newton put it this way:

I saw one hanging on a tree,
In agony and blood,
Who fixed His languid eyes on me,
As near His cross I stood.

O, can it be upon a tree,
The Savior died for me?
My soul is thrilled, my heart is filled,
To think He died for me.

The Practical Side of Holiness

Ephesians 5:3-16

Robert Morgan

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.

For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person--such a man is an idolater--has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore do not be partners with them.

For you were once darkness, and now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth), and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." Be very careful, then, how you live--not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil (Ephesians 5:3-16)

I don't know if you heard about the preacher who was given a thesaurus for his birthday, but the next Sunday he began his sermon saying, "Today I would like to preach, admonish, edify, enlighten, exhort, instruct, sermonize about the role of the church, the disciples, the body of Christ, the family of God, the assembly of the saints, the household of faith, the company of the redeemed...." His normal half hour sermon went on for three hours and twenty minutes.

Well, we could stay here all day coming up with synonyms for the word "church," because the Bible uses so many different phrases, terms, words, nouns, and figures of speech to describe the church from God's perspective. In the passage we've just read, we have one of the most precise and poignant definitions, though it consists of just three words. Look at the end of verse 3: But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's Holy People.

Who are Christians? How are we described in the Bible? How should we appear in the eyes of the world around us? We are God's Holy People. Many theologians believe that holiness is God's central quality. Evangelist Billy Graham said in one of his books, "As I read the Bible, I seem to find holiness to be His supreme attribute."

In his book of systematic theology, Louis Berkhof wrote, "It does not seem proper to speak of one attribute of God as being more central and fundamental than another; but if this were permissible, the scriptural emphasis on the holiness of God would seem to justify its selection."

Philadelphia pastor James Montgomery Boice once spoke to a discipleship group on the characteristics of God. He began by asking them to list God's qualities in order of importance. They put love first, followed by wisdom, power, mercy, omniscience, and truth. At the end of the list they put holiness. "That did surprise me," Boice later wrote, "because the Bible refers to God's holiness more than any other attribute."

The Bible doesn't generally refer to God as Loving, Loving, Loving! Or Wise, Wise, Wise! Or Omniscient, Omniscient, Omniscient! He is all those things; but over and over we read the cry of the angels, Holy, Holy, Holy!

One man wrote, "Just as all the colors of the spectrum come together to form the pure white light which illuminates our world, so all

the attributes of God come together into His holiness."

For this reason, when we give our lives to Jesus Christ, we are endorsing the holiness of God and committing ourselves to emulate His holiness in our own lives. We are "God's Holy People."

1 Peter 1:15-16 says:

"But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (KJV).

So in the Christian's thesaurus, we are identified as "God's Holy People." Now, in light of this identity, we have here in Ephesians 5 a description of the practical side of holy living. There is a set of injunctions, followed by a rationale, followed by a summation at the end.

Not Even a Hint... - Eph 5:3-4

The injunctions are given in verses 3 and 4. These are New Testament "Thou-shalt-nots," a series of bans and taboos, some things that are out of place in the Christian's life. The first is sexual immorality. Verse 3 says: But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality. Not even a hint.

The Greek word that Paul used here is *porneia* (*poárneáia*, *por-ní'-ah*), from which we get our English word "pornography." But this Greek term isn't limited to pornography. It is a broad word that covers sexual immorality in all its forms.

This injunction in Ephesians 5:3, for example, bans both pre-marital and extra-marital sex. It bans living together before marriage. It bans all kinds of pornography including internet porn. It bans homosexual behavior. All of these trends are powerful forces in today's culture. Sexual temptation is very strong in our day and age. I think our society struggles with it more than previous societies for five reasons. First, the breakdown of the traditional family lays us open to sexual instability and temptation. Second, the powerful images of the media--especially television and cinema--compound the problem a thousand-fold. We need to begin realizing that there is a sense in which our television sets are very often the devil's evangelists, designed to subtly persuade us of a philosophy of life that is exactly counter to the teachings of Scripture.

Third, the loss of our traditional Judeo-Christian framework of morality over the past fifty years or so in the Western world makes us vulnerable. Fifth, our technology today gives us easy access any kind of indulgence we desire.

And so the moral trends of America are tracking downward at an alarming rate. Perhaps the most disturbing moral pattern of our age is the crusade to legitimize homosexual behavior. The trend setters in America are determined to "homosexualize" our society, and anyone who disagrees with them is accused of homophobia, of hate, or at the least, of intolerance.

I read just this week that the National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) organization is endorsing and making available a video which embraces same-sex families as part of a nationwide effort to fight "discrimination against homosexuals." The video, titled "That's a Family!" uses real-life examples of children from ages 8 to 13 to describe what it's like growing up in various non-traditional home situations. One little girl looks at the camera and explains, "My dads are gay, and gay means when two men or two women love each other. It's sort of like having a mom and dad who love each other. It's just that it's a man and a man or a woman and a woman."

What's wrong with that? Genesis 1:27 says that in the beginning, God created humanity "in the image of God...male and female." And both the Old Testament and the New Testament prohibits homosexuality.

I read this week in a book by Dr. David Stern that a full 75% of gay men do most of their sexual acts with men they don't even know, and about 30% of gay men rack up more than 1000 lifetime partners. One study was conducted of 100 so-called "stable" gay couples. After living together for a full five-years, not one couple had remained sexually faithful.

Perhaps some here are struggling with homosexual urges. Others may be battling temptations regarding pornography. Perhaps someone is on the verge of going to bed or with your boyfriend or girlfriend.

What I want to tell you this morning is that these are unhealthy choices, but they are not irresistible urges. They can be overcome. Defeat is not inevitable. There can be victory.

In early Greek mythology, there were creatures named sirens--enchanted musicians having bodies like those of birds and beautiful human faces. They lived on a lonely, rocky island near the southwestern coast of Italy where they awaited passing ships. Their voices were so sweet that sailors passing by the island inevitably feel under their spell. These sailors either jumped off their ships to swim to the island and were drowned, or they changed the course of their ships in that direction, only to crash upon the rocks. The song of the sirens was thought to be irresistible.

But it wasn't. Even with the sirens, defeat was not inevitable. One brave captain, passing the island, planned ahead for the danger and played music of his own so loudly that it drowned out the song of the sirens. On another ship, the captain poured beeswax in the ears of the sailors and had himself tied hand and foot to the mast so that he could not be drawn away.

Perhaps you're struggling with sexual temptation or sexual sin, and you're discouraged and defeated. I want to say this to you: Don't give up.

When the Bible says here in Ephesians 5:3 that there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality among us, there is in that command an implicit promise. Every commandment contains within it the seed of a promise, for the Lord will never command us to do something that He cannot empower us to do. With God's help, you can arrive at more and more victory.

You do not have to be defeated by sexual sin in your life. It may take a lot of will power. It may take some Christian counseling. It may take an integrity group or some friends to keep you accountable. It may take daily Bible study. It may take a lot of prayer. But I want to dispel this myth that we are born with certain orientations or weaknesses that cannot be overcome by the grace of God.

The Bible says, Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loves us.

Psalm 60:12 says, With God we will gain the victory.

The book of Jude ends with the words: To him who is able to keep you from falling... be glory, majesty, power and authority.

1 Corinthians 15:57 says: Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it (1 Corinthians 10:13).

So Ephesians 5:3 says, But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. And verse 4 goes on to tell us that we must exercise the same kind of control over the words we say: Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.

For Of This You Can Be Sure... - Eph 5:5-13

Now, in verses 5 through 13, the apostle Paul gives us the rationale for these prohibitions. He has already told us in verse 3 that these behaviors are "improper for God's holy people." He has told us in verse 4 that these activities are "out of place." But now he is going to be more specific.

First, these activities are improper and out of place because of the lost world around us. This is the way the world acts, and Christians are in the world, but not of the world. Look at verses 5ff: For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure, or greedy person--such a man is an idolater--has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore do not be partners with them.

This week CNN reported a bizarre story. In Ashland, Massachusetts, emergency medical technicians found a 39-year-old woman slumped in her bathtub, dead. The body ended up in a body bag at the funeral home. It was there that the funeral director, John Matarese, heard a gurgling noise coming from the body bag. He quickly unzipped it and held the woman's mouth open to keep her air passages clear. Apparently she had overdosed on drugs and experienced hypothermia the cold water in the bathtub and was cold and stiff and appeared to be dead--when she wasn't. Doctors say she's going to fine.

Christians shouldn't be wrapped up in the body bags of sin imitating dead people. We aren't to be mistaken for those who are dead in trespasses and sins. We aren't to be confused with those who are facing judgment. The Bible says, "Come out from among them and be ye separate."

The second rationale for keeping the Bible's prohibitions is given in verse 8: For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for it is light that makes everything visible.

When you go out into a field on a sunny day and turn over a rock, what happens? All those little insects and maggots and worms and bugs scurry away as quickly as possible. They can't stand the light. And when we walk with the Lord in the light of His word, those sins however stubborn don't have a chance.

I like the words of that song by Stephen Curtis Chapman:

Well I got myself a T-shirt that says what I believe

I got letters on my bracelet to serve as my ID
I got the necklace and the key chain
And almost everything a good Christian needs; yeah...
I got the little Bible magnets on my refrigerator door
And a welcome mat to bless you before you walk across my floor
I got a Jesus bumper sticker
And the outline of a fish stuck on my car
And even though this stuff's all well and good...
I cannot help but ask myself . . . "What about the change?
What about the difference?
What about the grace?
What about forgiveness?"

We're to be people who walk in the light. People of grace. People with changed lives. That brings us to the conclusion of this paragraph...

Be Very Careful Then... - Eph 5:15-16

Now in verses 15 and 16, we have a summation. What does all this mean? How can we sum it up? Be very careful, then, how you live--not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

This week I read about an Irish terrorist named Hugh Brown. He joined one of the Northern Irish terrorists groups as a teenager, and he was responsible for the deaths of several people. He also himself was targeted. One night, armed men broke into his house and drove him into a windowless room where he endured two hours of intermittent questioning and torture. Then he was taken outside and given a knee-capping, which consisted of a bullet shot into each knee-cap.

But an interesting thing happened to Hugh Brown. He was captured and arrested, and one night in prison he settled down to watch the movie, "Ben Hur." There was a crucifixion scene in the movie, and as he watched that scene, the story of the crucifixion of Christ became very vivid and real to him. Suddenly he felt a wave of guilt, not just for his terrorism, but for his thieving and fighting and drinking. He gave his life to Jesus Christ and was called to the mission field and went to Japan as a missionary. Today he is chaplain at the Kobe Prison, and because of his background he has a powerful rapport with the inmates, and his biography has just been published throughout Japan.

The power of Jesus Christ can turn around anyone's life. But when Jesus turns our lives around, He begins in practical, daily ways to cultivate within us holiness. Are you letting Him do that with you?

Be very careful, then, how you live--not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.