

The Lord Who Sanctifies 2

JEHOVAH MEKEDDESHEM THE LORD WHO SANCTIFIES THREE "STAGES"

THE THREE STAGE OF SANCTIFICATION AKA THE THREE TENSES OF SALVATION		
POSITION (PAST)	PRESENT EXPERIENCE	FUTURE CERTAINTY
Past Sanctification is... A condition	Present Sanctification is... A process	Future Sanctification is... A promise
Justification	Sanctification	Glorification
One time event Occurs in the past	Daily event moment by moment Occurs in the present.	One time event Our blessed, living hope to be fulfilled in the future
Past tense Salvation I have been saved	Present tense salvation I am being saved	Future tense salvation I will be saved
SCRIPTURE SUPPORTING 3 "STAGES" OF SANCTIFICATION		
1 Cor 6:11 Such were some of you (1 Cor 6:9, 10); but you were washed, but you were sanctified (passive voice = divine passive), but you were justified (passive voice = divine passive) in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.	1 Thess 4:3+ For this is the will of God , your sanctification ; that is (Paul gives one definition of sanctification), that you abstain (present tense middle voice = make the choice continually - just try this in your own strength! Demands dependence on the Spirit) from sexual immorality. (cf 1 Pe 2:11+ "abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against your soul.")	
	1 John 3:3+ And everyone who has this hope (absolute certainty of future good = being like Jesus experientially) fixed on Him purifies (hagnizo in present tense, active voice [choice of our will, but enabled by the Spirit Who gives us the Desire and the Power] = habitually, progressively) himself, just as He is pure.	1 John 3:2+ Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him (1 Cor 15:52), because we will see Him just as He is.
2 Th 2:13 But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.	Hebrews 10:14+ For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified . (hagnizo in present tense, active voice [choice of our will, enabled by the Spirit Who gives us the Desire and the Power] = habitually, progressively)	Romans 8:18; 19+ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us . For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God

1 Peter 1:1+ Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen 2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit , to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.	1 Peter 1:14+ As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, 15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy (Be sanctified)(aorist imperative = Need the Spirit to obey) yourselves also in all your behavior.	Colossians 3:4+ When Christ, Who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory .
1Cor 1:2 To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified (past tense salvation) in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours...	Hebrews 12:14+ Pursue (present imperative active voice) [choice of our will, enabled by the Spirit Who gives us the Desire and the Power] = habitually, progressively) peace with all men, and the sanctification (holiness) without which no one will see the Lord.	Jude 1:24+ Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy,

Related Resources:

- [Progressive Sanctification](#)
- [Divine Passive](#)
- Three Tenses of Salvation

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

You may not "feel" holy today but if you are in Christ by grace through faith (Eph 2:8, 9+), you can rest assured that you ARE HOLY before the LORD. You are a SAINT (which is not a special class of believers). (See related excellent discussion by F B Meyer entitled **Fact! Faith! Feeling!**)

Since you are a SAINT, you have a **RESPONSIBILITY** to live a saintly, sanctified, holy life, making God glorifying choices (not keeping lists of do's and don'ts) so that you "walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called," (Eph 4:1+)

Paul wrote "This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? (BY HEARING WITH FAITH!) Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit (AND BY FAITH), are you now being perfected (bringing about progressive sanctification) by the flesh?" (Gal 3:2-3) Of course not. Past tense salvation is entered into by faith and daily present tense salvation (progressive sanctification) is also by faith, not by works, not by self-effort, but by denying self and trusting the enabling supernatural power of the Holy Spirit!

Renew your mind daily (Ro 12:2+; Ep 4:23+; Col 3:10+) with the truth that you are an alien & stranger (1Pe 2:11+) in this present age & that you have awaiting you a glorious "inheritance which is imperishable & undefiled & will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Pe 1:4+)

THE ROLE OF THE WORD OF TRUTH IN PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION

In John 17 Jesus prayed for us to experience progressive sanctification...

Sanctify (aorist imperative) them in the truth. Thy word is truth. 18 As Thou sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. 19 For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that **they themselves also may be sanctified in truth**. (John 17:17-19)

As you observe Jesus' prayer, how are believers to be **progressively sanctified or set apart** from the world and unto God? The Word of God, the Truth is used by the Holy Spirit to set us apart. Therefore it behooves us to daily be in the Word of Truth because

we are living in a world that daily bombards our minds with lies (just watch the news tonight if you don't believe me!) How foolish of believers to not "flush" or "purge" the lies of the world system headed by the chief liar Satan (Jn 8:44) using the precious and holy Word of Truth! (cf Mt 4:4+, Lk 4:4+).

ARE YOU IN THE WORD OF TRUTH DAILY TO COUNTER THE LYING WORDS OF THE WORLD?

If your answer is "**No**" (I'm too busy, I'll do it later, etc, etc), then you are in trouble! Your **progressive sanctification** will be impacted (negatively). It is like riding a bicycle. What happens if you stop pedaling? You have an accident. This same principle is true spiritually if you are failing to eat the Word of Truth EVERY DAY!!! There will be NO growth in your spiritual life! (Read and ponder 1 Pe 2:2+) And don't say you are too busy, because if that is really true, than the truth is you are way too busy with the world system and you need to cut back some of that **secular busyness** or you will end up with **spiritual barrenness**!

Sanctify in John 17:17 and **sanctified** in John 17:19 is [hagiazō](#) which means to separate from profane (common) things and dedicate to God. God progressively sanctifies believers in the sphere (*en*) of the Truth of God's Word. The process of sanctification or being set apart from this world for His service is accomplished through the Word of God and the Spirit of God. In 2 Cor 3:18+ we read "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord (BEST SEEN IN HIS WORD), are being transformed ([present tense](#) DESCRIBES A PROCESS, AKA "PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION") into the same image from glory to glory (PROGRESSIVE GROWTH IN CHRISTLIKENESS), just as from the Lord, the Spirit."

Truth is Greek **aletheia** which is that which is true in any matter under consideration. GOD'S WORD IS TRUTH ON ANY MATTER UNDER CONSIDERATION. That which is in accord with what really happens. Francis Schaeffer "So this change in the concept of the way we come to knowledge and truth is the most crucial problem, as I understand it, facing Christianity today." I would add let us avoid the "bypaths" of worldly wisdom and hold fast to the ancient paths (Jer 6:16, 18:15). Aletheia basically refers to the content of that which is true. God's TRUTH is absolutely essential for the believer in his battle against the LIES of Satan. Without knowledge of biblical teaching, believers are vulnerable to being "carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming" (Eph 4:14+).

THE ROLE OF PRAYER IN PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION

One other point not mentioned above is we should pray for ourselves and others that God would progressively sanctify us! Is there any Scriptural support for this premise? I think so...and notice the motivating truth that we will all appear before our Lord Jesus Christ. This truth should motivate us profoundly to pursue progressive sanctification!

Now may the God of peace Himself **sanctify you entirely**; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame **at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ**. (MOTIVATED BY THE CERTAINTY OF THE [SECOND COMING](#)) 24 Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass. (1 Th 5:23, 24+)

Now may our God and Father Himself and Jesus our Lord direct our way to you; 12 and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another (THIS IS CLEARLY A PRAYER FOR PROGRESSIVE GROWTH IN HOLINESS AND CHRISTLIKENESS, AKA "PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION"), and for all people, just as we also do for you; 13 so that (PURPOSE) He may establish your hearts without blame in holiness (IS THIS NOT THE ENDPOINT OF PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION) before our God and Father **at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints**. (SAINTS WHO HAVE ALREADY GONE AHEAD OF US) (1 Th 3:11-13+)

Believer's Study Bible has a good note on verse 13 - The apostle's desire is to see them standing fast in holiness when the Lord returns to examine them. The form of the word "holiness" ([hagiosune](#), Gk.) emphasizes not an act of holiness but the state or condition of holiness. **God's will is that our lives be characterized in every area by Christlikeness** (ED: AKA "PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION"). This includes both attitudes and actions. "**The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ**" provides incentive to holiness. (ED: 1 IN 20 NT VERSE DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY MENTIONS THE [SECOND COMING](#)) Paul's statement that all of God's people will be together at the return of Christ reflects a concern about the status of God's people at the rapture of the church. Perhaps some taught that the dead in Christ would be absent from this event. Paul will answer this question when he addresses it more fully in 1 Th 4:13-18. Paul's statement is

possibly a response to those who doubted there would be a resurrection and were concerned about Christian loved ones now dead.

And this I pray, that **your love may abound** ([present tense](#) - continually, "progressively") still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment (THIS DESCRIBES PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION), 10 so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless **until the day of Christ** (AGAIN NOTE THE [SECOND COMING](#) AS INCENTIVE FOR PURSUING PASSIONATELY PROGRESSIVE HOLINESS); 11 having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. (Phil 1:9-11⁺)

To this end also we pray for you always that our God may count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power (IS THIS NOT A PRAYER FOR PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION?); 12 in order that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Th 1:11, 12)

It would be very easy to read the preceding prayers and nod your head in agreement that Paul seems to be passionate in praying for **progressive sanctification**. The question however is this -- Will the way Paul prayed for his sheep change the way you pray for those in your sphere of influence? Will you call your church to begin to intercede to the Father for one another to experience Spirit wrought, God glorifying progressive sanctification in the Name of Jesus? I would submit that if you are bold enough to pray this way and to call your congregation or Bible study group or Sunday School class or Home group to pray this way specifically (in the Spirit as in Eph 6:18⁺, not mechanically, not vain repetition), then God's Spirit will move mightily in your midst! Why can I say that with complete confidence? Because God's Word tells us "This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything **according to His will** (IS PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION ACCORDING TO HIS WILL? OF COURSE IT IS) He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, **we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him** (1 Jn 5:14-15⁺) This is the real version of "Name it and Claim it!" Beloved, do you believe the promise penned by the apostle? If you do then be a doer and not just a hearer (or an agreeer)! (James 1:22+).

Hebrews 12:14: "Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification (holiness) without which no one will see the Lord." (see note Hebrews 12:14)

Pursue ([1377](#)) (**dioko** from **dio** = pursue, prosecute, persecute, also pursue in good sense) means to follow or press hard after, pursue with earnestness and diligence in order to obtain, go after with the desire of obtaining.

Pursue literally means to run swiftly in order to catch a person or thing, run after, follow after, press on: Figuratively dioko describes one who in a race runs swiftly to reach the goal. The idea is to strive, to seek after eagerly, and to earnestly endeavor to acquire. Implicit is the idea that this involves intense personal effort. The verb tense and mood is **present imperative** which commands one to pursue peace and holiness as their lifestyle. This verse can be misinterpreted to imply that we are to "work for" our salvation and that if we don't we will lose it. That is not what the writer is saying, nor does the New Testament support such a teaching. See the following note for an enlightening explanation of this potentially confusing verse.

The Sanctification - See Puritan **Thomas Watson's** excellent message on- [Sanctification - Real, Counterfeit, Necessity, Signs, Inducements, How Attained?](#)

William MacDonald provides one of the most lucid, Scripturally reasoned explanations of Hebrews 12:14, a verse that can easily be misinterpreted, leading to confusion and discouragement regarding our "great salvation".

MacDonald writes...

We should also strive for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. What is the holiness referred to here? To answer the question we should remind ourselves that holiness is used of believers in at least three different ways in the NT.

First of all, the believer becomes **positionally holy** at the time of his conversion; he is set apart to God from the world (1Co 1:2; 6:11). By virtue of his union with Christ, he is sanctified forever. This is what Martin Luther meant when he said, "My holiness is in heaven." Christ is our holiness, that is, as far as our standing before God is concerned.

Then there is a **practical sanctification** (1Th 4:3; 5:23). This is what we should be day by day. We should separate ourselves from every form of evil. This holiness should be progressive, that is, we should be growing more and more like the Lord Jesus all the time.

Finally, there is complete or **perfect sanctification**. This takes place when a believer goes to heaven. Then

he is forever free from sin. His old nature is removed, and his state perfectly corresponds to his standing.

Now which holiness are we to pursue? Obviously it is **practical sanctification** that is in view. We do not strive after **positional sanctification**; it is ours automatically when we are born again. And we do not strive after the **perfect sanctification** that will be ours when we see His face. But practical or **progressive sanctification** is something that involves our obedience and cooperation; we must cultivate this holiness continually. The fact that we must follow it is proof that we do not fully attain it in this life.

Wuest writes: The exhortation is to the born-again Jews who had left the Temple, to live such consistent saintly lives, and to cling so tenaciously to their new-found faith, that the unsaved Jews who had also left the Temple and had outwardly embraced the New Testament truth, would be encouraged to go on to faith in Messiah as High Priest, instead of returning to the abrogated sacrifices of the Levitical system. These truly born-again Jews are warned that a "**limping Christian life**" would cause these unsaved Jews to be turned out of "**the way**".

But a difficulty remains! Is it true that we cannot see the Lord without practical sanctification? Yes, there is a sense in which this is true; but let us understand that this does not mean that we earn the right to see God by living holy lives. Jesus Christ is our only title to heaven. What this verse means is that there must be practical holiness as a proof of new life within. If a person is not growing more holy, he is not saved. When the Holy Spirit indwells a person, He manifests His presence by a separated life. It is a matter of cause and effect; if Christ has been received, the rivers of living water will flow. ([MacDonald, W & Farstad, A. Believer's Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#)) (Bolding added)

C H Spurgeon commenting on **Hebrews 12:14** wrote that...

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.

1 Thes 4:3 ([entire chapter](#)) **For this is the will of God, your SANCTIFICATION; that is, that you ABSTAIN from sexual immorality.**

J B Phillips paraphrases it "God's plan is to make you holy, and that entails first of all a clean cut with sexual immorality." ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

See in depth **notes** on **1Thessalonians 4:3**

Abstain ([568](#)) (apechomai or apecho) in 1Thessalonians 4:3 is **present tense, middle voice**. You are probably saying to yourself "*so what?*" The "so what" is that even a simple understanding of the Greek tenses can add significantly to your understanding of a given verse (click here for quick Greek "primer") In this verse the **present tense** calls for the subject to carry out an action continually or habitually. The **middle voice** conveys reflexive intent. Thus the idea is that the subject initiates the action himself or herself & then participates in the results of that action.

Now insert these simple insights into the verse and you can derive your own "amplified" version = "*continually hold yourself back from...*". Why is continual action so important? Because the world will continually be trying to conform you into its unholy mold & therefore you must live a lifestyle which is manifest by continually abstaining from those things that would defile you, specifically in context anything sexually immoral.

Webster defines **abstain** as

to refrain DELIBERATELY and OFTEN with an EFFORT of self-denial from an action or practice.

This is a relatively good definition EXCEPT that "SELF-DENIAL" is the world's way. Believers have access to **Jehovah MeKeddeshem**, Who sets His people apart & Who provides us with the fruit of the Spirit, self-control (Gal 5:22, 23) . And yet believers do have to make choices and initiate specific actions that cultivate the character trait of self control (cf 2Pe 1:6-note). Job is an excellent example of an OT saint who continually abstained from evil (Job 1:1, 2:3).

1Thessalonians 4:7 ([entire chapter](#)) **For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in SANCTIFICATION. 8 So, he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you. (See notes on 1Th 4:7; 4:8)**

John MacArthur comments on 1 Thessalonians 4:

You see, the effectual call of salvation was a call to **holiness**, not unholiness. God has not called us for the purpose of impurity. It isn't grace so that sin may abound. Paul's point is that the very nature of God's calling and justification is a calling to **sanctification**. He called us to Himself for the purpose of **sanctifying** us, **making us holy, making us pure, making us sinless**. You have a holy, pure, and sinless God who brings salvation through His holy, pure and sinless Son, who then applies that salvation through His holy, pure and sinless Spirit in order to produce a people who are holy, sinless and pure. And thus the heart of the Apostle is to present the church without blemish and without spot, holy before God. [Ed note: MacArthur does not mean to imply by "sinless" that we can ever achieve a state of perfect sanctification in these bodies of flesh. See 1 John 1:8+]. ([Abstaining from Sexual Sin, Part 2](#))

John Piper comments on 1 Th 4:1-8. Note Dr Piper uses the phrase "Practical Holiness" which is synonymous with Progressive Sanctification.

"Now let's see what we can learn from this text about the way a pastor should preach in order to help his people make progress in **PRACTICAL HOLINESS**. I'll only mention four things briefly. These are not the only way to preach practical holiness. Nor must every sermon include them all. But in your overall ministry of the word I believe these should have a large place.

1. TEACH YOUR PEOPLE TO KNOW GOD.

Brothers and sisters, our people do not know God very well. If you asked them to talk for five minutes about the character of God most couldn't do it. Preachers shy away from the doctrine of God because it seems abstracted from what immediately moves people. But Paul implies in v5 ("*not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God*") that the key to conquering sexual temptation is to **know God**. "Don't give reign to your passions like Gentiles who don't know God." If our people could only get a taste of the majesty of God it would have more practical consequences in their lives than many messages about human relationships -- and I believe in such messages. I am only pleading for a new emphasis and focus on God. Charles Colson hit a dry spell in his Christian life a few years ago and one of his friends suggested he listen to some lectures by R. C. Sproul on the **holiness of God**. He said,

All I knew about Sproul was that he was a theologian, so I wasn't enthusiastic. After all, I reasoned, theology was for people who had time to study, locked in ivory towers far from the battlefields of human need. However, at my friend's urging I finally agreed ... By the end of the sixth lecture I was on my knees, deep in prayer, in awe of God's absolute holiness. It was a life-changing experience as I gained a completely new understanding of the holy God I believe in and worship.

Teach your people to **know God** and you will touch every area of their lives with the **practical holiness of God**.

2. EXHORT YOUR PEOPLE TO PRACTICAL HOLINESS

We need to be specific and earnest in urging our people to change their behavior. Practical holiness is a gift of God not a merely human achievement. That is clear from (1Th 3:12+) ("*may the Lord make you increase and abound in love*") and from 1Th 5:23+ ("*May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly*"). But how does God produce practical holiness in the lives of his people? He does not do it apart from the apostolic word of exhortation. Right after praying that God would make the Thessalonians abound in love (1Th 3:12+), Paul himself commands them not to transgress and wrong a brother (1Th 4:6+). Our word of exhortation is essential. It is the means of grace which the Lord uses to do his sanctifying work. "Father, sanctify them in the truth; thy word is truth!" (Jn 17:17)

3. PUT ONE AND TWO TOGETHER AND HELP YOUR PEOPLE SEE ALL THEIR LIFE IN RELATION TO GOD

Drive home 1Th 4:8+. **If you reject the exhortation to sexual purity you reject God**. It is amazing how many professing Christians think that their day to day choices have no bearing on their relation to God. We must tirelessly remind them that a sharp word at the breakfast table is rebellion against the Holy Spirit. Breaking the speed limit is probably a failure to trust God to take care of your schedule. Lust is an insult to the all-satisfying fellowship of God. Holding a grudge cuts one off from the forgiveness of God. And all the joys of

life can either be exalted by a spirit of gratitude and worship toward God, or debased to idolatry by ignoring their relation to God. Our great aim must be to give our people a God-saturated experience of life.

4. FINALLY WE MUST WARN THE PEOPLE OF GOD'S VENGEANCE

Thousands of pastors do not believe this because they cannot make it square with their view of eternal security. How can you warn the saints on Sunday morning of God's vengeance if their faith in Christ delivers them from the wrath to come?

Zane Hodges of Dallas Seminary in a recent book, wrote that... It may be safely said that no man in Christian history -- with the exception of our Lord Himself -- ever motivated believers more or threatened them less than did [Paul]. Hodges must say this because he concludes 3 pages earlier that "works have nothing to do with determining a Christian's basic relationship to God." If the way you behave -- say in your sex life -- has nothing to do with your basic relationship to God, then warnings of God's vengeance make no sense.

It makes no sense when Paul says to Christians in Rome (Ro 8:13+), "If you live according to the flesh you will die." It makes no sense when he says to the Corinthians (1Co 10:9), "We must not put the Lord to the test, as some of the Israelites did and were destroyed by the serpents." It doesn't make sense when he says to the Galatian churches (Gal 5:21+), "I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things shall not enter the kingdom of God." And it doesn't make sense here in 1Th 4:6+ when Paul says, "Let no man transgress and wrong his brother ... because God is an avenger in these things as we solemnly forewarned you." That is, it doesn't make sense unless your premise is wrong that the behavior of man has nothing to do with his salvation. And it is surely wrong. For the tree is known by its fruit. Therefore, I urge you all to immerse yourselves more and more in the Scriptures and learn for yourselves how to preach practical holiness. And from this one very typical passage in 1 Thessalonians I believe you will find at least that you should...

1. Teach your people to know God.
2. Exhort your people to practical holiness.
3. Help your people see all their life in relation to God.
4. And warn the people of God's vengeance.

(See Dr Piper's entire message [Preaching Practical Holiness - 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8](#))

1 Peter 2:9 But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; (see notes on 1 Peter 2:9) (see Torrey "[Missionaries, All Christians Should Be](#)")

For believers as NT PRIESTS - 1Pe 2:5+, Re 1:6+, Rev 5:10+, Rev 20:6+ (For a real blessing ponder who you now are [your new names] in Christ in Torrey's Topic "[Titles & Names of Saints](#)").

Israel forgot that she was God's "[people](#), a [treasured possession](#)," (KJV "a peculiar people" Dt 26:18, 19) a "[holy nation](#)" (Ex 19:6) and began to break down the walls of separation that made her special and distinct. God commanded them to put a "[distinction between](#) the [holy](#) and the [profane](#), and [between](#) the [unclean](#) and the [clean](#)" (Lev 10:10); but they ignored the differences and disobeyed God. They became like all the corrupt idolatrous pagan nations around them and it ultimately destroyed them. So too the church is of most value to God when it is least like the world in which it exists to be an ambassador of reconciliation. Come out from the world & be separate is the ageless, clarion call finally fully obeyed by the bride who makes herself ready for her Bridegroom with the righteous acts of the saints (Re 19:7+; Re 19:8+).

Ray Stedman ([from the Message of First Peter](#)) associates "**holiness**" with "**wholeness**" adding that "the ingredients of wholeness are basically single-mindedness. He is a person who has his eye on a goal, on a person whom he follows, & that person is so thoroughly all-important to him that he is not interested in anything that does not relate to that person. That is single-minded, dedicated. There is something attractive about that. Any time you meet a Marine who takes pride in his outfit you can see the kind of single-mindedness I am talking about. He is proud that he is a Marine, and he walks like it and he talks like it."

Proclaim is the Greek verb **exaggello** which meaning to tell out, to make widely known and thus to tell something not otherwise known. It can even mean to "advertise". Each believer should be a veritable "WALKING ADVERTISEMENT" of the EXCELLENCIES and the MARVELOUS light of God. Get on your knees and talk to God about men and then go out on your feet and talk to men about God.

Holiness is to unholiness as...

- whole is to broken
- usable is to unusable
- special is to ordinary
- valuable is to worthless
- a clear conscience is to guilt
- honesty is to deception
- excellent is to unacceptable
- pure is to stained
- good is to bad
- happy is to sad
- fresh is to spoiled
- gain is to loss
- complete is to incomplete
- from RBC booklet [Why Would Anyone Want To Be Holy?](#)

A FEW QUOTES ON SANCTIFICATION & HOLINESS

A. W. Tozer wrote

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.

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.

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!"

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."

C. H. Spurgeon had much to say about holiness...

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

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

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

Spurgeon commenting on the truth that God "saved us and called us with a **holy calling**" (2 Timothy 1:9) 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 endeavor 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 aforetime 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 for ever 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)

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")

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."

In the **Radio Bible Class** 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.

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".]

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). (Or **listen to his audios** - see [list of multiple Mp3's related to pursuit of holiness](#))

Pastor Bruce Goettsche 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, (Heb12:14-note) there is a good chance you are not a child of God...no matter how long you have been in the church. (ponder [Eph 5:1-7](#))"(see Wayne Barber's sermon on Eph5:1ff)

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."

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.

A W Tozer commenting on 1 Peter 1:15,16 ("be holy as I am holy") 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.” (2Co 7:1- See notes).

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.

Related Resources

- Radio Bible Class Booklet [Why Would Anyone Want To Be Holy?](#)
- Holiness Quotes
- Thomas Watson on- [Sanctification - Real, Counterfeit, Necessity, Signs, Inducements, How Attained?](#)
- Jehovah Mekeddeshem: The LORD Who Sanctifies (“Makes Holy”) (Part 1) (Part 2)
- Exposition of 1 Peter 1:15-16 “Be Holy as He is Holy”
- Holiness - J.C. Ryle
- The Attributes of God - His Holiness
- The Holiness of God - by A W Pink
- [What God Goes By - Study of 11 Names of God by Brian Bill](#)
- [Holiness: The Root of His Grace - by Sammy Tippit: Part I; Part II; Part III](#) - scroll down for articles
- Greek Word Studies: Holiness: hagiasmos / Holy: hagios / Holy (One): hosios
- Cultivating Holiness by Joel R. Beeke
- Holiness by Striving or Resting? Jerry Bridges (see also [Mp3's related to pursuit of holiness](#))
- Integrity - A Few Thoughts