

Lesson 1.

The Battle for Holiness

We are in a great battle to hold onto the values we call holiness in the Apostolic church. These values include inward and outward purity, modesty, morality, humility, honesty, and commitment to the work of the Lord. The world around us is making these values seem old-fashioned and unnecessary to many believers. In some cases church leaders and entire assemblies have let go of these values, making themselves indistinguishable from the world around them. But the Bible tells us that Jesus is coming for a glorious church that is “holy and without blemish” (Ephesians 5:27). Holiness is important!

Isaiah 35:8-10

It shall be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it. Whoever walks it shall not go astray. No lion is there, no ravenous beast (no devil). But the redeemed shall walk there. They shall come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads. Isaiah called it a “high” way. Living a holy life elevates us. It enhances our lives. It’s a higher way of living than the worldly way.

Why do some people leave the holy way of living?

1. Insincere in their profession of faith.
2. The price is too high.
3. They don’t understand. They have been given a set of rules, but they have never been taught *why* holiness is important to God.

Three answers to the accusation of legalism:

1. Teaching believers what God expects of them once they are saved is not legalism. It can become legalistic if the teacher uses manipulation or coercion or rewards and punishments to get people to comply with his teachings.

Legalism is when the focus is on rules, particularly to do with external conduct and appearance. What crosses the line into a legalistic approach is when people are led to believe, either by implication or example, that they must comply with these rules in order to be acceptable to the church and/or its leadership.

When people are merely adhering to a set rules that only pertain to the outward man, such as rules about appearance and conduct, that is not true holiness. That is only an outward facade of holiness.

If you teach that the externals are the outward expressions of inward beliefs, then that is not legalism. Don’t let the accusation of legalism intimidate you into keeping silent.

2. Everyone has standards concerning what constitutes appropriate behavior, proper speech, and proper dress. So the issue is not whether or not it is legalistic to have standards; the issue is what those standards ought to be.
3. The fact that we are saved by grace does not nullify God’s expectation that His people would live a holy life. In fact, it demands it.

Romans 6:1-2, Hebrews 12:14-15, Titus 2:11-12

If we continue to sin, if we fail to pursue peace with all people *and* holiness, if we do not deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, then we run the risk of failing to obtain the grace of God. Because God loves us, He does not leave us in ignorance trying to figure out how to live all on our own. He teaches us how to live. All anyone needs to do is submit to the teaching.

Jude 3-4

Jude is saying that teachers will come in among the believers and change the meaning of God's grace from being a teacher and enabler into God's permission to do pretty much as you please.

True holiness begins with repentance, being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, and receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). This is how unholy man becomes connected to the holy God, who is the source of all true holiness.

Romans 6:22

We must be set free from sin [through the new birth]. We must then become slaves of God [by submitting to God]. Only then will we have our fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.

Galatians 3:14-16, 4:6, 4:19

The Seed is "the blessing of Abraham," which is "the promise of the Spirit through faith." Once the seed is planted in the heart of a believer, we must labor in birth again until Christ is formed in the believer. The formation of Christ in a believer is the full expression of holiness. It is the fruit that comes forth from the seed.

When holiness is only a seed in the heart, it can only be seen by God. It is only when holiness has come forth as fruit that what God has placed in the heart can be seen by man. This is God's plan for making Himself known to the world.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-8

It is God's will is for every believer to be holy. We must therefore control our own bodies in holiness and honor. To fail to cooperate with God as He works in us to produce the fruit of holiness is tantamount to a rejection of God. It is a rejection of His whole purpose in giving us the Holy Spirit.

Many of the misunderstandings about holiness come from the way the word is used in the Bible. Whenever we see the word "holy" or "holiness," we must look carefully at how it is being used. We must understand the difference between the seed being planted in our hearts and the fruit coming forth in our lives.

All Apostolic people would say that believers ought to be holy; the battle is over *what it means to be holy*.

Lesson 2

Defining Holiness

1 Thessalonians 3:12-13

The word “holy” can be found 646 times in the Bible. In contrast, the word “love” is found only 385 times. When Jesus comes, we need to have hearts that are “blameless in holiness.” We all need to have a full understanding of exactly what holiness is all about.

Hebrew word translated “holy” is *kadosh*. The Greek word used in the New Testament is *hagios*. Our English word “holy” is derived from the German root word *hal*, which is where we also get the words “whole” and “health.” This is also the root of the German expression *heil*, or as we say in English, *hail!* which is used as an expression of acclaim to wish a person “health, happiness, and good luck!” The deeper root of the German word *hal* is the Hebrew word *hallel*, which means literally to shine (as a halo) but is often translated “praise” (Hallelujah! = Praise Yahweh). By connecting these various roots and their meanings, we can see that holiness encompasses the ideas of wholeness, health, and even happiness and praise. These ideas show the positive impact of holiness on the life of a believer.

The first place “holy” is used in the Bible is when Moses encounters God in the burning bush.

Exodus 3:4-5

In the days of Moses, a *place* could be considered holy. And because it was holy, it was to be treated with special honor and respect. The idea of holiness is so closely associated with the God of the Bible that in the book of Isaiah alone, 30 times He is called simply “the Holy One.” See Isaiah 43:3

The original meaning *kadosh* is “clean” or “pure.” It follows that the true God is pure and clean in everything He is and does: in His words, His acts, His thoughts, His attitudes, and His motives. Because God is pure, He is without blemish, which means He is perfect.

1 John 1:5, James 1:17, John 3:19

We are not like God. None of us is perfectly and absolutely pure and clean. We all fall short. So derived out of the idea of perfect purity comes the concept of being separate or set apart. Because God is absolutely pure and perfect and we are not, He is *separate* from us and thus *different* from us.

When we say that God is holy, we mean that He is perfectly and absolutely pure and clean, without blemish of any kind. We also mean that He is separate and therefore different from us.

God’s Holiness vs Man’s Holiness

Man can be holy in two ways: First, we can be holy because of the new birth; second, we can be holy by living a holy life. This is why Paul writes, “Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14). And “Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Corinthians 7:1).

From our human perspective, our holiness is to be modeled after God's perfection, but we must understand that ours is an *anointing* from God and a *pursuit* for perfection rather than a settled reality, as it is with God.

Psalms 18:30, 32

As it pertains to humanity, holiness includes the negative idea of *separation* and the positive idea of *dedication*. In practical terms, believers are called upon to be separate from sin, evil, and worldliness and to be dedicated to God and His purposes.

These verses capture the idea of separation from sin, evil, and worldliness. **1 Corinthians 15:34, 1 Thessalonians 5:22, 1 John 2:15**

These verses describe the idea of dedication to God. **Romans 12:1, Mark 12:30**

This verse captures both ideas. **Romans 6:11**

In the days of Moses, the whole earth was not *holy ground*. Only this particular place was declared to be holy, because it was there that God was—it was there that He had chosen to make Himself known to Moses—and it was there that Moses received His commission to bring Israel out of Egypt and into the Promised Land.

The tabernacle built by Moses was called the holy place. And the most inward chamber was called the holy of holies, which means the holiest place of all. That was where God dwelled. Later the temple in Jerusalem was called the holy place and Jerusalem was known as the holy city.

At the time of the temple, all things existed in one of two states: everything was either common or holy. Common was the natural state of all things. Holy was a special state. It meant that a thing had been removed from its natural state and dedicated to the Lord. It now belonged to Him and was set apart for His exclusive use. The process of taking a thing from the common to the holy is called "sanctification."

Notice that each of these holy places (the tabernacle, the temple, Jerusalem) had a wall around it. Each was an enclosed space. If you were within the wall, you were standing on holy ground. If you were outside the wall, you were in an unholy place.

Other places, people, and things described in the Bible as holy:

God's heavenly dwelling place. **Isaiah 63:15, Jeremiah 25:30, Revelation 21:27-22:2**

There is an intricate connection between holiness, purity, and healing.

God's name. **Psalms 33:21**

God's people. **Exodus 19:6, Deuteronomy 7:6**

The priest's clothing. **Exodus 28:4**

The tithe. **Deuteronomy 26:130**

The Sabbath. **Exodus 20:8**

The anointing oil. **Exodus 30:25**

The altar. **Exodus 29:37**

During the Old Testament period, there were holy time. Today, for the person committed to a holy life, all time is holy.

During the Old Testament period, people were anointed with special holy oil. But this was only symbolic of what was coming. On the day of Pentecost, the true holy oil was poured out.

During the Old Testament period, animal sacrifices were considered holy because they had been taken from among the herds and set apart unto God. Today we offer ourselves.

The meetings of God's people. **Leviticus 23:37**

The sacrifice of Christ. **Leviticus 6:25, Hebrews 10:10**

We could never be holy in any way were it not for what the holy God did for us on the cross. 1 Peter 2:22 says that He “committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth.” 1 Peter 2:24 says, “Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness.”

Holiness is also a set of boundaries and living within those boundaries. There was one place where it was okay for Moses to have his sandals on, but just one step away it became necessary for him to take his sandals off.

What does this mean for us? Even though God is all-powerful, there are a lot of things that He won't do. This is because His power is circumscribed by His holiness. There are certain things that God will not do because it would contradict His own ethical values. It is in this sense that holiness is a set of boundaries, which establishes clear lines between what is right and what is wrong—what is proper and appropriate and what is not.

Holiness tells us that there are certain ways of acting that are holy and certain ways that are not. There are certain activities that are holy and certain ones that are not. There are certain ways of speaking that are holy and certain ways that are not. There are certain ways of dressing that are holy and certain ways that are not. There are certain thoughts that are holy and certain ones that are not. There are certain desires that are holy and certain ones that are not.

If you are one of God's holy people, one that God has set apart from all the other people of the earth by the new birth, then you should be acting like it.

God has always been concerned about His people being able to recognize the boundaries of holiness. During the days of Moses, He told the priests that they were not allowed to drink alcohol because it would make it hard for them to differentiate between what was holy and what was unholy.

Leviticus 10:8-11

There is a lot of confusion today as to what constitutes true holiness. For many people the lines are fuzzy. This is at least partly because the minds of many of God's people have been dulled by the intoxication of worldliness, entertainment, and pleasure-seeking. But the Bible exhorts, not just spiritual teachers but all believers, to be sober-minded.

1 Peter 1:13-16

Holiness begins with getting your thoughts under control. As New Testament priests, we need to be careful not to let our minds become intoxicated by the things of this present world.

Conclusion

Holiness means being pure. This means that to be holy, we must rid ourselves of all corruption and uncleanness and anything else that would cause us to be impure in thought, word, or deed.

Holiness means being set apart. This means that to be holy, there are some people and some practices that we will need to set ourselves apart from.

Holiness means being dedicated to God and His purposes. This means that to be holy we must be available to God and committed to doing the work He sets before us.

Holiness means being different. This means that to be holy, you must be willing to be unconventional. You can't be afraid of being different from the crowd.

Holiness means living within a set of boundaries. This means that to be holy you must be willing to learn God's boundaries and live within them.

Holiness is not a matter of living up to a code of conduct or a set of standards. Holiness is manifesting the attributes of the holy God in every area of life. The foundation of true holiness is the connection with God we experience through the new birth. After the new birth, this connection must be maintained through a consistent life of devotion, dedication, and commitment to service.

God *is* holy. We are told to *be* holy. In this regard, holiness is the pursuit of being like God in every way that a human being can be like God.

Holiness is a highway. We enter it through the new birth and move along it as we yield ourselves to the Lord. We should pursue holiness with the objective of perfecting it.

Lesson 3.

Principles of Holiness

Philippians 2:14-15

God expects us to live out our faith, fully and freely, right in front of this crooked and perverse generation as a witness of Him. This is what it means to “shine as lights in the world.”

1 Corinthians 6:20

God’s desire is that His own glory would shine through our lives just as sunlight shines through a window. The quality that allows God’s glory to shine through us is called holiness. This is the broadest term the Bible uses to describe the moral attributes of God.

Holiness begins in the heart when we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. But it must advance from the hidden glory of the indwelling Spirit to the visible glory of a holy life. The problem is, at times our humanity acts like a closed window blind preventing the light from shining through. As we align our humanity with the principles of God’s holiness, we begin to allow God’s glory to shine through us, in the same way that as we open the blinds, more light shines through.

Ephesians 4:22-24

All Apostolic people would agree that God calls His people to be holy. The disagreements are not over whether or not we are called to holiness, but what holiness actually looks like in the life of a believer. The key is to understand the principles of holiness, which form the basis for the inward attitudes and outward expressions of holiness.

Seven attributes of God:

1. His authority. God is Lord of all.
2. His different roles.
3. His redemptive purpose.
4. His inner beauty.
5. His integrity. God is whole.
6. His peace. God is secure and at rest.
7. His love.

From these seven attributes we can derive seven core principles of holiness:

1. The principle of authority.
2. The principle of differentiation of roles.
3. The principle of redemption.
4. The principle of inner beauty.
5. The principle of integrity.
6. The principle of peace.
7. The principle of love.

Ezekiel 44:23

One of the meanings of holiness is *separation*. This is derived from the idea that God, as the Creator, is separate, or set apart, from His creation, similar to the way a painter is set apart from his painting.

Just as God is set apart from the world He created, He calls us to be separated, or set apart, from the ungodly values and practices of the world we live in. That is the nature of our separation. We are instructed to not be conformed to the world, to not love the world, and to not be a friend of the world.

2 Corinthians 6:17

It is only by being separate from the sin and lust and corruption of the world that we put ourselves in a position to effectively offer God's salvation to the world. This is why the people of God must be able to recognize the difference between the holy and the unholy, the unclean and the clean.

Our setting apart from the uncleanness and unholiness of the world occurs as we learn the attributes of God (what the true God is really like) and recognize the principles that are derived from those attributes. Separation will be the automatic result of submitting to these principles in practical applications of daily living.

1. The principle of authority.

1 Corinthians 11:3

As the Creator, God is free to arrange His creation any way He chooses. This is the essence of His authority as the Lord of all.

1 Corinthians 11:3, Genesis 3:16, Ephesians 5:22-23, 1 Timothy 2:13, 1 Corinthians 11:8-9

By accepting God's principle of authority and willingly submitting to the authorities God has placed in our lives, we show the world this attribute of God as the Lord of His creation.

2. The principle of differentiation of roles.

Genesis 1:27-28, Ephesians 5:32-33

When God made mankind, He divided us into two distinct categories: He made us male and female. The principle of differentiation of roles tells us that we are to live in accord with what we are. Men are to be distinctively men, and women are to be distinctively women. God calls His people to learn the proper gender distinctions, not from the world we live in but from biblical precept *and* from nature.

1 Corinthians 11:14-15, Romans 1:26-27

The word "nature" means "original purpose." In other words, it speaks of what God intended at the beginning. This means that we can learn the way things ought to be by looking at what God intended

them to be at the beginning, in the opening chapters of the Bible, not by observing the way things are in the world around us today.

According to nature, men were to have short hair and women were to have long, or freely growing, hair. Likewise, women were to have sexual relations only with men and men only with women.

As we carefully maintain the distinctions between the sexes in their God-appointed roles, responsibilities, and appearances, we express to the world the eternal commitment of the Husband, the Lord Jesus, to His bride, the Church. And that is the whole point!

God also draws sharp lines of distinction between the roles and responsibilities of His Spirit and our flesh.

John 6:63, Romans 8:5-6

God works through humanity, but the work is His, not ours. When we focus on our own plans and activities (the things of the flesh), then we are said to be carnally minded. This results only in death. But if we set our minds on the things of the Spirit, recognizing that without Him we can do nothing, this will result in life and peace.

The principle of differentiation of roles tells us that we must live our lives as the beings God has created us to be—men being men and women being women. It also tells us that we must focus our attention of the things of the Spirit, knowing that humanity cannot on its own give life or accomplish anything of eternal value.

3. The principle of redemption.

Genesis 3:21, Psalms 32:1

The original purpose of clothing was to cover, not to reveal. In the world many people intentionally use clothing to reveal the parts of the body that can arouse sexual desires, but nature tells us that the purpose of clothing is not to show off body parts but to cover them.

Adam and Eve's coverings of animal skins were only a symbol of the covering we all need for our sins. When we cover our bodies appropriately with clothing, we are pointing to the covering for sin provided by God. The aprons Adam and Eve did not cover their nakedness fully; therefore, they were not a proper portrait of God's redemption. His blood covers fully.

1 Corinthians 11:15

The term "long hair" means freely growing hair. It is not the length that matters but the fact that it is being allowed to grow freely. The woman's hair is described here as a covering because woman represents the church, the bride of Christ, which must be covered by the blood, whereas man is uncovered (keeps his hair cut) because he represents Christ, who needs no covering because He has committed no sins.

The principle of redemption shows that we can glorify God by wearing clothes that fully cover whatever parts of our bodies could be provocative and by men keeping their cut and women allowing their hair to grow freely. By this we show God's redemptive plan.

4. The principle of inner beauty.

1 Timothy 2:9-10

Modest: Without flashiness, extravagance, vanity, or suggestiveness. Adequately covering the body.

Propriety: Literally, the idea of downcast eyes; bashfulness, expressed as modesty toward men and awe toward God.

Moderation: Soberness, self-control, proper decorum.

1 Peter 3:3-4

Peter and Paul both advised women to avoid attracting attention to themselves by the way they dress or do their hair. Instead of focusing on external beauty, they should focus on the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, *and*, as is proper for women professing godliness, good works.

The principle of inner beauty shows us that we glorify God when we focus on the hidden person of the heart and good works rather than dressing and decorating ourselves in ways that call attention to our physical features. As we do this, we reveal the inner beauty and good works of the Lord Jesus.

5. The principle of integrity.

Psalms 101:2-3

God is who He is. He is genuine. He never fails, falters, stumbles, or changes. He is never duplicitous or deceitful, but is always completely honest and open in all His dealings with man. In other words, He has absolute, untarnished integrity.

Since holiness is built on this principle, we must be concerned about any compromising desires (lusts) that would make us less genuine as children of God. We must keep our eyes on Jesus and be careful not to indulge our eyes on images that would tend to corrupt our hearts.

Job 31:1

The principle of integrity shows the seriousness of making a covenant (a firm commitment) with our eyes that we will not feast them on any image that might ignite a battle within our minds which, if we lose, would drag us into sin. When we yield to temptation, we are corrupted and become less whole. We have less integrity. We are less like God. Therefore, averting our eyes, casting down imaginations, abstaining from every form of evil, fleeing from fornication, not touching the unclean thing are all necessary applications of the principle of integrity.

6. The principle of peace.

Ephesians 5:18, Philippians 4:7

God is in full possession of Himself, which is to say, He is at peace within His own Spirit. He is not anxious or frantic or in any way out of control. He never has a slip of the tongue. He never just reacts. He never acts impulsively. His every thought, word, and action is deliberate and in perfect accord with His purpose in redemption.

Throughout the New Testament we are exhorted to control our thoughts, to be sober-minded, and to set our minds on the things of the Spirit. Thinking right is a foundation for holy living. Anytime we take a substance into our body that will cloud or diminish our ability to think clearly we are acting contrary to our responsibility in the Lord to be sober-minded and to show the peace of God.

7. The principle of love.

Romans 13:10, 1 Corinthians 8:1

The principle of love shows us that we are not to harm others but rather to edify them. This principle directs us in two ways. The first concerns stumbling blocks. The second concerns the priority of choosing that which is helpful and edifying.

Romans 14:12-13

It is hard enough avoiding the many temptations that could snare us and bring us into sin, we certainly don't need our own brothers or sisters making it harder for us.

1 Corinthians 8:12

As we apply this aspect of the principle of love to our lives, we reveal the love of the Lord Jesus, who offers Himself to mankind as a foundation stone, not a stumbling block.

1 Corinthians 10:23

During the days of His flesh, there were many things Jesus could have done that would not have been sinful, but neither would they have contributed to His purpose in coming, which was to bring salvation to the world. Likewise, there are a whole host of areas where God wants us to make choices as to how we will use our time, not based on whether or not it will harm us, but whether or not it will help us.

As we allow our love for others and our own desire to grow spiritually to govern our choices, choosing what's helpful and edifying over what may be preferred or convenient, we will show forth the love of God in always doing what is right and good for His people.

Let all that you do be done with love.

1 Corinthians 16:14

Whenever we fail to reflect these principles in our daily lives, we obscure the glory of God from shining forth. We close the blinds. When we focus on the externals and give short shrift to the inner qualities such as kindness or honesty, we likewise obscure God's glory. When we compromise on the external applications and suggest that they don't really matter, we likewise obscure the glory that God so desperately wants to shine forth as light to the world. When we allow these principles of holiness to direct our lives, the result is that we will be different from most of the people around us. We will be holy!