

“Be Holy, For I Am Holy”

Lesson 1: An Introduction To Holiness



Discovering God's Word
Bible Study Series

Be Holy, For I Am Holy”

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Learn what it means to be "holy," why being holy is so important, and the effort required for holiness

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Discovering God’s Word Bible Study Series

Study Number: DGW120

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My plea: It is my hope and prayer that you are searching for the truth that is contained in God’s word, the Bible. My desire is to help you understand and obey these truths God has revealed in the pages of His word. It is to that end that I write this material. Please observe all of the Scripture references and evaluate whether the conclusions I have drawn are in harmony with God’s word. If they are, I ask that you make honest application of those truths to your life and obey God’s instructions.

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“Be Holy, For I Am Holy”

Lesson 1:

An Introduction

To Holiness

1 Peter 1:13-16 says, “Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but 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.’”

The Christian’s life is expected to be different from the ways of the world – and from the ways in which he/she lived prior to becoming a Christian. The life of a Christian is a holy life that is patterned after God’s holiness!

But, what exactly does it mean to be holy? Man often has his own ideas about what holiness is – and how it ought to be applied to his life. However, we are forced by passages like 1 Peter 1:13-16 to think about the holiness of God – and to use God’s holiness as our own standard for holiness. In addition, man often desires to withhold a portion of his own life for himself, without allowing God’s command to be holy to take effect in that portion of his life. Yet again, the passage in 1 Peter 1:13-16 forces us to challenge that way of thinking – and apply God’s standard of holiness to every area of our lives!

The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the term “holy,” to consider why

holiness is so important, to realize that God does expect for His people to be holy, and to accept that holiness requires effort on our parts. This is an introduction to holiness. This lesson is attempting to establish a foundation for our future studies concerning holiness. And, please note that some of what we will discuss in this lesson will be discussed in greater detail in future studies.

Now, before we begin looking at this lesson, I want to offer a few words about what this 8-lesson study on holiness requires of you. First, this study requires an open Bible. The Bible is the inspired word of God that guides us into all of the ways that are pleasing to God. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” As such, we must appeal to it as the standard/criteria for living life on this earth!

Second, this study requires an open and willing mind. To learn about holiness is not all that God requires. Instead, God requires that we apply the things that His word teaches about holiness – and be willing to make the necessary changes to our lives, no matter how far-reaching or “radical” they may seem to be!

What Is Holiness?

The original words that are translated to indicate holiness all have the same basic meaning. The main idea of being holy is to be set apart. In a spiritual sense, then, it is used to denote that which has been set apart (separated from) the common, unclean, profane, and sinful – and dedicated to God! Consider, now, some examples from both the Old and New Testaments to see that this is true.

Holiness in the Old Testament

First, consider seven passages from the Old Testament that represent a sample of God’s teaching about holiness. Many of these passages specifically discuss the responsibility of the Israelites to be God’s special and separate people. Still, through these

examples, you can gain a greater understanding of what it means to be “holy.”

(1) Exodus 3:5. “Then He said, ‘Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.’”

As Moses turned aside to look at a bush that was burning, but, not being consumed by the fire, God called to Moses. He instructed Moses to take his shoes off – because the place he was standing was “holy ground.” This ground was “holy” because it was separated from/different than all of the common ground. This ground was holy in that it was in the presence of the Almighty God!

(2) Exodus 20:8-11. “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.”

The Sabbath (seventh) day was to be kept holy under the Old Covenant. This day was set apart from all of the other days of the week. The Israelites were to recognize this day as being separate – and follow God’s special instructions concerning their work on the Sabbath.

(3) Leviticus 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.”

The Lord is separate from everything that is evil. Therefore, He calls for His people to be holy (separate from everything that is evil, profane, common, etc.). Under the Old Covenant, God had separated His people (the Israelites) from all of the people of the world to be His own special people and be a holy nation.

(4) Leviticus 21:5-9. “They shall not make any bald place on their heads, nor shall they shave the edges of their beards nor make any cuttings in their flesh. They shall be holy to their God and not profane the name of their God, for they offer the

offerings of the Lord made by fire, and the bread of their God; therefore they shall be holy. They shall not take a wife who is a harlot or a defiled woman, nor shall they take a woman divorced from her husband; for the priest is holy to his God. Therefore you shall consecrate him, for he offers the bread of your God. He shall be holy to you, for I the Lord, who sanctify you, am holy. The daughter of any priest, if she profanes herself by playing the harlot, she profanes her father. She shall be burned with fire.”

The priests of Israel (from the tribe of Levi) performed the tabernacle (and later, the temple) service for God, including offering sacrifices to God. Those who were involved in the priesthood were expected to be “holy to their God.” That is, they were to be separated from the unclean, impure, and sinful in order that they might perform their service to God in a way that was acceptable to Him. These laws reflect the things God had instructed of them in fulfilling this special role among God’s people.

(5) Deuteronomy 14:21. “You shall not eat anything that dies of itself; you may give it to the alien who is within your gates, that he may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner; for you are a holy people to the Lord your God. ‘You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.’”

As God’s holy people, the Israelites were given certain restrictions concerning their conduct, diet, etc. in order to be acceptable to God. Notice how these laws were relevant to the holy people of God and not to the nations of the world. This was because God’s people were called to a higher standard to be separated from the things God declared common and unclean and be devoted entirely to Him!

(6) Deuteronomy 7:1-6. “When the Lord your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you, and when the Lord your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them. Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their

son, nor take their daughter for your son. For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the Lord will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly. But thus you shall deal with them: you shall destroy their altars, and break down their sacred pillars, and cut down their wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire. For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.”

When God would bring the Israelites into the promised land of Canaan, they were to destroy the people of the land along with all of their idolatrous images and altars! This was all to be done because God had called the nation of Israel to be His own special people and be separated from the wicked ways of the world to Himself. God realized that if they would not take these provisions, the people of the world would influence the Israelites to turn away from serving Him!

(7) Deuteronomy 26:16-19. “This day the Lord your God commands you to observe these statutes and judgments; therefore you shall be careful to observe them with all your heart and with all your soul. Today you have proclaimed the Lord to be your God, and that you will walk in His ways and keep His statutes, His commandments, and His judgments, and that you will obey His voice. Also today the Lord has proclaimed you to be His special people, just as He promised you, that you should keep all His commandments, and that He will set you high above all nations which He has made, in praise, in name, and in honor, and that you may be a holy people to the Lord your God, just as He has spoken.”

The covenant Israel entered with the Lord was this: They would be God’s people and He would bless them. And, He would be their God and they would keep His commandments. Therefore, the people of Israel were separated from all of the people of the world to serve the Lord according to the Lord’s instructions and abstain from the sinful ways of the world!

Holiness in the New Testament

Now, let’s focus on five passages in the New Testament containing the idea of holiness. Though these passages speak of different things/people as being “holy,” they help us gain a greater understanding of the word itself.

(1) Romans 16:16. “Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you.”

This passage (along with 1 Corinthians 16:20, 2 Corinthians 13:12; and 1 Thessalonians 5:26) talks about the greeting between those who are Christians. This greeting is something that ought to be special and set apart from all the other ways people greet each other. There is truly something special/unique about the way Christians should greet one another. It reflects the unique and special relationship that is shared between one another in the Lord.

(2) 2 Timothy 1:9. “[Who] has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.”

The way that God calls people to Himself is separate from all of the other calls an individual might receive in this world. God calls people to Himself through the gospel’s message (2 Thessalonians 2:14). Therefore, this call is special and unique in that it is the only calling that will result in the salvation of souls (Romans 1:16)!

(3) 1 Peter 3:5. “For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands.”

Women who trusted in God were known as “holy women.” They were known as such because they were separate from all of the common women who would not trust in God! These who trusted in God and were separated from the worldly women, then, submitted to their husbands – according to the instructions of the Lord (1 Peter 3:1-6).

(4) 1 Peter 2:9-10. “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the

praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.”

As we have seen, the Israelites were God’s special people in the Old Testament and were separated from the world. Today, God’s “holy nation” of people who are separated from the world is the church (composed of individual Christians)! These have been called by God’s holy calling to be separated from the ways of darkness, come into His marvelous light, and obtain mercy from Him!

(5) 1 Peter 1:15-16. “but 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.’”

God is separated from all that is evil. In the same way, God expects His people to be separated from all that is evil in every area of their lives! We will be revisiting this passage frequently throughout this study. This passage instructs that you must be holy according to God’s standard of holiness in order to please Him.

Why Is Holiness So Important?

Why is it even important to consider this subject? Now that we have learned a little about how the word “holy” is used in the Scriptures, I want us to consider some reasons we need to be concerned about our own holiness. In fact, as we will observe, holiness is a major theme of the Scriptures – beginning with the holiness of God Himself! We will talk more about these points in the next couple of lessons. Still, let’s briefly observe these important points concerning why holiness is so important.

Because of God’s own nature

Remember the basis of God’s plea for His people to be holy is His nature of being holy: “Be holy, for I am holy.” This was true concerning God’s people in the Old Testament (the Israelites). Leviticus 11:44-45 demonstrates this point, “For I

am the Lord your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy. Neither shall you defile yourselves with any creeping thing that creeps on the earth. 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.” And, the same is also true concerning God’s people under the New Covenant (Christians), as we saw in 1 Peter 1:15-16.

God’s nature is such that He is entirely pure and separated from everything that is evil. 1 John 1:5 says, “This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.” There is no amount of evil in God! And, since this is true, He expects His people to be separated from the ways of evil.

Because of sin

Sin is the transgression/violation of God’s laws. It is acting against or contrary to God’s laws. 1 John 3:4 says, “Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.” God’s ways are always perfect and righteous. Therefore, those who violate God’s perfect and righteous commandments are guilty of unrighteousness! 1 John 5:17 plainly states that all unrighteousness is sin.

Then, because sin is contrary to the holy nature of God, sin separates us from God. Isaiah 59:1-2 says, “Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.” After stating that God is light (without any mixture of darkness), 1 John 1:6 goes on to make it clear that there can be no fellowship with God while we live in sin.

Because of what God has done

The Scriptures teach that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). With the exception of those who do not have the mental ability to sin (i.e. infants, young children, etc.) and Jesus Christ, all who have ever lived on this earth have sinned. Since the wages of sin is spiritual death (separation from God, Romans 6:23) and results in

eternal spiritual death in Hell fire (Revelation 21:8), man's separation from his holy God is a serious problem!

Thanks be to God that He has provided a way through Jesus Christ to be forgiven of our sin and be reconciled to Him! Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 says, "Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation."

Because God calls His people to be holy

God has sacrificed His only begotten Son in order to redeem mankind from his sin. This was the greatest sacrifice that could ever be made – and it was one entirely stemming from God's love and compassion for mankind! He did *not* make this great sacrifice so that mankind could continue living in the same sinful ways he had been living!

Therefore, God requires that those who come to Him for the forgiveness of their sins come out from the world to be separate and dedicate their lives to following Him! This is what we have already considered from 1 Peter 1:13-16 and 1 Peter 2:9-10. Now, consider 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 to further demonstrate this point.

"Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.' Therefore 'Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.' 'I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty.' Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse

ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

Because we will reap what we have sown

The Bible warns us that it *does* matter whether we choose to live our lives for ourselves or for Him! Galatians 6:7-8 tells us that we will reap what we have sown, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life." We will all be judged by Jesus Christ when our earthly lives are over (2 Corinthians 5:10). The standard by which we will all be judged is the word of God – whether we have lived according to the instructions of God while we lived on this earth or not (see John 12:48; Romans 2:16; Revelation 20:11-15). God's word is the standard that describes the holiness of God and instructs us concerning our own holiness.

Those who choose to live their lives in rebellion against the holy ways of God will be sentenced to eternal punishment in Hell fire (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 21:8). But, those who choose to live their lives in submission to the holy ways of God will be rewarded with eternal life in Heaven (Matthew 25:34; Revelation 21:1-22:5).

How you choose to live matters!

How you choose to live matters! First, it matters to God. God is a holy God who calls you to live a life of holiness if you want to be in fellowship with Him and receive the blessings He provides. He has even sent His only begotten Son to die on the cross so that you could be saved from your sins and be made holy in His sight.

Second, how you choose to live matters to you! If you choose to live in sin, you will be eternally punished in Hell! However, you will be eternally rewarded if you will give your life entirely to God! Jesus taught that there is nothing and nobody worth losing your soul for (Matthew 16:26)! Therefore, it pays to be holy!

Holiness matters! All of the points we have considered are directly related to the importance of living a holy life. I hope I have adequately

demonstrated that point. So, whether or not you choose to live a life of holiness matters!

The People Of God

God expects His people to be holy. This was the case under the Old Testament – and it continues to be the case under the new. Therefore, let’s search the Scriptures to see how they refer to God’s people under the New Covenant, particularly as it relates to holiness.

Christians are “the people of God”

1 Peter 2:9-10 (as quoted earlier) said that Christians (the church) are God’s own special people – just like the nation of Israel was God’s own special people under the Old Covenant. The term “church” (as frequently used in the Bible) simply refers to the collection of God’s people. All Christians are part of Christ’s church – and are the people of God!

They are God’s people because they have been purchased with His own blood and have entered into a covenant relationship with Him! Acts 20:28 is one passage that indicates the church of God has been purchased by His own blood (through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross). It says, “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”

2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 (as we’ve already considered) describes the covenant that God has made with His people. Notice that this covenant is one in which God will be their Father (which results in a great inheritance, see Romans 8:16-17) and His people have agreed to be separated from the sinful ways of the world in order to follow Him!

Some figures used for God’s people

Now, consider some ways in which His people are described in the Scriptures (as applicable to our study about holiness).

(1) A holy nation. 1 Peter 2:9 identifies Christians as God’s “holy nation.” Just as the

Israelites were called by God to be separate from the wicked and sin-filled world, Christians (His people today) are called to be separate from the wicked ways of the world.

(2) Saints. All Christians are identified as “saints” in the Bible (see Ephesians 1:1; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:2). The Greek word translated as “saint” simply refers to a most holy thing (see Thayer’s Greek definitions).

This is because all Christians are sanctified! To be sanctified is to be set apart (and is related to the idea of holiness). Specifically, the Scriptures frequently refer to sanctification in the sense of being set apart from sin – and the consequences of sin.

Those who are obedient to God’s plan of salvation are sanctified by God. Remember, he/she was previously enslaved to sin – and could not escape his/her sin alone! It is through the working of God that those who obey God are sanctified! Ephesians 5:25-27 demonstrates how Christ loved the church so much that He gave Himself to die for her – in order to set her apart (sanctify her) from sin, presenting her to himself as a “glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.” As an example, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 demonstrates how those in Corinth (who had been guilty of the sins listed in 6:9-10 prior to becoming Christians) were set apart from and justified of their past sins through Jesus Christ!

In the same way, all who are obedient to God’s plan of salvation today are set apart from and justified of their sins – in order that they would live holy lives that are entirely dedicated to the Lord! Therefore, Christians are “saints” (God’s holy people).

(3) The temple of God. The church of God is called His temple. 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 says, “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.” Also consider 2 Corinthians 6:16 and Ephesians 2:19-22. This is used in the collective sense of all His people (His church). Then, individual Christians are also called temples of God (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

Christ's church is identified in this way because God dwells in His people and they are expected to be entirely separated to Him. God dwells in Christians through His word – as God's word works in the lives of Christians! So, just as God's tabernacle and temple (used in Old Testament worship) were recognized as holy places, God's people are also to be holy. The tabernacle and temple were recognized as being separate from all other places on earth – because God would dwell in them. Therefore, everything about and around the tabernacle and temple was to be holy! In the same way, since God dwells in the Christian (through His word), everything about the Christian's life is expected to be set apart from that which is common, impure, and wicked!

(4) A royal priesthood. 1 Peter 2:9-10 not only describes God's people as a holy nation, but also as a royal priesthood. In the Old Testament, God's priests were expected to be set apart and dedicated to God's service (as we observed in Leviticus 21:5-9). You can read about the various aspects of the priesthood to see how they were called to be separate because of their important role of ministering to God on behalf of the people.

Today, all Christians are priests! We offer to God the spiritual sacrifice of our lives (Romans 12:1-2) and offer our worship to Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24). Therefore, God expects every Christian to be separated entirely to Him so that their spiritual sacrifices and worship will be acceptable to Him!

Holiness Requires Effort

Finally, after considering these truths that God expects His people to be holy, you must recognize that holiness requires effort! Holiness doesn't just happen. Consider how the Scriptures demonstrate the effort that is attached with holiness.

The flesh pulls us to be unholy

The way of the flesh is contrary to the way of God (the Spirit). Galatians 5:16-26 demonstrates this to be true. Verse 16 instructs us to live according to

God's instructions (walk "in the Spirit") so that we will not fulfill the desires of the flesh. "For," he explains in verse 17, "the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish." Paul then identifies some wicked things that will be produced in the lives of those who live according to the ways of the flesh (i.e. fornication, adultery, idolatry, sorcery, jealousies, murder, drunkenness, and such things). In contrast to these, are some good things that will result in the lives of those who live according to God's holy ways (i.e. love, joy, peace, self-control, etc.). Paul concludes that "those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (verse 24).

After Peter identified God's people as a "royal priesthood" and a "holy nation" in 1 Peter 2:9-10, he begs those who are Christians to view themselves as "sojourners and pilgrims" during their earthly lives. He does so because those who view themselves in this way will not be focused on living according to the unholy desires that are often used by the devil to lure people away from serving God. He exhorts those who are Christians to "abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul" (see 1 Peter 2:11-12).

In Romans 8:5-8, Paul taught that the mind that is set on living according to the ways of the flesh cannot please God. He said that this mind is hostile toward God and will not submit to God's holy ways. Instead of focusing on temporary earthly things, Paul encouraged Christians to focus on the eternal (spiritual) things of God. These are the only things that will help us to experience life and peace.

Clearly, the Scriptures demonstrate that the fleshly things of this life are trying to pull us away from being holy and serving God. Sadly, most people succumb to the pull of these fleshly desires that result in being unholy. The way of the flesh is the way that is common, sinful, wicked, etc. In fact, listen to John's assessment of the things that are "in the world," in 1 John 2:15-17. It is not the way that is separate and pure! "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the

world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”

Many Bible examples demonstrate that the majority of those on the earth will pursue the ways of the flesh instead of living to please God. (1) All but eight individuals were wicked in the days of Noah (Genesis 6:5-8). (2) Not even ten were found to be righteous in Sodom and Gomorrah to prevent God from destroying those two wicked cities (Genesis 18-19). (3) Even the nation of Israel (God’s people under the Old Covenant) consistently turned away from following after God, so as to pursue their own fleshly desires and follow the idols of the nations around them.

Jesus also said that most people would choose to live in a way that does not please God, taking the easy path through this life: “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Matthew 7:13-14).

Because of the great pull of the flesh to live in a way that is unholy, being holy requires great effort! It doesn’t just happen by chance! It takes determination and self-discipline!

Must cleanse self from all filthiness, perfecting holiness

2 Corinthians 7:1 says, “Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

We must make an effort to be entirely holy! This passage (2 Corinthians 7:1) instructs that we cleanse ourselves from *all* filthiness of the flesh and spirit. This is our responsibility! We must make a determined effort to rid ourselves of the filth of sin, both inside and outside! This passage tells us that we must be pressing toward perfect holiness!

Holiness, therefore, is an ongoing responsibility. Holiness is not a one-time decision (i.e. when we become Christians). Instead, holiness requires great diligence throughout the course of a lifetime! Therefore, Jesus told the Christians in

Smyrna, “Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life” (Revelation 2:10). We must take time to be holy, evaluating our lives in order to see whether we are living in the way that is pleasing to God or not – and determine to make the necessary changes to our lives in order to perfect holiness!

Then, this is to be done as you recognize the fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord involves two elements: (1) Reverential respect for God concerning who He is and what He has done. (2) Terror of God concerning His vengeance upon those who disobey Him. Both of these elements have a tremendous impact on our decisions to be holy!

Conclusion

In this lesson, we have observed: (1) That to be holy is to be separated from the common, evil, unclean, profane, etc. and to be completely dedicated to God. (2) That the choice to be holy or not to be holy has eternal implications for our souls. (3) That God calls those who are His own special people (Christians) to live holy lives. And, (4) that holiness requires diligence and effort.

How dedicated are you to being holy? Do you recognize your need to be holy? Holiness is only found through Jesus Christ – in coming to Him for the forgiveness of your sins through obedience to the gospel! Come to Christ today! Have you heard His word, believed in Him, repented of your sins, confessed Christ, and been baptized for the forgiveness of your sins? If not, you are still in your sins! If you have come to Christ, are you living your life in the way that is pleasing to God, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord? If not, you need to make the necessary corrections to your life today! 2 Corinthians 6:2 says, “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation”!

Study Questions

What are your impressions from reading 1 Peter 1:13-16?

What does this study on holiness require of you?

1. What Is Holiness?

Define holiness.

Briefly discuss the following OT examples of holiness:

1. Exodus 3:5 –
2. Exodus 20:8-11 –
3. Leviticus 20:26 –
4. Leviticus 21:5-9 –
5. Deuteronomy 14:21 –
6. Deuteronomy 7:1-11 –
7. Deuteronomy 26:16-19 –

Briefly discuss the following NT examples of holiness:

1. Romans 16:16 –

2. 2 Timothy 1:9 –

3. 1 Peter 3:5 –

4. 1 Peter 2:9-10 –

5. 1 Peter 1:15-16 –

2. Why Is Holiness So Important?

What does God's own nature have to do with holiness?

What does sin have to do with holiness?

What does the sacrifice of Jesus have to do with holiness?

What does God's call have to do with holiness?

What does the Day of Judgment have to do with holiness?

Does holiness matter? Explain.

3. The People Of God

Who are the "people of God"?

Discuss the following figures that are used regarding God's people – and how they are connected with holiness:

1. A holy nation –
2. Saints –
3. The temple of God –
4. A royal priesthood –

4. Holiness Requires Effort

How does the flesh pull you away from being holy?

What does 2 Corinthians 7:1 teach you concerning your individual effort to be holy?