

LIVING HOLY

Life Application: Understanding the nature of holiness and why it is vital in the Christian life.

Key Verse for Meditation: As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. – 1 Peter 1:15-16

Focus Scriptures: Leviticus 19:2; John 17:9,15-17; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 1 Peter 1:13-16; 2:9

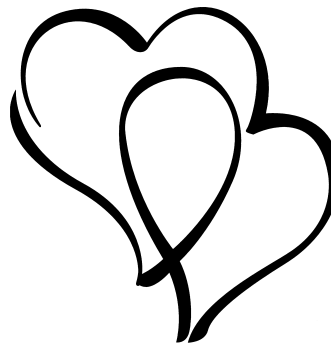
What is Holiness?

In the Book of 1 Peter, we find an awesome command: "As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:15-16). We are called to be holy as God is holy!

Often in Scripture the words *sanctified* and *holy* are synonymous. When the Bible refers to sanctification, it is speaking of one of two aspects. First, it can indicate being set apart—being consecrated or dedicated to God for His use. Secondly, it can mean to be cleansed—to be made holy, to have the inherited sin nature eradicated.

The sanctuary where we worship together has been sanctified in the first sense.

Called to Be Holy



It has been dedicated to God. The altar benches at the front of our sanctuary are holy. The pews where the congregation sits are holy; they have all been consecrated to God and His service.

When the Tabernacle in the wilderness was to be dedicated, God commanded Moses to anoint the altar and all its vessels. We read, "And thou shalt sanctify them, that they may be most holy" (Exodus 30:29). Moses did according to God's instructions—he sanctified them. He set them apart.

God was conveying a lesson through the dedication of objects. If God can sanctify an object, God can sanctify us. And He wants to do so!



Lesson Key: While the experience of sanctification is definite and instantaneous, the sanctified believer continues to grow as a Christian. A sanctified heart has a desire to be instructed, to learn, to mature. A sanctified heart asks: What does living holy look like? How should holiness and separation unto God govern my words, my thoughts, and my actions? The answers to these questions were what Paul and the other Apostles sought to teach the early believers.

The Greek word translated *common* in Acts 10:14 and 28 means “unholy.” Thus, the word *holy* could also be translated *uncommon*. God’s Word draws a clear difference between holy and unholy, between clean and unclean (see Leviticus 10:10). Sanctified objects are not to be used in a common manner; they are to be used for the glory of God.

That principle extends to followers of Christ as well. The Apostle Peter said, “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Peter 2:9). As Christians, we are not to be “common” people because we have devoted ourselves to God; we have set ourselves apart for Him.

The second aspect of sanctification—that of cleansing—is an act of God that brings about a change in the inner person. After our sins have been forgiven, we come to Him with a recognition of needing more. We long to fully conform to the image and nature of Christ, so we present our lives in total submission to Him. As we look to God to accomplish the purifying work in us, He sanctifies our hearts and makes them holy in a second, definite, and instantaneous work of grace. The carnal nature with which we were born is destroyed.

God wants every individual who has been saved to be entirely sanctified. When we pray and consecrate to God, we have separated ourselves for His use. But then we must let His Blood be applied again to our hearts to make us clean and pure and holy in the sight of the Lord.

Even after we have received the experience of sanctification, we are still subject to human limitations such as flawed reasoning and imperfect judgment, which can cause us to make less than perfect decisions. However, holiness will keep our hearts pure and motivate us to always want to do the right thing. We want to receive instruction from God. We listen, we obey when that instruction comes, and we continue to grow in Him. We mature as Christians.

Holiness must permeate every aspect of our lives. Our lives should reflect that we are consecrated to God. The decisions we make should be based on the fact that we have separated ourselves to live for the Lord. Our speech should reflect our commitment to belong to Him. Our actions, the places we go, the music we listen to, the way we look—all of it should reflect the fact that we have set ourselves apart for God.

Living holy lives is a tremendous privilege, and it is what God desires for each of His children! – *From a sermon by Darrel Lee*



“If you think you can walk in holiness without keeping up perpetual fellowship with Christ, you have made a great mistake. If you would be holy, you must live close to Jesus.” – *Charles H. Spurgeon, English evangelist*

Avoiding Contamination

My cousin was recuperating in the hospital after a near-fatal accident on his job. Because of the nature of his injury and to prevent the possibility of infection, scrupulous care was taken to prevent his visitors from contaminating the surroundings.

Before we entered his room, we had to put on surgical gowns and gloves. We were not allowed to touch him or his bed, and every nurse who entered scrubbed thoroughly before assisting him in any way. It was clear that every effort was being made to maintain a sterile environment.

There are many ungodly influences in our world today. As God’s people, we must be willing to separate ourselves from anything that would defile or contaminate the purity God has given us. This does not mean that we become hermits. Rather, it means that we carefully avoid anything that would influence us toward sinful practices. In a world filled with evil, we must resist the sin around us, instead of partaking of it. – *From a Daybreak devotional*





For Personal Study

1. Why must Christians be holy? Leviticus 11:44-45; 1 Peter 1:13-16

2. Read 2 Corinthians 6:17 and Ephesians 5:11. What does it mean to be separated from the world?

3. Even though the experience of sanctification is instantaneous, we need to "perfect holiness" (see 2 Corinthians 7:1). How can we keep our hearts as "good ground"?

He Purified My Heart!



When I was saved, I thought it was the most wonderful thing in the world, and I basked in the wonder of spiritual new birth. However, before too long, a brother in the church said to me, "You know, you cannot live on that experience alone forever. You need to pray that the Lord will sanctify you." I found out that was absolutely the truth.

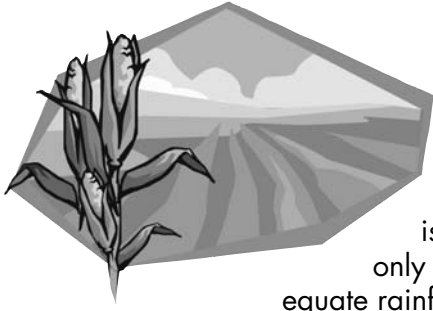
My job was with the post office, and the Christmas rush came shortly after I was saved. For about six weeks we worked twelve or more hours a day, seven days a week. There was almost no opportunity for me to go to church, and I was in the same environment as before I was saved. Working with me were people with whom I had drunk alcohol, smoked, and partied. God gave me the strength to stand, but because of the battles that came my way, I began to understand the importance of sanctification.

God gave me such a hunger that I could hardly sleep or keep focused on my job or my daily routine. Sanctification became the most important thing in my life. Even though I did not really understand the experience, I was desperately hungry for God. During church services, I sat and wept.

Then one day, as I prayed and consecrated myself to God, the Lord opened the heavens and gave me the wonderful experience of sanctification. He really did something for me. It seemed even better than salvation, which I did not think anything could top.

When God sanctified me, He purified my heart and gave me the very thing that has kept me steady through the years. I found myself of one heart and one mind with the saints of God. Being in unity with my brothers and sisters in the faith was a tremendous and beautiful experience that nothing else could ever produce.

How I thank Him for that wonderful experience! – Gary Bertram

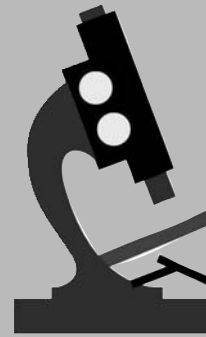


A farmer plows, plants, and cultivates his crop, all the while knowing that his efforts will pay off only if the weather and other external factors are positive. For a successful harvest, he is ultimately dependent on things only God can provide: sunshine, adequate rainfall, protection from insect infestations or natural disasters that might affect crops, etc.

Even though the farmer cannot control his environment, he continues to diligently attend to his responsibilities of plowing, planting, cultivating, weeding, fertilizing, and tending to his crop. The farmer cannot do what God must do to make the crops grow, and God will not do what the farmer should do.

It is the same way in our lives as sanctified believers. Paul told the believers in Corinth, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 7:1). When we have been saved from our sins, God will wonderfully sanctify us and eradicate our sinful natures. However, we still have a responsibility: even though the experience of sanctification is instantaneous, we must continue to keep the ground in our hearts watered through prayer, and nourished by intake of the Word of God. Any "weeds" that might hinder our spiritual growth must be removed quickly, and we need to keep a watchful eye out for any "insects" or undesirable elements that would damage or destroy the spiritual fruit we are to produce.

In short, there is an on-going requirement to exercise diligence to keep ourselves uncontaminated from the world's influence, and to grow in our relationship with God.



Word Search

The word *sanctify* comes from the Greek word *hagios*, which means "holy." Thus, the experience of sanctification is sometimes referred to as "holiness." The verb *sanctify* has two meanings: "to hallow; to consecrate or to separate from ungodliness and dedicate to God" (in a ceremonial sense), and "to make holy or purify" (in a moral sense). These meanings reveal that a holy and sanctified person is one who has been first consecrated or set apart to serve God, and subsequently cleansed from his sin nature.

4. Romans 12:1-2 has three directives that will help us maintain and grow spiritually once we have been sanctified. What are these three instructions?

5. How does a holy lifestyle impact our Christian witness? See Philippians 2:15.

6. According to 1 Corinthians 6:19, we belong to God. How might being set apart for God's use affect our view of ourselves?
