

"Be Ye Holy"

Have you thought about what it means to be holy? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Today we're going to take a serious look at our need to be holy like God is holy. Stay tuned.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. God is completely holy; and sin is against His very nature. 1 John 1 and verse 5 says that, "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all." His judgments and His ways are righteous altogether. God doesn't think like we do. God said in Isaiah 55 verses 8 to 9, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." Oh, thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

As society becomes less formal and more secular, so some churches are losing their sense of the sacred. They've blurred the line between the sacred and the common. And people have lost a sense of reverence and awe for God. Some have seen little use for worship and turned their assemblies into concerts. The Lord Jesus calls us to deny ourselves and take up our crosses daily. Much of what passes as religious activity has little to do with carrying a cross.

Holiness in the Bible calls for separation from all that is common or unclean. In respect to God, holiness not only means that He is separate from all that is unclean and evil but also that He is positively pure and thus distinct from all others. This purity sets Him apart from his world. Habukkuk 1 and verse 13 says about God, that "Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, And You can not look on wickedness with favor." So...God calls upon His people to become holy, so that He may dwell with them and so that they may worship Him. We must distance ourselves from the ways and the values of the world.

Now if you want to know more about holiness, we offer this study free. If you'd like a printed copy or a CD of our study and you live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website at www.searchtv.org.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from 1 Peter 1 verses 13 to 16, and then explore our need to be holy in God's sight.

Our reading today comes from 1 Peter chapter 1 verses 13 to 16.

"Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."

That's something that all of us need to strive for. To live a holy life. Let's pray together. Father help us in every way to please You and to be more and more like You every day that we live. May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen.

God wanted Israel to regard Him as a holy God. And when people failed to listen and obey Him, God punished them. Leviticus 10 verses 1 to 3 says, "Now Nadab and Abihu, (that's the sons of Aaron), each took his censer and put fire in it and laid incense on it and offered unauthorized fire before the LORD, which he had not commanded them. And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD. Then Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD has said:

'Among those who are near me I will be sanctified, (that is made holy) and before all the people I will be glorified.'"

On another occasion, David was bringing the ark of the covenant into Jerusalem. And he erroneously brought it on an oxcart rather than to follow the Lord's instructions to have the Levites carry it. Uzzah was also on the oxcart. 2 Samuel chapter 6 verses 6 and 7 says, "But when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out toward the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen nearly upset it. And the anger of the LORD burned against Uzzah, and God struck him down there for his irreverence; and he died there by the ark of God." Now Uzzah should not have touched the ark, which is holy. God expects His people to show Him reverence and awe; and nothing less will do.

Sin has always separated people from God. You can't live in sin and expect to grow close to God. Isaiah 59 verses 1 and 2 says, "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or His ear dull, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear." When you sin, you separate yourself from God's holiness and from His favor. Iniquity and sin are acts or feelings that transgress God's will. Perhaps they do what God forbids, or perhaps they ignore what God requires. In either case, sin and iniquity treat God with disrespect. They treat Him as if He were common or a "nobody." Well, God will not tolerate sin.

Now just as the Father in heaven is holy, so our Lord Jesus Christ is holy. You can see His holiness demonstrated in His life. Hebrews 4 and verse 15 says, "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin." Again, Peter could say in 1 Peter 2:21 to 22, "For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in his mouth." Now even when Jesus suffered, He didn't sin against others. Do you remember how Jesus in Luke 23:34 prayed for those who crucified Him, "Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing"? I simply say, no one has ever lived, who has ever lived, can measure up to the godliness, purity, and holiness of Jesus Christ. Jesus asked in John 8 and verse 46, "Which one of you convicts Me of sin?"

Surprisingly, many people, even some Christians, believe that Jesus committed sins while on earth. That's just wrong. They ignore the fact that as the Son of God, He was indeed holy and without sin. If Jesus had not been holy, He could not have served as a sacrifice for our sins. As an atoning sacrifice, Jesus offered Himself without blemish to God (Hebrews 9 and verse 14). If Jesus had not been holy, He could not be the mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2 verses 5 and 6). If Jesus had not been the righteousness One, He could not be our Advocate with the Father (1 John 2 and verse 2). John chapter one tells us that Jesus was the Word in the beginning who came to earth and took on flesh, so that He might take away our sins. Now as the Word, He was divine and holy!

Now since God is holy, He isn't like you and me, not like us. He doesn't take pleasure in sin. As a holy God, He cannot tolerate sin but must punish it. God said to the wicked in Psalm 50 verses 17 to 21, "For you hate discipline, and you cast my words behind you. If you see a thief, you are pleased with him, and you keep company with adulterers. You give your mouth free rein for evil, and your tongue frames deceit. You sit and speak against your brother; you slander your own mother's son. These things you have done, and I have been silent; (and he says to them, to the wicked) you thought that I (speaking of God) was one like yourself. But now I rebuke you and lay the charge before you." We must never presume that because God doesn't strike us dead immediately, that somehow God doesn't care whether we sin or not.

No, God has called us to follow in the steps of Jesus. And it makes sense that we are to forsake our sins and to pursue righteousness and godliness. 1 Peter 1:14 to 16 says, that “As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’” Now Peter was writing to young Christians, many of whom had come out of a pagan lifestyle, filled with drunkenness and immorality. But God calls us to something better than living for our fleshly lusts.

Paul laid it out clearly in 2 Corinthians 6 verses 14 to 18: “Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, ‘I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their GOD, and they shall be my people. Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate,’ says the Lord. ‘and do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you. And I will be a Father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,’ Says the Lord Almighty.”

Now living holy lives allows us to be His sons and daughters. We must avoid what is evil and unclean so that we may be a temple where God can live. Now if we live in sin, God can't live in us. 2 Corinthians 7 and verse 1 concludes this point: he says, “Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” Oh by the grace of God and through the blood of Jesus, we can be washed from sin; but our cleansing means that we can no longer live like we used to live. We must grow in the fear of God by perfecting holy lives. Romans 8:12 and 13 says, “So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”

Because we want to be holy like God, we must take what God teaches to heart. Romans 12 and verse 2 says, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” Now the more we allow God's word to transform our lives, the more we show the world that God's ways are good, acceptable, and perfect. Now this means taking what God teaches to heart and applying them to our lives.

God never intended us to own a Bible that we ignore. Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount that we not only are responsible for what we do but also for what we think and what we say. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 5:21 to 22, “You have heard that the ancients were told, ‘You shall not commit murder’ and ‘Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.’ (then Jesus said) But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, ‘You good-for-nothing,’ shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, ‘You fool,’ shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell.” I tell you we need to think twice about our attitudes and what we call others. God is listening!

The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 12 verses 36 to 37, “But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.” Now it may be popular to call names and slander other people, but God will hold us accountable for our words on the day of judgment. The Lord Jesus wants us to rise above a hateful attitude. He said in Matthew 5:43 to 45, “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes

His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and (He) sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.” Holiness means being sons of our Father, sons who love even those who don’t appreciate our love. We love rather than hate, because our Father does. We pray for and bless others who persecute us, because God is our Father.

The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 5 verses 27 to 28, “You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery'; but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” God knows our actions begin with our hearts, and a lustful heart will lead to a lustful way. The Scriptures are clear; Ephesians 5:1 to 5 says, “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (you see that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.”

My friend there is no greater blessing in Christ than God’s grace and forgiveness. But grace is not a license to continue in sin. Paul asked in Romans 6 verses 1 and 2, “What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?” Jesus died on the cross to set us free from sin, so we can’t return to the sins of our past. And we must not. We’ve got to repent and continue to follow the Lord.

God has blessed us richly; and this should make us want to serve Him even more. 1 John 3 verses 2 to 3 says, “Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.” My friend do you have this hope, of being able to live with God forever? Are you living a pure life and are you purifying yourself as He is pure so that you may live with Him one day? I certainly hope so. Let’s pray together. Oh Father help us to live pure and holy lives, that bring glory and honor to Your name. This is our pray in the name of Jesus our Lord. And may His will be done. Amen.

The apostle Paul by inspiration said in 2 Timothy 2 verses 19 to 22: “But God’s firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: “The Lord knows those who are his,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.” Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honorable use, some for dishonorable. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work. So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.”

Now if you’re living as you ought to live, God knows it; but if you’re not living as you should, God knows that too! You cannot fool God; He always knows our hearts and sees every aspect of our lives. Proverbs 15 and verse 3 says that, “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, watching the evil and the good.” Now what is God seeing in your life? If you aren’t living as you should, then you need to make a change. You can’t continue in sin and expect to please God.

The Lord can transform your life, yes, if you’ll let Him. But you have to let Him. Turn from doubt to faith. Believe in the gospel of the Lord Jesus, and that He died for your sins and was raised from the dead. Turn from sin to obedience. Repent of your sins by changing your thinking and deciding to live as God wills. Confess the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God. And be baptized into Christ for the

forgiveness of your sins, and God will make you one of His sons and daughters (Galatians 3 verses 26 to 27). Oh my friend get right with God today!

We hope that this lesson about being holy as God's child has stirred you to consider your soul. If you live in the United States and you want a free printed copy or a CD of this message, then mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now you can download these lessons or a newsletter online at our website: www.searchtv.org. You can also watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! And we ask that you do. Subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry" on YouTube. There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches in your area on our website at www.searchtv.org. And we also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. And we're not here to try to trouble you or exploit you or to just get money from you. No, we're here to help you get to heaven.

We do ask that you please get involved with a church of Christ. And if you want to find one, we'll be happy to help you. We'll be back next week, Lord willing. And so we say always, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.