

Teacher's Guide for Living Holy

Theme: What is Holiness?

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

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.

Introduction:

The first step in living holy lives begins with a proper understanding of what God means when He calls believers to holiness, a command that is found in both the Old and New Testaments. Holiness is *not* merely conforming to a certain set of rules. Rather, it is a way of life based on separation from the world, setting ourselves apart or devoting ourselves to God for His use, and the eradication of the sin nature through the experience of entire sanctification. It includes the necessity of spiritual growth, and is marked by a desire to receive instruction from God and to mature as Christians in every aspect of the Christian walk.

It will be important for your students to understand that a measure of holiness is imparted to the heart at salvation. We do not minimize the experience of salvation when we preach the experience of sanctification. The "old man" is nailed to the cross at salvation; he is dealt the death blow at sanctification. God deals with each of us uniquely according to our understanding and the Light we have. For this reason, it is impossible to attribute the precise level of virtue imparted at the experience of salvation versus what is reserved for the experience of sanctification. We can unequivocally state, however, that at salvation our sins are forgiven and we have power to live without sin, even though the principle of sin still exists until the experience of sanctification, when it is eradicated. So in this lesson, and in subsequent lessons which deal with specifics, we should be clear that holy living is an ongoing continuum, beginning with the instantaneous experiences of salvation and sanctification, and continuing in development as we mature as Christians.

The theme of this entire unit is that there is an essential difference between the sanctified people of God and the people of the world. The views, motives, desires, and purposes of a holy, sanctified individual are diametrically opposed to those of the world. The one who is interested in living holy will be constantly seeking to abide in conformity to the character of God, and in obedience to the will of God.

Opener Ideas/Activities:

The downloadable video clip "Polished Outside and Messy Inside" presents a compelling visual illustration for this lesson. Search for it by title at <http://sermoncentral.sermonspice.com>.

Ahead of class time, give a member in your group who has some dramatic ability the “Window Washer Mime” included in your supplemental resources for this lesson. Conclude the mime performance by pointing out that polishing up the “exterior” of our lives is not the point of holiness. The important thing is that we are clean and holy on the inside.

Bring to class a sock that has been soaked in mud. Prior to showing your group the sock, ask if someone in the class would volunteer to put on a sock as part of a visual demonstration. When someone volunteers, take out the muddy sock and ask him to put it on his clean foot. He will likely hesitate to do so. (You may wish to move forward as soon as he hesitates, just so he does not overcome his objections and actually do it!) Liken this to the Holy Spirit’s refusal to dwell in an unclean body.

Show an example of “almost is not enough.” Before class, arrange for one of your students to come in “almost” ready for Sunday school (maybe with a few curlers still in, a bathrobe on, etc.) Tell your class that you are going to begin by talking about the word “almost.” Suppose you planned a weekend trip to the beach. If you made reservations, packed your suitcase, put gas in your car, and drove twenty-five miles out of town, would that be enough? What about a project like building your own computer? If you bought the hardware, studied the instructions, and then sat and stared at the pieces, would you end up with a computer? Make the point that there is no such thing as being “almost holy.” We either are holy—set apart for God and His service—or we are not.

Questions from Student Handout:

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

Christians must be holy because the Word of God clearly commands it. God is our God, and He is holy. If we hope to live eternally with God, we must strive to be like Him. Jesus died not only so that sinners might be saved, but also that believers could live to please God instead of themselves (2 Corinthians 5:15). A holy life is the soundest evidence a Christian can give to the world of the saving and sanctifying power of Jesus Christ.

You might ask your class: How does a person become holy? Then guide the class discussion so the students see that the work which sanctification does in a believer’s heart will purify the desires so a person can live a Christ-like life.

It would be a good idea to begin this unit by focusing initially on the experience of sanctification. However, be sure the point is clear that while the experience is definite and instantaneous, the sanctified believer continues to mature and grow as a Christian. That concept is what we will be zeroing in on during the next weeks.

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

A holy person will try to avoid the things that defile, desiring to distance himself from enticements to evil. He will have a different value system (world view) than those around him, and that will cause a separation. He will not choose associations or relationships with those who would draw him away from living a holy life.

You could also reference John 17:15-17. To please God, we need to be kept from the evil of the world, and we cannot do it in our own strength. First, we need an experience of heart cleansing from God. Then we need to actively try to preserve that holiness and separation. If we have close fellowship with the unredeemed, it is likely that we will be tempted to disregard God’s command to “touch not the unclean thing.” If we have a distinct separation from the world, God promises, “I will receive you,” and that is the fellowship we want.

Even though Christians rub shoulders with the world as they go about their daily lives, they do not have to be affected by the sin and pollution that surrounds them. Those who are living a holy life will be uncomfortable with the ways of the world and will shun things that are appealing to the sinful flesh. Sanctified Christians will search the Scriptures and look to God for guidance in order to have spiritual discernment about what is pleasing to God and what is not.

Jesus was the perfect example. He ate with sinners and mixed with unbelievers, but He took a definite stand against their sinful ways. On the other hand, He offered them a better way and an opportunity to gain fulfillment in a relationship with Him, and that far exceeded any satisfaction they could get from the world. As Christians, we can offer that same alternative to the unsaved we come in contact with from day to day.

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”?

Our hearts need to be:

- *Watered through prayer.*
- *Nourished by the intake of the Scriptures.*
- *Weeded by removing any hindrance to our spiritual growth.*
- *Watching for undesirable elements that would damage or destroy our spiritual fruit.*
- *Kept unspotted from the world’s influence.*

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?

Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.

Be not conformed to this world.

Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.

What will be the result of taking these actions? Class discussion should bring your group to the conclusion that we will be able to “prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

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

A holy life will stand out as a bright light in a world of evil. Those around us will note that we are different, even if they do not know why. The actions and deeds of a holy lifestyle will have far more impact than what a Christian may say. The credibility of our verbal witness is tied to how we live.

It might be beneficial to ask your class to share personal experiences illustrating how their lifestyle gave credibility to their testimonies.

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?

We will understand that we belong to God, not to ourselves. Therefore, life is really not “about us.” We will regard ourselves with humility and will understand that our merit is only in what Jesus Christ has done for us and in us. This will help us have confidence that is rooted in knowing we belong to God, rather than in our own abilities, and there is security in that.

Additional Questions:

In Exodus 26:33, we find that the Tabernacle and then later the Temple had the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies (or “most holy” place). Of what significance are these areas to us today?

The Tabernacle layout is a beautiful picture of the three foundational Christian experiences. The offering at the Brazen Altar in the Outer Court represented salvation. The Holy Place represented sanctification, and the Holy of Holies represented the baptism of the Holy Spirit. When Jesus died, the veil

separating the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies was rent from top to bottom, illustrating that we have access to the Spirit of God in our lives. However, we must still follow the steps shown in the Tabernacle picture: salvation, sanctification, and then the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

Using “The Tabernacle in the Wilderness” handout provided in your supplemental resources will help in discussion of this question.

Under the Law, the priests of the tribe of Levi were charged with teaching the Children of Israel what was holy and what was unholy (see Ezekiel 44:23). Who is charged with teaching the saints of God today?

We are taught by the Holy Ghost (see John 14:26; Hebrews 8:10-11); faithful men (see 2 Timothy 2:2); and Scripture (see 2 Timothy 3:16).

What are the inward characteristics of a holy heart?

Class discussion should bring up the following points.

- *A sanctified heart has pure desires. The wrong moral bias has been replaced by a bias toward God and things that are right. The Adamic nature is gone.*
- *A sanctified heart despises evil, and agrees with God’s judgment—hating what He hates, loving what He loves.*
- *A sanctified heart desires to be instructed of God and to please Him in every way.*
- *A sanctified heart will exhibit reverence for God and humility.*
- *A sanctified heart will possess spiritual-mindedness.*

After we are sanctified, we should seek to grow in our relationship with the Lord, which will continue to increase these attributes in our hearts.

What are the outward characteristics of a holy heart?

The outward characteristics of a holy heart include:

- *It measures every aspect of life by the standard of the Word of God.*
- *It shuns every known sin and strives to live like Jesus.*
- *It exemplifies the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith.*
- *It has unity with other believers and places great importance on maintaining that unity.*
- *Its appearance, activities, actions, and reactions reflect Jesus.*
- *God is first in the life.*
- *It considers the needs of others ahead of its own.*

Psalm 93:5 says, “Holiness becometh thine house.” Ask your class to think about the many activities, conversations, and interactions that take place within a house. If we preface our daily living in the home with holiness, it will shine out and keep us separate as we enter the “world.”

One definition of holiness is to be set apart—to be consecrated to God for God’s use. What is our part of this transaction? What is God’s part?

Our part is to determine in our hearts that we are going to devote ourselves to God. We offer ourselves to Him, relinquishing our personal rights and yielding our lives to His control. We choose to set ourselves apart for God’s use, and we ask God to make our hearts and desires holy.

God’s part takes place when the offering we have made is accepted by Him. His Spirit touches our hearts; a second application of the Blood of Jesus purifies our hearts and removes the impurity and wrong moral bias that we inherited from our foreparents.

According to 1 Peter 2:9, what is our calling?

We are to “shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.” How do we accomplish that? By being “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people.” In this reference peculiar people means “a purchased people” indicating that we belong to 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 first been consecrated or set apart to serve God, and subsequently cleansed from his sin nature.

Supplemental Resources:

“Spotless Garments” by Rob Wakefield, *Higher Way* Vol.90-1

“Practical Holiness” by Arthur O’Hare, *Higher Way* Vol.89-3

“Are You Interested in Holiness?” by Dwight Baltzell, *Higher Way* Vol. 92-1

“Unspotted” by Randy Baltzell, *Higher Way* Vol.91-6

“Sanctification: The Path of Holiness” – Tract #125

“The Tabernacle in the Wilderness” handout

“Window Washing Mime”