

# Holiness Isn't What You Think It Is!

Holiness isn't about how you live or conduct your life but what you believe.

OUR BEHAVIOUR COMES FROM WHAT WE BELIEVE IN OUR HEARTS.

The astonishing truth is that 3/4 of the New Testament scriptures about holiness teach that Jesus has made us as believers holy in Him.

**So, our holiness comes from who we are in Christ, not how we live.**

I know the last part of that statement can rile some people who place a great deal of emphasis on "being holy."

They often quote the verse, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14).

THE QUESTION IS WHOSE HOLINESS CAUSES US TO SEE THE LORD?

## **IS IT MINE, OR IS IT HIS?**

If my holiness qualifies me to see the Lord, then I am in big trouble because my holiness can be lacking at times; thus, I am disqualified from seeing the Lord.

IF THE HOLINESS I AM TO FOLLOW AND CLING TO IS THE LORD'S, THEN I AM GUARANTEED TO SEE HIM BECAUSE HE HAS MADE ME HOLY.

“Because of him, you are in Christ Jesus, who has become wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness, and redemption”  
(1 Corinthians 1:30).

Both the old and the new testament you will find scriptures like:

## **Be Holy, because God is Holy.**

“Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy” (Leviticus 19:2).

### **1 Peter 1:15-17**

15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:

If our work of holiness is from the flesh, that part will not be looked on as holy.

Our lifestyles should be distinguishable from unbelievers and match our profession of faith.

### **But it's not easy, is it?**

If We're Holy, according to 1 Corinthians 1:30, Why Does God Call Us to be Holy, according to 1 Peter 1:16?

**Answer: He's calling us to be who we truly are.**

He is saying, "You are my sanctified children.

Act like it. Be who I made you to be."

As D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones once said:

**Holiness is not something we are called upon to do in order that we may become something; it is something we are to do because of what we already are...**

"Michael, I'm still confused. It seems there are a lot of scriptures exhorting us to become holy.

How do we reconcile those with other scriptures that say that we are already holy?"

Perhaps the best answer comes from Bill Gillham, who compares Christians to oak trees:

**Are Christians a truly holy people, or are we trying to become a holy people?...**

**As an oak seedling grows, it doesn't get more "oakier."**

**Oak is oak.**

**It simply matures into what it is, a full-grown oak tree.**

You don't become an oak tree by acting like an oak tree; nor do you become holy by acting holy.

**Jesus made you holy.**

**Your part is to mature into what he has already made you.**

This takes time, but just as a baby never becomes more human as it grows, you will never become more holy as you mature.

**You simply grow into who God has already made you to be.**

**Critics of the grace message say we who preach it are opposed to holy living.**

Nothing could be further from the truth.

**What we are opposed to is the old habit of trying to make yourself holy by acting holy.**

You just can't do it.

**The standard is too high.**

But the good news declares that God makes us holy.

**He takes the shards of our broken lives and makes something beautiful, pleasing, sweet-smelling, and Christ-like.**

**Now that we have a good understanding of why the Bible calls us to be holy, we can look at some of the NT scriptures on holiness:**

To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints.  
(Romans 1:7a)

In other words, be saintly because you are saints, as Paul says many times in his letter to the Romans.

Just as you used to offer yourselves as slaves to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness (Romans 6:19b)

Given that Christ has already sanctified us, a more accurate translation might be “unto holiness” as in, “Just as you used to live unto wickedness when you were wicked, live unto holiness now that you are holy.”

But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life (Rom 6:22)

A better translation may be, “have fruit unto sanctification.”

**Holy fruits are harvested and not manufactured.**

**Like eternal life, fruit are gifts, not a salary (John 3:16, 5:21).**

To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be His holy people ... (1 Corinthians 1:2a)

You are sanctified so act like it.

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity ... (Colossians 3:5a)

**If you're a butterfly, don't act like a caterpillar.**

If you have been given a new nature, don't act in accordance with your old one.

**That's hypocrisy.**

**It's pretending to be someone you are not.**

It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality ... (1 Thessalonians 4:3)

It is God's will that you should be sanctified in your conduct, not because your salvation hinges on it, but your well being does.

**Sin is destructive.**

## **What you plant you will harvest.**

Each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honourable, not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God (1 Thessalonians 4:4–5)

**You know who your Father is so don't act like someone who doesn't.**

May God Himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through (1 Thessalonians 5:23a)

**Sanctification is God's work, not yours.**

**Just as His gift of salvation is something to work out in your life, so is His sanctification.**

**You already have it, so enjoy it!**

But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do (1 Peter 1:15)

You are not holy because you act holy.

**You are holy because you are children of a holy Father.**

You are a holy nation (1 Peter 2:9).

Be who you truly are.

Exhortations to live holy should not be read as a self-help guide to holiness.

Rather, they are pictures of the wholesome, healthy life we get to enjoy as we allow Christ to express his holy life through us.

**New Testament exhortations to live holy are advertisements for the abundant life that is already ours in Christ.**

**Let us go back to this question:**

**WHOSE HOLINESS CAUSES US TO SEE THE LORD?**

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