

Holiness Starts Here

May 7, 2017

Hebrews 12:14 ESV

14 **Strive** (*diōkō* - pursue, to run swiftly to catch, press on) **for peace with everyone, and for the holiness** (*hagiasmos* - purity, consecration, holiness, sanctification of heart and life) **without which no one will see the Lord.**

The qualities that makes a person peaceable are the very same qualities of a holy life.

Holiness in the Christian is one of the delicate balances of Biblical Truth, positioned between God's free, unmerited grace and God's absolute, uncompromised purity.

"There should always be a healthy tension between the confidence with which we come before God as His children and the reverential awe with which we behold Him as our sovereign Lord." --Jerry Bridges, A Healthy Tension, I Exalt You O God

Though we are loved unconditionally, forgiven and granted access into His presence freely without merit or works, we are commanded God to strive after holiness.

2 Corinthians 7:1 ESV

1 **Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness** (*hagiōsynē* - purity) **to completion in the fear of God.**

"...let us cleanse ourselves..." not in the sense that we are able to cleanse, but only we, individually, can surrender to God's cleansing. We must want to be cleansed. We must ask and seek God's cleansing. God won't cross that line until we yield.

Holiness is NOT:

- **Set of Rules or Code of Conduct** (*we like the pride of accomplishment and self-sufficiency*)
- **Behavior Modification** (*"optics" are not everything*)
- **Asceticism** (*designed to flaunt your superior spirituality and discipline*)

Holiness is a deep-seated conviction, passion and motive in the bedrock of our heart and character. Holiness is the WHY behind our lifestyle, life choices, words and actions.

Hebrews 4:12 NASB

12 **For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.**

2 Chronicles 16:9 NASB

9 **For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His.**

1. FEAR GOD NOT MAN.

As humans we are obsessed with pleasing and impressing each other, driven by fear of what others think, whether they will accept or reject us. We must live our lives for the Audience of One. We must live every moment for that one moment of judgment.

It is impossible to be holy, separate, consecrated and wholly given to God while trying to please and impress people. People are pleased by appearance and results. God is pleased by obedience, not appearance or results.

Galatians 1:10 NASB

10 **For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.**

Proverbs 29:25-26 NASB

25 **The fear of man brings a snare, but he who trusts in the LORD will be exalted.**

26 **Many seek the ruler's favor, but justice for man comes from the LORD.**

Acts 5:27-29 NASB

27 When they had brought them, they stood them before the Council. The high priest questioned them, 28 saying, "We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name, and yet, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and intend to bring this man's blood upon us."

29 **But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men."**

1 Peter 3:14-15 NASB

14 But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. and do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled,

15 but **sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts**, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;

1 Thessalonians 2:4 NASB

4 **but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who examines our hearts.**

2 Corinthians 5:9-11 NASB

9 Therefore we also **have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.**

10 For **we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.**

11 Therefore, **knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men,** but we are made manifest to God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences.

Proverbs 16:6 NASB

6 **"...by the fear of the LORD one keeps away from evil."**

"Living becomes an awesome business when you realize that you spend every moment of your life in the sight and company of an omniscient, omnipresent Creator." --J.I. Packer

"All wickedness flows from a disregard of God...Since the fear of God is the bridle by which our

wickedness is held in check, its removal frees us to indulge in every kind of licentious conduct.”

--John Calvin

“The person who follows God in godly fear will be conscious that God is aware of every minute detail, every mundane activity...we are aware of His all-seeing eye and all-hearing ear, we live in a way that pleases Him as He sees what we do and hears what we say...This is where integrity actually begins - living all of life in the conscious awareness of God’s constant presence.”

--Jerry Bridges, In His Sight and Company, I Will Follow You O God

2. DO ALL THINGS FOR GOD’S GLORY.

When we strive to please and impress man, we do all things to bring attention and glory to ourselves, instead of to God. We must do so to earn the approval and favor of men.

It is impossible to be holy, separate, consecrated and wholly given to God while trying to promote and advance ourselves by impressing others with our skills, talents, experience, influence, reputation and status. How often do we speak or act to try and somehow advance, vindicate, defend or showcase ourselves?

Do we desire people to think more of us, or more of Christ?

Isaiah 43:21 NASB

21 "The people whom I formed for Myself **will declare My praise.**"

1 Peter 2:9 NASB

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, **so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him** who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."

1 Peter 3:3-4 NASB

3 Your adornment **must not be merely external**--braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses;

4 **but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.**

Philippians 1:20 NASB

20 according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, **Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.**

John 3:26-30 NASB

26 And they [John's disciples] came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified, behold, He is baptizing and **all are coming to Him.**"

27 John answered and said, "A man **can receive nothing unless it has been given him** from heaven."

28 "You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent ahead of Him.'"

29 "He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. So this joy of mine has been made full.

30 "**He must increase, but I must decrease.**"

Isaiah 42:8 NASB

8 "I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, Nor My praise to graven images."

Acts 12:21-23 NASB

21 On an appointed day Herod, having put on his royal apparel, took his seat on the rostrum and began delivering an address to them.

22 The people kept crying out, "The voice of a god and not of a man!"

23 And immediately an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and died.

Daniel 4:28 NASB

28 "All this happened to Nebuchadnezzar the king.

29 "Twelve months later he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon.

30 "The king reflected and said, 'Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?'"

31 "While the word was in the king's mouth, a voice came from heaven, saying, 'King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: sovereignty has been removed from you,

32 and you will be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place will be with the beasts of the field. You will be given grass to eat like cattle, and seven periods of time will pass over you until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes."

33 "Immediately the word concerning Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled; and he was driven away from mankind and began eating grass like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws."

34 "But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever; For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom endures from generation to generation."

35 "All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What have You done?'"

36 "At that time my reason returned to me. And my majesty and splendor were restored to me for the glory of my kingdom, and my counselors and my nobles began seeking me out; so I was reestablished in my sovereignty, and surpassing greatness was added to me."

37 "Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride."

"Vacate the throne room of your heart and enthrone Jesus there. Set Him in the focus of your heart's attention and stop wanting to be a hero. Make Him your all in all and try yourself to become less and less. Dedicate your entire life from self to God. Let the reason back of your daily conduct be Christ and His glory, nor yourself, nor your family, nor your country, nor your church. In all things let Him have the preeminence." -- A.W. Tozer, Born After Midnight, "Sanctifying the Ordinary"

3. DO ALL THINGS AS UNTO THE LORD.

When we are not living to please and glorify God, then we do all things for ourselves, for self-promotion, self-advancement and self-gratification. How can I out-strategize others and defeat my competitors? How can I prove my significance and worth?

When we are holy, separate, consecrated and wholly given to God, every task, even the most mundane, becomes a love offering to Him, done to please Him in not only what was done, but how it was done.

Colossians 3:17 NASB

17 Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

1 Corinthians 10:31 NASB

31 Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Colossians 3:22-24 NASB

22 Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

23 Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men,

24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

"A Christian poet of a bygone generation wrote a rather long hymn around a single idea: You can, by three little words, turn every common act of your life into an offering acceptable to God. The words are 'For Thy sake.' "'For Thy sake' will rescue the little, empty things from vanity and give them eternal meaning. The lowly paths of routine living will by these words be elevated to the level of a bright highway. The humdrum of our daily lives will take on the quality of a worship service and the thousand irksome duties we must perform will become offerings and sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." --A.W. Tozer, Born After Midnight

Ephesians 6:5-8 NASB

5 Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ;

6 not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.

7 With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men,

8 knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.

4. KNOW WHO OWNS YOU.

We conduct ourselves as though we legally own and possess our lives and bodies. We do not recognize the reality of the cross of Calvary, purchased by the blood of Jesus, having no legal authority to do what we choose, please or deem right. You cannot be holy, separate, consecrated and wholly given to God as long as you believe you have the right to possess and control your life and your body.

Romans 12:1 NASB

1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NASB

19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?

20 **For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.**

1 Peter 1:15-19 NASB

15 **but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior;**

16 **because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."**

17 **If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth;**

18 **knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers,**

19 **but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.**

"Christian men are not to be used for anything but God. They are a set-apart people; they are vessels of mercy, they are not for the devil's use, not for their own use, not for the world's use, but for their Master's use. He has made them on purpose to be used entirely, solely and wholly for Him. O Christian people, be holy, for Christ is holy." — Charles H. Spurgeon

5. **BE SATISFIED BY GOD.**

You cannot be holy, separate, consecrated and wholly given to God if He alone is not your satisfaction and fulfillment in life. Your heart will always wander to earthly enticements and pleasures if you're not fully satisfied by God.

Psalm 107:9 ESV

9 **For He satisfies the longing soul, and the hungry soul He fills with good things.**

Psalm 34:8 NASB

8 **O taste and see that the LORD is good.**

Psalm 16:11 NASB

11 **You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.**

Psalm 63:3-5 NASB

3 **Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips will praise You.**

4 **So I will bless You as long as I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name.**

5 **My soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness, And my mouth offers praises with joyful lips.**

"It is easy to want things from the Lord and yet not want the Lord Himself, as though the gift could ever be preferable to the Giver." --Augustine

"I bear my testimony that there is no joy to be found in all this world like that of sweet communion with Christ. I would barter all else there is of heaven for that. Indeed, that is heaven. As for the harps of gold and the streets like clear glass and the songs of seraphs and the shouts of the redeemed, one could very well give all these up, counting them as a drop in a bucket, if we might forever live in fellowship and communion with Jesus." — Charles H. Spurgeon