

The Call to Holiness

I. HOLINESS – GOOD FOR ALL OF US

A. Attitudes Toward Holiness

Holiness has seldom been popular. Being holy means that people accept a different lifestyle from the norms of society. Many think of holy people as *bizarre* and *eccentric* and that it is reserved for only a select few.

For many holiness applies to those who dress out of date, who refuse to enjoy modern entertainment, those who wear no make up, wear "old fashion" hair styles and belittle others who do.

When it comes to holiness some people have a list of do's and don't. For example, if you do this you are not holy and if you "don't" do "this" you are holy.

II. GOD EXPECTS HOLINESS

God expects us to be holy. The absolute bedrock (fundamental principle) of Christian living is holiness. This expectation is based on His nature. Christian living involves holiness because Christians should be like God himself.

A. God is Holy

The most fundamental principle of the universe is God's holiness. God is holy! God's holiness permeates both the Old and New Testament.

The Bible makes clear that when things belong to God, they are **set apart** to honor Him. **They are holy.**

B. God Expects Us To Be Holy

The Bible teaches that no one can have a relationship with God without holiness. God created us to have an intimate relationship with Him. Since we are created that way, the only way to achieve *ultimate* personal fulfillment is to live as God intends. Yet sin distorts everything about us so that we cannot understand God's ways.

Even though we are set apart to God, we often fail. We struggle to overcome the habits of sinful behavior.

The Bible consistently encourages Christians to be holy. In many passages Paul urged Christians to live holy lives. Romans 6:12-13 tells us: "Therefore, *do not let* sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. *Do not* offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather *offer* yourselves to God...."

III. PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION

A. Who Am I?

As Christians, we must be **DIFFERENT**. Whether we like it or not, we have a responsibility when we profess Christ. People expect that Christians will never *lose their temper, never become impatient, never gossip, complain, or do anything else wrong*. The common expectation is that when we become a "**new creature**" there will be a new way of living.

As Christians we react to this expectation. We realize that we have a strong tendency to sin. We know the struggles we have within. Furthermore, we know that temptations to sin grow stronger once we identify with Christ.

The standards in God's Word are **HIGH**. God **EXPECTS** His people to be **HOLY, SET APART** to Him and from the world. He expects that our "**old**" life, our "**old**" way of thinking will be replaced with our "**new**" life, our "**new**" way of thinking. But, but none of us are perfect. There will be times in our lives when we will fail God. But, there is one thing that is certain – God loves us, and His love will **NEVER** change. He loves us when we **FAIL** and when we succeed.

IV. VALUES OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Values are the things we most prize – the things we hold most dear. Values motivate us to achievement. They also help us to measure personal success. When we value health, we will take care of our bodies. When we value family, we will be our best for our spouse, children, and extended family. When we value God, we will **INCLUDE** Him in every aspect of our lives. Our values are foundational to life, the platform supporting our ambitions and pleasures.

Holiness means living by God's value system rather than our own, **accepting** God's patterns for life rather than the world's.

A. God Over Self

When we are saved, God becomes more important than *anything* else in our lives – even more important than life itself. This change in values evidences itself in the desire to know Christ, to be like Christ, and to be with Christ. Many Christian women have testified that they have experienced greater joy and self-fulfillment in placing Christ **FIRST** in their lives and submitting to Jesus Christ.

B. Proper Priorities

God calls us to consider the priority of things that are external over things that are temporal. We must seek the kingdom of God instead of seeking the things of this world.

C. Effecting Change

Christians must have the power to be able to affect the choices they make in their quest for holiness. Three basic issues confront Christians in their daily battles for holiness: **KNOWLEDGE, CHOICES, AND POWER.**

V. KNOWLEDGE

The basic foundation to change is knowledge. Almost all Christian growth begins with some understanding of certain *issues, life patterns, and possibilities*. Once the **mind** is confident, it is able to influence the rest of the person to choose what is right.

The body does what the mind thinks. It is clear that our **mind** is the *instrument of control of our bodies*.

In order for us to be transformed our minds must be renewed. But, the mind **DOES NOT** change immediately. There are habits that take time to change. When we are saved, the process of renewal begins.

A. Choices

We need more than knowledge. We need to also be able to make proper choices. The world is full of people whose broken lives and failed relationships reveal the difficulty of making correct choices. The fact is – *we will become* what we **choose to become**.

1. Choosing Salvation – There is no salvation without personal choice. Every individual must detail whether or not to choose Christ. The most important choice of all is the **choice to accept Christ**. Until that decision is made, **NOTHING** really matters. Once it is made, a new life begins.

2. Choosing Total Commitment - The second choice which promotes holiness is choosing complete dedication to Christ. Complete dedication also brings the resources needed for a life of holiness.

3. Choosing Holiness Day By Day – Day by day situations require decisions that will reinforce and encourage the life of holiness within. There are times when we are called to

react positively and Christlike to life's unpleasant or difficult events. Then there are other times when we have the responsibility of cultivating a lifestyle that reflects the glory of a Holy God.

The new self is clothed with virtues that come from honoring the **TRUE** God. Holiness means walking with the *spirit of God* so that the old ways of living are replaced by the fruit of the Spirit.

While the Holy Spirit will urge one toward holiness as well as bring conviction about a wrong way of living, God will not force His way upon the believer. He does expect us to choose a new way of living based on new values and ambitions.

4. Opposition to Proper Choices

Developing new patterns of life is never easy. Although God expects us to make the correct choices, there is strong opposition to cultivating a life of holiness. The opposition comes from both inside and outside.

B. Power

Perhaps the most crucial issue confronting those who would change their lives is the **ability to do it**. God knows our *weaknesses and our temptations*, but he also knows the way to victory. The power for Christian living comes from the Holy Spirit.

Many times we think we can make it with our **own Power**. But, we soon learn that we **cannot** handle spiritual battles on our own strength. Why? Because Satan's power is simply **TOO GREAT!** Without the Holy Spirit's help, **THERE IS NO VICTORY!!!**

VI. Conclusion

Even if life seems overwhelming and the world, the flesh, and the enemy overbearing, God will give us the victory. Holiness is becoming like Jesus Christ day by day, step by step, relationship by relationship, and victory after victory. **WE ARE VICTORS, NOT VICTIMS!**