

LIVING STONES DISCIPLESHIP GROUP



SECOND SEMESTER
UNIT 2



"[Y]ou yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

1Peter 2:5

UNIT 2: You Shall Be Holy



IN THIS SESSION

- :: What is Holiness?
- :: The Problem of God's Holiness
- :: How God Makes Sinners Holy
- :: The Motivation for Holiness
- :: Overcoming Temptation

UNIT 2 // You Shall Be Holy

// OPENING SCRIPTURE

[B]ut 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."

1Peter 1:15-16

// OPENING PRAYER

// FOLLOW-UP FROM PREVIOUS UNIT

Memory Verse :: Matthew 16:24-25

Homework :: Did everyone in the group complete this unit's work and activities (if applicable)?

UNIT 2: You Shall Be Holy

// What is Holiness?

:: Think about the sun. It's more than just a bright circle in our sky. The sun is utterly unique in our solar system. All the planets orbit the sun, and it alone accounts for over 99% of the mass in our solar system. The sun controls the weather and sets the seasons and gives life to everything on earth. In this way, the sun is good. However, the sun is unapproachable. The surface burns at 3.5 million °F. Anything that gets close would be burned up.

:: This uniqueness and unapproachableness makes the sun—in a way—holy. The word 'holy' means *unique, different, uncommon, or set apart*. The most fundamental characteristic of God is that He is holy, unlike anyone or anything else. He is utterly unto Himself in description or category.

:: Read Isaiah 6:1-3. What word, repeated three times, is used to describe God? _____
The ancient Hebrew language lacked superlatives. To express a quality of the highest degree, a word was simply repeated. When we see God described as "Holy, holy, holy", the Bible is saying God is immeasurably different and unique from all other persons or things.

:: Look up the following verse and fill in the blanks: Revelation 15:4, "**Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For _____ are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.**"

:: From what we've learned so far, do your best to answer this question: "What is holiness?" *[Don't worry about getting it perfect, we will return to the answer later.]*

// The Problem With God's Holiness.

:: The holiness of God is wonderful, but it is also terrible. Like the unapproachable heat of the sun, God's holiness makes Him inaccessible to sin-bearing humans. Read Exodus 33:18-23. What did God say would be the result of Moses seeing God's face? How did God 'protect' Moses as His glory passed by?

:: The Bible teaches God's wrath burns against sin. Thus, a sinner cannot come near God. God gave Israel an elaborate set of instructions on how they were to live before Him. These laws were meant to make them holy. When they broke God's laws, animals were sacrificed on an altar to cover their sins. This was, in part, to protect them. See **Leviticus 10:1-3**. What was the consequence of approaching God in the wrong way?

:: In the Prophet Isaiah's vision we read earlier, something strange takes place. Read Isaiah 6:1-7. What has to prophet so upset in verse 5?

:: Read verses 6 & 7 closely. Take note of what is happening. Something comes from the presence of God and it touches the prophet. Ordinarily, this would have killed Isaiah. But in this case, something different happens. Describe what happens in verse 7.

:: Isaiah 6 is a foreshadowing. It tells of something else that would come from the presence of God to take away guilt and atone for sin. Finish this glorious sentence in 1Peter 3:18, "**For Christ also**

suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might _____ us to God...”.

:: Read Colossians 1:21-23. List as many of the effects of the gospel you find in these verses.

:: The magnificence of God in the gospel is this: Jesus lived a holy and sinless life. Jesus died a brutal sinner’s death. His life, death, and resurrection eliminates the chasm between unholy sinners and the Holy God. Jesus is the bridge to the Father. He is the mediator of a new relationship with God that cannot fail because it is based on His faithfulness, not ours.

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.

Hebrews 10:19-23

// Moralistic Therapeutic Deism

:: A right understanding of the gospel is critical. Without the gospel, holiness becomes self-salvation. There is a dangerous temptation to see holiness as a means to get things from God to make us happy. We do good deeds to obtain God’s blessing. Author Christian Smith calls this “*moralistic, therapeutic deism*”. God will reward my good deeds with a good life.

:: But this is *not* the gospel. Good works are not karma with which we purchase blessings. Besides, our good deeds are woefully inadequate to appease God for our sin. Once we understand the depth of our sin and the inadequacies of good works, only then can we begin to appreciate the true glory of the

gospel. What we are attempting to do with our holiness, Jesus already did. The payment of our sins, Jesus already paid. The blessing of God's favor Jesus already gave us.

:: Only in the gospel can we understand personal holiness. We don't do good deeds to get something from Him; we do them for His sake. Holiness is not for His blessing, it is for His sake. The reward for holiness is not God's favor, but God Himself.

// Then why does holiness matter?

:: Read Psalm 23:1-3, what is the reason God leads the Psalmist into "**paths of righteousness**" in verse 3?

:: When God delivered His people, Israel, out of slavery in Egypt, He gave them a special commission, "**...you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.**" (Ex. 19:6) They were to be different from all the people because they represented God Himself. God uses the holiness of His people to draw others to Himself for His glory. Fill out Matthew 5:16, "**In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your _____ and give glory to your _____ who is in heaven.**"

:: After taking 11 chapters to explain the means by which God saved sinners through Jesus Christ, the Apostle Paul makes the following appeal to Christians: "**present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.**" (Rom. 12:1b) Think about that phrase, "*living sacrifice*". What do you suppose this means?

:: The process of becoming holy is called *sanctification*. It is the work of God in our lives. But it is also true to say we cooperate with God in some ways. This is best described in Philippians 2:12b-13, "...

work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you,¹ both to will and to work for his good pleasure.” According to these verses, what is the reason God makes us holy? How does this affect the way you view your own holiness?

// The Gospel Overcomes Temptation

:: Perfect holiness will never be achieved in this life. Every day we strive to overcome besetting sins and become more like Jesus. Thankfully, God has given us His power to overcome sin through the gospel.

:: The epistle of James exposes how temptation to sin works on us. Read **James 1:14-17**. James seems to be saying temptation arises from a deception that God is withholding some good gift from us. To overcome temptation we must recognize this lie. God has given us every good gift in the gospel.

:: Write down a few sins that commonly tempt you. How is this sin a lie about the nature of God and how has God already met that desire in the gospel?

Temptation:

Ex: Greed

What is the lie about God?

The lie: God will not Provide for me.

How has Jesus met this desire already?

The truth: God has given me everything in Christ.

*“To see the law by Christ fulfilled;
And hear His pardoning voice,
Transforms a slave into a child,
And duty into choice.”
- William Cowper*

¹ For a brief survey of how God cooperates with humans in the process of sanctification, see the following verses: Philippians 2:12-13; Romans 12:1; Hebrews 12:14; Hebrews 13:20-21; 1Corinthians 1:30-31; 1Thessalonians 4:3-4; 2Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 10:10; Romans 8:13; 1Corinthians 15:10

UNIT 2: You Shall Be Holy

PRAYER REQUESTS // PRAISE REPORTS

Go around the room and have each person share a prayer request and/or a praise report. Members should commit to praying for these requests.

ACTIVITY

For the next two weeks, make an effort to train yourself to approach temptation from the angle of James 1:14-17 (see page 8, above). When you are being tempted, expose the lie. Look for how the gospel has already met that 'desire'. Resolve to believe it and overcome the temptation. Take note of the effects of this. Be prepared to share with your brothers/sisters the next time you meet.

UNIT 2: You Shall Be Holy

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

:: Memorize the following verse(s):

**[B]ut 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."**

1Peter 1:15-16

:: Complete the Unit 3 worksheets and activities (when applicable).

:: Pray for the needs of your brothers/sisters in your group.

:: Ensure you are able to attend the next session.