

The Habit of Holiness

(Adapted from Raymond Woodward's *Life Course 201*)

“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord”
(Hebrews 12:14).

Real Christianity is about **LIFE CHANGE**, not just about **RELIGION**. The central “habit” of the Disciple’s Cross is the habit of **HOLINESS** which indicates that a real change has taken place in a believer’s life. In addition to **glorifying God**, holiness has the effect of **testifying to others** around us. It is possible to keep the “rules” on the habits of Bible study, prayer, tithing and fellowship through sheer human effort. However, the habit of holiness (especially its inner aspects) can only be maintained through the enabling of God’s Spirit.

The Bible teaches that HOLINESS must first affect our inward ATTITUDE, and then our outward ACTIONS and APPEARANCE.

1. Personal holiness is essential in maintaining the salvation of a believer.

“Try to live in peace with all people, and try to live free from sin. Anyone whose life is not holy will never see the Lord.” (Heb. 12:14)

“But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God – who chose you to be his children – is holy. For he himself has said, ‘You must be holy because I am holy.’” (1 Peter 1:15-16)

2. Holiness involves both the negative concept of separation and the positive concept of dedication.

“The Lord also says, ‘Leave them and stay away! Don’t touch anything that isn’t clean. Then I will welcome you and be your Father. You will be my sons and my daughters, as surely as I am God, the All-Powerful.’ My friends, God has made us these promises. So we should stay away from everything that keeps our bodies and spirits from being clean. We should honor God and try to be completely like him.” (2 Corinthians 6:17 - 7:1)

“And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice – the kind he will accept. When you think of what he has done for you, is this too much to ask?” (Romans 12:1)

3. We are motivated to live holy lives not merely by enforced rules, but by our love for God.

“This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome.” (1 John 5:3)

“And how can we be sure that we belong to him? By obeying his commandments. If someone says, ‘I belong to God,’ but doesn’t obey God’s commandments, that person is a liar and does not live in the truth. But those who obey God’s word really do love him. That is

the way to know whether or not we live in him.” (1 John 2:3-5)

- 4. Our righteous works are not the MEANS of us receiving salvation, but they should be the RESULT of us receiving salvation!**

*“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: **Not of works**, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus **unto good works**, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” (Ephesians 2:8-10)*

*“**Not by works of righteousness which we have done**, but according to his mercy he saved us ... and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, **that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.**” (Titus 3:5-8)*

- 5. The Bible teaches that a genuine Christian will exhibit a noticeable external witness when “internal holiness” is present in the heart.**

*“Let your light so shine before men, that they may **see your good works**, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16)*

*“Dear brothers and sisters, what’s the use of saying you have faith if you don’t prove it by your actions? That kind of faith can’t save anyone ... it isn’t enough just to have faith. **Faith that doesn’t show itself by good deeds is no faith at all – it is dead and useless** ... ‘I can’t see your faith if you don’t have good deeds, but I will show you my faith through my good deeds’ ... So you see, we are made right with God by what we do, not by faith alone.” (James 2:14-24)*



- 6. There are different levels of maturity in God’s family, and each member is loved at their present stage.**

“If our faith is strong, we should be patient with the Lord’s followers whose faith is weak. We should try to please them instead of ourselves. We should think of their good and try to help them ...” (Romans 15:1-2)

“(Jesus said) It will be terrible for people who cause even one of my little followers to sin. Those people would be better off thrown into the deepest part of the ocean with a heavy stone tied around their necks!” (Matthew 18:6)

- 7. The more mature I become in my lifestyle of holiness, the more God can use me.**

“But God’s truth stands firm like a foundation stone with this inscription: ‘The Lord knows those who are his,’ and ‘Those who claim they belong to the Lord must turn away from all wickedness’ ... some utensils are made of gold and silver, and some are made of wood and clay. The expensive utensils are used for special occasions, and the cheap ones are for everyday use. If you keep yourself pure, you will be a utensil God can use for his purpose. Your life will be clean, and you will be ready for the Master to use you for every good work.” (2 Timothy 2:19-21)

8. Even if I do not feel personally convicted about a holiness standard, I still need to submit to the spiritual leaders God has placed in my life.

“Obey your spiritual leaders and do what they say. Their work is to watch over your souls, and they know they are accountable to God. Give them reason to do this joyfully and not with sorrow. That would certainly not be for your benefit.” (Hebrews 13:17)

As our society moves further away from God, they also move further away from holiness principles. Even some church groups have now decided to conveniently ignore the Bible’s call for a “lifestyle change” in every believer. But just because immodesty and immorality are accepted by society – or by religion – doesn’t change God’s opinion!

HOLINESS FOR MATURE CHRISTIANS

Here are some important areas of life today in which we must apply the principles of holiness:

ATTITUDE

Galatians 5:19-21, Ephesians 4:31-32

We must put away all evil attitudes including hatred, wrath, jealousy, bitterness, pride, prejudice, vengeance, discord and rebellion. The fruit of the Spirit (kindness, love, patience, self-control, etc.) must manifest itself in our attitudes. We must learn to forgive, to be obedient to authority, to be thankful, not to let anything offend us, and not to be a busybody in the lives of others.

THOUGHT

Proverbs 23:7, Matthew 15:18-20, 2 Corinthians 10:5, Philippians 4:8

We are what we think and we become what we allow our minds to dwell upon. Evil thoughts defile us. We must think on true, pure and noble things, while casting out thoughts that stem from evil lusts and attitudes. We are to take captive every thought in obedience to Christ.

SIGHT

Psalms 101:3, 119:37, Matthew 6:22-23

We must guard our eyes as the gate of the soul and the primary source of input for the mind. We should choose reading material with care so that we do not saturate our minds with vulgarity, sensuality and sin. Because of the violence, illicit sex, sinfulness, bad language and vanity that dominate television, movies and the internet, we must severely limit our exposure to such media.

SPEECH

James 1:26, 3:1-12, 4:11, 5:12

We should avoid gossiping, backbiting, slander, causing division, swearing by an oath,

complaining, taking the Lord's name in vain, criticizing, cursing, lying, idle words and suggestive or filthy speech.

BODY

1 Corinthians 3:16-17, 6:12, 6:19-20

Since the body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, we avoid anything that would harm or defile the body, including anything that would cause intoxication or addiction. In light of the biblically described evils of alcoholic beverages, we must abstain from them. In view of the overwhelming evidence that tobacco and hallucinogenic drugs are defiling and harmful, we must not use them.

SEX

1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Colossians 3:5

The Bible condemns all sexual relationships and activity outside of marriage between one man and one woman, and opposes lustful thoughts and actions.

FELLOWSHIP

1 Cor. 5:9-6:8, 15:33, 2 Cor. 6:14, Matthew 18:15-18

Although we should associate with unbelievers, we must not identify ourselves too closely with sinful activities or lifestyles. We should have no fellowship with those who call themselves Christians but continually indulge in sinful activities. We are not to become partnered with unbelievers in relationships such as marriage.

LIFE

Exodus 20:13, Matthew 5:44, Acts 15:29

In view of the sanctity of human life, Christians must not participate in violence or taking of human life. This includes abortion, euthanasia, murder and suicide.

HONESTY

Mark 10:19

Christians must reject all forms of dishonesty. This would include lying, stealing, defrauding, refusal to pay debts, extortion, bribery, and all types of cheating.

AMUSEMENT

1 Thessalonians 5:22, 1 John 2:15

Because of the sinfulness of the world today and because of the biblical warnings against loving the world, we must carefully and maturely regulate our music, sports, activities and amusements. We must avoid excessively worldly atmospheres and appearances. Some activities are inherently worldly by their very nature, such as gambling, dancing and astrology,

and must therefore be rejected outright.

HAIR

1 Corinthians 11:13-15

The Bible teaches that men should have short hair and that women should have long uncut hair. God desires us to do this both to maintain a distinction between the sexes and to illustrate our obedience to Him with the only physical characteristic that men and women have the power to change – our hair.

APPEARANCE

Deuteronomy 22:5, 1 Timothy 2:9, 1 Peter 3:1-6

The Bible establishes several principles in relation to our apparel and adornment. These include sex distinction in clothing, modesty of clothing, moderation in the cost of clothing, and avoidance of jewelry and cosmetics that serve only as ornamentation for the body. Specifically, God’s Word teaches that garments for either sex must not expose the torso or leg above the knee, nor should they draw attention to the form of the body. The Bible also specifically teaches that only men may wear garments that “gird up the loins” (i.e. pants, which show a separation between the thighs), and that it is an abomination to God for a woman to wear this type of clothing. Applying these principles to modern culture, we must avoid dresses on men and pants on women, shorts on either sex, clothing that immodestly exposes the body (i.e. sleeveless or tight garments), and very expensive or extravagant attire. We must also avoid non-functional jewelry and colored cosmetics (makeup) that serve only to draw attention to the features of the body. Since modern fashion has strayed so far from Biblical principles, we can no longer rely on society’s definition of “modesty” to govern our appearance.



Because men and women were created differently, the Bible places emphasis on their unique “problem areas” in its holiness commandments. Women are instructed to APPEAR a certain way so that men are not tempted, while men are instructed to ACT a certain way so that women are not tempted.

God’s plan for holiness is designed to help us stay away from temptation and sin. He has provided everything we need to fulfill His command that tells us to “follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which NO MAN shall see the Lord.” Those who get to see Him, WILL BE HOLY!

Study Questions

1. The Bible teaches that Holiness must first affect our inward _____, and than our outward _____ and _____.
2. List eight (8) points that support the above statement, supporting each with Scripture.
1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

6) _____

7) _____

8) _____

3. List and briefly explain the twelve (12) areas of life today in which we must apply the principles of holiness. Give Scripture references for each.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

6) _____

7) _____

8) _____

9) _____

10) _____

11) _____

12) _____

4. As our society moves further away from God, they also move further away from _____ principles. Even some _____ groups have now decided to conveniently ignore the _____ call for a “_____ change” in every _____. But just because _____ and _____ are accepted by society – or by _____ – doesn’t change _____ opinion.

5. Because men and _____ were created _____, the Bible places emphasis on their _____ “problem areas” in its holiness _____. Women are instructed to _____ a certain way so that men are not _____, while men are instructed to _____ a certain way so that _____ are not tempted.

Real Christianity is about life change, not just religion!