

EXPLORING GOD'S WORD
LESSON 9b

THE HIGH CALLING OF HOLINESS

2 Corinthians 6:17–7:1 (NKJV)

17 Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you."

18 "I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty."

1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

God has always called His people to be set apart. This was true of Abraham and the Children of Israel in the Old Testament and it is no less true today. The New Testament is comprised of 27 books. 21 of those books deal almost entirely with the Christian's lifestyle.

Ephesians 5:8–11 (NKJV)

8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light

9 (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),

10 finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.

11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.

1 Peter 1:15–16 (KJV 1900)

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.

I. HOLINESS DEFINED:

Holiness is about separation for the purpose of dedication.

We are called to separated unto the Lord. Our hearts, minds, bodies, and families should be consecrated to and for Him.

Romans 12:1–2 (NKJV)

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Holiness is also called sanctification and it is an ongoing process in the life of every Christian.

Holiness is a matter of maturity.

Holiness is about relationship not rules.

II. THE THREE MOTIVES OF HOLINESS:

We pursue a lifestyle of holiness for three important reasons:

1. TO HONOR AND GLORIFY GOD:

1 Corinthians 6:19–20 (NKJV)

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

20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

2. TO BE A WITNESS AND SHINE AS A LIGHT FOR OTHERS:

Matthew 5:16 (NKJV)

16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

3. TO PROTECT OURSELVES AND OUR WALK WITH GOD:

John 17:16–17 (NKJV)

16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

III. THE THREE TEACHERS OF HOLINESS:

There are three ways that God teaches His people how live a holy life:

1. THROUGH THE BIBLE:

Psalms 119:9 (NKJV)

9 How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word.

- a. Commandments (precepts): These are behaviors or attitudes that are specifically addressed in the scriptures (such as adultery or drunkenness.)
- b. Principles: These are timeless truths that must find application in our daily lives.

Example of principles:

- 1 Thessalonians 5:22 – Abstain from all appearance of evil
- Psalm 101:3 – I will set no wicked thing before my eyes
- 1 Timothy 2:9 – Modesty in dress

2. THROUGH PASTORS AND SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP:

Hebrews 13:17 (NKJV)

17 Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

God will use ministry to help make application of biblical principles in the ever - changing landscape of culture. Biblical principles never change, but the way they find application in our lives may change with developments in culture. God calls pastors to watch for our souls as a shepherd would watch for dangers and snares.

3. THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT WITHIN US:

John 16:13 (NKJV)

13 However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

The spirit of God will convict believers of attitudes, thoughts, and behaviors that are not pleasing to God. The key is to be sensitive and responsive to the prompting and the leading of the Spirit so that we do not grieve Him. – Ephesians 4:30

IV. CHRISTIANS SHOULD REJECT CONFORMITY TO THE WORLD:

Christians should never seek to pattern their lives after the standards, definitions, opinions and priorities of the culture around them.

1 John 2:15–16 (NKJV)

15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.

Romans 12:1–2 (NKJV)

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

We should be careful not to allow the world to establish our priorities, and we should question the world's standards of beauty, success, happiness, truth, goodness, etc.

Just because a behavior is legal or deemed normal by the culture, it does not mean that it is acceptable to God.

V. WHAT IS OUR ROLE IN THE PROCESS OF SANCTIFICATION?

2 Corinthians 7:1 (NKJV)

1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Paul uses the phrases: “cleanse ourselves” and “perfecting holiness.” Clearly, this reveals the personal responsibility we each have in this process of sanctification.

Simply put, our role is to bring our attitudes, thought life, lifestyles, and speech into as much agreement with the will of God as possible.

Perfecting holiness is the process of learning to apply Gods Word, its commandments (Kingdom laws) and principles (Kingdom customs), to the way we live.

This is an imperfect process. There are many things the Bible does not explicitly address. However, that does not mean that the Word is irrelevant or outdated. On the contrary, its principles can still find application in our lives today and guide us in a contemporary setting.

Cultures and technology may change, but biblical principles never do.

VI. WHAT ABOUT HOLINESS STANDARDS IN A CHURCH?

Holiness standards in a church are a good faith effort to apply timeless, Biblical principles in a 21st century culture. It is not always an exact science.

However, if the church we attend is sincerely trying to honor God and is basing their standards on the clear principles of His Word, we should strive to work together in unity and trust godly leaders even if we may not always agree with the way the church makes application of a specific principle.

Remember, no-one agrees 100% of the time. Even in marriages, we do things for the sake of unity that we may not do if we lived alone.

Two questions that should guide the church's application Biblical principles to our lifestyles:

1. Are we applying Biblical principles in a safe place? In other words, are we drawing the lines of holiness in the most minimum way possible or are we applying these principles in a way that ensures we are honoring the heart of principle?
2. Are we applying these principles in a God-honoring way? Remember, we want our lives to be a "living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God." It is our "reasonable form of worship."

VII. SEVEN PRINCIPLES TO CONSIDER:

1. GOD FIRST IN EVERYTHING:
2. ABSTAIN FROM THE APPEARANCE OF EVIL:
3. GAURD YOUR HEART:
4. BRIDLING YOUR TONGUE:
5. YOUR BODY IS THE TEMPLE OF GOD:
6. MODESTY & MODERATION:
7. THE DISTINCTION OF SEXES: