



# Light from the Word

## Walking Carefully and in Holiness – Part 2

*“For I am the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.”<sup>1</sup>*

### Called to be like God

The Word of God calls us to be holy, for He is holy. Living up to God's instruction to be holy may seem overwhelming at times, but equipping us to be holy was the very purpose of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Certainly these characteristics and actions can only become real in our lives if the Holy Spirit lives within us.<sup>2</sup> It is also apparent that we are called to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in obedience. Peter admonishes us not to fashion ourselves according to the former lusts in our ignorance, but by obedience, to be holy as God is holy.<sup>3</sup>

If He is holy, then the key to becoming holy is to become like Him.

### The Holiness of God

Learning to know God in His breadth, width, height, and fullness, will give us the best opportunity to understand holiness and to be able to know how it should be manifested in our lives.

*God is truthful.* We need not say more. To be like God we must live and speak truth. Anything less is ungodliness.<sup>4</sup>

*God is faithful.* He will never fail to follow through on his commitments. A key element of being holy is keeping commitments, though it costs us greatly. The Father kept His commitment to send a redeemer, even though it cost Him His only begotten Son. Commitment takes many forms in our walk of faith, but includes faithfulness in marriage, faithfulness in our work, commitment to our brotherhood, and commitment to our local

congregation. A practical application of holiness is to be faithful in our relationships with our brothers and sisters in Christ, especially in times of testing and conflict. If we experience conflict, it may seem easier to avoid that conflict by assembling with another congregation—whether in our brotherhood or another denomination—but the principle of holiness through faithfulness will motivate us to love our brethren with the love that Jesus has for the church and strengthen rather than break our commitment to one another.<sup>5</sup>

*God is consistent and without variation.* As humans, it seems that we are too often subject to inconsistency in our walk of faith. Human nature justifies different standards when it suits us, and has the potential to lead us to become inconsistent or even false witnesses for Jesus. Holiness will motivate us to live consistently righteous lives without self-justification.<sup>6</sup>

*God is love.* Quite simply, we cannot hope to be holy if we are not filled with the love of God. Love is what enables us to be always truthful, always faithful, filled with righteousness and peace. Love for God draws us to Him and gives us the desire to be like Him. Love for others motivates us to put His love into action—which is the essence of holiness.<sup>7</sup>

*God is righteous and judges righteously.* Jesus criticized the Pharisees for omitting judgment, mercy, and faith. He calls us to, “judge righteous judgment”—to discern with a pure heart and not with an intent to pervert the outcome. He also teaches us not to judge one another. We see that God alone is able to judge people because He alone knows the thoughts and intentions of the heart. However, good decision-making requires the indwelling of the Holy Spirit—and is an essential part of being holy as God is holy.<sup>8</sup>

*God is merciful.* It is easy to be harsh with others and hold them to a high standard, perhaps even a higher standard than we hold for ourselves. Our Father

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in heaven is rich in mercy and has treated us with much patience and kindness. If our hearts are holy, we will likewise be full of mercy towards others.<sup>9</sup>

### What is Unholy?

A good understanding can come from examining the alternatives. What are characteristics that God does not have, or even despises? What is unholy?

*God abhors covetousness.* To covet is a form of discontentment. As His children, we are called to be content with such things as we have and not desire more. This can include an inordinate desire for money, goods, or even for friendships or marriage. Contentment is holy.<sup>10</sup>

*God holds some actions as abominable.* Proud looks, lies, wicked imaginations, a tendency to mischief, false witness against others, shedding of innocent blood, and the sowing of discord among the brethren are all unholy and must not be a part of our life.<sup>11</sup>

*God forbids any worship or acceptance of idols.* We are called

to destroy them utterly from our lives. In our culture, the worship of images is thought to be rare. However, we should honestly acknowledge the idolatrous nature of covetousness, self-righteousness, and many of the aspects of the entertainment world in our time. The cult of celebrity is very much a substitute for idol worship. Adoration by “fans” exceeds attendance in churches many Sundays. Holiness rejects the worship of these pseudo-gods.<sup>12</sup>

*God is not a respecter of persons.* Prejudice of any kind is unholy.<sup>13</sup>

Seeking holiness involves both the putting off of all forms of unrighteousness and putting on the positive attributes of God. Thus we are called to not only abstain from sinful behaviors—such as fornication, pollutions of idols, fleshly lusts, and every instance of evil—we are to abhor them.<sup>14</sup> Abstain means never; abhor means hate. Holiness is a full-time occupation.

### Conclusion

If one has learned to know the Lord, understanding the difference between holy and unholy is almost intuitive. It would be difficult to imagine God as a liar or unjust in His dealings with men. It should

be just as difficult for men to imagine ungodliness in us. By faith, let us draw near to God and learn to know Him in truth. Empowered by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, let us love God with all we have and thereby become holy as He is holy. Because of His love within us, let’s discern righteously and choose to live in peace with our brethren and with all men. Through holiness, let us look forward to that time when we shall see Him as He is and know Him as we are known.

*Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.*<sup>15</sup>

(Footnotes)

<sup>1</sup> Leviticus 11:45

<sup>2</sup> John 15:5

<sup>3</sup> 1 Peter 1:14-16

<sup>4</sup> Heb. 6:18

<sup>5</sup> Heb. 10:23

<sup>6</sup> Mal. 3:6

<sup>7</sup> 1 John 4:6-21

<sup>8</sup> Isaiah 5:16

<sup>9</sup> Psalm 116:5

<sup>10</sup> Psalm 10:3

<sup>11</sup> Prov. 6:16-19

<sup>12</sup> Deut. 12:29-32, 16:22

<sup>13</sup> Acts 10:34-35

<sup>14</sup> Acts 15:20, Romans 12:9  
1 Thess. 5:22, 1 Peter 2:11

<sup>15</sup> Heb. 12:14