
IHOP Lifestyle 3: Living Holy

A. THE PRIMARY CALLING OF GOD FOR US IS TO BE HOLY (1 Pet. 1:15-16)

1. It is vital to know that the *number one calling* of God for every believer is to be HOLY. All of our faith must be centered on this truth.
2. *Every sphere* of our life should be *centered on being holy* before God. Our primary calling is *not to be happy, blessed, rich or married*. All these things should be the outflow as we fulfill the calling to be holy.
3. The Christian faith is about *pleasing God first*. It is not only about God being committed to make us happy or seeking to please us, although He has the best plans for us (Jer. 29:11).

B. WHAT IS HOLINESS?

1. Being holy is *more than* just being *pure and without sin*.
2. God is holy means that God *cannot be compared to anything*. He is transcendent, totally different. He is “other than”.
3. The word “HOLY” primarily means “SEPARATE” and it has a two-fold meaning:
 - a. SET APART FROM THE WORLD - We should not be living according to the sinful pattern of the world, but to live according to the way of God (2 Cor. 6:17 – 7:1). If we want to come close to God, we have to be separated from the things of the world. Without holiness, no one will see God (Heb. 12:14).
 - b. SET APART FOR GOD - God is inviting us to a higher quality of life than what we are experiencing now, to be the very kind of people that God is looking for (Ex. 33:16).
4. *The nation of Israel* is called to be *a holy people* unto the Lord (Deut. 7:6). She is special compared to other nations, because Israel is *set apart for God*, to be the very kind of people that God is looking for. God gave the Ten Commandments and the Torah to Israel so that they would *know God and walk in His way* (Deut. 4:6-8).
5. *The Church* is also called to be *a holy nation* set apart for God; to be the very kind of people that God desires (1 Peter 2:9).

C. “H” STANDS FOR HOLINESS

1. This is especially vital as a *core value* for our House, because we want to be set apart for God, to be *the very kind of people that God desires*.

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2. God is looking for a specific kind of people who have these five traits: who fear God, who walk in all His ways, who love Him, who serve Him with all their heart and soul, and who keep his commandments and statutes (Deut. 10:12-13).
 3. God is looking for a people loyal to Him (2 Chron. 16:9).
 4. God is looking for a resting place (Isa. 66:1-2).
 5. God is looking for true worshippers (John 4:23).

D. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO EMBRACE A LIFESTYLE OF HOLINESS?

1. To be intimate with God, to be a man after His own heart and the people of One Thing (2 Cor. 6:16-18, Acts 13:22, Jer. 9:24)
2. To be wholehearted in love for God (Matt. 22:37-38)
3. To walk out the Sermon of the Mount lifestyle - Matt. 5 – 7 gives us the clearest description of how to be true kingdom people. The eight fruits of the Beatitudes are the character traits needed to become such a people.

E. NEGATIVE MINDSETS ABOUT HOLY LIVING

A lifestyle of holiness is NOT...

1. A call into legalism, of keeping a list of “dos” & don’ts”. It is only legalism if there is no relationship involved, when we do spiritual things without engaging the heart of God.
2. A call into the drudgery of self-denial.
3. A call into a stifling, restrictive and boring lifestyle.

F. CORRECT MINDSETS ABOUT HOLY LIVING

1. God is INVITING us to the highest and most exhilarating quality of life. If we walk in holy living, we will experience vibrancy in our spirit and abundant life.
2. Holy living is a call to greatness in God and a call to liberty from darkness and bondages. We will begin to realize who we truly are in God.
3. The Scripture says that God is holy (1 Pet. 1:16). He is certainly not boring and not stifling. God is full of life (John 1:4), indescribably glorious and transcendent in beauty (Isa. 4:2) and infinitely superior to any other thing (Isa. 6; Isa. 40).
4. Holy living is not about behaving, or about doing something. It is not a message of drudgery and denial. We do not just grind our teeth and endure the boredom.
5. It is about entering into and partaking of the superior quality of God’s life.

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6. Holy living is a call to the superior pleasure of being fascinated by the revelation of God.

G. TWO FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS

It is vital for us to understand two foundational truths in walking out a lifestyle of holiness:

1. God created every human being with a longing for PLEASURE
 - a. We cannot repent away our longing for pleasure and fascination. The longing for pleasure is not a sin. Sin only occurs when we seek pleasure in an ungodly manner or outside of God's will.
 - b. The Bible does teach about self-denial. But it is not the denial of pleasure. It is the denial of sinful pleasure e.g. Lust, pride and immorality.
 - c. God created pleasure but Satan counterfeited it with pleasure that is outside of God's will. Pleasure will be forever and eternal (Ps. 16:11). We long for physical, mental, emotional and spiritual pleasure because we are created with this longing.
 - d. The key is that we need to define pleasure correctly and biblically, because it will not go away and it is the craving of our soul. We get caught in sin because we are "distracted" or "tempted" by the inferior pleasure.
 - e. The key to overcoming darkness is to turn on the light (John 1:5). We should focus on the superior pleasure of the revelation of God and then resist the inferior pleasure of sin. (Heb. 12:1-2)
 - f. Why did David fall into adultery with Bathsheba? He took his gaze away from the beauty of God (2 Sam. 11:2). The key to be holy is not to resist sin, but to experience the superior pleasure of the beauty of God.
 - g. The greatest pleasure available to the human spirit is SPIRITUAL PLEASURE, when God is revealed and when we encounter Him. There is joy unspeakable (1 Pet. 1:8) and fullness of joy (John 3:29; 1 John 1:4) in the river of His pleasures (Ps. 16:11; Ps. 36:8).
 - h. It is the desire of the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth and the things of God to us (1 Cor. 2:10-12; John 16:13). God is releasing insight and revelation as we meditate on the Word (2 Cor. 3:18). It will tenderize and change our heart over time. It will make us feel different about God, ourselves and other people (Isa. 4:2).
 2. God created every human being with a longing to be FASCINATED
 - a. God has created us with a longing to be awestruck, to marvel, and to wonder. Thus we cannot repent of our longing for fascination.
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- b. Many of us are spiritually bored and are preoccupied with hobbies because we are not fascinated. We do not read the Word because we think that it is boring (Ps. 119:13-21).
 - c. We need to be fascinated by God. Paul said the knowledge of Christ Jesus is excellent (Phil. 3:8). Jesus is altogether lovely (Song. 5:16) and beautiful (Song. 5:10).
 - d. Primarily, the call to holiness is the call to ENJOY GOD, to experience the superior pleasure and to enjoy a holy fascination.

H. THREE PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES THAT ARE NECESSARY IN OUR PURSUIT OF HOLINESS

1. There are three important principles in walking in holiness, found all over the Scriptures. Rom. 6:11-13 puts all three principles together in one passage:

- a. KNOWING PRINCIPLE (“Reckon yourselves” – Rom. 6:11)

We must know certain truths in order to be able to walk in our faith effectively. The “knowing” principle is necessary for us to resist sin, pursue God, and know what He wants. Examples of what we need to know:

- i. Who we are in Christ
- ii. The gift of righteousness
- iii. Indwelling and working of the Spirit in us
- iv. Confidence in God as our Father and Jesus as our Bridegroom
- v. The authority of believers

- b. RESISTING PRINCIPLE (“Do not let” and “Do not present” – Rom. 6:12-13)

We need to resist Satan (James 4:7) in the authority of believers, in the Name of Jesus. We can resist sin and flee sin-provoking circumstances (1 Cor. 6:18; 1 Tim. 6:11). We must take radical action so that sin will not reign in us (Matt. 5: 29-30).

- c. PURSUING PRINCIPLE (“Present yourselves to God” – Rom. 6:13)

We should pursue God, set a vision for holiness, read the bible, pray and fast regularly, spend time with God and serve God.

2. We need to walk out all three principles. Some people resist sin and pursue God without knowing who they are, leading to striving and frustration. Some people pursue God without resisting sin.
3. We must embrace all three principles in the context of seeking 100% obedience. Then the Holy Spirit will work dynamically and powerfully in our inner man and we will experience vibrancy in our heart.

I. APPLICATION

1. We should set our heart on 100% obedience and should not settle for just 98%. The final 2% is vital because it can be the spark that empowers or it becomes the weakness that diminishes.
2. This is not referring to attaining 100% obedience, but a deliberate and intentional focus in reaching, aiming, seeking, contending to fully obey God. When we sin, we should immediately repent and renew our resolve to reach for 100% obedience.
3. There are four giant areas that we need to submit 100% obedience to God:
 - a. OUR SPEECH (James 3:2; Col. 4:6; Ps. 15:1-2) – God is very particular about our words. We should speak words with grace.
 - b. OUR EYES (Job 31:1) – We should make a covenant with our eyes that we will not lust.
 - c. OUR TIME (Eph. 5:15-17) – All our “time” belongs to the Lord, under the Lordship of Christ. There is no such thing as time-out from God. We should not compartmentalize our time.
 - d. OUR MONEY – This is about stewardship, that all is for His glory.