

Walking In Holiness

Our workshop topic for today is walking in Holiness; it is too deep and broad to try to cover in one hour, so let's narrow it down to one area, our behavior.

What is my response to God's command for Holy Living?

1Peter 1:15-16 "but like the Holy One who called you, be Holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written you shall be Holy, for I Am Holy." NASB

"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." NLT

"But just as He who called you is Holy so be Holy in all you do; for it is written: Be Holy, because I AM Holy." NIV

"but as He which hath called you is Holy, so be ye Holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, be ye Holy; for I AM Holy." KJV
See Leviticus 11:45, 19:2.

When we hear the phrase he is a Holy man what vision comes to mind? Long robes and a long white beard, some aged character out of the Old Testament, living somewhere out of the main stream of life, maybe like Elijah or Elisha. What about the modern man of today. Have you recently heard anyone referred to as a holy man, maybe a godly man, a good Christian, faithful man or even perhaps a man of God, which is usually reserved for the church staff. Would your best friend refer to you as a Holy man?

Self evaluation

- 1 I am making a concentrated effort to obey all of God's commands.
 - 2 Are you satisfied with the current level of your Christian walk?
 - 3 Because I am assured of eternal life with Jesus I have become complacent.
 - 4 Have I considered the need to advance in Holy living?
 - 5 I am making a concentrated effort to live a Holy life.
- Did you answer no to all but question 3?

God, at the time we received Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord of our life, by His power and mercy. Has justified and sanctified us the instant we received Jesus, He saved us from the penalty of sin, saved us from the power of sin, and someday save us from the presence of sin, this entirely of God. John 17:4 "I glorified Thee on the earth; having accomplished, the work which Thou hast given Me to do." John 19:30 Jesus said "it is finished". In God's eyes we are justified and sanctified.

Justification is a divine act whereby an infinitely Holy God judicially declares a believing sinner to be righteous and acceptable before Him, because Christ has borne the sinner's sin on the execution stake, Romans 3:24 "being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus." 1 Corinthians 1:30 "but by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption." A justified believer emerges from God's great court room with a consciousness that another, his substitute has borne my guilt and that I stand without accusation before the bar of God. Romans 8:1, 33-34. Justification makes no one righteous neither is it the bestowment of righteousness as such but rather DECLARES one to be justified whom God sees as perfected once and forever. See Unger's Dictionary.

The dominant idea of sanctification is separation from the secular and sinful and setting apart for a sacred purpose. Ephesians 2:8-9 "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast." Verse 10 "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. John 6:28-29 "Then they asked Him, What must we do to do the works God requires? Jesus answered; the work of God is this: to believe in the One He has sent." NIV Hebrews 12:14 "pursue peace with all men and Holiness without which no one will see the Lord." the word pursue means to me I must make an effort to exercise holy behavior.

Have you ever watched a T-ball game with kids playing in their first year of baseball, I was watching a game a few summers ago. The coach had placed a youngster in right field I was sitting along side the foul line. The player is in the position the coach placed him. The boy is watching a bird fly over, a bug in the grass has captured his attention, and he turns to watch his family on the other side of the field. He is in position but his attention is not on the game, his behavior as a ball player is not acceptable. But if he sets his heart and mind on becoming the best he can be with the talents God has given him, he may some day fulfill his dream of playing in the major leagues and some day play in the World Series. As he seeks to fulfill his dreams he will have numbers of coaches and mentors to help him perfect his skills.

You and I are in our position due to the finished work of Jesus Christ and of our receiving Him as our Savior and Lord. Is it our desire to grow and mature in our behavior to be Holy and the standard is Jesus Christ? Are you putting any effort to grow in Holiness? I thank God for KMI, men like John Crawford, Roy Robinson, Max Barnett, Jim White and the men in our various bible study groups that mentor, guide and encourage us to pursue holiness.

Psalms 42:1-2 Psalms 63:1. To really know God, not just about God, but to know Him is to love Him to love Him is to obey and serve Him. To really long for God, this we can grow in, as we have extended time of prayer, meditating on God's Word, placing His Word in our heart, meeting God every morning, Exodus 33:13 Moses said that I might know You. Deut. 10:12-13

Now let's consider who determines or defines Holiness or the level of Holiness, God does. He said to be holy as He is holy. This directs me to the life of Jesus who is the exact representation of God the Father, Hebrews 1:3. If I do not use Jesus as the standard of Holiness, who then is my standard, the pastor, youth minister, deacons, elders. Would you agree that the level of Holiness will vary from person to person and from church to church? Is it possible that when I evaluate my personal Holiness it is some where between the world I was born into and it is unholy and the Christian community I worship in. If I use any of these as my standard I am in danger of missing the mark. One has only to review recent history to see generally speaking the lowering of the standards in the Christian communities. Therefore the only reliable standard is Jesus Christ.

Consider Daniel, Daniel 1:8 "But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank.

Here is one of my major points; first we must make up our mind as Daniel did not want to be defiled by the world's way of life. Daniel decided and so can we. So at the end of the day it would be said about us as it was said about Daniel in chapter 6:4b there was no error or fault found in him. Daniel was just a normal ordinary man living rightly before God, we or at least many of us are living a sub-normal Christian life that is why Daniel stands out as exceptional. But we can change even today and decide to pursue a Holy life style and we should since God commanded it.

A level of Holiness is attainable and it is my choice, I will never reach the level of Holiness that Jesus did, but I can be moving in that direction. Better to try and do my best with the gifts God has given me, than to never even attempt to move in the direction of Holy behavior. Luke 12:47 " And the slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, will receive many lashes. NASB

Oswald Chambers said "We must never allow anything to interfere with the consecration of our spiritual power, Consecration (being dedicated too God's service) is our part; sanctification (being set apart from sin and being made Holy) is God's part. We must make a deliberate determination to be interested only in what God is interested in. The way to make the determination, when faced with a perplexing problem, is to ask yourself, is this the kind of thing in which Jesus Christ is interested, or is it something in which the spirit that is diametrically opposed to Jesus is interested in.

Romans 12:1-2, when you present yourself to God as a living sacrifice, is it a Holy sacrifice? Am I being conformed into the world's way of thinking or am I being transformed? We have considered some of the things necessary to transform us into the image of Christ. Let's briefly look at some things that will derail us from our goal of Holy behavior. We have one of two choices conformed or transformed which will it be.

What do you see when you watch a professional football game on TV besides the actual game. Beginning at the kick off and ending at the half time not including half time,

I saw 48 commercials. If I had watched the whole game including the half time activities it would be at least 100 commercials, some of them telling me I needed some junk food to eat, beer to drink, a product to use that will make me more attractive to the women, how I need a new truck and a new wardrobe that will put me in with the in crowd or some new electronic gadget. Not one of the commercials will help me be transformed into the image of Jesus, it seems to me that all of the commercials was attempt to conform me into the world's value system. I don't want you to think I am picking on sports, I watched a one hour show and there were 33 commercials not counting the in-between and after the show. And what was the message from the show? It was trying to conform me into its world view. It certainly was not encouraging Holiness. I am not just picking on TV. This type of thing is all around us trying to shape our way of thinking. My message is just this, carefully consider and decide, will the activity I am about to engage in help me grow in Holiness or it will be an obstacle to my stated goal. If it is not going to help you it will most likely hurt you to some extent. If 90% of your intake is from the world, you are being conformed. You must make up your mind, am I going to obey God's command to be as Holy as He is or not. 2 Chronicles 12:14 "He did evil because he did not set his heart to seek the Lord. Contrast this example of life to 2 Kings 2:13:25 "Before him there was not a king like him who turned to the Lord with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him." King Josiah. 2 Chronicles 16:9 'The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the earth that He may show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart are fully His. Are you a King Josiah? See 2 Kings 10:30-31

Decide not to be a mediocre Christian, decide to be Holy, and not go with the flow of today's average Christian, and rid yourself of all that is not holy in your house and in your life. Continue to ask the Holy Spirit to show you anything that is an obstacle to advancing in Holiness, this is a life long process, it is not a static position that we attain to and then when move on to something else. Hebrews 12:1-2 "Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame and sit down at the right hand of the throne of God. Men we can not fix our eyes on Jesus and the world at the same time. 1 Corinthians 3:18 "But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the image of Christ.

Are you cooperating with God to be transformed into the image of Christ?

Proverbs 3:56

Trust the Lord with all your heart. This speaks to Holiness or growing in Holiness, Holy behavior. It is a directive from the Lord.

Lean not to your own understanding. This speaks to being influenced by the world view of life or could be said being conformed to the world.

If you are leaning on your own understanding, where did that understanding come from? It is coming from the world influence.

In all thy ways acknowledge Him. Holy living, Holy behavior,. Acknowledging I need the Lord to lead me, acknowledging the Lord as my Lord and God in all I say and do.

And He shall direct thy paths. This sounds like a promise from God and to me it seems conditional on Trust, Lean not. Acknowledge.

To my way of thinking if most of the input into my life is from the world. It will influence my thinking. If 90% of input into my life is from the world-----

In many cases we do ask the Lord, we do not think, we just act or do that which is before us, and most of the time it is a decision based on world influence, not even thinking or seeking God's input. Then we think how could I have been so misled. Psalm 106: 13-15. Jeremiah Chapter 42

Being Conformed is easy, it requires nothing of me.

Being Transformed requires some effort on my part.

Summery

We are commanded to be Holy in our behavior, as God is Holy. 1 Peter 1:15-16

We must make a determined commitment to grow in Holiness. Oswald Chambers.

We must pursue Holiness; pursue means to me that Holy behavior takes some effort.
Hebrews 12:14

Our part is to learn and grow through the study of God's Word, meeting with Him every day, obedience to the Word. To know God is to love God, to love God is to obey Him. Deut.10:12-13. Walking in all His ways is Holy behavior.

I am a living sacrifice, Holy and acceptable to the Lord. Am I attempting to offer to the Sovereign Lord a living sacrifice that is less than holy in my behavior? Romans 12:1-2
What were the O.T. standards for a sacrifice to the Lord?

Be not conformed, the world is always trying to get us to conform to its world view:
We must resist and be transformed to God's world view; both not conforming and transforming require discernment, determination and effort by the power of the Holy Spirit.
The Holy Spirit is Holy and lives within us to guide us to Holy behavior, if we listen,

Remember out of the 100 commercials viewed during a football game, none of them was an aid to Holy behavior. We should evaluate all our activities. Any thing that in some way does not assist me to grow in Holiness is in some way no matter how small is an obstacle to Holy living. We must do more transforming activities and less conforming activities.

Holy behavior is a life time pursuit; it is not static but always growing or receding.
Psalms 63, do I hunger and thirst for the Living God in the same fashion as I hunger and thirst for food?

When I have free time, do I pursue my personal pleasure for something, a hobby, or a physical urge? Why not use at least a big portion of my free time to seek God's fellowship. 2 Kings 10:29-31 Jehu made no effort to live a holy life.

Rules for Self-discovery

1. What we want most.
2. What we think about the most.
3. How we use our money,
4. What we do with our leisure time.
5. The company we enjoy.
6. Whom and what we admire.
7. What we laugh at.

The cost of Holiness (Sanctification)

When we pray, asking God to sanctify us, are we prepared to measure up to what that really means? We take the word Holiness (Sanctification) much too lightly. Are we prepared to pay the cost of sanctification? The cost will be a deep restriction of all our earthly concerns, and extensive cultivation of all our godly concerns. Sanctification means to be intensely focused on God's point of view. It means to secure and to keep all the strength of our body, soul and spirit for God's purpose alone. Are we really prepared for God to perform in us everything for which He separated us? And after He has done His work, are we then prepared to separate ourselves to God just as Jesus did? For there sakes I sanctify Myself.....John 17:19. The reason some of us have not entered into the experience of sanctification is that we have not realized the meaning of sanctification from God's perspective. Sanctification means being made one with Jesus so that the nature that controlled Him will control us. Are we really prepared for what that will cost? It will cost absolutely everything in us which is not of God.

Are prepared to be caught up into the full meaning of Paul's prayer in this verse? 1 Thessalonians 5:23 are prepared to say, Lord, make me, a sinner saved by grace, as holy as You can? Jesus prayed that we might be one with Him, just as He is one with the Father.

John 17:21-23, the resounding evidence of the Holy Spirit in a person's life is the unmistakable family likeness to Jesus Christ, and the freedom from everything which is not like Him. Are we prepared to set ourselves apart for the Holy Spirit's work in us?

Oswald Chambers

My Utmost for His Highest

God-Centered Holiness
1st Peter 1:16

If holiness is so basic to the Christian life, why do we not experience it more in daily living? Why do so many Christians feel constantly defeated in their struggle with sin? Why does the church of Jesus Christ so often seem to be more conformed to the world around it than to God?

Our first problem is that our attitude toward sin is more self-centered than God-centered. We're more concerned about our own "victory" over sin than we are about the fact that our sins grieve God's heart. We cannot tolerate failure in our struggle with sin chiefly because we are success-oriented not because we know its offensive to God.

W.S. Plumer said, "We never see sin aright until we see it as against God. All sin is against God in the sense; that it is His law that is broken, His authority that is despised, and His government that is set at naught. Pharaoh and Balaam, Saul and Judas each said, 'I have sinned;' but the returning prodigal said, 'I have sinned against heaven and before thee; and David said, 'against Thee, Thee only have I sinned. God wants us to walk in obedience---not victory. Obedience is oriented toward God; victory is oriented toward self. This may seem to be merely splitting hairs over semantics, but there's subtle, self-centered attitude at the root of many of our difficulties with sin. Until we deal with this attitude, we won't consistently walk in holiness.

Victory is a by-product of obedience. As we concentrate on living an obedient holy life, we'll certainly experience the joy of victory over sin. Will you begin to look at sin as an offense against a holy God, instead of as a personal defeat only?

Holiness Day by Day by Jerry Bridges

Practicing the Presence of God

Remembering that God stands everywhere as both a witness and a judge should restrain our temptation much. Most outward sin is taken away if a person has a witness of his behavior. A man belittles God when, before doing something wrong, he first checks to make sure his children aren't around—as if the eye of a little child were more powerful than the all-seeing eye of the Lord. God is to be feared in public and He is to be feared in private.

Guidelines for Practicing God's Presence

1. When you begin to pray, place yourself in God's presence and let your desires actually fix on Him. Then the rest of your prayer will more likely be wise.
2. Let everything you see represent God's presence, Excellency, and power. In the face of the sun you may see God's beauty; in the fire you may feel His warmth; in the water you may feel His gentle refreshment.
3. Have frequent dialogues between God and your soul, as David did: "Seven times a day I praise You" (Ps.119:164 niv). Every act of thanksgiving, rejoicing, or mourning to God builds Him a chapel in our hearts. It reconciles Martha's employment with Mary's devotion (Luke 10:38-42). Even in the middle of your occupation you may worship at your heart-chapel.
4. As God is in us, we are in Him. We are His craftsmanship; let us not deface it. We are in His presence; let us not pollute it with unholy actions.
5. God created the animals. Do not be cruel to them or abuse them, but remember that the creatures are lesser receptacles of God's touch.
6. A person who walks with God, like Enoch, converses with Him in frequent prayer, runs to Him in every need, asks His advice whenever doubtful, weeps before Him for sin, and asks support for weakness, That person fears God as a Judge; reverences Him as a Lord; obeys His as a Father; and loves Him as a Patron.

The Benefits of Practicing God's Presence

1. Practicing God's presence produces a confidence in God, fearlessness toward enemies, patience in trouble, and hope of aid, since God is so near in all our circumstances. Though His rod of discipline may strike us, His staff supports us; He turns misery into mercy and trouble into advantage by showing us His presence in a new way.
2. Practicing God's presence produces joy in God, as we are more apt to delight in persons we know best. Every mutual conversation and togetherness becomes an endearment. If we walk with God in all His ways as He walks with us in all ours, we will find perpetual reasons to "be joyful in the Lord always" (Phil.4:4). This reminds me of a saying of Saint Anthony: "There is one way of overcoming our spiritual enemies—spiritual mirth and a perpetual bearing of God in our minds."
3. Practicing God's presence produces desire for God's strength, the same desire that a weak man has for a defender, a sick man for a doctor, and a child for a father.

4. Practicing God's presence produces spiritual humility, awareness of our great needs and His unfathomable Mercies.

What child would do under the eye of his father, a pupil before his teacher, and an employee before his boss, let us do, for we are always in the sight and presence of the all seeing and almighty God, our Father and Guardian, our Husband and Lord.

This article and Things to Ponder have copied from the book

The Search for Holy Living.

Things to ponder.

Guidelines for using our time wisely.

1. In the morning, when you awaken, accustom yourself to think first upon God; at night, let Him close your eyes. Let your rest be healthful and necessary, not just idle time.
2. Let all your intervals or open moments of time be employed in prayer, reading, meditation, exercise, and acts of friendship.
3. Sundays and holidays are in no sense mere days of idleness. It is better to work on Sundays than to do nothing. Instead of idly wasting time, let those days be spent doing charitable and religious work.
4. Avoid the company of all who talk too much without a purpose. No one can be careful in his use of time who is careless in his choice of company, for when a conversationalist continually speaks emptiness or trivia, all who listen or answer waste their time.
5. Never engage in any trifling activity merely to pass the time away, for ever day well spent can become a “day of salvation” (2 Cor.6:2 niv) and any time rightly used is an “opportune moment” (Ps. 69:13). The time to trifle away was given to you to repent, to pray, to lay up heavenly treasure.
6. While working, go often to God in brief prayers. These times of prayer can make up the lack of devotional time which others may have and which you wish you had. Be sure of this: God is present at your breathed prayers on the job as the longer prayers of those who are less employed.
7. Let your employment be fitting for a reasonable person. A person may be idle though busy. There are entire occupations devoted to vanity and foolishness that deserve to be banned. And there are some people who are genuinely busy, but it is in the way the Emperor Domitian once claimed to be busy: catching flies.
8. Let those who are independently wealthy or retired be extra careful in their use of time. Let them choose good company and learn useful things. Let them visit the poor and relieve their needs, pray often, and read good books.
9. Everyone should avoid excessive attention to appearance. Many people primp and comb away all their opportunities for morning devotions.
10. People should avoid idle curiosity and inquiring into things that do not concern them. Of course, we should be aware of the needs of our fellow believers, but one need not be a gossip to learn his brothers’ needs.

11. As much as possible, cut off all useless occupations of your life: unnecessary meetings, day dreaming, reading about celebrities, or however time is spent to no real purpose.

12. Do not spend time lavishly in recreation, but choose leisure activities that are healthful, brief, and refreshing. Avoid games that require too much time or involvement, or which are likely to dominate your thoughts. Do not dwell upon them or make them your major enterprises. And don't think that spectator sports are real exercise. A person who passively spends his time watching sports and calls it exercise makes about as much sense as a person who wears a belt without wearing any pants. It is permissible to relax our bow but not to unstring it.

13. Set aside some parts of every day specifically for prayer and devotion. Events may force you to shorten your devotional time occasionally, but do not omit it under anything less than absolute necessity.

14. Do God's work attentively. Do not let your hands be folded in prayer while your thoughts are on the world. Do not pray negligently. Put forth all your strength.

15. Fill hour of insomnia with prayer, since you have no requirements on your time then.

16. The busy person should set aside a holy time every year in which, ignoring his occupation, he may give himself wholly to fasting and prayer, to confession and attention to God.

17. Before we sleep we might well examine our actions during the day, especially anything unusual. For our failures we will have sorrow, and for our victories we will have thanksgiving.

18: All these points should be used wisely, not vexingly. These guidelines have advantages, but they are not divine commandments, at least not their specifics. Every person may select whatever process enables him to do his Christian duty. A man will be happy when he can use every hour in a useful or holy way, but our duty does not consist in just scrupulously examining how we use our minutes (provided no minute is engaged in sin).

19: The habit of using time wisely will influence our whole lives, and will especially benefit us in two ways. It doesn't just teach us to avoid evil but encourages us to do good. And it causes us to be ready and eager for the Lord's return at any time.

HOLINESS

Holiness, Holiness is what I long for
Holiness is what I need
Holiness, Holiness is what You want from me

Take my heart and form it,
Take my mind, transform it,
Take my will conform it
To Yours, to Yours O Lord.

Righteousness, Righteousness...
Brokenness, Brokenness....