

Be Holy

1 November, 2009

By Rev. Lonny R. Bower

Scripture Reference – Leviticus 20:1-10; Deuteronomy 7:6-11; Colossians 3:5-11; Titus 2:11-12; Hebrews 12:14-28; 1 Peter 1:15-16

Unit Theme: “The Gospel Fulfills the Law”

Central Truth: God commands every Christian to live a holy life.

Focus: Recognize the need for holiness and live a holy life.

Key Verse: 1 Peter 1:15

Introduction:

In Exodus Chapter 19 and 20 we have a wonderful picture of the presence of God before the people on Mt Sinai. It was God’s desire to let His people see His presence and hear His voice. However, it proved too be to much for the people, for in Chapter 20, we see them crying out to Moses saying, “you speak to God for us, but let not God speak to us lest we die.” The unholy cannot stand in the presence of God, nor do they desire to hear God speak. This is why Moses had told them in Chapter 19 to get themselves ready, to consecrate themselves for in three days God will reveal Himself. If we have any hope of being in the presence of God, any hope of hearing God speak, we must be holy. Apart from the Word it is very difficult to comprehend how we can be holy. The fact is though that we are commanded of God to be holy, therefore it is attainable. The enemy has convinced many that it’s impossible or it’s about outward observances, but it’s neither. It’s a matter of our heart being changed and as our heart is changed the man will soon follow after in speech and in actions. As we begin today’s lesson let us not lose sight of God, or His word, because it is through His power and presence that we are able to be holy in all that we say and all that we do.

I. Commanded to Live Holy - Leviticus 20:7, 8; 1 Peter 1:15-16

Consecrate (set yourselves apart) is not a term we hear much outside of the church, yet it is something that people do all the time. Whether its sports, vocations, or hobbies, people everywhere set themselves apart. There may not be necessarily anything wrong with the former, but how much of us is left for God? It is God’s desire that we live our lives in such a way that reflects His holiness. We can do this through our daily lives, but it is our choice. Consider

Romans 12:1, 2 from the Message:

¹So here’s what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. ²Don’t become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You’ll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.

1 Peter 1:15-16

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God would never require something of us that is not attainable. We can be holy, however it is our choice. Do we want to go to the mountain and hear God, feel His presence? He will not force us to come up, but has provided a way for us to, through His Son Jesus. We must understand however, as much as holiness is a choice on our part it is also a requirement to see God (**Hebrews 12:14**). This is why the Lord required them to consecrate themselves so that they could stand in His presence.

➤ **Think about it:**

Have you intentionally changed the way you live so that you can reflect God's holiness?

“A passion for personal holiness will make you a lot easier to get along with.”—Robert Cook

II. Instructions for Holy Living - Leviticus 20:1-6, 9, 10

The Lord has established boundaries for us that define our holiness, these boundaries, like it or not, often relate to the way we live our lives. Holiness is more than a condition of the heart; rather it is a work of the heart born out through the flesh. If our heart is corrupt our flesh will expose it, likewise if our heart is holy our actions will be too.

Colossians 3:5-11;

We are exhorted to put to death the deeds of the flesh; if you are honest, you'll probably admit with me that this is easier said than done. However, if we keep two things in perspective, our desire and ability may change. First we must never lose sight of the Lord's complete holiness – if we do we will not ever attain holiness. Second we must ever be cognizant of the Lord's righteous wrath. This will protect us from entering into the things the flesh so longs for. When either is absent (awareness of His holiness and wrath) from our lives, so is holiness. There are not a lot of preachers who will preach on either topic today (holiness or God's righteous wrath). Make no mistake though, just because we don't hear a lot about them does not mean that they are not important. I would argue the opposite, they are more important than ever, especially in the day we're living in.

Titus 2:11-12

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The Lord makes it painfully clear that even if there is a lack of preaching on the topic, there is none who will be able to stand and say, “I never knew you required holiness.” We need to stop viewing grace as a license and start looking at it as a springboard into holiness a lifestyle that God desires. He doesn’t save us from our sins to leave us in them, but He saves us to delivers us, and transform us into trees of righteousness (**Isaiah 61:3**).

➤ **Think about it:**

What does holiness mean to you, is it a lifestyle or just a philosophy?

“Even with God’s help, pursuing holiness is difficult. Anyone who thinks differently either is foolish or has never tried to lead a holy life.” —Dale Coulter

III. Motivation for Holy Living - Deuteronomy 7:6-11;

We all need motivated from time to time, as God’s people we certainly are no exception. The motivation for holy living is to stand in the physical presence of our Holy God, to dwell in His house and to be as He is (**1 John 3:2**). This is His promise to us, if we’ll live holy lives as enabled by His grace. We must always keep our eyes on the destination and never forget the purpose for living holy.

Hebrews 12:14, 18, 22-28

Think about the consequence of rejecting the Lord’s command for holiness; compare it to the benefits of being holy. Why would anyone choose to walk after the flesh? We cannot attain holiness apart from living in God’s word and seeking His presence. The Lord reveals His grace once again toward us in that He warns us to not be like the Israelites who refused Him. You see it wasn’t that they didn’t want to hear God speak, the truth was they did not want to give up the temporal pleasures of the flesh and consecrate themselves unto the Lord so that He could make them a holy nation. The Lord calls us a holy nation a peculiar people, we belong to God and therefore are holy. This is impossible to understand without the revelation of the Holy Spirit. In all of our imperfections we are holy when we simply obey His commands and walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit (**Galatians 5:16**). It comes down to our belief in Him – do we believe that He is able to make us holy (**Romans 4:3**)?

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➤ **Think about it:**

What have you hung onto that is keeping you from living in holiness?

“Nothing whatever pertaining to godliness and real holiness can be accomplished without grace.”—Augustine

Conclusion:

Holiness is vital to our eternity yet so difficult for us to get our minds wrapped around and our lives in line with. The truth is if it were not for God’s grace, holiness would be absolutely and definitively impossible! But because God loves us so much He made a way for us to be holy that is through His Son Jesus. It’s not the church, denomination, organization, living by rules, or even complying with a sensible progression of outward observances that make us holy – it is faith, it is choice, it is dying to our worldly carnal nature and living to Christ. This is what makes us holy. I thank God that He has revealed this to us, though many of us aren’t there yet – we haven’t attained. Let us seize the attitude of Paul who said I press on toward the mark and prize which is in Jesus. Let’s determine in our hearts today to be holy because God commands it.

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This study and others can be found on my website at www.bowerlife.com from the home page click on the Full Message link.

Next Week’s Lesson – Obedience to God’s Commands

- I. Obedience to God Demanded – Leviticus 18:1-5; Deuteronomy 6:13-25**
- II. Justified by faith not Law – Galatians 3:10-25**
- III. Freedom to Love and Obey – John 14:23, 24; Galatians 5:1-6, 13, 14**