

Lesson 7

HOLINESS

Compiled by Darrell Crow based upon personal studies, notes and prayer.

Darrell Crow

January 1, 2020

HOLINESS

The Hebrew word for holy is “qodesh” and means “apartness, set-apartness, separateness, sacredness” because God is totally above His creation and His creatures, including us. Holy has the idea of heaviness or weight of glory. In the New Testament, the word for holy is “hagios” and means set apart, reverend, sacred, and worthy of veneration.” This word applies to God because God Himself is totally other, separate, sacred, transcendent, reverend, and set apart from every created thing. Since God is spirit this is why the Third Person of the Trinity is called the Holy Spirit. He too is fully God and all three Persons of the Trinity are holy and have the weight of glory abounding in them. Though all the attributes of God are important and dependent on one another, God’s holiness seems to be the one He wishes us to put emphasis upon. When God revealed Himself to man (Moses, Job, Isaiah, Mount of Transfiguration, etc.) each encounter mentions His holiness. Isaiah called God “*the Holy One*” more than 30 times. Psalm 99:9 says, “*the Lord our God is holy.*” Because of His holiness He cannot accept, nor even look upon sin (Habakkuk 1:13).

God Is Holy

OT: “godesh”
Apartness
Set-apartness
Separateness
Sacred

NT: “hagios”
Set-apart
Reverend
Sacred
Worthy of veneration

God has many attributes, He is compassionate, merciful, good, patient, longsuffering, and abounding in love but the only attribute of God that is mentioned three times is His predominant attribute. He is not just holy, but He is holy, holy, holy. In Jewish liturgy, when something is incredibly important, it is mentioned twice. Jesus does this when He says something twice like “verily, verily I say unto you ...” This also signifies great intimacy when He repeats someone’s name twice like Moses, Moses; Abraham, Abraham; Saul, Saul... but when something is mentioned three times in a row, it is off the charts in importance and this is why of all the attributes of God, He is holy, holy, holy. That is the greatest emphasis that can be put on anything or anyone in Scripture and this is telling us that this is the most important thing about God. God is holy, holy, holy. This is the only attribute of God that is mentioned in the Scriptures three times!

Let’s look at two examples. One in the Old Testament and another from the New.

- *Isaiah 6:1-4 In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called out to another and said, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory. And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke.*

Isaiah actually saw a vision of the glory of God and this smoke was the Shekinah glory of God. In ancient days, the length of the train a king's robe was the measure of his greatness and in this case, God's train fills the whole temple. Each of the seraphim angels had six wings and proclaimed "*Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!*" and indeed it is. The seraphim had six wings for this purpose; with two of them they flew, with two of them they covered their face and with the last two they covered his feet. Why cover their feet and their face? Because God is too holy for even the holy angels to look at directly. Remember that God told Moses that He could not see His face directly or he would die. No man or any created being can look directly at God and not be incinerated (*Exodus 33:20 But He said, "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!"*) so two of the seraphim's six wings had to cover their face (and eyes) or else they too would cease to exist. Next, the other two wings covered their feet because they were standing on holy ground and you might remember when Joshua encountered the pre-incarnate Christ and when Moses approached the burning bush, they were told to remove their shoes from off their feet (*Ex 3:5 Then He said, "Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground."*; *Joshua 5:15 The captain of the LORD'S host said to Joshua, "Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy."* And Joshua did so.). That is because the ground where they stood was holy ground and so this explains why even the seraphim had to cover their feet because anywhere that God is will be holy ground.

- *Revelation 4:8 And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night ^[a]they do not cease to say, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God, The Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come.*

Here is where John, like Isaiah, gets a heavenly vision of God. He sees a vision of Jesus Christ and His glory and the angels (the four living creatures) also had six wings and continuously, "day and night" never stopped repeating "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is and is to come." This "who was, and is, and is to come" shows the eternity of Christ. That He was (has always existed) and is (does exist now) and is to come (will always exist). He too is holy to the third degree. Since Jesus is also God, He too is "Holy, holy, holy." It appears that these creatures are also seraphim and had six wings for the same purpose that they did in Isaiah's vision; they flew with two, they covered their face or eyes with the others, and they covered their feet with the remaining two wings. That shows us just how holy God is. That He is above all things, holy. This mentioning of his holiness three times could also indicate that there a one holy for each Person of the Trinity and that He is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient but most importantly He is holy, holy, holy.

God doesn't tell us that He is wanting us to be holy or that we can make ourselves holy, "but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, "*You shall be holy, for I am holy*" (*1 Pet 1:15-16*) and God through Moses tells the children of Israel that they must be "*Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy*" (*Leviticus 19:2*). How can we be holy since we are wicked to the core? Is this even possible? Holiness only results from a right relationship with God by believing in Jesus Christ as Savior (accepting His gift of eternal life). If we have not placed our faith in God's Son alone to save us from our sins, then our pursuit of holiness is in vain.

In 1 Peter 1:13-16, Peter writes to believers, "*Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, 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.'*"

- Leviticus 11:44 ⁴⁴ *For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. And you shall not make yourselves unclean with any of the swarming things that swarm on the earth”*
- Leviticus 19:2. ² *“Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy”*

**To Israel
Be Holy Because
I Am Holy
Leviticus 19:2**

**To Believers
Be Holy Because
I Am Holy
1 Peter 1:15-16**

Without a doubt God is demanding that His people be holy. The call is equal in both the Old Testament and the New Testament era. It is still the call today.

We are to be holy for the Lord our God is holy.

What does it mean that God is holy? Let’s examine a few verses ...

**Holy God Is:
Absolute, divine perfection
Absent Of Even A Trace Of Sin
Pure
Loving
Merciful
Righteous
To Be Desired.
Higher Than Anyone
Nobody Can Compare To God**

- *1 Samuel 2:2 “There is no one holy like the LORD, Indeed, there is no one besides You, Nor is there any rock like our God*
- *Isaiah 6:3 And one called out to another and said, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory*
- *Hosea 11:9 I will not execute My fierce anger; I will not destroy Ephraim again. For I am God and not man, the Holy One in your midst, And I will not come in wrath*
- *James 1:13 Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone*

- *Hebrews 6:18 so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have ^[a] taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us*
- *Psalm 40:5 Many, O LORD my God, are the wonders which You have done, And Your thoughts toward us; There is none to compare with You. If I would declare and speak of them, They would be too numerous to count*

Another way to say it is Holiness is absolute, divine perfection. It is pure, loving, righteous and to be desired. God is unlike any other. His very being is completely absent of even a trace of sin. He is high above any other, and no one can compare to Him. God's holiness pervades His entire being and shapes all His attributes. Review the discussion on God and His attributes. His love is a holy love, His mercy is a holy mercy, and even His anger and wrath are a holy anger and a holy wrath. These concepts are difficult for humans to grasp, just as God is difficult for us to understand in His entirety.

What does it mean for us to be holy?

"You shall be holy, for I am holy."

God is not saying "be holy in the same way that I am holy" No, God says, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." Because I am holy, therefore you are to be holy. This sort of holiness is what God calls us to. So what does it mean to "be holy, for I am holy"?

What Does It Mean For Us To Be Holy:

**"Set Apart" From The World
Live By God's Standards Not The World
Focus Our Minds On Spiritual Matters
Fix Our Hope Entirely on Jesus**

1 Peter 1:13-16 "Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, 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.'"

When God told Israel to be holy in Leviticus 11 and 19, He was instructing them to be distinct from the other nations by giving them specific regulations to govern their lives. Israel is God's chosen nation and God has set them apart from all other people groups. They are His special people, and consequently they were given standards that God wanted them to live by so the world would know they belonged to Him.

When Peter repeats the Lord's words in 1 Peter 1:16, he is talking specifically to believers.

- As believers, we need to be "set apart" from the world unto the Lord.
- We need to be living by God's standards, not the world's.
- God isn't calling us to be perfect, but to be distinct from the world.
- *1 Peter 2:9 But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light*

Since we are separated from the world; we need to live out that reality in our day-to-day lives, which Peter tells us how to do in 1 Peter 1:13-16 *"Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, 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.'"* .

How can we become holy?

Holiness only results from a right relationship with God by believing in Jesus Christ as Savior (accepting His gift of eternal life). If we have not placed our faith in God's Son alone to save us from our sins, then our pursuit of holiness is in vain.

So, we must first make sure we are born-again believers

- *John 3:16* "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.
- *Romans 10:8-10* But what does it say? "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART"--that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, (9) that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; (10) for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

If we truly are believers, then we recognize that our position in Christ automatically sets us apart from the world (1 Peter 2:9 ⁹ But *PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;*).

After all, we have a relationship with the living God! Then we must daily live a set-apart life, not trying to "blend in" with the world, but instead living according to God's Word as we study the Bible and grow in it.

Is being holy even possible, since only God is holy?

Holiness is not only a possibility for the Christian; holiness is a *requirement*. "Without holiness no one will see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14 ¹⁴ Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord). The difference between God and us is that He is inherently holy while we, on the other hand, only become holy in relationship to Christ and we only increase in practical holiness as we mature spiritually.

The difference between God and us is that He is inherently holy while we, on the other hand, only become holy in relationship to Christ and we only increase in practical holiness as we mature spiritually.

then we recognize that our position in Christ automatically sets us apart from the world (1 Peter 2:9 ⁹ But *PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;*).

relationship with the living God! Then we must daily live a set-apart life, not trying to "blend in" with the world, but instead living according to God's Word as we study the Bible and grow in it.

Is being holy even possible, since only God is holy?

Holiness is not only a possibility for the Christian; holiness is a *requirement*. "Without holiness no one will see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14 ¹⁴ Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord). The difference between God and us is that He is inherently holy while we, on the other hand, only become holy in relationship to Christ and we only increase in practical holiness as we mature spiritually.

The New Testament emphasizes the pursuit of holiness in this world and the final attainment of holiness in the world to come.

To be "holy" means that we are, first of all, "set apart for honorable use." Whereas we were "once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures . . . God our Savior . . . saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit"

- *Titus 3:3-5* For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. (4) But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, (5) He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,
- *1 Corinthians 6:11* Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

The Lord took the initiative to pull us out of our former lifestyles. He saved us, cleansed us, and set us apart for righteousness. If we have believed in Christ for salvation, we have been washed by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit and set apart from the world for godliness

- *Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

However, the pursuit of holiness does not end when we come to Christ. In fact, it just begins!

There is a positional holiness that we inherit at regeneration and a practical holiness which we must actively pursue.

- God expects us to cultivate a lifestyle of holiness (*1 Peter 1:13-16 "Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, 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.'"*)
- God commands us to “*cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*” (*2 Corinthians 7:1*).

The Process of Becoming Holy

- Cultivate a lifestyle of holiness (*1 Peter 1:14-16*)
- Cleanse yourself of all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (*2 Corinthians 7:1*)
- Daily increasing in spiritual fruitfulness every day. We are to consider ourselves “dead to sin” (*Romans 6:11*)
- Become a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to God, prepared for every good work. (*2 Timothy 2:21*)
- Practice righteousness and love your brother (*1 John 3:9-10*)

Holiness is the mark of every true Christian

- *1 John 3:9-10 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. 10 By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.*

Cultivating a lifestyle of holiness does not mean that we must draft a list of do's and don'ts to live by. We are free from the letter of the law which kills and now live according to the dictates of the Holy Spirit.

- *2 Corinthians 3:6 who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.*
- *Galatians 5:16-18 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. (17) For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. (18) But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.*

We are told, “*So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; (13) for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. (Philippians 2:12-13)*.” In this verse, we see cooperation between God and His children in sanctification. We “work out” what God “works in” us, because God has a timeline for the virtues that He wishes to cultivate in our lives. Our responsibility is to yield to His wishes, “working out” with focused attention and great care those things that He is causing to grow in us. Holiness will not be brought to completion in our lives with no effort on our part. We are invited to participate in God’s work in us. We will not be “carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease,” as the old hymn says.

This is, perhaps, the most important lesson that we can learn as Christians. God’s ultimate desire for His people is that we be holy—conformed into the image of His Son, Jesus

- *Romans 8:29 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;*
- *1 Thessalonians 4:3-4 For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; (4) that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,*

Holiness is the will of God for our lives.

Of course, the flesh is weak. None of us will reach sinless perfection in this world, but God has made provision for our sin. Our pursuit of holiness in this world includes daily confessing and forsaking sin.

- *Mark 14:38 Keep watching and praying that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”*
- *1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
- *Hebrews 12:1-3 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also 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, (2) 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 has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (3)For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

God helps us in our weakness by giving us His Holy Spirit who reveals the mind of Christ to us and enables us to carry out His will.

- *1 Corinthians 2:14-16 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. (15) But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one. (16) For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ.*
- *Philippians 2:13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.*

**The New Testament
emphasizes the pursuit of
holiness in this world and
the final attainment of
holiness in the world to
come.**

When we yield to the Spirit, we become fruit-bearing Christians, yielding a harvest with which God is well pleased. On the other hand, when we suppress the work of the Holy Spirit by rebelling against His will for us, we stifle the design of God, sabotage our own spiritual growth, and grieve the Holy Spirit.

- *Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*
- *Ephesians 4:30 Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*

If God was gracious enough to redeem us from sin and death and give us new life in Christ, the very least that we can do is offer our lives back to Him in complete surrender and holiness, which is for our benefit. Because of God's mercies, we should be living sacrifices, "holy and pleasing to God". One day, in heaven, we will be free from sin and all its effects. Until then, we "fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith" and keep running our race.

- *Deuteronomy 10:13 and to keep the LORD'S commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good?*
- *Romans 12:1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.*
- *Hebrews 12:2 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 has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

God Is Holy
He does not sin.
All God's
attributes are
based on Holiness

What Is Holiness
Absolute perfection
Sinless, Pure,
Loving, Righteous

Man Is To Be Holy
Given Standards To
Live By.
Chosen To Be
Separate From
World

- How To Be Holy
1. Right relationship with God.
 2. Live according to God's word.
 3. Pursue Holiness through Spiritual maturity
 4. Faithful obedience to God
 5. Keep watch against temptation
 6. Not slaves to lust and pleasures
 7. Daily confessing and forsaking sin
 8. Love our Brethren
 9. Being Fruitful
 10. Fear of God

There is a positional holiness that we inherit at regeneration and a practical holiness which we must actively pursue.