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Living Like You Belong to God

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Kay Arthur, David & BJ Lawson

4minute
BIBLE STUDIES

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PRECEPT MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL



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LIVING LIKE YOU BELONG TO GOD

In today's churches, the concept of *holiness* seems a bit archaic, or "old school." On the rare occasions the word *holy* comes into conversation, most people picture a preacher in a robe or a woman wearing a long skirt and her hair in a bun—individuals whose lives are devoid of fun, joy, and laughter.

Perhaps you associate the concept with an offensive holier-than-thou attitude sported by some self-appointed member of the piety police. Or does the word *holy* bring a sense of defeat and discouragement at the thought of the perfect life you know you will never attain?

Our goal in this study is to turn those misguided notions on their heads and help you see that in fact a life of true holiness is the key to true happiness. Rather than some arbitrary standard set by the church or an unreachable goal of sinless perfection, holiness is about

pleasing God, about living in such a way that it's clear you belong to Him. Holiness is what makes the believer unique and easily distinguishable from the unbeliever.

Although it's been neglected in recent years, holiness is a biblical idea, one that is mentioned over six hundred times in the Bible. It is even the key theme for some of the books in the Bible, such as Leviticus. If holiness is such a basic biblical concept, then we should know what it is and what it is supposed to look like in our lives.

In the next six weeks we will learn what holiness is, what God thinks about it, and how the practice of holiness should guide the daily life of a believer.

WEEK ONE

Although some people prefer to believe that a loving God looks upon all His creatures as being the same, from the very beginning He has chosen to set certain things and people apart from others. This week we'll look at some of the clear distinctions God has set to mark specific people and things as holy.

OBSERVE

As we begin our study we need to go back to the Creation account in order to see who God is and what His desire was from the very beginning.

***Leader:** Read Genesis 1:1–5 aloud. Have the group say aloud and...*

- mark every reference to **God**, including pronouns, with a triangle: 
- draw a cloud shape like this  around the word **separated**.

As you read the text, it's helpful to have the group say the key words aloud as they mark them. This way everyone will be sure they are marking every occurrence of the word, including any synonymous words or phrases. Do this throughout the study.

GENESIS 1:1–5

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

2 The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.

3 Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

4 God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness.

⁵ God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

DISCUSS

- Look at where you marked *God* in this passage and list out all that He did.
- So you don't miss it, what specifically did God separate?
- Isn't that exciting? The first recorded words of God are "Let there be light." His first act was to separate the physical light from the physical darkness. And spiritually speaking, He has been separating light and darkness ever since. Keep that in mind as we continue our study on holiness.

OBSERVE

The people of Israel, God's chosen nation (Genesis 12), had been slaves in Egypt. God chose a man named Moses to lead them out and to serve as a mediator between them and Himself. The passage we're going to look at begins after God's chosen people had sinned greatly against Him. He forgave the sin but threatened to withdraw His presence from them. So Moses was pleading with God.

Leader: Read Exodus 33:15–16 aloud.

- Have the group draw a cloud around the word *distinguished*: 

DISCUSS

- What did Moses say distinguished Israel from all the other nations?
- So with that in mind, what did Moses want more than the knowledge the nation was forgiven?
- What about you? Would you be content to simply know your sins are forgiven, or do you want more than that? What distinguishes you from the world around you?

OBSERVE

As outlined in Leviticus 21, the priests were expected to preserve the holiness of the sanctuary and the uniqueness of the people of Israel. Therefore, they were subject to a higher standard than the average Israelite.

EXODUS 33:15–16

15 Then he said to Him, “If Your presence does not go with us, do not lead us up from here.

16 “For how then can it be known that I have found favor in Your sight, I and Your people? Is it not by Your going with us, so that we, I and Your people, may be distinguished from all the other people who are upon the face of the earth?”

LEVITICUS 21:6

They shall be holy to their God and not profane the name of their God, for they present the offerings by fire to the LORD, the food of their God; so they shall be holy.

DEUTERONOMY 33:10

They shall teach Your ordinances to Jacob, and Your law to Israel. They shall put incense before You, and whole burnt offerings on Your altar.

Leader: Read *Leviticus 21:6* and *Deuteronomy 33:10* aloud. Have the group say and...

- put a **P** over each occurrence of the word **they**, referring to the **priests**.
- draw a cloud around the word **holy**.

INSIGHT

The word *profane* here means “to defile, make common, dishonor, to violate a covenant.”

DISCUSS

- What did you learn from marking the references to priests? What were they responsible for?

OBSERVE

Israel had not obeyed God’s laws, and the priests were partly to blame.

Leader: Read *Ezekiel 22:26* aloud. Have the group...

- put a **P** over each reference to **priests**, including pronouns.

- draw a cloud shape like this  around the words **holy** and **clean**.
- draw a cloud with a slash through it over the words **profane** and **unclean**, like this: 

DISCUSS

- What charges did God, speaking through Ezekiel, bring against the priests?
- We have seen that the priests were to teach Israel the difference between the clean and unclean. They were taught in Leviticus how they were to live in order to be an example to the nation. From all we have seen so far, were the priests following God's commands? Explain your answer.
- How seriously does God take making the distinction between holy and profane, and why?

EZEKIEL 22:26

Her priests have done violence to My law and have profaned My holy things; they have made no distinction between the holy and the profane, and they have not taught the difference between the unclean and the clean; and they hide their eyes from My sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.

WRAP IT UP

The first recorded words of God in Scripture are “Let there be light” (Genesis 1:3). His first recorded act, after creating the heavens and the earth, was to separate light from darkness. This actual physical separation became a metaphor for a spiritual truth. In John 1, Jesus is described as the Light of the world shining into the darkness. In Matthew 5, Jesus taught that, as citizens of the kingdom of heaven, believers are the light of the world (verse 14). “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (verse 16). Jesus then went on to describe holy living in the rest of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7).

Light is to be the characteristic of Christians. We are to be clearly separated from the darkness. No gray, no shade, no shadows. We, as people who name the name of Christ must be light—bright pure light, shining in the darkness so that everyone will see the truth and some will even seek our Father.

Are you living as a child of light? Is your holiness clearly visible to a dark world?

Sometimes, in too many places, the people called the church are living in the shadows. Spend some time in prayer, asking God to show you areas of darkness in your own life, areas where you are not walking in holiness. If God shows you an area of darkness, confess it as sin, knowing that He has promised to cleanse you from all unrighteousness.

Then walk in light; live out the holiness that shows you belong to God.



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No-Homework Bible Studies

That Help You Discover Truth For Yourself

