

WELCOME TO THE QUEST!

You are about to join the world on a quest for holiness. In the month of September 2013, the entire world will join together on this quest, in many different languages, to study holiness. You and your church are a part of a great unifying effort of the Church of God of Prophecy—a call to be a holy people.

This curriculum came about through a joint effort of the leadership of the Church of God of Prophecy. In our heart to pursue true holiness, we felt a unified call to study this great biblical truth. It's a call from God, "Be ye holy, for I am holy," and it is not one we take lightly.

Through this combined effort from the International Offices, we have created what you now have in your possession. This study is to be used in correlation with the document released by our Biblical Doctrine and Polity Committee, "The Pursuit of the Holy God: Answering the Call to Holiness" which was made public at the 2012 International Assembly. If you don't have it yet, you can download it at www.questforholiness.org. It is our hope that this study, along with the holiness document, will push all of us into a deeper understanding and practice of true holiness.

Thank you for joining us on this quest. May God richly bless all of you as you study His Word—TOGETHER WITH THE WORLD.

"Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."
1 Peter 1:16

Darren Schalk
Curriculum Editor

"Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one."
John 17:11



UNDERSTANDING THIS CURRICULUM

WHEN?

SEPTEMBER 2013

This is the month we have designated to embark on this quest. It is our hope that you will join us for five weeks beginning Sunday, September 1st and continuing throughout the month.

WHAT'S INSIDE?

Inside you will find 4 sections:

Adult Lessons
Sermon Outlines
Youth Lessons
Children's Lessons

We have developed each section for specific age levels in hopes of allowing your entire church to come together to study holiness.

WHAT ELSE?

We will be adding several FREE downloadable materials to our website:

WWW.QUESTFORHOLINESS.ORG

Continue to check for updates, as we will be adding things such as:

- Video sermon introductions
- Bulletin inserts
- Posters
- Parent pages
- AND MUCH MORE!

GET THE DIGITAL COPY!

If you'd like to receive the digital file of this study, it's available for purchase at www.whitewingbooks.com

SIGN UP!

Be sure to sign up at www.questforholiness.org and let us know your church will be participating. When you do, you will receive notifications as new updates and content become available in the months before the study begins.

Additional Resources

HERITAGE SERIES

The Last Great Conflict

General Assembly Annual Addresses 1911-1927

General Assembly Annual Addresses 1928-1943

God's Pioneer

Diary of A. J. Tomlinson 1901-1923



SpiritMatters Curriculum

CORNERSTONE SERIES (DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING)

First Steps

Building Blocks

Spiritual Gifts Vol. 1

Spiritual Gifts Vol. 2

Deeper Waters

CHARACTER SKETCHES

Eve

Hosea

Jonah

Moses



One Accord Curriculum

Age appropriate curriculum for toddlers through adults

All of the resources above, and more, are available at whitewingbooks.com or by calling 1-800-221-5027. Many of these resources are also available as digital downloads at whitewingbooks.com.

THE QUEST FOR HOLINESS

Table of Contents

SECTION 1: ADULT LESSONS

- Lesson 1—The Origin and Nature of Sin
- Lesson 2—From Sin to Holiness
- Lesson 3—Sanctified Living
- Lesson 4—Develop Godly Character
- Lesson 5—Walk In Holiness

SECTION 2: SERMON OUTLINES

- Sermon 1—The Quest for Holiness
- Sermon 2—Dead to Sin, Alive to Christ
- Sermon 3—Life, Light, and Love in Sanctification
- Sermon 4—Spiritual Maturity Is Not Optional
- Sermon 5—Be Who You Are

SECTION 3: YOUTH LESSONS

- Lesson 1—The Main Event: Sin vs. Holiness
- Lesson 2—Embrace Your New Nature
- Lesson 3—Sanctification: Walking In The Light
- Lesson 4—Develop Godly Character
- Lesson 5—Finding True Holiness

SECTION 4: CHILDREN'S LESSONS

- Lesson 1—My Way, God's Way
- Lesson 2—An Invitation to Sin
- Lesson 3—Set Apart and Holy, God's Part
- Lesson 4—Yielded, My Part
- Lesson 5—Changing From The Inside Out

Copyright ©2012. All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, except for parent pages, without written permission of the publisher. Created through a joint effort of the leadership of the Church of God of Prophecy. CPETF

When passages are paraphrased by the editor for the sake of clarity, they are consistent with a commitment to the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible.



THE QUEST FOR HOLINESS

Adult Lessons

White Wing Publishing House

Published by White Wing Publishing House
3750 Keith Street
Cleveland, TN 37312

Copyright ©2012. All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, without written permission of the publisher. Lesson Contributors, Matt Brogdon, Elizabeth Witt, Darren Schalk, Duke Stone. CPETF

Item No. 9994

Table of Contents

The Quest for Holiness

Adult Lessons

	Page
Lesson 1—The Origin and Nature of Sin	5
Lesson 2—From Sin to Holiness	11
Lesson 3—Sanctified Living	17
Lesson 4—Develop Godly Character	23
Lesson 5—Walk In Holiness	29

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

Be sure to check out www.questforholiness.org for **FREE** downloadable resources!



Lesson 1

THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF SIN

INTRODUCTORY MATTERS

Discuss these questions:

What does it mean to be holy?

What does it mean to be sanctified?

These are questions that, for some, have seemingly dropped off the radar of Christianity. In years past, and still for some today, holiness has been gauged by a certain list of 'do's' and 'don'ts.' For these few, holiness is performance based. "Do the right things and we'll call you holy." But is this what holiness is really about?

For others, holiness is less about performance and more about an inner state of being. That is, we're holy not because of what we do, but more because of who we are. As Christians, we take on the character of Christ, and as I have a relationship with Jesus, I can be called holy because He is holy. But this emphasis can lead to a laissez-faire attitude about our sins. And, is this all holiness is really about? Is it nothing more than a relationship with God, or is there something more?

So, is it about what we do, or is it about who we are? And to that question that answer must be, "YES!" Holiness is concerned with both: who we are, and what we do.

Discuss this question:

So, if holiness is concerned with both being and doing, which is more important, what we do or who we are?

This is a question we must answer. But now, there are two more questions that arise:

1. Can we be holy without doing holy things?
2. Can we do holy things without being holy?

Discuss these two questions with the class.

To the latter, I'm inclined to say, "Yes". Surely we all have known people who claimed to be Christians by doing all the right things, but on the inside, they had no true relationship with

Jesus Christ. The Pharisees in the New Testament portray this idea perfectly. They may have looked holy because of their actions as they followed every rule of the Law, but they were in no way actually holy.

As for the first question, that one's not so easy to answer. If we are holy in that we have a true, growing, deepening relationship with a holy God, then will we not be inclined to do what He asks of us? If we truly love our Savior, Jesus Christ, shouldn't we be doing the holy things He requires of us? It certainly seems so.

So, the questions remain. Hopefully, by the end of this series of lessons, we'll all have a clearer understanding of holiness. We're on a quest—a quest for holiness—a quest for a holy God. We are seeking Him, and thankfully, He promises that when we seek Him, we will find Him.

On our quest for holiness, we begin in the beginning; specifically, in Genesis. Today we'll look more closely at the need for holiness. Sin is a problem that certainly moves us away from holiness and so, to truly understand holiness, we must first look to the very thing that fights against holiness—the origin and nature of sin.

QUESTIONING MATTERS

- *Have you ever felt that people judged you based on your Christian “performance”?*
- *Have you ever judged someone else's level of holiness based on their outward appearance or actions?*
- *Do you believe you have been sanctified? If so, what makes you believe this?*
- *Do you think sanctification is a one-time occurrence or an ongoing experience? Why?*
- *Have you sinned since becoming a Christian? Does this failure mean you're not sanctified, holy, or worse, not saved at all?*

PRINCIPAL MATTERS

1) Disobedience to God

Read Genesis 2:16, 17 and 3:1–13.

Ask: *“Why do you think God put a single, off-limits tree in the Garden?”*

This off-limits tree is what gave man free will. God did not create robots, He created free thinking beings and He wanted us to serve and love Him out of choice.

Discuss these questions:

- *How did the serpent challenge God's command in 3:1? (He made them doubt God's words to them.)*
- *Is this still how the enemy tries to challenge us today? (Yes, we are often plagued with doubt about God, His Word, and His promises.)*
- *Why do you think Eve gave in to the serpent's argument and ate the apple?*

Reread verse 3:6.

Sin always looks good at first. It entices us and pulls us in. We just want a taste to see what it might feel like. But when we disobey God, things never turn out well. After eating, Adam and Eve immediately felt shame for the first time, as they noticed their nakedness and tried to hide from God. Then came their punishments.

Read Genesis 3:13–24.

ILLUSTRATING MATTERS

Eve's Temptation

Yes, Eve had it all. She didn't have to worry about what she wore every day. Adam never had to wait for her to pick out an outfit. She didn't have to worry about the mortgage payment, the dwindling (or non-existent) savings account. She didn't have to worry about her health, her weight, her exercise (or lack thereof!). She didn't have to worry about taxes, or the price of gas, or groceries, or health insurance. She didn't have to worry about social security, her retirement fund, the economy, or who to vote for in presidential elections. She didn't have to worry about other women flirting with her husband, or wonder if he was being faithful to her. She didn't have to contend with Adam's former girlfriends, or his mother's cooking, or his brothers and sisters. He was the only man. She was the only woman. Could it have been any more perfect for her?

Eve didn't have to wonder about her relationship with God. She knew Him. She spoke with Him often in the cool of the day when He walked in the Garden. Eve's life was something that today we can only dream about; one we can only imagine. We have never seen or felt the perfection Eve had in her life. Eve truly had it all.

Well, almost all. There was one thing she didn't have: permission to eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. And Eve's desire to eat of that fruit became her stumbling block, affecting not only her life and her husband's life, but the lives of all humankind to follow. The one thing she couldn't have is what she had to have.

—Karin Schalk, *Eve: A Matter of Choice*

Discuss how we are so often like Eve.

2) Rejection of God

While Adam and Eve disobeyed God, they did not completely reject God. Some throughout history have rejected Him, though, and this is a dangerous progression.

Read Romans 1:21–32.

Several times we see the phrase "God gave them over." Discuss the things God is giving these people over to as they progress in their sin and reject God. Note the similarities between this passage and the practices of our society.

Read Romans 8:5–8.

In these verses, we have an answer to the dilemma found in Romans 1. In Romans 1, we see people who have rejected God and have their minds set on fleshly desires. These people are in a continual downward spiral, out of control. But here we read of a person whose mind is set on godly things. And this person whose mind is governed by the Spirit finds life and peace, rather than ever-increasing sin.

Discuss: *“What does a life and a mind ‘governed by the Spirit’ look like?”*

Point 3: Obedience to the sinful nature

Explain that when we are in sin, we are not controlled by God or following His Spirit, obviously.

Ask: *“When we are in sin, what does control us?”* (our sinful desires and nature)

Read Mark 7:20–23.

Discuss these questions:

- *According to this passage, where does sin begin? (in our hearts)*
- *And when there’s evil in our hearts, what happens to our actions? (They are also evil.)*
- *So can we fix our hearts by simply changing our actions? (No, change must begin on the inside.)*

Read Romans 7:15–24. **Discuss** the struggle of sin that seems to be outlined here.

Discuss:

- *What do you think Paul is describing?*
- *Is he talking about a personal struggle?*
- *Is he talking about his struggle before salvation, or is he describing a struggle he has after salvation?*
- *Why would this question even be important?*

ILLUSTRATING MATTERS

Paul’s Battle

The immense popularity of this part of the letter (of Romans) derives from the fact that Christians can readily identify with its depiction of the struggle with sin. Interpreting this section as the dilemma of the Christian has had a long history within the church . . . Those in denominations with roots in the Holiness Movement of the nineteenth century have likewise identified with the struggle depicted here . . . That being said . . . we all share a personal interest in knowing whether Paul is expressing the dilemma of a (saved or unsaved) person. If Paul is speaking as a believer, then it assists us in coming to grips with our own inabilities and frustrations. (However), if we teach that a constant inability to do what God desires accompanied by a sense of despair because sin is in control is normative for believers, it will affect the determination with which they pursue holiness . . . But which interpretation reflects the truth Paul was communicating?

—Van Johnson, *Full Life Bible Commentary: Romans*

The author of this commentary came to the conclusion that Romans 7 refers to an unbeliever, but as he even pointed out, many in the church historically have taken a different view.

Discuss: *What do you think?*

While many debate what Paul is describing here, one thing is clear—overcoming the sinful nature is a battle. Thankfully, Paul gives us some information concerning this battle in Romans 8.

Read Romans 8:1–13 carefully, and **discuss** how Paul describes a life free from sin and disobedience through the Spirit.

RESOLVING MATTERS

The dilemma of sin is a big one, and it's not getting any better. We are surrounded by sinful images, practices, and thoughts. Sin is practiced openly and without shame.

Discuss the sins your class saw openly occurring in the past week. **List** them on the board if you can.

We see these things occurring regularly, and it can be very easy to become completely desensitized to them.

Ask: *“What’s the danger of becoming desensitized to sin?”*

When we become desensitized, we will often begin to accept something without thinking about it. The more homosexuality we see, the easier it is to glance over it. The more abortions we hear of, the easier it becomes to stop thinking about it. The more fornication we see and hear of, the less likely we are to avoid it.

Our world is on the downward spiral we read of in Romans 1. This is a scary thought. But we have a challenge—we are to be holy in an unholy world. We are to be light in the darkness. Light is the complete opposite of darkness, and holiness is the opposite of unholiness.

What about your life? Are you living an opposite life to the world? How different does your life look like than that of the unsaved? Can someone pick you out on the street and identify you as Christian? We like to blend in and avoid causing waves, but when we live in an unholy world as holy people, we won't be able to avoid standing out. So, if you're not standing out amidst unholy people, are you actually living in holiness?

Hmmm. That's a good question.

Perhaps we should start asking ourselves that one daily.

Further Review

The following excerpts from the Biblical Doctrine and Polity's study on holiness entitled *“The Pursuit of the Holy God: Answering the Call to Holiness”* will further enhance this lesson. Please take time to review them with the class.

- “The Sanctifying Work in the Life of the Believer” pages 13-15
- “Biblical Understanding of Holiness” pages 20-21
- “Culture and Holiness” pages 36-39



Lesson 2

FROM SIN TO HOLINESS

INTRODUCTORY MATTERS

ILLUSTRATING MATTERS

You Can't Ride the Fence

If any athlete was known for focus, it was Michael Jordan. In Jordan's book, *Driven from Within*, Fred Whitfield, president and chief operating officer of the NBA's Charlotte Bobcats basketball team, tells a fascinating story about something Jordan did while getting ready to go out one evening. When Jordan asked if he could borrow a jacket from Whitfield, he found that Whitfield's closet was filled with both Nike and Puma products. The Nike outfits had been given to Whitfield because of his relationship with Jordan, who had a lucrative contract with the company. The Puma outfits had been given to Whitfield because of his relationship with ex-basketball player and Puma representative Ralph Sampson. Whitfield recalls that Jordan walked into the living room, laid all the Puma gear on the floor, and went into the kitchen to grab a butcher knife. When Jordan returned to the living room, he proceeded to cut all of the Puma clothes to shreds. He then picked up the scraps and carried everything to the dumpster. Once Jordan came back inside, he turned to Fred and said, "Don't ever let me see you in anything other than Nike. You can't ride the fence!"

—T. Ranier, and E. Geiger, *Simple Church*

It would seem that far too many Christians spend their entire lives riding the fence, dealing with their own issues, never getting victory over their sin. They live as described by Peter Marshall, a former political chaplain: "We are too Christian really to enjoy sinning and too fond of sinning really to enjoy Christianity" (as quoted by Calvin Miller in *Once Upon A Tree*).

The problem with living that way is that when you want it both ways, you don't get either way. It makes us miserable. Perhaps it's time to stop riding the fence. Perhaps it's time to rip to shreds anything and everything that causes us to sin. The focus of our lesson today is the freedom Christ gives us over sin and the holiness of life that we can find in Him as we move from sin to holiness.

QUESTIONING MATTERS

- What does it mean to be a “sinner”?
- What does it mean to be a “saint”?
- What should a holy life look like?
- Does receiving God’s grace and forgiveness, and moving into a lifestyle of holiness, mean we will never sin again?
- What does God expect of us after salvation?

PRINCIPAL MATTERS

1) Peace With God

Review Romans 5:1–11 with the class.

Write the words: “Peace”, “Grace”, and “Joy” on your board as you define each of them with the following information:

While many debate what Paul is describing here, one thing is clear—overcoming the sinful nature is a battle. Thankfully, Paul gives us the answer to overcoming this battle in Romans 8.

- ◆ Paul says in verse 1 that we have peace with God. Our relationship with Jesus removes the animosity between God and man caused by our sin. Sin is rebellion against God, and as such, it creates a rift between God and man. However, because of what Christ has done, we are at rest, at peace, with our Creator.
- ◆ Verse 2 says that we have access by faith into this grace. Grace means that I get what I do not deserve. The wonderful blessings of salvation are not earned, nor do we deserve them. They are gracious gifts from God. In fact, the Greek word that Paul used for grace in verse 2 is *charis*, which is the root word for the Greek word *charisma*, which is translated “gift.” Grace is a wonderful gift that comes from God.
- ◆ In verses 2–11, Paul says that we rejoice on three different levels:
 - 1) in hope (v. 2)
 - 2) in tribulations (vv. 3–10)
 - 3) in God (v. 11)

The tremendous freedom from sin that God offers us is a source of great joy and rejoicing. Regardless of our circumstances or the events we find ourselves in, God’s freedom provides a source of celebration for us.

ILLUSTRATING MATTERS

The Asterisk

A cloud of doubt hangs over home run king Barry Bonds. On August 7, 2007, Bonds hit number 756, the home run that broke Hank Aaron's record. Most of the talk about the new record is whether it really should count because Bonds is alleged to have used steroids. Sports buffs say if his name goes in the record book it should be accompanied by an asterisk. The asterisk, of course, means that the record is a "sort-of" record, a footnoted record. The asterisk means the record is tainted.

The asterisk idea didn't go away. Mark Ecko, the man who bought the ball that Bonds hit to set the record, asked baseball fans in an Internet poll what he should do with it. The fans voted for him to brand the baseball with an asterisk and donate it to the baseball Hall of Fame. In the summer of 2008, that's what Ecko did.

—"Bonds 756th HR ball lands in Hall," *USA Today*, 7/2/2008

Having an asterisk by your name is something that we Christians understand completely. We have all committed sins. We have all failed. But the amazing truth of God's grace is that we are granted peace with God through Jesus Christ!

Read Romans 8:1–13 carefully, and **discuss** how Paul describes a life free from sin and disobedience through the Spirit.

2) Life Through Christ

Review Romans 5:12–21, as we covered it in the previous session.

Discuss these questions:

- *What were the results of Adam's fall upon mankind?*
- *Do you think that it is fair that we should be held responsible for Adam's sin(s)?*

ILLUSTRATING MATTERS

Holding Our Wounds

I have on my desktop a picture of a boy named Sasha. Sasha is one of the children of Chernobyl, a young boy born after the disaster that happened when the core at a nuclear facility in Russia melted and leaked. This little boy, Sasha, is perhaps five years old, and he is gripping, with a tiny arm, the side of a crib. His other hand is flailing upward toward his ear, his head and shoulders the only portion of his body not mutated. On the right side of Sasha's chest rises a lump the size of a softball, and his belly grows out disfigured before him as though he were pregnant, a truly painful sight.

(continued p.13)

His legs are oversized and blocky, and he has no knees, only rounded flesh flowing awkwardly to his oversized feet, which produce four toes each, the largest of which, as big as my fist, is distanced from the others and pointing itself in an opposite direction. From the bottom of his stomach protrudes a rounded flow of flesh as though it were a separate limb, stopped in half growth. Sasha lives in constant pain.

As terrible as it is to compare Sasha to ourselves, I have to go there. I have to say that you and I were not supposed to be this way. As creatures in need of somebody outside of ourselves to name us, as creatures incomplete outside the companionship of God, our souls are born distorted, I am convinced of it.

I believe, without question, that none of us are happy in the way we were supposed to be happy. I believe that nobody on this planet is so secure, so confident in their state that they feel the way Adam and Eve felt in the Garden before they knew they were naked. I believe we are in the wreckage of a war, a kind of Hiroshima, a kind of Mount Saint Helens, with souls distorted like the children of Chernobyl. As terrible as it is to think about these things, as ugly as it is to face them, I have to see the world this way in order for it to make sense. I have to believe something happened, and we are walking around holding our wounds.

—Donald Miller, *Searching for God Knows What*

Discuss: “Do you agree with Miller’s assessment of the human experience?”

In Romans 5:12–21, Paul contrasts Adam (representative of man’s failure and sin) with Christ (the source of forgiveness and restoration). **Write** the three underlined phrases on your board as your comment on each one.

- ◆ The result of their lives (verse 15).

Adam’s life resulted in the physical and spiritual death of all men after him. Jesus’ life results in abundant and eternal life.

- ◆ The quantity of their lives (verse 16).

The one act of rebellion resulted in a multitude of sins in his descendents. The act of obedience of Jesus resulted in the justification of all who believe on Him.

- ◆ The certainty of their lives (verse 17).

Those who choose to remain in Adam can be certain of the end result of their rebellion. Those who choose to place their trust in Jesus can also be certain of the reward of their decision.

3) Freedom From Sin

Review Romans 6:1–22.

Discuss: “What do you think is the significance of the question Paul asks in verse 1? Why do you think he asks this question?”

Paul asks the question in response to his anticipation of people abusing grace in Romans 5:20. Paul tells us that God has done two things for every Christian that provide us with the freedom from sin. First, He has baptized us into Christ. *Baptize* was a generic term that meant “to put into or immerse” so that the thing baptized takes on some of the properties of the thing into which it was baptized. Garments were baptized into dye so that the garments took on the color of the dye. In the same way, God’s Spirit baptizes you into Christ when you believe in Him, so that you become identified with Christ in certain key ways. Secondly, because we have been baptized into Christ, we somehow participate in His death and resurrection, and we receive certain benefits from this participation. We are dead to sin and alive to God! By living our lives in the truth of those words, we experience freedom from sin.

Discuss: “*What does it mean to be dead to sin?*”

To understand the answer to this question, we must understand that there is an opposing force pointed out by Paul. That is, to be dead to sin means to be alive in Christ. He also points out the interesting idea that being set free from sin leads us to yet another type of bondage.

Discuss: “*Are we set free at salvation?*”

This is a trick question, and one that is answered in Romans 6:18, which says again, “You have been set free from sin *and have become slaves to righteousness.*” What a powerful image! When we accept Christ as our savior, we aren’t merely loosed and free to roam—no—in fact, we merely **change masters**. Whereas we were once chained to sin, selfishness, and self-centeredness, we are now chained to God and righteousness! We no longer have the chains of hell and death pulling us down, but we have the chains of Christ and heaven pulling us up!

So, we have to ask, “Who is your master? Who are you serving?” How we live determines the answer to this question. We can say we serve God, but do our actions show it? Do we uphold the Great Commandment? Do we prefer our brother ahead of ourselves? Do we strive to live sinlessly day in and day out, or do we regularly give in to temptation without ever putting up a fight?

Who are we chained to? Are we slaves to sin, which leads to death, or slaves to obedience, which leads to righteousness? Only by chaining ourselves to obedience can we truly find freedom and holiness.

RESOLVING MATTERS

The glorious power of salvation not only provides forgiveness of sin, but also freedom from sin’s grip over our lives. But that freedom is not a chainless one. In fact, it is a freedom found only as we chain ourselves to Christ, His Word, and His truth.

Many today are wrapped up in spiritual chains. We are bound by addiction, depression, fear, worry, doubt, and all kinds of dilemmas. And we often seek freedom. But perhaps it's not freedom we should seek. Perhaps we should begin asking for a different set of chains. Perhaps our prayer should sound something like this:

"Lord, I've sought freedom for a long time and have yet to find it. But today, I realize, I should not be seeking freedom to do whatever I please. I should not be seeking freedom simply to be free. In fact, it's not freedom that I want at all. Rather, Lord, I want to be chained up as a slave to nothing less and nothing more than you. So, break me from this bondage, but don't set me free. Rather, chain me to your will, your Word, and your way. Perhaps then I can find true holiness as I embrace the chains of spiritual freedom. Amen."

Further Review

The following excerpts from the Biblical Doctrine and Polity's study on holiness entitled *"The Pursuit of the Holy God: Answering the Call to Holiness"* will further enhance this lesson. Please take time to review them with the class.

- "The Sanctifying Work of the Cross" pages 10-13
- "Biblical Understanding of Holiness" pages 20-21
- "The Pastoral Call to Holiness" page 50



Lesson 3

SANCTIFIED LIVING TURN ON THE LIGHTS!

INTRODUCTORY MATTERS

Read 1 John 1:7.

Begin with this object lesson:

With the lights on in your room, light a match or turn on a small flashlight. Notice that in a well-lit room, the match or flashlight adds little or no illumination to the room. Now turn out the lights. Light another match or turn on the small flashlight. Now point out how much light the match or flashlight gives. Jesus said we are the light of the world—but if all the light gathers in one place all the time, each individual light will give very little light to its world. When we choose to model our lives after Jesus and we step into a world that is morally bankrupt, our light will shine brightly. (By the way, Jesus also referred to us as the *salt of the earth*. But too much salt in one place ruins the taste as well—or can be poisonous!)

Notice that in 1 John 1:7, there is an “if” statement.

Ask: “*What is the ‘if’ statement?*” (If we walk in the light, as he is in the light . . .)

Ask: “*And if we walk in the light, what should happen?*” (We have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.)

So, if we walk in the light, then we have fellowship with our fellow Christians and we can be cleansed from sin. So the real question is this: “How exactly do we walk in the light?”

Discuss this question with the group: “*What does ‘walking in the light’ entail?*”

Read 1 Peter 1:15, 16.

This is a quote from Leviticus 19. In this chapter, it would seem that we see an Old Testament example of how we ought to walk in the light. God commanded his people to be holy, and then He gave them specific guidelines to do just that.

ILLUSTRATING MATTERS

A Return to Holiness

Holiness is nonnegotiable when it comes to Christian living. It is seen so plainly at the beginning of the holiness chapter, Leviticus 19. Following verses 1 and 2 is an extensive listing of lifestyle requirements that span a wide variety of actions. This is what God expected of His people.

A brief review of all the items listed in this chapter reflects God's concern for the whole person. Several of them are a restating of selected items from the Ten Commandments. Others are designed for health reasons. Some are intended to keep their visible separation from heathen neighbors and their pagan practices. Also, there are those intended to protect character.

Holiness is a separation from the impure so there can be establishment of the wholeness that God intends and requires of His people.

—Dr. Jerald Daffe, *Clothing a Naked Church*

In Leviticus 19, walking in the light required several specific actions, but the bottom line seems to be that God was concerned with our entire being and holiness was intended to keep us pure both spiritually and physically.

Today we'll look at 1 John 1 and 2 and we'll notice some of the ways we can learn to live a sanctified and holy life under the new covenant of Christ.

QUESTIONING MATTERS

- *What is sanctification?*
- *Is sanctification a one-time occurrence, a lifelong continuing experience, or a bit of both?*
- *What does it mean to live a sanctified life?*
- *Does sanctification have only to do with our behavior, or does it entail something deeper?*
- *Do you believe you've experienced sanctification? Why and how?*

PRINCIPAL MATTERS

1) Walking In The Light

Read 1 John 1:5–10.

John reminds us that God is light. Therefore, our fellowship with God requires that we walk in the light. What does this mean?

Read this out loud: "Walking in the light means that we are responsive to God's moral guidance in our lives."

Discuss:

“What does God’s moral guidance mean to you?”

“Does merely claiming to have fellowship with God mean that you actually have it?”

ILLUSTRATING MATTERS

The Power of Light

Todd Hunter writes in his book, *Giving Church Another Chance*, “While I was ministering at [a certain church], we had a blackout during one of our services. An automobile accident knocked out the power line to our building. There were approximately three thousand people in the room and close to a thousand children in the area behind the sanctuary. For a reason I cannot remember, the emergency lights failed, too. Sitting in the front row of the church, I was only a dozen steps from the hallway leading to the children, but the darkness was so overwhelming and disorienting that it was difficult groping my way there.

“When I finally reached the door that led to a long hallway, I saw that a mother who had a small flashlight on her key chain had beat me to the door and was making her way to her children. Her small light didn’t illumine the whole hallway, but it reoriented the whole scary moment for me. Soon others found emergency flashlights in the classrooms, and still others shined their car headlights through the classroom windows. We got all the kids out to safety.

“After about five or ten minutes, I made my way back to the sanctuary. It looked like a rock concert, as everyone had gotten out their lighters and were waving them around as if “Hey Jude” was being performed by the Beatles. As funny as that was, what I still remember twenty years later is the enormous power of that mom’s flashlight to bring hope and orientation to a seriously unnerving moment.”

—Todd Hunter, *Give Church Another Chance*

Most of us will never impact huge amounts of people, but if we will let our light shine, we can make a difference in a dark world!

2) Depending on the Advocate

Read 1 John 2:1–6.

John wants us to understand that we should walk as people of the light, rather than in darkness. However, he also wants us to know that if we fail, God has provided a provision for our sin. Jesus Christ is “the one who speaks to the Father in our defense.” The King James Version of verse 2 says “we have an advocate.”

Write “Advocate” on the board as you give the following definition: “A legal term that described an attorney being called to the aid of someone who’s accused of a crime.” Jesus speaks in our defense.

The basis of His defense is His death on the cross, which is described here as “an atoning sacrifice”. Some Bible translations render this phrase “propitiation” (KJV), which would mean that Christ’s death is directed to God the Father to “propitiate” or “turn aside” God’s anger at

our sin. Other Bible translations use the phrase “expiation” (NRSV), which would mean that Christ’s death is directed at sin, to “expiate” or “wash away” our sins. The NIV tries to convey both ideas, since *atonement* directs it at our sin, but *sacrifice* directs it to God. Either way, the idea here is that our Advocate isn’t begging for mercy for us, but He’s showing the Father that the price has already been paid for our sins.

Yet, while we have this advocate working on our behalf, it does not give us the right to live in our sin. This is made clear in the previous section, where we are told to walk in the light. While the advocate enables us to freely receive forgiveness, we cannot use Jesus as a ticket to continue in sin. Walking in the light implies a continual maintaining and moving forward, not in darkness, *but in light*, free from sin and depravity.

3) Living in Love

Review 1 John 2:8–11.

This passage seems to make it pretty clear—if you don’t have love for your brother, you are not living in the light. In fact, you’re actually walking in darkness! It is so easy in a local church body to become estranged to fellow churchgoers. We expect a lot from our fellow Christians, and when they fail us (proving themselves to be human), it’s easy to become angry and even dismissive. For this reason, we often see church splits, power struggles, and petty squabbles. We cannot claim holiness and sanctification while having anger or even animosity toward our brothers and sisters. We have a divine mandate to walk in the light, and this involves much more than simply avoiding sin. It involves truly loving our brothers and sisters in Christ. If we ever hope to find true holiness, we must resolve our differences and put others ahead of ourselves.

Discuss:

“What types of things might cause us to fail at the task of loving our fellow Christians?”

“How should arguments and hurtful experiences be resolved within the body of Christ?”

“How can we avoid future conflict with our fellow churchgoers?”

True holiness involves living in love, and that means we must love our brothers and sisters in Christ, and resolve our conflicts.

RESOLVING MATTERS

Sanctification has been, in the past, merely a term used to describe deliverance from sinful actions. But sanctification requires walking in the light. Here are a few points in summary:

1. Walking implies a continuing experience.

We are not asked to walk **to** the light, we are asked to walk **in** the light. At no point do we actually reach the end of the light, thereby ending our walk. We must continue to walk as the light shines upon us, in us, and through us.

2. Walking in the light requires more than just avoiding sin.

Avoiding sin tends to be a personal, “me-centered” endeavor as we try to fight our evil inclinations and ward off temptation. While walking in the light certainly includes that, it does not end with me. We not only avoid sin, but we must go a step further by loving and helping others as we put them ahead of ourselves. If we fail to do this, we run the risk of seeing only our own struggles when we should be helping others in theirs, as well.

3. To walk in the light, you’ve got to flip the light switch to “on.”

The light is Jesus Christ, and to walk in the light, we must turn our lives over to Him and accept Him as savior.

As you end today, give an invitation for salvation. If your entire class is saved, simply remind them of the great gift given to us by Jesus, who flipped the light switch to “on” in all our lives.

Further Review

The following excerpts from the Biblical Doctrine and Polity’s study on holiness entitled “*The Pursuit of the Holy God: Answering the Call to Holiness*” will further enhance this lesson. Please take time to review them with the class.

- “An Expanded View of Holiness” pages 7-10
- “Corporate Sanctification” pages 15-18
- “Missional Sanctification” pages 18-19
- “Dynamics Between Personal and Corporate Sanctification” pages 39-42



Lesson 4

DEVELOP GODLY CHARACTER LIVE HOLY

INTRODUCTORY MATTERS

Discuss:

“Can you name a few tasks that are difficult to do without cooperation from others?” (List answers on the board—building a house, running a business, raising children, playing team sports, etc.)

“What does ‘cooperation’ mean or entail?”

“How do we go about cooperating with God’s grace?”

We must learn to work with God, accepting His grace in our lives, and releasing that same grace to others. Doing so will help us develop godly character. Today we’ll talk about a few ways we can go about developing godly character as we cooperate with Him in our attempt to find true holiness.

PRINCIPAL MATTERS

1) Remove Yourself From Evil Influences.

Read Psalm 1:1–6. Pay special attention to verse 1 which discusses how we should avoid evil influences.

Discuss:

“Can you name some examples of evil influences we should avoid?”

“What are the harmful effects of negative influences?”

Our Christian witness can be seen through our various relationships and associations. This does not mean we are to avoid the unsaved. After all, Jesus Himself was seen associating with sinners. What it means is that we are not to participate in bad things that have the potential to pull us down. By avoiding these situations and influences, we are able to shine the light of truth on the things that are wrong.

ILLUSTRATING MATTERS

Resist the Crowd

Once, a spider built a beautiful web in an old house. He kept it clean and shiny so that flies would patronize it. The minute he got a “customer” he would clean up on him so the other flies would not get suspicious. Then, one day, this fairly intelligent fly came buzzing by the clean spider web. Old man spider called out, “Come in and sit.” But the fairly intelligent fly said, “No, sir. I don’t see other flies in your house, and I am not going in alone!”

But presently he saw on the floor below a large crowd of flies dancing around on a piece of brown paper. He was delighted! He was not afraid if lots of flies were doing it. So he came in for a landing. Just before he landed, a bee zoomed by, saying, “Don’t land there, stupid! That’s flypaper!” But the fairly intelligent fly shouted back, “Don’t be silly. Those flies are dancing. There’s a big crowd there. Everybody’s doing it. That many flies can’t be wrong!”

Well, you know what happened. He died on the spot. Some of us want to be with the crowd so badly that we end up in a mess. What does it profit a fly (or a person) if he escapes the web only to end up in the glue?

—Charles Swindoll, *Living Above the Level of Mediocrity*

Avoiding the crowd, or not following the way of the world, is a common message in church.

Discuss: “Do you ever get sick of hearing it? Why do you think we hear it so often?”

We hear this message often because we need to hear it often. That is, we have a hard time avoiding the crowd and shunning evil influences. We are surrounded by evil—television, cell phones, billboards, and undoubtedly, the Internet. We are bombarded with evil influences at every turn. Therefore, we need to be reminded of the need to shun these evil influences. It is easy to become desensitized to the evil around us when it’s so blatant, so often.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:33, 34.

2) Let God Reshape Your Heart.

Read Matthew 5:1–12.

Ask: “How do these beatitudes apply to reshaping our hearts?”

The Beatitudes show us how different God’s plan is than our own. In His world, up is down. The persecuted are blessed, and the meek are in charge. These ideas do not come naturally to us, so we must learn them. This requires a reshaping of our hearts.

Discuss:

“How are the world’s ways backwards from God’s ways?”

“How do we allow God to reshape our heart?”

We must allow God full access into our lives. He desires that we do more than just “lip service”; He wants “heart service.” By so doing, we render our hearts completely to Him for His molding and reshaping. Through this, we are given a *tabula rasa*—a clean slate; a new attitude and mindset. Our total act of surrender to Him results in a renewed and reshaped heart—which He can use for His glory.

ILLUSTRATING MATTERS

The Heart

Heart is used in Scripture as the most comprehensive term for the authentic person. It is the part of our being where we desire, deliberate, and decide. It has been described as “the place of conscious and decisive spiritual activity,” “the comprehensive term for a person as a whole; his feelings, desires, passions, thoughts, understanding and will,” and “the center of a person. The place to which God turns.”

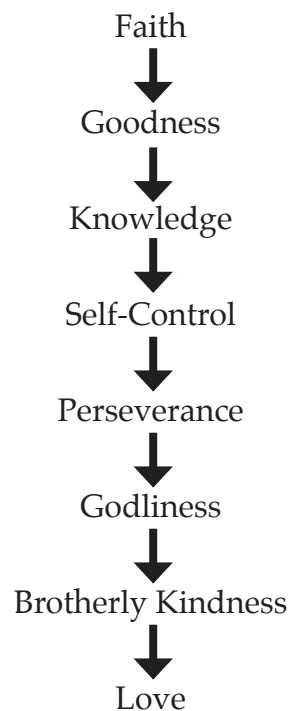
—J. Stowell, *Fan the Flame*

3) Cooperate With God’s Grace.

Review 2 Peter 1:2–11.

Ask: “According to this passage, how are we able to escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires?” (We are able to because God’s power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him [vv. 3, 4].)

In verses 5–9, we are given a series of qualities that apparently build on one another. Draw the following on the board.



Notice that it begins with faith. Our faith in Jesus Christ is obviously our starting point. But then we are asked to add one thing at a time to our faith. It begins with goodness, a quality we simply cannot have without faith in Christ. Then, knowledge is to be added to faith and goodness. This implies we must be hungry for God and His Word, as well as seeking knowledge of Him through a personal relationship.

Then we add self-control to these, then perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and finally, love. All these build upon one another, that is, you cannot have one without the other. You might consider this a picture of spiritual maturity, in which the final step is true love for God and others. The implication could be that if you're missing anything before love, then the love you claim to have may somehow be spiritually inept. Also notice how it moves from inward, personal actions to outward, public actions (brotherly kindness and love). Obviously, what begins on the inside ends up showing on the outside. But the key is: it all must begin with faith in Jesus Christ.

Discuss each of these traits and how they might build upon one another.

Discuss how all of these traits are needed to be able to truly show godly love.

Then, verse 8 gives us an even greater challenge, as if just finding these traits isn't challenging enough. Not only are we to develop these traits in our lives, but we are to have them in "increasing measure." That is, we should be continually growing in all these areas. We never reach the pinnacle of the Christian life, because there isn't one while we're on this earth. There is no finish line for holiness or sanctification. It must come always in increasing measure. We must learn everyday to love more, to persevere more, and to be more self-controlled. It all must grow. We must grow. We cannot remain static. We must continually have more of God, and less of self. This is the journey of holiness. This is a holy life.

RESOLVING MATTERS

The Christian life is not a static one. We cannot sit stagnantly in Christ. We can never stop maturing and growing. It's been said that if you're not moving closer to God, you're falling further away. Our study today would seem to support this idea.

The quest for holiness does not have an end. It must be an ongoing, every day journey. We must continue becoming holy. We must continue to grow closer to God. We must strive to be more like Him every day. Yesterday's growth means little today. Today is another day for growth, and if we do not grow today, we have failed.

Are you holier today than you were yesterday? Are you closer to God today than you were yesterday? What have you done today to draw closer to God? Perhaps we should start making intentional and specific plans for our journey.

When you're on a quest for holiness, a map sure does help.

ILLUSTRATING MATTERS

X Marks the Spot

Give each student a blank piece of paper and ask them to draw a map that will help lead them to holiness. On a map, there are specific markers, or points that help us identify where we are on the journey. Ask the students to list a few things that need to be overcome in their life, then, tell them to make these the markers on their journey. Challenge them to begin asking God to help them overcome each situation, and as God does this, they can check it off the list. In a few weeks, revisit the lists and see if God hasn't moved them forward on their journey of holiness.

Further Review

The following excerpts from the Biblical Doctrine and Polity's study on holiness entitled "*The Pursuit of the Holy God: Answering the Call to Holiness*" will further enhance this lesson. Please take time to review them with the class.

- "Initial Sanctification/Ongoing Sanctification" pages 44, 45
- "More biblical Explorations of Sanctification/Holiness" pages 45, 46



Lesson 5

WALK IN HOLINESS

INTRODUCTORY MATTERS

Ask: *“Have you ever seen (or been) a mall walker?”*

Ask: *“Do you think their walking helps them at all? Why and how?”*

ILLUSTRATING MATTERS

Benefits of Walking

Walking, like other exercise, can help you achieve a number of important health benefits. Walking can help you:

- Lower low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol (the “bad” cholesterol)
- Raise high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol (the “good” cholesterol)
- Lower your blood pressure
- Reduce your risk of or manage type 2 diabetes
- Manage your weight
- Improve your mood
- Stay strong and fit

All it takes to reap these benefits is a routine of brisk walking. It doesn’t get much simpler than that. And you can forget the “no pain, no gain” talk. Research shows that regular, brisk walking can reduce the risk of heart attack by the same amount as more vigorous exercise, such as jogging.

—www.mayoclinic.com

Just as there are benefits to walking in a physical sense, there are benefits to walking in a spiritual sense. Walking implies movement, moving forward, and not standing still. We often call our Christian lives our “Christian walk.” This idea conveys a constant moving forward and maturing. All Christians must constantly grow. To not grow in Christ and develop ourselves is to actually regress. It causes our relationship to become stagnant and we no longer enjoy being around

Christ or other Christians. We've mentioned in previous lessons that we must continue progressing in our quest for holiness; we must continue to walk forward in holiness. In our final lesson of this series, we will discuss a few ways in which we can continue to walk in holiness.

PRINCIPAL MATTERS

1) Walk Purposefully

Read Philippians 3:12–16.

In this passage, Paul is describing what he hopes all Christians will do—walk with purpose or live intentionally. Paul has a goal, and he is pressing on toward his goal in Christ, and he has a plan and an end in mind. This is something we all need when seeking holiness—we need purpose. That is why we've initiated this study, and this is why we've called it “the quest.” Our goal is holiness, and we are striving to obtain it. If you don't know where you're going, you'll never get there.

We know where we want to go—to holiness. We are in the process of identifying how to get there. And we trust God will continue to reveal his plan for our lives as we continue our quest for holiness with intentionality and purpose.

Ask: “What does the word ‘intentional’ mean to you?”

The word *intentional* is a buzz word that's thrown around often today. To be intentional simply means we live or do something with the intent to achieve a desired outcome. If you cook something, you are intentional about your preparation. You are placing certain ingredients together in hopes of achieving a desired end (at least, we hope that's how you cook!).

Ask: “How can we make our Christian walk more intentional?”

To live intentionally, with purpose, we must have goals. We must know where we are going. What is your goal in your Christian walk? Do you want to be closer to God? Do you want to know your Bible more thoroughly? Do you want to fulfill His calling to the fullest? Identify your desired outcomes and start being intentional about fulfilling them. Walk purposefully, not haphazardly.

ILLUSTRATING MATTERS

Never Lose Sight

Do you see what this means—all these pioneers who blazed the way, all these veterans cheering us on? It means we'd better get on with it. Strip down, start running—and never quit! No extra spiritual fat, no parasitic sins. Keep your eyes on Jesus, who both began and finished this race we're in. Study how he did it. Because he never lost sight of where he was headed—that exhilarating finish in and with God—he could put up with anything along the way: Cross, shame, whatever. And now he's there, in the place of honor, right alongside God. When you find yourselves flagging in your faith, go over that story again, item by item, that long litany of hostility he plowed through. That will shoot adrenaline into your souls!

—Hebrews 12:1–3, *The Message*

2) Walk Humbly

Read James 4:6–10.

Point out that this passage starts in verse 6 by emphasizing humility. Then it continues to give specific instructions on walking in holiness. List these steps on the board:

- Submit to God
- Resist the devil
- Come near to God
- Wash your hands
- Purify your hearts
- Grieve, mourn, and wail
- Change your laughter to mourning
- Change your joy to gloom
- Humble yourselves

Notice how these commands are framed by the call to humility. True holiness cannot be found without humility because, as we know, pride cometh before the fall.

Ask: *“Why is humility something many people struggle with?”*

ILLUSTRATING MATTERS

Humility

“I am the least of the apostles.” —1 Corinthians 15:9

“I am the very least of all the saints.” —Ephesians 3:8

“I am the foremost of sinners.” —1 Timothy 1:15

Humility and a passion for praise are characteristics which together indicate growth in grace. The Bible is full of self-humbling (man bowing down before God) and doxology (man giving praise to God). The healthy heart is one that bows down in humility and rises in praise and adoration. The Psalms strike both these notes again and again. So too, Paul in his letters both articulates humility and breaks into doxology. Look at his three descriptions of himself quoted above, dating respectively from around A.D. 59, 63, and 64. As the years pass, he goes lower; he grows downward! And as his self-esteem sinks, so his rapture of praise and adoration for the God who so wonderfully saved him rises.

Undoubtedly, learning to praise God at all times for all that is good is a mark that we are growing in grace. One of my predecessors in my first parochial appointment died exceedingly painfully of cancer. But between fearful bouts of agony, in which he had to stuff his mouth with bedclothes to avoid biting his tongue, he would say aloud over and over again: “I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth” (Psalms 34:1). That was a passion for praise asserting itself in the most poignant extremity imaginable.

Cultivate humility and a passion for praise if you want to grow in grace.

—James Packer, *Your Father Loves You*

3) Walk In New Life

Read Romans 6:1–13.

Discuss:

“Why do you think many Christians struggle to live as God expects them to?”

“When God offers us new life, do we sometimes feel ourselves drawn back to our old lives of sin?”

“Why does this sometimes happen?”

ILLUSTRATING MATTERS

The Weight of Sin

It is said that a flippant young man once remarked to a preacher in mocking fashion, “You say that unsaved people carry a great weight of sin. Frankly, I feel nothing. How heavy is sin? Ten pounds? Fifty pounds? Eighty pounds? A hundred pounds?”

The preacher thought for a moment, then replied, “If you laid a four-hundred-pound weight on a corpse, would it feel the load?”

The young man was quick to say, “Of course not; it’s dead”

Driving home his point, the preacher said, “The person who doesn’t know Christ is equally dead. And though the load is great, he feels none of it.”

The Christian, unlike the average non-Christian, is not indifferent to the weight of sin. He is actually hypersensitive to it. Having come to Jesus Christ, his senses are awakened to the reality of sin. His sensitivity to sin intensifies as he matures spiritually. Such sensitivity prompted a saint as great as Chrysostom, the fourth-century church Father, to say he feared nothing but sin (Second Homily on Eutropius).

—John MacArthur, *“Freedom From Sin,”* www.gty.org

Romans 6 makes it perfectly clear: we are not to continue in sin. We are to live in holiness, sanctified through and through; cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ. Walking in new life means shedding the old life. The old life was dominated by sin and death. The new life should be dominated by purity and life.

Unfortunately, we sometimes buy into the notion that sin is no big deal because God doesn’t expect me to be perfect. He may not expect you to be perfect, but He does expect you to strive for perfection and to avoid sin! We can never stop fighting temptation, and we should win the battle more often than not if we are truly walking in new life.

Discuss:

“Why is it important that, as Christians, we live free from sin?”

“What are some struggles that you believe many Christians are dealing with?”

“How can we help each other in our struggles to walk in new life?”

In our tradition, we have been great at testifying of God's delivering power. We can tell how we used to be in sin and how God delivered us. *But* we have not been so good at CONFESSION of sin. We have believed in the past that one sin meant we were backslidden and in need of renewed salvation. For this reason, confessing our sins one to another (which is undoubtedly a biblical mandate) has been null and void.

To walk in new life, we need help from our fellow Christians. We need to trust them, believe in them, and support them. And we need to be able to be honest about our struggles. Holiness will *never* be achieved alone and in isolation. Holiness calls for the community of believers—the body of Christ—to come together, pray for one another, support one another, love one another, and confess to one another when we are struggling, without shame and fear.

ILLUSTRATING MATTERS Holiness and Confession

Many great men and women of God have fallen in recent times and made the headlines. Name someone whose failures have truly shocked you (go ahead, name names). Now, consider the following:

What if in the beginning of this person's temptation, they had someone to go to, or an entire group to talk to, to confess their sin in its early stages. What if they could have come to a group of loving, supportive fellow believers and confessed what the devil was hounding them with? Might the outcome of their failure have been different if they could have been upheld, supported, and prayed through their temptations? Could the great failures that made headlines and shocked people's faith have been avoided by a simple outlet of confession, prayer, and support?

What about you? How has the enemy hounded you recently? Have you confessed your struggles? Do you even feel free to do so, or do you fear what might happen if you were to be open and honest about your struggles? Would you be scorned, turned out, or written off?

Discuss:

"Why are we so afraid of confession?"

Sin thrives in darkness and there is no better way to shine a light on sin than through open and honest confession. Confession leads us to cleansing. Perhaps a renewed understanding of the ongoing nature of holiness and sanctification should lead us to a call for ongoing, open confession. Perhaps confession is what we've been missing. What do you think?

Read and discuss 1 John 1:5–10 in light of this idea concerning confession.

RESOLVING MATTERS

The pendulum always swings to the extremes.

What does that mean?

In every aspect of life, movement occurs. Our societal practices morph and change, our governments change, and our beliefs change. Typically, change occurs in a reactive sort of way. That is, we see something we dislike, and we react to the matter by going the other direction.

Unfortunately, when we turn to go another way, we often go too far. Just like the pendulum of a grandfather clock, when we turn the other way, we always go to the other extreme before stopping.

This is apparent in our understanding of holiness. In times past, sanctification and holiness were viewed by a strict set of do's and don'ts. If you were seen doing certain things, you were considered holy and if you failed to check every requirement off the list, you were judged to be unholy (or worse, unsaved).

In response to this, many from the holiness tradition have moved the other way. But as typically happens, the pendulum perhaps swung too far the opposite way. Now we find ourselves in the opposite predicament, with many believing that holiness has nothing to do with our actions and everything to do with our state of being in relationship with Christ. This, too, is an extreme just as the legalistic rules were an extreme.

So, where is the proper landing point?

The key is always found when the pendulum finds its true center. We must live in balance and stop swaying to extremes. To find a perfect balance on a scale, tension must be equal on both sides. This is also true of holiness. Does holiness concern itself with what we do? Absolutely! Does holiness concern itself with who we are? Absolutely!

Is holiness concerned ONLY with what we do? Absolutely not! Is holiness concerned ONLY with who we are in Christ? Absolutely not! They are both equally important and equally intertwined.

And when these two find balance in our lives—and we live in the tension of that balance—we just might find holiness.

ILLUSTRATING MATTERS

Seeking a Holy God

In the early stages of our movement, people experienced God in a real and tangible way. These experiences led the early pioneers of the faith to do away with all sorts of things that did not draw them closer to God, even when the Bible didn't specifically call some things sin. Such a practice simply came out of their pure desire to please God, and to be close to His presence.

Some look at practices such as outlawing neckties and Coke as extremes. But the people of that time did not. They were looking for God, and they were hungry for God, and they were willing to do away with anything to be closer to Him.

While this eventually led to a legalistic mindset, it did not begin that way. It began out of a hunger for a holy God that led them to desire a holy life. This in turn caused them to say, "If it doesn't draw me closer to God, I don't want it whether it's sinful or not."

(continued p. 32)

If God doesn't call it sin, neither should we. We don't want to return to legalism in any way, shape, or form. But, we could certainly learn something from such a mindset. Maybe we should pray: "God, if it doesn't draw me closer to You, remove it from my life."

See how he responds to that prayer. You just might be surprised.

The great minister, D.L. Moody, once said, "The world has yet to see what God can do with one man wholly committed to him."

Maybe you could be the first.

QUESTIONING MATTERS

We've now discussed five topics concerning holiness. Discuss these questions in light of all five studies.

- "What is holiness?"
- "How can holiness be achieved?"
- "What can you do this week to walk in holiness?"
- "Does God expect us to live sinless lives after salvation?"
- "Would the biblical practice of confession help us find holiness?"
- "How can we integrate this idea into our church practices?"

Further Review

The following excerpts from the Biblical Doctrine and Polity's study on holiness entitled "The Pursuit of the Holy God: Answering the Call to Holiness" will further enhance this lesson. Please take time to review them with the class.

- "History of Holiness and Sanctification specifically" pages 30-34
- "Presuppositions in the Past COGOP Formation" pages 34-36
- "Vital Nature of Prayer and Holiness" pages 42-44
- "Appendix: The Controversy Over the Three Blessings" pages 51-57

REMINDER

Stand up and be counted!

Don't Forget: BE A PART! LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD!

Don't forget that in the next General Assembly, we will be considering this topic of holiness and sanctification. Take time to review the Biblical Doctrine and Polity Committee's document, "The Pursuit of a Holy God," in its entirety. Be sure to take an active part in the discussion on this matter. We want to find God's will and we believe it is best found in community. You are a part of our community and we want your voice to be heard!



THE QUEST FOR HOLINESS

Sermon Outlines

White Wing Publishing House

Published by White Wing Publishing House
3750 Keith Street
Cleveland, TN 37312

Copyright ©2012. All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, without written permission of the publisher. CPETF

Item No. 9994

Table of Contents

The Quest for Holiness

Sermon Outlines

	Page
Sermon 1—The Quest for Holiness	5
Sermon 2—Dead to Sin, Alive to Christ	9
Sermon 3—Life, Light, and Love in Sanctification	13
Sermon 4—Spiritual Maturity Is Not Optional	15
Sermon 5—Be Who You Are	19

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

Be sure to check out www.questforholiness.org for **FREE** downloadable resources!



Sermon 1

The Quest for Holiness General Overseer, Bishop R.E. Howard

SCRIPTURE EMPHASIS

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48).

“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” (1 Peter 1:15).

MAIN THOUGHT

Holiness and Sanctification: They are far more than the simple idea of separation from sin, which has often been perceived in negative terms. Holiness also involves our entire and fervent consecration to God, which brings a radical transformation away from self/ flesh domination to Christ/Spirit life and freedom.

INTRODUCTION

(NOTE: A video from Bishop Howard of this introduction is available for free download at www.questforholiness.org.)

Amazingly, over the last four decades, holiness and sanctification has all but disappeared off the radar of spirituality in western Christian culture. No doubt there are many factors that have contributed to this erosion. Whatever the reasons, many polls show consistently that there is no significant difference between the behavior of secular culture and Christianity.

It is time to make a new case for sanctification and describe a new relevance for holiness in today's context. After all, revival and awakening through time have often been seen as a renewal of divine power to draw the lost out of the darkness of evil and to transform them into the image of Christ. That certainly involves the grace that sanctifies and the call that ignites passion for holiness.

Today is a moment of opportunity for the Kingdom with regard to sanctification. Christianity has been charged as being judgmental, legalistic, and harsh toward society. Within our ranks,

most would confess that we want to leave behind the former, outward focus on behaviors and shift to holiness of heart that will manifest Christ's character.

With this falling away of a holiness focus in the Kingdom, we have the opportunity to put away negative baggage of the past and to announce new relevance and applications for sanctification significant for today. The Spirit will empower God's people toward holiness, and He can guide the Body to new perspectives and manifestations that this generation most desperately needs.

SERMON BODY

I. THE CALL TO SEPARATION FROM SIN

A. Holiness defined

The call we hear from Jesus and Peter is most familiar, since it has been the emphasis of Christian history in the last two centuries. This biblical theme is identified by passages such as 2 Corinthians 6:14–17: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord." The word *holy* is defined as follows, "hagios, hag'-ee-os; from hagos (an awful thing); sacred (phys. pure, mor. blameless or religious, cer. consecrated):—(most) holy (one, thing), saint" (*Strong's Concordance*).

B. Old Testament Separation

Certainly there is the element of absence of sin or any defilement in this definition of holiness. But more prominently, the idea of separation from sin came from the Old Testament background of the temple, sacrifices, and the tabernacle. There, the priests cannot touch things unclean, sacrifices must be clean without defilement, and no unclean thing could come into holy areas.

Mistakenly the idea arose that righteousness could be defiled by proximity to sin. Romans 12:21 says, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." The thought is present that evil might overcome good. The implication from an Old Testament mindset would be to not allow evil to touch or defile oneself.

C. New Testament Separation

In New Testament days this is seen in the Qumran community which separated itself from society to be the pure and holy people of God. The second half of this verse was overlooked as concern for evil overcoming good became preeminent.

D. Jesus Clarifies Separation

The life of Jesus clarifies this extreme view of holiness as separation from sin. Though Jesus was without sin, he is regularly seen with sinners. As a matter of fact, this disturbed the religious leaders of his day. They would not allow their reputations to be sullied by eating or socializing with sinners, yet, Jesus did just that. He demonstrated that holiness is a separation from sin within the heart, rather than external rituals or observances of cleanliness and purity.

II. THE CALL TO CONSECRATION TO GOD

From a more positive perspective, holiness is the call to complete consecration to God. This is also seen in the Old Testament structure of Israel's worship.

A. Biblical Examples of Consecration

The Levitical Priesthood was to be totally given to the Lord and the work of the Temple (Leviticus 21:6; Numbers 8:16).

The Nazarites mentioned in the Old Testament were another illustration of this type of consecration (Numbers 6:2). This family committed themselves to a vow unto the Lord, never to drink wine or any strong drink and never to participate with unclean things. They were fully consecrated to the Lord.

In a similar way, the entire nation of Israel was consecrated to God. In God's eyes they were His chosen people. 2 Samuel 7:24 says, "For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever: and thou, Lord, art become their God." God redeemed Israel with the purpose that they would be the nation in all the earth that belonged to Him.

B. Modern Day Examples of Consecration

In the New Testament, the call of holiness speaks this truth of consecration to all believers and requires us to be modern day examples of consecration to God. Perhaps 1 Peter 2:9 says it most profoundly, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." One scholar wrote that the word *peculiar* could be described as a circle which has only one dot right in the center. God's people are the dot in the center of his attention, redeemed to be His alone.

III. THE ULTIMATE CALL: TO LOVE

A. The Great Commandment of Love

Of course the Great Commandment affirms love as the highest aim of the Christian life (Matthew 22:36–40). And we can consider the supreme priority of love seen often in the New Testament—Colossians 3:14, "above all these things;" 1 Timothy 1:5–7, "the end of the commandment;" as well as John 13:34, 35; Romans 13:8; and Galatians 5:14.

B. Perfection in Love

In sanctification, love is the goal. Wesley's definition of perfection is as yet unimproved. At the end of his book, *A Plain Account*, Wesley sums up his teaching in these words: "By perfection I mean the humble, gentle, patient love of God and our neighbor, ruling our tempers, words, and actions." In his sermon on Christian Perfection, Wesley says, "It [perfect love] is only another term for holiness. They are two names for the same thing." Notice the context of the Matthew 5 text (vv. 44–48). The call to perfection the Father made is a call to love as a child of the Father.

CONCLUSION

Today is the day of opportunity to revive the biblical truth of holiness in the most positive and impacting manner. Yes, holiness does deal with sin through the work of sanctification by the blood of Christ and the Word of God. Yes, holiness brings a believer to a profound level of entire consecration to God in Christ by the Spirit. And yes, holiness in its highest form is love—a life filled with love for God and expressed in love for fellow men. May God give us this fervent love that will extinguish every other carnal or evil passion by its ardor!

ALTAR EMPHASIS

Who among us would pray to experience greater victory in separation from sin? Who would pray that you may step into a deeper consecration of your life to God? Who would pray that your love for God would grow brighter than any other passion in your life? Who would pray to be touched with a sanctifying grace here at this moment? Who would desire fresh cleansing from the filth of the world around you? Let the people of God call out for renewal in holiness today in God's house.



Sermon 2

Dead to Sin, Alive to Christ

Cathy Payne

SCRIPTURE EMPHASIS

Romans 6:1–14, 5:1, 6, 8, 20, 21.

MAIN THOUGHT

We can be freed from sin to new life in Christ.

INTRODUCTION

(NOTE: A video from Cathy Payne of this introduction is available for free download at www.questforholiness.org.)

Several years ago I was invited to preach a crusade during the spiritual emphasis week at a Christian college. Each evening, after service, I had the opportunity to personally engage in conversations with groups as well as one-on-one with some students. One particular evening, a young man wanted to discuss the challenges he was facing. His main question seemed to be, “If there is a God, why is He not personally engaged in our lives?” When we reached an impasse, the Lord reminded me of a passage that spoke richly concerning God’s demonstration of His love for us. I began sharing the passage from memory but could not remember the specific Scripture reference. As I opened my Bible, it opened to that *very* page where I had marked that *very* passage. When I noted that the passage was at the very place where the Bible opened, he and I both knew God was with us in that very intimate moment. God was revealing His *active* participation as the One who reaches out to us while we are yet sinners. The young man told me he was ready to pray. The interruption of the Holy Spirit hit the target and we were both forever changed in that moment.

The reality is that “while we were unable to help ourselves, at the moment of our need, Christ died for us, although we were living against God.” He died for us. He died while we were still helpless, needy sinners. “God shows his great love for us in this way: Christ died for us while we were yet sinners” (Romans 5:6, 8, NCV). The reality is that God never has to tell us again that He loves us, He demonstrated it at Calvary.

SERMON BODY

I. GRACE HAS COVERED OUR SINS (Romans 5:1, 20, 21)

The message of grace is heard clearly: “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1 NIV).

A. Christ has positioned us before God. His blood has cleansed us from every sin.

B. God’s sovereignty declares us justified and righteous.

The Apostle Paul told the Roman Christians that this experience is for every believer. The very moment we place our faith in Christ, God declares us righteous in His eyes. We are justified by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone. Paul summarizes his whole argument in the first four chapters of Romans with these words, “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (5:1).

Paul ends chapter 5 by noting the restrictions of the law and the overcoming power of God’s grace. “The law came to make sin worse. But when sin grew worse, God’s grace increased. Sin once used death to rule us, but God gave people more of His grace so that grace could rule by making people right with Him. And this brings life forever through Jesus Christ our Lord” (vv. 20, 21, NCV).

II. FREEDOM TO CHOOSE—LIFE OR SIN (6:1, 2, NIV)

A. Choosing responsible freedom, death to sin—life in Christ.

B. Choosing the freedom to be who God has called us to be.

Paul declares we are dead to sin therefore, we can no longer choose an irresponsible lifestyle with sin dominating us. He encourages, rather, a choice of maturing in Christ as this verse leads us into the sanctifying work of God. “What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?” (vv. 1, 2, NIV).

III. KNOW YOUR POSITION IN CHRIST (vv. 3–14)

- A. We are baptized unto Christ.
- B. We are dead to sin, crucified with Christ.
- C. We are alive in Christ.

The ordinance of Baptism is a public testimony in remembrance of Christ and a proclamation of our new relationship in Him. We are crucified with Him and we are no longer slaves to sin. We have been set free to live in holiness unto the Lord.

CONCLUSION

There are seasons in life when we become overwhelmed with challenges, limitations, and even life itself. The concluding understanding of this passage is that grace, freedom, and our position purchased by Christ provide the power to live the Christian life in holiness. Paul calls us from the slavery of sin. He challenges us to live a life of total commitment to Christ, “Do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin . . . but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God” (v. 13, NASB).

ALTAR EMPHASIS

It is impossible to live dead to sin and alive in Christ without living in relationship in Christ. This message provides an opportunity for you to establish a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Are you exhausted as a slave to sin? Do you long for grace and peace and freedom to be who God has called you to be? Saving grace is where life begins. Today you can put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. Today you can choose life over death.



Sermon 3

Life, Light, and Love in Sanctification Bishop Adrian Varlack

SCRIPTURE EMPHASIS

John 8:12; 1 John 1:9–11

MAIN THOUGHT

Light, life, and love are growing characteristics of the believer who is walking in sanctification and Christ-likeness.

INTRODUCTION

(NOTE: A video from Bishop Adrian Varlack of this introduction is available for free download at www.questforholiness.org.)

The words *light*, *life*, and *love* all contain the idea of motion, forward movement, and progress toward a goal or objective. In the biblical sense, these words relate to our walk **with** or **in** Jesus and call forth a fervent desire to pursue holiness (sanctification/set-apartness) which, ultimately, is the realization of love for God and love for the people of God among whom we walk as followers of Christ in a **life-union** with Him.

(Share here the thought that many who claim the experience and light of sanctification often lack the evidences of love and life which are characteristic of true holiness [wholeness in Christ]. A personal illustration concerning this thought would be helpful).

SERMON BODY

THEME: CHRIST IS EVERYTHING (John 1:1–5, 9; 10:10; 15:9–13; 1 Corinthians 1:30)

I. JESUS CHRIST IS THE LIGHT THAT SHINES IN DARKNESS.

- A. The whole world lay in darkness; Christ brought the light.
- B. Those who turn to Christ walk in light.
- C. Transition: That light brings life (He that follows me shall not walk in darkness).
In New Testament days this is seen in the Qumran community which separated itself from society to be the pure and holy people of God. The second half of this verse was overlooked as concern for evil overcoming good became preeminent.

II. JESUS CHRIST CAME TO BRING LIFE.

- A. Eternal life is knowing God the Father and Jesus Christ His Son (John 17:2, 3).
- B. Christ prayed for set-apartness as He had set Himself apart (vv. 17–19).
- C. Transition: The light and life of Christ ensues in love.

III. JESUS CHRIST IS THE SUPREME EXAMPLE OF LOVE TO GOD AND HUMANS.

- A. Christ's love to His Father is exemplified by His singular devotion to His Father's will (15:9; 17:4).
- B. As Son of Man, He loved God with a perfect love as our substitute and pattern (8:29); we are to walk in that same love (Ephesians 5:1, 2).
- C. Transition to Conclusion: As Light, Life and Love, Christ is made unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

CONCLUSION

Christ Himself is the Light and Life and Love of God. By faith and in union with Him, we enter into light and life and love, the set-apartness for which we were originally designed—to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. This includes a growing love and fellowship one with another as the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin. We walk together **in** Him towards the goal of reaching the measure of the stature of His fullness (Ephesians 4:13). Christ is made unto us wisdom, righteousness [holiness], sanctification, and redemption (1 Corinthians 1:30). We are to walk worthy of the vocation with which we have been called (Ephesians 4:1, 2). This is the true evidence of our sanctification.

ALTAR EMPHASIS

Invite hearers to rededicate their lives to a closer walk in Christ, to walk in His light, His Life, and His love as we commit to love and serve one another.



Sermon 4

Spiritual Maturity Is Not Optional Bishop Wallace Pratt

SCRIPTURE EMPHASIS

Philippians 3:10–16

MAIN THOUGHT

Holiness requires continued growth and maturation in Christ.

INTRODUCTION

(NOTE: A video from Bishop Wallace Pratt of this introduction is available for free download at www.questforholiness.org.)

Several years ago, I attended a time management seminar with over three hundred pastors in San Luis Obispo, California. The guest speaker was the renowned, late Olen Hendricks. In the opening session, he asked the question: “How many of you have clearly defined goals of how you will develop your spiritual life in the next ten years?” Only five of the ministers raised their hands to signify they had such goals—less than two percent. Mr. Hendricks was shocked to find that those who were leading other Christians and churches had no personal spiritual goals to guide them toward a more mature life in Christ. If this was a fact among these prominent leaders in the faith of Christ, it is more than likely also true in the life of those they lead.

During Paul’s writing of his pastoral letter to the church at Philippi, the apostle takes the opportunity to teach the Philippian believers concerning spiritual maturity. By spiritual maturity, Paul is addressing the idea of developing a godly character that is both inward and recognizable to the community around us. Throughout this passage of Scripture, he is advocating a walk with Christ that is measurable and progressively moving toward a goal that is greater than that which the believer has already attained. According to Paul’s own admission, he was not satisfied with his past accomplishments or growth as a Christian. He desired to pursue a more godly life. We all must strive to do the same.

SERMON BODY

I. THE FIRST GOAL OF EVERY BELIEVER SHOULD BE TO GROW IN SPIRITUAL MATURITY WHICH BEGINS WITH OUR MINDSET (Greek: *phronesis*).

- A. Sometimes believers think they know everything there is to serving Christ. Such immature thinking hinders their progress in walking with Christ.

We see this improper thinking when someone gets into a *frame of mind* that causes them to believe they no longer need the sanctifying work of the Word of God in their lives (John 9:30–34).

- B. Spiritual maturity will come to a halt when a Christian believer assumes he or she has nothing else to learn or attain regarding spiritual maturity.

At 80 years old and after a revelatory experience on Mt. Horeb, Moses led the children of Israel into the wilderness. But the godly character of Moses was still tested and nurtured even more as he faced great challenges and learned some of his greatest lessons about God and himself after that time.

II. EVERY PERSON WHO WANTS TO GROW IN SPIRITUAL MATURITY MUST SET DEFINITE GOALS.

- A. Did Paul set goals? Most definitely.

In Philippians 3:13, 14, Paul gives us two phrases to clearly indicate this practice in his walk with Christ. The first is “reaching forth to those things that are before.” If you could see a timeline of Paul’s life and work after his conversion, you would see a purposeful pattern in how he approached serving the Lord and seeking spiritual maturity through the guidance of others (Barnabas, the apostles, Aquila and Priscilla).

- B. Secondly, he emphatically declares, “I press toward the mark (goal) for the prize.”

Those who make no plans or set no goals can be assured that they will never achieve their goals! Without a target, a bullseye cannot be hit. Jesus Christ taught the importance of this by His own example of planning for life (Luke 14:28–30).

III. SPIRITUAL MATURITY REQUIRES BOTH MOTIVATION AND EFFORT. THIS KIND OF MATURITY WILL ALWAYS CAUSE THE BELIEVER TO EVALUATE HIS/HER LIFE AND TO SET NEW GOALS.

- A. Are you making any real, continuous effort to bring yourself into unity with others who profess faith in Christ Jesus?

We must visualize and pray those powerful phrases that Paul uses when writing his encouragement to the Philippians. Such phrases as: *I follow after, that I may apprehend, take hold of, and reaching forth, I press*. They constitute a mindset to know Jesus beyond his present knowledge or experience (Philippians 3:10).

- B. Are you doing anything significantly and consistently to receive more knowledge and relational experience with the Lord?

People who are maturing are always stretching, preparing, training, disciplining, praying, and pushing themselves into greater relationship with the Lord (Ephesians 4:13).

- C. Spiritual maturity causes believers to continually examine and open themselves up to what the Holy Spirit may reveal about the way they live or think.

In Philippians 3:15, 16, Paul states that when we receive spiritual maturity in one area, we must remain sincere and open to other areas of immaturity that God still wants to reveal in our lives. Spiritual maturity is not a “blanket policy” that covers everything at once. It is a godly process of discovery that overcomes one shortcoming after another as we continually yield ourselves to the Spirit.

CONCLUSION

(Suggestion: The sermon conclusion could be your own experience concerning a time when you had to develop more knowledge and learn new ways to grow in understanding or relationship with God and others. The following is my experience.)

Around two and a half years ago, a series of noticeable changes began occurring in my body. Within a month, these drastic symptoms led me to a doctor where my suspicions were confirmed—it was Type II diabetes. The diagnosis did not surprise me, as I’d had a brother pass away in his forties from Type I diabetes. Furthermore, the disease was hereditary in my family for generations. Even though I had prior knowledge and experience with diabetes, and even though I had never neglected my own physical health, the disease still came unexpectedly. It called for a major lifestyle change and it caused me to pursue diligently more knowledge on the subject, to pray more about my situation, and to seek out counseling on how to live with this weakness.

Throughout these past two years, I have learned to discipline myself with exercise, good dieting, and proper rest. This discipline has paid off immensely, and has kept me from becoming insulin dependent. Such discipline and maturity is not optional; it is required to have a healthy life and to having a growing relationship with my grandchildren. In the same manner, spiritual discipline and maturity is not optional! We must fervently and continually seek God for holiness and maturity.

ALTAR EMPHASIS

Give a call to all believers present to awaken to the need to continue seeking spiritual maturity in Christ. “If you realize today that you need to grow in your spiritual maturity, you can join company with others who, like the apostle Paul, know they, too, need to develop more of the character of God.” Encourage people to confess to the Lord their need of a persistent hunger for more godly character and maturity.

Assign mature Christians to help the immature or young believers in the altar (and even afterward). Choose people who have spiritual humility and understanding to guide others in continually seeking a deeper walk with Christ.



Sermon 5

Be Who You Are Bishop David Bryan

SCRIPTURE EMPHASIS

Ephesians, chapters 1-5

MAIN THOUGHT

Holiness is the reality of being separated to/for God from the depths of our inner-selves to the outer world of our actions and words. It is being what we already are through the transforming grace of God. It demands such an intimate association between us and God that we can be described as being “participants of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4).

INTRODUCTION

(NOTE: A video from Bishop David Bryan of this introduction is available for free download at www.questforholiness.org.)

Identity and action are married to each other and cannot be divorced without psychological and spiritual breakdown. Who we are and what we do are like conjoined twins—inseparable without surgical intervention.

The apostle Peter must have told Mark about the time when the group of apostles-in-training began a boat ride across a lake. A violent windstorm swept across the water and experienced fishermen panicked. Jesus was asleep in the stern of the boat. These men shook him awake fearing for their lives. Jesus got up from his resting position, and gave the turbulent winds and sea two verbal commands: “Peace! Be still!” (Mark 4:39, NET). The response was immediate. The wind stopped and there was an instant calm. The reaction of the men in the boat was captured by one question: “Who then is this?” (v. 41). These men realized something we all know intuitively—what you do says something profound about who you are, and who you are is reflected in how you behave.

SERMON BODY

I. IDENTITY—WHO ARE YOU? (Ephesians 1)

A person who does not know his name does not know who he is related to and who he is not. Loss of identity is the most fundamental human crisis. The teaching of the apostle Paul in Ephesians 1–3 about the identity of the believer is the basis of the counter cultural conduct described in Ephesians 4–6. The identity of a Christian is a given—accomplished by God’s grace—received by faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As a Christian you now are:

- A. A saint (v. 1)—one of God’s holy people
- B. Chosen in Christ to be holy (v. 4)—personally selected by God for Himself
- C. God’s adopted child (v. 5)—adopted into God’s own family through Jesus Christ
- D. Released from sin’s power through a ransom, i.e., *redeemed* (v. 7)—completely free from sin because of the blood of Christ
- E. Fully forgiven (v. 7)—the breach sin created between you and God has been totally healed
- F. In Christ (v. 11)—joined, united, intimately connected to, identified with, Jesus Christ
- G. Marked by the Spirit’s seal (v. 13)—identified as being Christ’s by the gift of the Holy Spirit

The Point: Our old identity, inherited from an ancestral relationship to Adam, is changed for a radically new identity forged by our relationship with God through Jesus Christ. The believer’s identity is a result of a profound identification with Jesus Christ for we are “participants of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4, NET). This primary relationship changes our relationship to other Christians (to whom we are united in one body), the world, and unbelievers (who oppose us).

II. ACTION—WHAT MUST YOU DO? (Ephesians 4-6)

Changes in a Christian’s behavior are not arbitrary or haphazard. Our conduct must be consistent with our new calling and identity. New actions rise from our new identity in Christ and identification with Jesus, which motivate and empower our behavior.

- A. Live like a saint (4:1–5)—get along with other believers.
- B. Imitate God (5:1–5)—follow God’s example in all you do.
- C. Be filled with the Spirit (vv. 18–20)—allow the Spirit to control your actions and reactions.
- D. Submit to each other (vv. 21–33)—subject yourself to other Christians.

CONCLUSION

Holiness is much more than a series of actions, whether you think of it as good things to be done or bad things to be avoided. Holiness is what results from the calling to be who we are because of the great, multifaceted salvation received through Christ Jesus. Who are you? You belong exclusively to God and possess God's DNA. How then should you live? We are to live like God in the world, because in us, God is present in the world.

ALTAR EMPHASIS

Ask for those who have struggled to understand who they are in Christ to come and celebrate the benefits of salvation. Worship is appropriate for the incredible gifts provided through the grace of God. Ask for those who are aware that their actions have not lived up to their callings. Invite everyone who desires to "walk worthy of their calling" to seek the Holy Spirit's help. Those who want to be who they are in Christ are invited to come forward to pray for the activation of faith and the Spirit's power, and to seek God for true holiness.



THE QUEST FOR HOLINESS

Youth Lessons

White Wing Publishing House

Published by White Wing Publishing House
3750 Keith Street
Cleveland, TN 37312

Copyright ©2012. All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, without written permission of the publisher. Lesson Contributors, Morais Cassell, Tonia Jenkins, Jeff Jones, Valerie Moreno, Jonathan Olavarria, Celide Rodriguez, and Darren Schalk. CPETF

Item No. 9994

Table of Contents

The Quest for Holiness

Youth Lessons

	Page
Lesson 1—The Main Event: Sin vs. Holiness	5
Lesson 2—Embrace Your New Nature	13
Lesson 3—Sanctification: Walking In The Light	19
Lesson 4—Develop Godly Character	25
Lesson 5—Finding True Holiness	33

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

Be sure to check out www.questforholiness.org for **FREE** downloadable resources!



Youth

Lesson 1

THE MAIN EVENT SIN VS. HOLINESS

SET IT UP (Introduction)

Small Group Discussion:

What does it mean to be holy?

What does it mean to be sanctified?

These are questions that, for both young and old, have seemingly dropped off the radar of Christianity. In years past, and still for some today, holiness has been gauged by a certain list of do's and don'ts. For these few, holiness is performance based. "Do the right things and we'll call you holy." But is this what holiness is really about?

For others, holiness is less about performance and more about an inner-state of being. That is, we're holy not because of what we do, but more because of who we are. As Christians, we take on the character of Christ, and as I have a relationship with Jesus, I can be called holy because He is holy. But this emphasis can lead to a laissez faire attitude about our sins. And is this all holiness is really about? Is it nothing more than a relationship with God, or is there something more?

Small Group Discussion:

Is holiness more about what we do, or who we are?

To that question, the answer must be, "Yes!" Holiness is concerned with both: who we are, AND what we do.

Small Group Discussion:

Do you ever see Christians do unholy things?

How do such actions affect your view of these Christians?

Do you judge others by what they do, or by who they claim to be?

As we move forward on our quest for holiness, hopefully some light will be shed on these difficult questions about holiness. We're on a quest—a quest for holiness—a quest for a holy God. We are seeking Him, and thankfully, He promises that when we seek Him, we will find Him.

So, on our quest for holiness, we begin in the beginning, specifically, in Genesis. Today we'll look more closely at the need for holiness. Sin is a problem that certainly moves us away from holiness, and so, to truly understand holiness, we must first look to the very thing that fights against holiness—the origin and effects of sin.

Small Group Discussion:

Have you ever felt that people judged you based on your Christian “performance”?

Have you ever judged someone else's level of holiness based on their outward appearance or actions?

Do you believe you have been sanctified? If so, what makes you believe this?

Do you think sanctification is a one-time occurrence, or an ongoing experience? Why?

Have you sinned since becoming a Christian? Does this failure mean you're not sanctified, holy, or worse, not saved at all?

LET IT GO (Lesson Presentation)

Point 1: Sin is disobedience to God.

Read Genesis 2:15–17 and 3:1–13.

Ask: “Why do you think God put a single, off-limits tree in the Garden?”

This off-limits tree is what gave man free will. God did not create robots, He created free-thinking beings, and He wanted us to serve and love Him out of choice.

Small Group Discussion:

How did the serpent challenge God's command in 3:1? (He made them doubt God's words to them.)

Is this still how the enemy tries to challenge us today? (Yes, we are often plagued with doubt about God, His Word, and His promises.)

Why do you think Eve gave in to the serpent's argument and ate the apple?

Reread verse 3:6.

Sin always looks good at first. It entices us and pulls us in. We just want a taste to see what it might feel like. But when we disobey God, things never turn out well. After eating, Adam and Eve immediately felt shame for the first time, as they noticed their nakedness and tried to hide from God. Then came their punishments.

Read Genesis 3:13–24.

ILLUSTRATE IT

Eve's Temptation

Yes, Eve had it all. She didn't have to worry about what she wore every day. Adam never had to wait for her to pick out an outfit. She didn't have to worry about the mortgage payment, the dwindling (or non-existent) savings account. She didn't have to worry about her health, her weight, her exercise (or lack thereof!). She didn't have to worry about taxes, or the price of gas, or groceries, or health insurance. She didn't have to worry about social security, her retirement fund, the economy, or who to vote for in presidential elections. She didn't have to worry about other women flirting with her husband, or wonder if he was being faithful to her. She didn't have to contend with Adam's former girlfriends, or his mother's cooking, or his brothers and sisters. He was the only man. She was the only woman. Could it have been any more perfect for her?

Eve didn't have to wonder about her relationship with God. She knew Him. She spoke with Him often in the cool of the day when He walked in the Garden. Eve's life was something that today we can only dream about; one we can only imagine. We have never seen or felt the perfection Eve had in her life. Eve truly had it all.

Well, almost all. There was one thing she didn't have: permission to eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. And Eve's desire to eat of that fruit became her stumbling block, affecting not only her life and her husband's life, but the lives of all humankind to follow. The one thing she couldn't have is what she had to have.

—Karin Schalk, *Eve: A Matter of Choice*

Discuss how we are all so often like Eve.

Review Romans 5:12–19.

Adam's sin brought sin to us all, but Jesus' obedience made forgiveness available to all.

Point 2: Continued sin leads to rejection of God.

While Adam and Eve disobeyed God, they did not completely reject God. Some throughout history have rejected Him, and this is a dangerous progression.

Review Romans 1:18–32.

Several times we see the phrase "God gave them over" here in Romans 1. Point out the things God is giving these people over to as they progress in their sin and reject God. Note the similarities between this passage and our practices in America.

Read Romans 8:5–8.

In these verses we have an answer to the dilemma found in Romans 1. In Romans 1, we see people who have rejected God and have their minds set on fleshly desires. These people are in a continual downward spiral, out of control. But here we read of a person whose mind is set on godly things. And this person whose mind is governed by the Spirit finds life and peace, rather than ever-increasing sin.

In our younger years, confusion often abounds. We wonder who will be our friend from day-to-day. Who will we marry? How will we make a living? What's my calling? Why are my parents fighting? Why did my parents divorce? How can I live in this new, blended family? How do I respond to bullying?

So many questions. So much confusion. And then you throw our selfish, self-serving, overly sexualized and perverted media into the mix, and you're left with little to hold onto. We are pulled in a million different directions as we are immersed in a sinful society. Christianity can be confusing enough on its own, but all these extra forces make it even tougher.

This is where the Spirit of God comes in. A life governed by the Spirit finds life and peace. In a world that can bring us nothing but confusion, this is a promise we can all latch onto.

Small Group Discussion:

What does a life and a mind "governed by the Spirit" look like?

Point 3: Sin comes from obedience to our selfish inclinations.

Explain that when we are in sin, we are not controlled by God or following His Spirit, obviously.

Ask: *"When we are in sin, what does control us?"* (our sinful desires and selfish inclinations)

Read Mark 7:20–23.

Small Group Discussion:

According to this passage, where does sin begin? (in our hearts)

And when there's evil in our hearts, what happens to our actions? (They are also evil)

So can we fix our hearts by simply changing our actions? (No, change must begin on the inside.)

Read Romans 7:14–25. Discuss the struggle of sin that seems to be outlined here.

Small Group Discussion:

What do you think Paul is describing?

Is he talking about a personal struggle?

Is he talking about his struggle before salvation, or is he describing a struggle he has after salvation?

Why would this question even be important?

ILLUSTRATE IT

Paul's Battle

The immense popularity of this part of the letter derives from the fact that Christians can readily identify with its depiction of the struggle with sin. Interpreting this section as the dilemma of the Christian has had a long history within the church. Those in denominations with roots in the Holiness Movement of the nineteenth century have likewise identified with the struggle depicted here. That being said, we all share a personal interest in knowing whether Paul is expressing the dilemma of a (saved or unsaved) person. If Paul is speaking as a believer, then it assists us in coming to grips with our own inabilities and frustrations. However, if we teach that a constant inability to do what God desires, accompanied by a sense of despair because sin is in control, is normative for believers, it will affect their determination and how they pursue holiness. But which interpretation reflects the truth Paul was communicating? (Van Johnson, *Full Life Bible Commentary: Romans*).

The author of this commentary came to the conclusion that Romans 7 refers to an unbeliever, but as even he pointed out, many in the church historically have taken a different view. So, what do you think?

While many debate what Paul is describing here, one thing is clear—overcoming the sinful nature is a battle. Thankfully, Paul gives us the answer to overcoming this battle in Romans 8.

Read Romans 8:1–13 carefully, and **discuss** how Paul describes a life free from sin and disobedience through the Spirit.

LOCK IT DOWN (Conclusion)

The dilemma of sin is a big one, and it's not getting any better. We are surrounded by sinful images, practices, and thoughts. Sin is practiced openly and without shame.

Discuss the sins your students saw openly occurring in the past week. **List** them on a board or flipchart if you can.

We see these things occurring regularly, and it can be very easy to become completely desensitized to them.

Small Group Discussion:

What's the danger in becoming desensitized to sin?

When we become desensitized, we begin to accept things without thinking about them. The more homosexuality we see, the easier it is to glance over it. The more abortions we hear of, the easier it becomes to stop thinking about them. The more fornication or pornography we see and hear of, the less likely we are to avoid it.

Our world is on the downward spiral we read of in Romans 1. This is a scary thought. But we have a challenge: We are to be holy in an unholy world. We are to be light in the darkness. Light is the complete opposite of darkness, and holiness is the opposite of unholiness. A life of holiness is the opposite of a life of sin.

But what about your life? Are you living an opposite life to the world? How different does your life look like than that of the unsaved? Can someone pick you out on the street and identify you as Christian? We like to blend in and avoid causing waves, but when we live in an unholy world as holy people, we won't be able to avoid standing out. So, if you're not standing out amidst unholy people, are you actually living in holiness?

Hmmm. That's a good question. Perhaps we should start asking ourselves that one daily.

Parent Discussion Page
Lesson 1: Sin vs. Holiness

PARENTS:

This week we began our “Quest for Holiness.” Perhaps your entire church is on this quest. This week, your child/children discussed a lesson entitled “Sin vs. Holiness.” Below, you will find some of the questions discussed in class. You might be interested in following this up with a discussion of your own at home this week.

- *What does it mean to be holy?*
- *What does it mean to be sanctified?*
- *Is holiness more about what we do, or who we are?*
- *Do you ever see Christians do unholy things?*
- *How do such actions affect your view of these Christians?*
- *Do you judge others by what they do, or by who they claim to be?*
- *Have you ever felt that people judged you based on your Christian “performance”?*
- *Have you ever judged someone else’s level of holiness based on their outward appearance or actions?*
- *Do you believe you have been sanctified? If so, what makes you believe this?*
- *Do you think sanctification is a one-time occurrence, or an ongoing experience? Why?*
- *Have you sinned since becoming a Christian? Does this failure mean you’re not sanctified, holy, or worse, not saved at all?*

Read Genesis 2:15–17 and 3:1–13.

- *Why do you think Eve gave in to the serpent’s argument and ate the apple?*

Read Romans 8:5–8.

- *What does a life and a mind “governed by the Spirit” look like?*

Read Mark 7:20–23.

- *According to this passage, where does sin begin? (in our hearts)*
- *And when there’s evil in our hearts, what happens to our actions? (They are also evil)*
- *So can we fix our hearts by simply changing our actions? (No, change must begin on the inside.)*

Read Romans 7:14–25.

- *What do you think Paul is describing?*
- *Is he talking about a personal struggle?*
- *Is he talking about his struggle before salvation, or is he describing a struggle he has after salvation?*
- *Why would this question even be important?*
- *What’s the danger in becoming desensitized to sin?*

Note: Parents can also download this page at www.questforholiness.org



Youth

Lesson 2

EMBRACE YOUR NEW NATURE

SET IT UP (Introduction)

Small Group Discussion:

When someone says, “that’s my nature”, what does he or she mean?

What is the nature of a sinner?

What is the nature of a saint?

How is the nature of a sinner changed to the nature of the saint?

To move from sin to holiness, we need a completely new nature, a nature that is compatible with holiness. Sin and holiness are polar opposites. They are incompatible and as such they are mutually exclusive; they cannot exist together; there is no common ground between the two.

ILLUSTRATE IT

You Can’t Ride the Fence

If any athlete was known for focus, it was Michael Jordan. In Jordan’s book, *Driven from Within*, Fred Whitfield, former president and chief operating officer of the NBA’s Charlotte Bobcats basketball team, tells a fascinating story about something Jordan did while getting ready to go out one evening. When Jordan asked if he could borrow a jacket from Whitfield, he found that Whitfield’s closet was filled with both Nike and Puma products. The Nike outfits had been given to Whitfield because of his relationship with Jordan, who had a lucrative contract with the company. The Puma outfits had been given to Whitfield because of his relationship with ex-basketball player and Puma representative Ralph Sampson. Whitfield recalls that Jordan walked into the living room, laid all the Puma gear on the floor, and went into the kitchen to grab a butcher knife. When Jordan returned to the living room, he proceeded to cut all of the Puma clothes to shreds. He then picked up the scraps and carried everything to the dumpster. Once Jordan came back inside, he turned to Fred and said, “Don’t ever let me see you in anything other than Nike. You can’t ride the fence!”

—T. Ranier, and E. Geiger, *Simple Church*

Ask: “Do you think Christians ever try to ride the fence between sin and holiness?”

Peter Marshall, former Chaplain of the U.S. Senate, described many Christians as follows: “We are too Christian really to enjoy sinning, and too fond of sinning really to enjoy Christianity” (as quoted by Calvin Miller in *Once Upon A Tree*).

Ask: “Do you agree with Marshall? Why or why not?”

Undoubtedly, the appeal of sin is powerful. In such a sinful world, with so many ungodly distractions vying for our attention, we may wonder just how we are to live in a holy manner. Some might even feel that the pull of sin is so strong that it is just too difficult, if not impossible, to live genuinely holy lives.

Consider this illustration.

ILLUSTRATE IT

The Gravity of Sin

Whilst in a garden, in a contemplative mood, observing an apple fall from a tree, Sir Isaac Newton was inspired to formulate his theory of gravitation, or so the story goes. Whether or not the apple event is true, that invisible force that would pull an apple downward, never upward, every time, is undeniable.

The Law of Gravity can be likened to the Law of Sin that operates in our members, of which Paul spoke in Romans 7:7–8:4. Sin pulls us downward, never upward, every time. It is a force so powerful that, left to our own devices, we would never counteract it; we would be forever down.

Small Group Discussion:

How have you seen this law of sin operating in your life or in the lives of others?

To overcome the power of sin, we need a new nature; one that no longer responds to the downward pull of sin, as the old nature did. We need a nature that is dead to sin and over which sin has no power. This new nature has its roots in the heavens and from there we feel a new force that pulls us closer to God.

In this lesson, we will explore this new nature and how it serves as a vehicle that propels us from sin to holiness.

LET IT GO (Lesson Presentation)

Point 1: The Who: Jesus

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17: “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

Jesus is the Source of this new nature and it is made available to us via the new birth. We experience a change in our nature upon being born again. In Christ, we are brand new people.

Because of the born again experience through Christ we are no longer of the flesh. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6, 7).

Note: According to 2 Peter 1:3, 4, through the divine power of Christ, we have become “partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”

Point 2: The How: The Cross.

Richard S. Taylor, in *Life in the Spirit*, wrote, “Jesus did not die to make holiness unnecessary, but to make it possible.”

Discuss: *What you think Taylor meant by this?*

Without the atoning sacrifice of Christ, our holiness would be impossible. There would be no new nature to receive. We would need to continue the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament because without the shedding of blood there can be no remission of sin.

Read Colossians 1:21–23.

Sin created a rift between God and man, and made us enemies of God. This rift could be bridged and this hostility could be squelched by divine means only. Though God did not cause this rift, nor is He an enemy to us, it was He alone who could address this separation and hostility between His creation and Himself. So, it was through the shedding of His blood on the cross that Christ was able to make peace and end the hostility between God and mankind. He bridged the gap.

In verses 21 and 22 of Colossians 1, we see that we are no longer enemies of God but we have been reconciled through Christ Jesus, and as such we are presented holy in God’s sight. Our holiness is dependent upon and established in what Jesus did on the cross. There is no mention here of being presented in God’s sight as holy because we ponder holy thoughts, present a holy attitude, or partake in holy deeds. The door from sin to holiness is Christ and His redemptive work on the cross.

Small Group Discussion:

If your holy deeds don’t make you holy, if it’s all about what Jesus did that really allows you to move from sin to holiness, do you need to do anything further? Can you just sit back, relax, and enjoy this holy ride to heaven, given that Jesus did all the work?

Take note of the “if” in verse 23. This awesome benefit of being presented holy is a finished work indeed; nothing can undo what Christ did. However, we have the responsibility of responding in obedience to this Gospel and to not stray away from it. We have a responsibility to walk in holiness.

Point 3: The What: What is the nature of this new nature?

Read Ephesians 4:24. “Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” Another name for this new nature is the “new man” and, from this Scripture verse, we see that this new nature is holy and righteous.

Read Romans 6:1–11 and **Discuss** the paradox of this new nature (*Paradox: It’s both dead and alive*).

This new nature is dead yet alive. It is dead to sin; sin has been rendered powerless over this new nature. It is sinless and in it is found no inclination to sin. However, though dead, it is yet alive, alive unto God.

There are two things at play here:

- 1) Believers in Christ are now free to move from the realm of sin because their new nature is dead to it. The believer is no longer bound and shackled to sin; there is no more relationship to sin.
- 2) With this new nature, believers now have the vehicle to enter holiness because they can have a nature suited to it: a sinless, holy nature.

Small Group Discussion:

What is the relationship between our nature and our actions?

How do we move from behaving as sinners to behaving as saints? (Our actions come out of our nature. With God's nature you cannot habitually practice sin.)

Read 1 John 3:4–10. Note how verse 9 reads in the Amplified version: “No one born (begotten) of God [deliberately, knowingly, and habitually] practices sin, for **God's nature abides in him** [His principle of life . . . remains permanently within him]; and he cannot practice sinning because he is born (begotten) of God.”

Remind students to keep their focus on the “who” and the “how.” As they do this, it will help guide their actions and remind them of who they are in Christ; and out of their “who” will come their “do.” It will help prevent them from becoming legalistic in their living and keep their hearts tender to Christ as they walk in this new nature.

Discuss: *Why do I still do wrong things and think wrong thoughts if I have a new nature and am now holy?*

“The Christian life is a process. Although we have a new nature, we don't automatically have all good thoughts and attitudes when we become new people in Christ. But if we keep listening to God, we will be changing all the time.” (*Life Application Bible*, KJV, Notes on Ephesians 4:17–24).

Point out that Romans 12:2 admonishes us to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. This “renewing” suggests an ongoing process. We might still have incorrect mindsets and ungodly strongholds in our minds, but with this new nature, our conscience is awakened to righteousness. What didn't bother us before will begin to bother us now if it is contrary to God and our new nature.

Moreover, when we receive Christ as Savior, we are declared righteous. We are set apart unto God; we are now holy. Now, in our separation, it doesn't mean that we are error free or that we are perfect in all our thoughts and ways. For example, when God told Moses to take his shoes off because the ground upon which he stood was holy, it didn't mean the ground was free from all impurities. Actually, if the ground beneath Moses' feet could speak, I wonder what it would say. Maybe something like this: “Holy? Who me? With all this dirt, *I'm* holy? You must be mistaken; I'm not holy at all.”

Of course, it would be the ground that was mistaken because indeed it was holy. It was holy because 1) God declared it as such, 2) For that moment it was set apart for God's use, and 3) God Himself was there. In like manner, God Himself is in you if you have accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior. Therefore, you are now holy, set apart. You are now the temple of the living God, the temple of the Holy Ghost! As such, touch not the unclean thing. Why? Because you are now holy.

LOCK IT DOWN (CONCLUSION)

Discuss some ways that students can practice holiness.

Encourage students to begin, and/or continue, practicing the spiritual disciplines, such as prayer, Bible reading and studying, fasting, meditating, solitude, fellowship, to name a few.

Read 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1.

Ask: *“Is Paul suggesting that we never associate with unsaved people?”*

Living separate, holy lives is required of all believers; however, Paul did not mean for us to isolate ourselves from nonbelievers. We must be zealous in our Christian witness to them, but as one preacher said, “We must be careful that we are affecting them and they are not infecting us.” We must never compromise our faith and holiness. We should avoid relationships and situations that would cause us to do so.

Lastly, keep moving forward in this quest for holiness, both in study and in practice. Because for you to return to what you knew, to move backwards from holiness to sin, would indeed be like a dog going back to his vomit (nasty, I know, but very true). Sin is no longer yours to embrace. Leave the vomit behind; your nature is now holy. Proceed into deeper levels of holiness. Seek to be more like the holy, holy, holy God that separated you unto Himself. Embrace your new nature—be holy.

Parent Discussion Page
Lesson 2: From Sin to Holiness

PARENTS:

This week we continued our “Quest for Holiness” and your child/ children discussed a lesson entitled “From Sin to Holiness.” We took a look at the new and holy nature that we have in and through Christ Jesus and how it propels us from sin to holiness. You might be interested in following this up with a discussion of your own at home this week.

MAIN POINTS:

- 1) **Who** is responsible for giving us this new nature? (2 Corinthians 5:17; John 3:5–8; 2 Peter 1:3, 4)
- 2) **How** is this new nature made available to us? (Colossians 1:21–23)
- 3) **What** is the nature of this new nature? (Ephesians 4:24, Romans 6:1–11, and 1 John 3:4–10)

DISCUSSION OPTIONS:

- *When someone says, “That’s my nature,” what does he or she mean?*
- *What is the nature of a sinner? What is the nature of a saint?*
- *How is the nature of a sinner changed to the nature of a saint?*
- *Peter Marshall, former Chaplain of the U.S. Senate, described many Christians as follows: “We are too Christian really to enjoy sinning and too fond of sinning really to enjoy Christianity” (as quoted by Calvin Miller in Once Upon A Tree). Do you agree with Marshall? Why or why not?*
- *How have you seen the law of sin operating in your life or in the lives of others?*

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17; John 3:5–8; 2 Peter 1:3, 4.

- *Jesus is the source of our new nature via the new birth, being born again.*

Read Colossians 1:21–23.

- *Richard S. Taylor, in *Life in the Spirit*, wrote, “Jesus did not die to make holiness unnecessary, but to make it possible.” Discuss what you think Taylor meant by this.*
- *If your holy deeds don’t make you holy, if it’s all about what Jesus did that really allows you to move from sin to holiness, do you need to do anything further? Can you just sit back, relax, and enjoy this holy ride to heaven, given that Jesus did all the work?*

Read Ephesians 4:24; Romans 6:1–11; 1 John 3:4–10.

- *Discuss the paradox of this new nature (Paradox: It’s both dead and alive).*
- *What is the relationship between our nature and our actions?*
- *How do we move from behaving in the nature of a sinner to behaving in the nature of a saint?*
- *Why do I still do wrong things and think wrong thoughts if I have a new nature and am now holy?*

Read 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1.

- *Is Paul suggesting that we never associate with unsaved people?*

Note: Parents can also download this page at www.questforholiness.org



Youth

Lesson 3

SANCTIFICATION: WALKING IN THE LIGHT

SET IT UP (Introduction)

Small Group Discussion:

How does our relationship with God affect our daily living?

Is saying "I believe in, and have a relationship with, God" enough?

Read 1 John 1:5.

Ask: "How is God described in this passage?"

Here, God is described as light. Light is a common metaphor in the ancient world and also in Scripture. John uses the contrast between "light" and "darkness" to illustrate his point. Light can symbolize things such as truth, righteousness, and purity. God is the true, genuine light that shines on every person. The mission of the Light is to shine in the darkness, illuminating that which is dark. Asserting that God is Light indicates that God is the source of revelation and illumination.

Small Group Activity:

Take some time to think about why John would describe God as light. Create a "T" chart and write down at least five characteristics of light. Next to each of those qualities, write how God might be like that quality.

Characteristics of light:

e.g. Light allows us to see

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

God's Comparison:

e.g. God allows us to see how to live life

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Light enables people to do their work. It produces growth in crops; it reveals beauty and provides safety. Light represents what is good, pure, true, holy, and reliable. God is fully light and there is no place for darkness in or around him—at all. Darkness represents the contrary—whatever is sinful and evil. Light also relates to truth because light exposes whatever exists, whether it is good or bad (Psalm 119:105; Proverbs 6:23; John 1:4, 8:12).

Read 1 John 1:6–10, 2:9–11.

Ask: “*What ethical and/or moral obligations do you see in these passages?*”

If we claim to have fellowship (be connected) with God we are to:

- 1) not walk in darkness (falsehood and sin) but in light (truth and holiness).
- 2) not claim perfection or to be self-righteous but live a life of continual confession before the Lord.
- 3) since we walk in light and live a life of confession, we are not easily given to hate, gossip or division but we act in love toward others.

The purpose of this lesson is to analyze each of these three important aspects of sanctification (living a life of consecration before the Lord) and their impact on our lives.

LET IT GO (LESSON Presentation)

Point 1: Walk the Walk!

Discuss: “*What does it mean to “walk in the light?”*”

Reread 1 John 1:5–10.

Discuss: “*What does it look like to “walk in darkness?”*”

The term *walking* refers to our manner of life or conduct. Walking in darkness is being controlled by desires for this world instead of desires for God. This is done when people are blind to the light of God. Everyone who loves the world more than God is in the dark. When you walk in darkness, you are controlled by the desires of prestige and power and of the “two-second-pleasures.” You seek to satisfy your own desires and ambition. Nothing bothers; nothing is wrong; nothing matters. Walking in darkness is walking in sin, ignorance, and disobedience. It is life with the absence of God, who is light. Walking in darkness is the opposite of having fellowship with God. If we claim to have fellowship with God, but we walk in darkness, we are making our true nature even more evident—we are liars and the truth (light) of God does not dwell in us.

Discuss the lifestyle of an individual who walks in the light.

Walking in the light means walking in truth and holiness. Once we commit our lives to Christ, we become children of God. Children inherit certain characteristics from their parents. Children of God will conduct themselves in a manner worthy of their title as children of God. The character of God becomes manifest in the lives of those who follow Him. Therefore, since God is light, his children walk in light. They live truthfully and righteously before God and men. This requires constant contact with God. It’s a call to live transparently. It’s not a life that imitates other Christians; instead; it comes from continuous efforts to be transformed to the likeness of Christ from the inside out.

True Christians are not just hearers or speakers—they are doers. They don't just talk the talk but they walk the walk! They walk in the light—in the truth—of Christ!

Point 2: Don't Stress the Case!

Small Group Discussion:

What does it mean to be sanctified?

Can a believer commit sin after being sanctified?

Do you believe you've experienced sanctification? Why or why not? How?

Read 1 John 2:1–6.

John wants us to understand that we should walk as people of the light, rather than in darkness. However, he also wants us to know that if we fail (and we will at times), God has provided a provision for our sin. Jesus Christ is “the one who speaks to the Father in our defense.”

Reread 1 John 2:1. Have students mark (circle, underline, highlight, etc) the word *advocate*.

Ask: “What does the word “advocate” bring to mind for you? What is the job description of such person?”

John 16:7 translates the word *advocate* as “helper; one who comes alongside.” This word also conveys the idea of a modern-day defense attorney. Satan prosecutes believers night and day before the Father due to sin (Revelation 12:10), yet Jesus offers not only sympathy for our situation, but also a complete cancellation of the charges. He bases this defense on His ultimate sacrifice on the cross of Calvary.

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ was the **propitiation** for our sin, simply meaning that God's wrath was completely “satisfied” with the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 2:3). Every time we fail to meet the standard of holiness, thankfully, Jesus ‘comes alongside and reminds us of His great love demonstrated on the cross, showing the Father that the penalty for our sin has already been paid.

A result of walking in the light and confessing our sin is that the blood of Jesus cleanses us from every sin. The verb *cleanses* also means, “purifies.” Sin is not only forgiven, it is erased. Jesus does the complete job. In Old Testament times, believers would symbolically transfer their sins to an animal, which then would be sacrificed. The animal would die in their place to pay for their sin and to allow them to continue living in God's favor. A more detailed explanation of this ritual is found in Leviticus 4. All this serves as a representation of Jesus Christ's sacrifice. Real cleansing from sin came when He, the “Lamb of God”, took away the sins of the world (John 1:29). There is enough power in the blood of Jesus to forgive our past, present, and future sins.

Ask: “Does this principle give liberty to the Christian to continue practicing sin?”

Throughout this letter, John emphasizes that he wrote it so his readers would not sin. Followers of Christ no longer love sin as they once did. They no longer desire the things of this world, but those of the kingdom of Christ. True believers no longer brag about sin, they no longer want to remember sin, they no longer plan to sin; they avoid sin altogether.

Those who “walk in the light” will still find themselves battling with sin. Though Jesus condemned sin once and for all, Christians still sin. The struggle between the old nature and the new nature will continue until Christ comes to make his people perfect. Until then, however, they

desire to walk in the light to the best of their ability and refuse to consciously harbor sin. When they do sin, however, God has already made provision to deal with those sins through Jesus Christ. Because sin is not completely eradicated from the lives of those who believe in Jesus, God graciously gave his followers a way out of this problem: *Confession* (1 John 1:9).

To confess our sins means to agree with God that an act or thought was wrong and see to it that it does not happen again. Confession is essential for maintaining continual fellowship with God. This brings about a freedom to enjoy fellowship with Christ. At conversion, God, through Christ, forgives all our sin. We do not need to confess the sins of the past all over again and we do not need to fear that God will reject us if we don't keep our record spotless. Believers' relationship with Christ is secure! We have a defender! We have the best lawyer with the most stylish credentials—Jesus Christ! He is faithful and true to His Word.

Point 3: It's All About Love!

Small Group Discussion:

How is fellowship both vertical and horizontal?

Are love and holiness connected?

Read 1 John 2:9–11.

Discuss who is considered a “brother”? (Is this discussing the household of faith or everyone?)

It's simple: if we don't have love for our brother (neighbor, fellow Christian, associates, etc), then we are not living in the light. A person who is living in the light is an individual who is completely transparent, filled with love, peace, understanding, and patience; one who lives out in the open and has nothing to hide.

Read 1 Corinthians 13 for a biblical explanation of love.

We cannot claim holiness and sanctification while having anger or even animosity toward anyone. Love is the highest standard of holiness. It can be summed up into what the Bible considers the Greatest Commandment: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and love your neighbor as yourself” (Luke 10:27). We have a divine mandate to walk in the light, and this involves much more than forsaking sin—it involves complete reconciliation with our neighbors, friends, family, and enemies. If we are to seek holiness at its peak, we must resolve our differences and put others first. Love is the greatest mark of a true believer. It is considered a new commandment and a way of life. If we express love in our conduct, we show that there has been transformation. Jesus commands you to “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” (Matthew 5:16).

Small Group Discussion:

What are some practical ways we can “love others”?

How should conflict be resolved in the church?

How can we avoid future conflict in the church?

What is more difficult: loving God or loving others? Why?

LOCK IT DOWN (Conclusion)

In the past, sanctification has been a term to describe deliverance from sinful actions—suddenly. Sanctification goes further than instantaneous deliverance from sin and the sinful nature. It is the enabling of the believer through the power of the Holy Spirit to overcome sin. God provides you with power through the death of Jesus Christ and the Spirit that resurrected Christ from the dead and you have to make a daily decision to walk in the light. Remember:

1. We are not to settle at the foot of cross and expect our Christian walk to be victorious. We are to continue in Christ, walking in his marvelous light. This is a journey that we're taking with Christ Jesus. Let's make sure we are letting His light shine upon us, in us, and through us for the glory of God.
2. The sacrifice of Christ has given us direct access and a guaranteed defense attorney who has never lost a case. Having Jesus alongside gives us the opportunity to communicate with him daily as we seek to be more like him through fellowship and confession.
3. Being a Christian has so many benefits. Not only are we set free and delivered from the power of sin, but we are also able to fellowship in liberty with other believers who have experienced an encounter with the loving God.

This glorious light we walk in is Jesus Christ. The excellent advocate who pleads our case is Jesus Christ. The one who brings us together in the unity of the Spirit is Jesus Christ. As you end today, give an invitation for salvation. If your entire class is saved, simply remind them of the greatest gift given to us by Jesus who revealed his marvelous light to us all, and challenge them to truly walk in his light.

Parent Discussion Page
Lesson 3: Sanctified Living

PARENTS:

This week we continued our “Quest for Holiness.” Your child/ children discussed a lesson entitled “Sanctified Living.” We took a look at 1 John 1:5 through 2:17 and discussed what it means to live a holy life in today’s world. Below, you will find some of the questions discussed in class. You might be interested in following this up with a discussion of your own at home this week.

MAIN POINTS:

- 1) Our relationship with God is demonstrated when walking in the light (1 John 1:5–10).
- 2) Jesus Christ is our advocate: the one who speaks to the Father in our defense (1 John 2:1–6; Leviticus 4).
- 3) The highest standard of holiness is love (1 John 2:7–11; 1 Corinthians 13).

DISCUSSION OPTIONS:

- *How does our relationship with God affect our daily living?*
- *Is saying “I believe in, and have a relationship with, God” enough?*
- *What does it mean to “walk in the light”?*
- *What does it mean to be sanctified?*
- *Can a believer commit sin after being sanctified?*
- *Do you believe you’ve experienced sanctification? Why or why not? How?*
- *Are love and holiness connected?*
- *What are some practical ways we can love others?*
- *What is more difficult: loving God or loving others? Why?*

Read 1 John 1:5.

- *How is God described in this passage?*

Read 1 John 1:6–10, 2:9–11.

- *What ethical and/or moral obligations do you see in this passage?*

Read 1 John 1:5–10.

- *What does it look like to walk in darkness?*
- *What does it look like to walk in the light?*

Read 1 John 2:1–6.

- *What does the word “advocate” bring to your mind? What are an advocate’s responsibilities?*
- *Does this idea of Jesus as our advocate give liberty to the Christian to continue practicing sin?*

Note: Parents can also download this page at www.questforholiness.org



Youth

Lesson 4

DEVELOP GODLY CHARACTER

SET IT UP (Introduction)

To illustrate the importance of development, have pictures of a fetus in the mother's womb, week-by-week. Discuss how the pictures illustrate development from one month to the next, and how amazing God's creation of life truly is.

Small Group Discussion:

What does it mean to "develop"?

How does "development" occur in our spiritual lives?

Why is development important in our walk with Christ?

God calls us to be holy, to set ourselves apart, to dedicate our lives to a relationship with Him and Him alone. However, holiness does not stop when we understand the nature of sin and the consequences attached to it. It does not even stop when we make the firm decision to live a sanctified life; that is really only the beginning! After we make these decisions, we start "developing" and growing to become like our model: Jesus Christ.

LET IT GO (Lesson Presentation)

Point 1: Metamorphosis of the Heart: let God reshape your heart (Ezekiel 36:26, 27)

Have a list of news, facts, and human rights issues that display the cruel and sinful nature of humans. Discuss how human nature seems to lean toward evil.

Ask: *"Can we change the evil inclinations of our hearts by our own efforts?"*

The word *metamorphosis* can be defined as "a change of physical form, structure, or substance especially by supernatural means" (Merriam-Webster online dictionary).

Since we have established that human beings cannot change their heart or alter their sinful nature by their own efforts, it is clear that we need an antidote. We need something (or someone) stronger than ourselves. It is hard to visualize and know how repulsive our situation was to our God who is holy, pure, and righteous.

Ask: *“Have you ever dropped something you valued into a toilet?”*

When something valuable falls into something dirty (like the toilet bowl for example), we are likely hesitant and uncomfortable about recovering it, yet we do it because it is important to us. Jesus stepped down into evil, dirty, filthy humanity to save something that was valuable to God—YOU. Jesus willingly and lovingly came to save us from ourselves (from our inherited nature) and from the death sentence that we deserved for all the offenses committed against God.

ILLUSTRATE IT

An excellent, although lengthy, illustration about cleansing called “Foot Washers in Ethiopia” can be found at the following link:

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2011/may/footwashers.html?start=1>

Or, you may simply share a personal story of God’s forgiving and cleansing power in your life.

Small Group Discussion:

Have you ever sinned against God?

What do you think your punishment should have been?

Is the punishment for our sins mentioned in the Bible too severe?

Read and discuss the following passages:

- Romans 3:23
- Romans 6:23
- Romans 1:18–32

When we realize and accept that only God can transform our hearts, we take the first step in transformation.

Ask: *“How do we let God transform our hearts?”*

Review Genesis 22, where God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son, Isaac. **Discuss** Abraham’s willingness to do the unthinkable.

Ask: “What areas of sin do we struggle to give up? Why is it so hard for us to let go?”

We need to surrender everything to Him. When we willingly hand our lives over to God, His Holy Spirit performs a sort of “cardiac metamorphosis.” We get a new heart by faith. As long as we insist on having our way, God will not force Himself on us. He will patiently wait for us to give into His nudgings.

Small Group Discussion:

Does surrendering your heart to God seem like an easy task?

What choices will you make to allow God’s transforming power in your life?

Is God truly the King of my life when I neglect my relationship with Him?

Once we are willing to let God transform us, everything will begin to fall into place (Psalm 37:4, 5). When we give God control, we take control away from other harmful influences. This includes depression, wrong relationships, doubts, lack of forgiveness, sexual sin, and any other kind of bondage. As He becomes a resident in us, our priorities change and we start looking like Him. This is how we develop godly character.

Point 2: Where the Rubber Meets the Road: the right ingredients for healthy development

Once you hand the controls of your life completely to God, there are a few things God wants to develop in you as come to know Him more intimately.

Read 2 Peter 1:2–11.

Several characteristics of godliness are listed in verses 5–8. Ask the students to call them out in order, and list these on the board.

A) FAITH

Faith is believing in what we do not see (Hebrews 11:1) which includes God and His promises. Sometimes we struggle with trusting in God because we cannot physically see Him. This is why our faith is a shield against ideologies that want to trouble our holy relationship with the Father.

Developing a godly character also requires putting our faith into action.

How do you acquire faith? It grows as you hear the Word of God (Romans 10:17) and as it is tested through trials.

Small Group Discussion:

How does it feel when I lack faith?

Why do I lack faith in some circumstances but at other times I feel stronger?

B) GOODNESS

Goodness is a fruit of the spirit as well as a quality that is defined in the dictionary as being “the quality or state of being good, a virtue” (Merriam-Webster online).

Producing fruit of the Spirit requires that we allow God to dwell and work in us for a period of time. That is why the Bible says “Therefore by their fruits we will know *who the real disciples are*” (Matthew 7:20). We must learn to follow Christ in such a way that we develop evidence of His presence in us.

C) KNOWLEDGE

To develop and display godly character we must know and understand the Word of God. In the spiritual armor, the Word is a sword (Ephesians 6:10–20). In our spiritual walk we will be tempted and attacked, but the only way to stand victorious is to know God’s promises apply them to our battles. Even Jesus was tempted (Matthew 4:1–11). But He overcame because He had knowledge of the Word.

D) SELF-CONTROL

Another fruit of the Spirit, it is defined as, “restraint exercised over one’s impulses, emotions or desires.” The Bible clearly says “God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline” (2 Timothy 1:7, NLT).

ILLUSTRATE IT

A Sound Mind

Sound Mind, *sophronismos* (so-fron-is-moss) in Greek:

A combination of *sos*, “safe”, and *phren*, “the mind”: hence, “safe-thinking”. The word denotes good judgment, disciplined thought patterns, and the ability to understand and make right decisions. It includes the qualities of self-control and self-discipline. The Bible teaches that Christians are to have a sound mind. This means a mind that is not ruled by fear, anxiety, paranoia, depression, mood swings, and panic attacks. Through reading the Word of God and staying filled with the Holy Spirit, the believer’s mind should be filled with peace, creativity, good judgment, wisdom, common sense, energy, clear thinking, and productivity.

—*Spirit Filled Life Bible for Students*,
“Commentary on 2 Timothy 1:7”, 1584)

E) PERSEVERANCE

Read Romans 5:3–5.

We all go through hard times that the Bible sometimes calls “tribulations.” They may occur as a consequence to our disobedience, but often they happen as a test to produce perseverance. Sad and painful situations may seem unbearable, but God promises that in the end everything will work out for our good. He also promises that we will never be tested beyond what we can bear. Just like a muscle is developed by applying force and resistance through weightlifting, so our faith is developed through spiritual force and resistance.

F) GODLINESS

It is defined as “The whole of practical piety; it supposes knowledge, veneration, affection, dependence, submission, gratitude, and obedience” (www.biblegateway.com). It is a state of being “like God”.

Ask: *“How can we be godly?”*

G) BROTHERLY KINDNESS

Brotherly kindness is the goodness manifested to our brothers and sisters derived from love (which is God Himself because He is love [1 John 4:8]). Our loving actions give life to our faith (James 2:14-20) and show to the world that we are disciples of Jesus Christ (John 13: 35).

H) LOVE

Fittingly, this list ends with love. It is the ultimate goal of the Christian faith.

Ask: *“What movies have you seen recently? How was love portrayed in these movies?”*

Ask: *“What is love to you?”*

Read through 1 Corinthians 13, and compare this idea of love with what is portrayed in the media.

As we read through that passage and the rest of the Bible, we discover that love is not a mere feeling, but it is one of the many facets of our God. Often the media teaches us to rely on our hearts and feelings to know when we are in love or to know when to show others love. The only problem with this idea is that Jeremiah 17:9 tells us the heart is deceitful and always looking for ways to trick us. According to Scripture, real love requires commitment, calls for sacrifice, and makes us forget about ourselves and focus on others. In fact, the first and most important commandment has to do with loving God with ALL that we are.

Read Matthew 22:36–40

The Israelites were given ten commandments. Here, Jesus is asked to pick one as the greatest. He picks the first: Love God. And then He adds a bit: Love your neighbor. He says ALL other biblical writings hang on these commandments. Love truly is the most important factor as we seek to develop godly character.

Small Group Discussion:

How has the church failed to show love?

How has the church succeeded in showing love?

How does love relate to holiness and sanctification?

What can we do this week to show God’s love to others?

LOCK IT DOWN (Conclusion)

The Christian life is not a static one. We cannot sit stagnantly in Christ. We can never stop maturing and growing. It’s been said that if you’re not moving closer to God, you’re falling further away. Our study today would seem to support this idea.

The quest for holiness does not have an end. It must be an ongoing, every day journey. We must continue becoming holy. We must continue to grow closer to God. We must strive to be *more like* Him every day. Yesterday’s growth means little today. Today is another day for growth, and if we do not grow today, we have failed. We must continually seek and work to develop godly character.

Are you holier today than you were yesterday? Are you closer to God today than you were yesterday? What have you done today to draw closer to God? Perhaps we should start making intentional and specific plans for our journey.

When you're on a quest for holiness, a map sure does help.

ILLUSTRATE IT!

X Marks the Spot

Give each student a blank piece of paper and ask them to draw a map that will help lead them to holiness. On a map, there are specific markers, or points, that help us identify where we are on the journey. Ask the students to list a few things that need to be overcome in their lives, then, tell them to make these the markers on their journey. Challenge them to begin asking God to help them overcome each situation, and as God does this, they can check it off the list. In a few weeks, revisit the lists and see if God hasn't moved them forward on their journey of holiness.

Parent Discussion Page
Lesson 4: Develop Godly Character

PARENTS:

We are now into week 4 in our “Quest for Holiness.” Perhaps your entire church is on this quest. This week, your child/children discussed a lesson entitled “Develop Godly Character.” Below, you will find some of the questions discussed in class. You might be interested in following this up with a discussion of your own at home this week.

MAIN POINTS:

- 1) Metamorphosis of the Heart: let God reshape your heart (Ezekiel 36:26, 27).
- 2) Where the Rubber Meets the Road: the right ingredients for healthy development (2 Peter 1:2–11).

DISCUSSION OPTIONS:

- *Can a human being change their heart by their own efforts?*
- *Have you ever sinned against God?*
- *What do you think your punishment should be for your sins?*
- *How do we allow God to transform our hearts?*
- *Does surrendering your heart to God seem like an easy task?*
- *What choices will I make to allow God’s transformation in my life?*
- *Can I say God is my King but neglect my relationship with Him?*
- *Why do I lack faith in certain circumstances but at other times I feel stronger?*
- *What is love to you?*

Read Romans 1:18–32.

- *Why do you think we need a new heart?*

Read Ephesians 4:14–16.

- *According to Paul, why is it important to develop godly character?*

Note: Parents can also download this page at www.questforholiness.org



Youth

Lesson 5

FINDING TRUE HOLINESS

SET IT UP (Introduction)

Take a bottle and fill it almost full with tap water (fill 98 percent with water), then put in two percent sewage water. Remove the label on the bottle and put on a new label that says: “98% Pure Mineral Water and 2% Sewage Water.” Explain to the young people what the bottle contains. Tell them it is a gift you brought them to drink. Tell them it is pure water with only two percent contamination.

Ask: “Will you drink the water?”

Ask: “Why won’t you drink the water?”

Let’s apply this to our lives. If we give Jesus 98 percent of our lives, that doesn’t sound too bad, but that 2 percent actually means God has NONE of our lives. With Jesus, it’s all or nothing. And if we ever hope to truly find holiness, we’d better be all in.

“He that saith he abideth in him must walk as Jesus did” (1 John 2:6, NIV).

Ask: “Is it possible to be completely, 100%, holy while we are here on earth?”

This question has always been a source of discussion and controversy. There are some Christians who think it is not possible—that we can only be 100% holy when we get to heaven. Others think we can be completely holy while we are here on earth.

Sometimes we attend a service or a Bible study focused on holiness and in that moment the Holy Spirit works in our lives and we repent; we ask forgiveness from the Lord for the way we live. But should it be this way when we walk in holiness? Walking in holiness goes beyond asking for forgiveness; it is to live our daily lives free from sin.

LET IT GO (Lesson Presentation)

Point 1: The Bible says all have sinned.

Read Romans 3:23.

It is true that “all have sinned” and therefore must repent. However, the Word of God not only tells us that “all have sinned,” but also calls us to live in holiness.

Read John 14:15.

Many of us will say we love God, but we do not want to obey His commandments. In order to walk in holiness we must obey His commandments. The Word of God tells us that “all have sinned”; therefore we all need to repent, but it also tells us that “without holiness no man shall see the Lord.”

The phrase “all have sinned” doesn’t mean “we all **can** sin.” It is not a passport to sin. Instead, it is an all-encompassing call for repentance.

Point 2: The Lord tells us to sin no more.

ILLUSTRATE IT!

Go Ahead, Cast the First Stone

There was a woman who was found in the very act of adultery and the people took her to Jesus saying that the Law of Moses said she must die. She did not defend herself and it was as though she was admitting that she was actually found in sin. The people had stones with them because they wanted to kill her and they anxiously awaited Jesus’ response. To their surprise, it was not what they expected to hear. Jesus’s words were, “He, who is without sin, cast the first stone.” One by one, they began to drop their stones, recognizing that they were sinners. Interestingly, Jesus said to the woman, “Woman, where are your accusers?” and after the woman’s response, Jesus said: “GO, AND SIN NO MORE” (John 8:1–11).

Small Group Discussion:

What do you think Jesus meant when he told her, “Sin no more”?

Could he have been referring only to the sin of adultery, or any other sin?

Jesus was referring to both the sin of adultery **and** all other sins. If we have sinned, the Lord forgives our sin when we repent, but He also asks us to stop sinning.

Read Proverbs 28:13.

The Lord knows that our flesh is weak. He knows that the desires of our flesh work against the Spirit. Nevertheless, this did not prevent Him from telling us that if we confess our sins and turn away from them we will find mercy. It is very important not only to confess our sins, but also to put them away from us and sin no more.

Point 3: Is it Truly Possible to Walk in Holiness?

Read Hebrews 4:15.

Our God came to earth as a man and, according to His Word, He knows exactly what it is like to be human. He knows our weaknesses and our strengths. So if God knows exactly who we are and what we're capable of, would He dare ask of us something we cannot achieve? What do you think?

Read 1 Peter 1:14–16 and Hebrews 12:14.

Small Group Discussion:

When the Lord says in 1 Peter 1:16, "Be holy," do you think God is suggesting it would be nice to be holy, or is He saying that to see God we must be holy?

What about Hebrews 12:14—"Pursue holiness." Do you think God was suggesting that it would be good if we were holy, or is He saying that in order to see God we must be holy?

Let us examine Hebrews 12:14. It starts with a clear command, a mandate, something we must do. In some versions of the Bible it is translated as "seek." The NIV says, "Make every effort to live. . . ." The Lord tells us we must seek and make every effort to live in holiness. Then, there is a warning for those who do not live as such: "They will not see the Lord." It is important to note the word NONE. That means, young people, adults, seniors, no one who is unholy will see the Lord.

If God's Word tells us we are to be holy, seeing the need to live a life of holiness, then it is because it is achievable. Don't believe the lie that holiness cannot be attained. If you seek God, and love God, and thirst after God, you just might find it.

Point 4: How do we find holiness?

Walking in holiness is not easy, particularly in today's world where evil and temptation lie in wait around every corner. It requires courage, commitment, and love for God. Finding holiness can be as difficult as a war. In fact, IT IS A WAR.

Imagine a football game. You have the ball and you have to take it to the end zone, and your opponents will do their best to stop you. The war we are fighting is the same way and worse. Your enemy hates you so much he wants to see you completely flooded by sin. He will start with small things in order to distract you so you will not recognize his attack, but gradually his attacks will become stronger and more powerful. Moreover, if you are not careful, he will achieve his goal.

Read 1 Peter 5:8.

The Lord calls us to remain alert because our enemy is seeking whom he may devour.

Read 1 John 2:13, 14. Point out that here we read two times of young people "overcoming the evil one."

To overcome evil and truly walk in holiness, we will need the following attributes: 1) courage, 2) commitment, and 3) love for God.

A) COURAGE

No matter how strong our enemy is, God's Word tells us that the enemy is defeated, we are strong, and the Word of God abides in us. Isn't this enough to be courageous, to not be intimidated by the enemy? Obviously, we must remain alert. Remember: Our enemy is not so strong that we should become paralyzed by fear and unable to fight, but neither is he weak enough that we should not pay attention. No matter what the enemy is asking you to do, have the courage to say "no". Resist him!

B) COMMITMENT

Read Ephesians 6:10–12.

We must feel committed to the challenge of living in holiness. Imagine that you belong to a sports team and after arriving at the field, you realize you've forgotten your uniform. Will you still feel part of that team? Will they allow you to play without a uniform? Will they forgive you for leaving your uniform? You will never see a professional athlete playing without a uniform.

Our uniform is called HOLINESS and we must use it at all times. It is the way everyone identifies us as part of the army of the Lord. That is part of our commitment to this army; even when we go to work, school, the park, to the hospital, or to jail, we are committed to take our stand. We cannot quit.

C) LOVE FOR GOD

Read Mark 12:30.

The Bible not only tells us to love the Lord, but also tells us that this is the most important commandment. He commands us to love Him more, with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Ask: *"Why did the Lord tell us to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength and not just to love him?"*

If you will notice, God is asking us for the places in our lives where our emotions, attitudes, desires, thoughts, and struggles exist. The only way to walk daily in holiness is to give God our heart, soul, mind, and strength. We must fall in love with God more than anyone or anything (study, work, car, boyfriend, girlfriend, etc.), and only then will we find the ability to walk in true holiness.

LOCK IT DOWN (Conclusion)

How great it is to understand that, although all have sinned, we still have the opportunity to repent and live a different life—a life of holiness.

"Abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:22, 23).

We **can** ask the Lord to cleanse us completely and to impart to us His holiness. Remember, you are not alone in this fight. There is someone who is forever at your side and He is the Spirit of God.

Nobody gets up in the morning, fixes a cup of coffee, adds a drop of poison, stirs it and drinks it. No one buys a bottle of mineral water with a label that says, "98% Pure Mineral Water, 2% Sewage Water."

Make a commitment to yourself to live a life of holiness. I assume you did not drink the water that was two percent contaminated; likewise, God does not want you to be two percent contaminated. He wants you to be 100 percent clean from sin.

We can no longer live 98 percent holy. We must be 100 percent holy.

Call your students to a time of prayer. Ask them to seek God for cleansing, purity, sanctification, and the ability to live in true holiness day in and day out, free from sin. God can give them the ability to say "no" to temptation. They can find true holiness.

Parent Discussion Page
Lesson 5: Finding True Holiness

PARENTS:

This week we are concluding “The Quest For Holiness.” Your children studied the lesson “Finding True Holiness.” We have spent several weeks studying and searching for holiness; we have now reached the end. Does that mean that we no longer have to search for holiness? Not at all, this means we are now prepared to continue walking in holiness until Christ comes.

MAIN POINTS:

- 1) The Bible says we have all sinned (Romans 3:23; John 14:15).
- 2) The Lord tells us to sin no more (John 8:1-11; Proverbs 28:13).
- 3) Is it possible to walk in holiness? (Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 1:14-16; Hebrews 12:14)
- 4) How do we achieve it? (1 Peter 5:8)
 - a) Courage (1 John 2:13, 14)
 - b) Commitment (Ephesians 6:10-12)
 - c) Love for God (Mark 12:30)

DISCUSSION OPTIONS:

- *Is it possible to be completely holy while living here on earth?*
- *Why is God telling us to love Him with all our hearts, soul, mind, and strength, and not only to love Him? What might this imply about our behavior?*

Read Romans 3:23 and John 14:15.

- *Is the Bible giving us a license or permission to sin?*

Read John 8:1-11 and Proverbs 28:13.

- *What do you think Jesus meant when He told the women to “sin no more”?*
- *Was He referring only to the sin of adultery or all sins?*

Read Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 1:14-16, and Hebrews 12:14.

- *When God says “be holy” in 1 Peter 1:16, is He asking us to be Holy or demanding that we be holy?*
- *Consider Hebrews 12:14. Do you believe God is suggesting that we be holy? Or is He affirming that in order to see God we **MUST** be Holy?*

In this final lesson, your child was challenged to be 100% holy. We also want to challenge you, as parents, to do the same. What needs to be removed from your life? How can you be an example of holiness for your children? How can love rule and dictate all you do? Pray together as a family, asking God to lead all of you into holiness—true holiness.

Note: Parents can also download this page at www.questforholiness.org



THE QUEST FOR HOLINESS

Children's Lessons

White Wing Publishing House

Published by White Wing Publishing House
3750 Keith Street
Cleveland, TN 37312

Copyright ©2012. All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, without written permission of the publisher. Lesson Contributors, Kathy Creasy, and Bess Croyle. CPETF

Item No. 9994

Table of Contents

The Quest for Holiness

Children's Lessons

	Page
Lesson 1—My Way, God's Way	5
Bible Truth: Sin is going my way rather than God's way.	
Bible Verse: Isaiah 53:6	
Bible Lesson: Jonah 1, 2, 3:1-12	
Lesson 2—An Invitation to Sin	11
Bible Truth: Temptation is an invitation to sin. I choose to say "No."	
Bible Verse: James 1:14	
Bible Lesson: Matthew 4:1-11	
Lesson 3—Set Apart and Holy, God's Part	17
Bible Truth: God sets me apart to be holy and useful.	
Bible Verse: 2 Thessalonians 2:13	
Bible Lesson: Exodus 1-3	
Lesson 4—Yielded, My Part	23
Bible Truth: I say "Yes" to God's cleansing work in me.	
Bible Verse: Psalm 51:10	
Bible Lesson: Luke 19:1-9	
Lesson 5—Changing From The Inside Out	29
Bible Truth: I am changed as I choose God's way.	
Bible Verse: 2 Corinthians 3:18	
Bible Lesson: Acts 9:1-30	

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

Be sure to check out www.questforholiness.org for **FREE** downloadable resources!

HELPING KIDS PURSUE A SANCTIFIED LIFE
A Note To Children's Leaders

Biblical Foundation

Sanctification is not a list of rules children should follow. It is the amazing moment when God sets the believer apart for His purposes, but is also a process that lasts a lifetime. Sanctification gives children the power to say "Yes" to God and "No" to sin. It sets children apart for God's holy use. As ministers to children, we can help every child become fully engaged in this process so they have victory over sin, become mature, and are equipped for the good works God purposed them to do. When we teach foundational truths related to sanctification, we are teaching children more than simply doing good or acting properly. They will learn to think and act based upon the truths of God's Word and their lives will grow in holiness and godliness.

"Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

—1 Thessalonians 5:23, NKJV

Here are some Biblical foundations you can teach children about sanctification:

Sin is choosing to go my way rather than God's way.

"We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6, NIV).

Temptation is an invitation to sin and comes from wrong desires.

"But each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed" (James 1:14, 15, NIV).

God expects me to live a holy and useful life.

"But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, 'Be holy, for I am holy'" (1 Peter 1:15, 16, NKJV).

"In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work" (2 Timothy 2:20, NIV).

I can yield to God's cleansing work in me.

"Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20, NKJV).

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing, and perfect will" (Romans 12:1, 2, NIV).

God continually works in me to change me so I can become more and more like Christ.

"And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:18, NIV).

"Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose" (Philippians 2:12, 13, NIV).



Children's Lesson 1

MY WAY, GOD'S WAY

BIBLE TRUTH

Sin is going my way instead of God's way.

BIBLE LESSON

Story of Jonah, Jonah 1, 2, 3:1-12

BIBLE VERSE

"We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6).

Materials needed:

- Poster of Bible Truth: Sin is going my way instead of God's way.
- Rules visualized
- Balloons
- Isaiah 53:6 written on slide, poster, or chalkboard
- Words of Isaiah 53:6 written on flashcards. Make two sets of flashcards in two different colors i.e., a blue set and a yellow set.
- Video clip of the story of Jonah, slides, or character dressed as Jonah who tells his story using props such as direction sign, boat, blow up fish, etc.
- Sticky notes
- Costume for person representing Jesus, optional
- Posters of Admit, Believe, Choose

WELCOME

ACTIVITY FOR EARLY ARRIVERS

Create an activity that children can play together or individually as they arrive. Have two large signs labeled, “My Way” and “God’s Way” placed on the walls of the room. Write phrases on sheets of paper that reflect doing things our way or God’s way. Here are some suggestions:

- Give to people who are in need
- Use my money to buy stuff I want
- Complain when mom asks me to do something
- Do my chores without complaining
- Pick on a younger kid at school
- Share my school supplies with someone who forgot his
- Share my snack with a friend
- Brag about my new game
- Offer to let someone play my new game
- Say “thank you” when someone does something for me

As children come in, they can begin going through the sheets and placing them under the correct sign. After all the children arrive, you can talk about the signs and discuss if each phrase was placed under the correct sign. When a phrase is read that has been labeled “My Way” let the children respond with “That’s sin.”

COMMENT

Why did you say the phrase “That’s sin” when we talked about doing things our own way? Our Bible truth today is, “Sin is going my way instead of going God’s way. (Let the children repeat the Bible truth several times in a variety of creative ways so they will remember it.) So when we do what we want to do instead of what God wants us to do that is sin.

When all the children arrive, **review rules** in a creative way. Suggested rules are:

- Listen closely
- Keep hands and feet to self
- Stay in seat
- Participate

PRAYER

Pray with the children asking God to help them understand and apply today’s Bible truth in their everyday lives.

SECTION 1: WHAT IS THE TRUTH?

ACTIVITY TIME

Choose two players. Each player must move a balloon from starting point to ending point by blowing up and releasing the balloon. Each player must pick the balloon up wherever it lands, blow it up, and release it again until the balloon reaches the ending point.

Discuss this question: **“Did the balloon always go the way you wanted it to go?”**

COMMENT

Sometimes we act like the balloon. God has plans for us but we don't always follow His plans. We go our own way. Today's Bible verse says exactly that. (Let the children read Isaiah 53:6 with you.) “We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way” (Isaiah 53:6).

The balloon didn't always go the way you wanted it to go, did it? God has a wonderful plan for our lives. But sometimes, instead of following His plan, we go our own way. In this verse there is a word for that. Can you find the word?

Yes, the word is *iniquity*. What has God done with all of our sins? He has laid all of our sins upon Jesus. Jesus was punished for all of our sins; for each time we choose to go our own ways instead of obeying God's ways.

BIBLE VERSE FOCUS

MEMORIZATION ACTIVITY

Have children hold posters of the words from Isaiah 53:6. Have the group repeat the entire verse and then choose a word to leave out. That child turns the poster over. The verse is repeated leaving out words one by one until the verse is memorized.

SCRIPTURE REVIEW

Divide the group into two teams. Two sets of memory verse cards are mixed up and taped around the room. On the signal, the teams must go around the room gathering the words of their memory verse. (One team will collect blue word cards; the other team will collect yellow word cards.) Each team must arrange their cards in proper order as quickly as possible.

SECTION 2: WHAT DOES GOD'S WORD SAY ABOUT THE TRUTH?

BIBLE LESSON: Story of Jonah found in Jonah 1, 2, 3:1-12.

CREATIVE WAYS TO SHARE THE STORY

video clip; slides of Bible story pictures, character dressed as Jonah who tells his story using props such as direction sign, boat, blow up fish, etc.

COMMENT

Use the balloon illustration to review how we want to go our own way and how this is sin.

What are some things we do when we choose to go our own way? Jonah disobeyed. We might tell lies, steal, be unkind, act selfishly, or disobey. These are all sins.

What happened to Jonah when he did wrong things? God punished him. He sent a storm. The sailors threw Jonah into the sea.

When we choose to go our own way we are separated from God, the one who loves us. But God does not want this for us. He wants us to be with Him forever.

ILLUSTRATION (*Laid on Jesus*)

God did not want Jonah to die because of his disobedience, so he prepared a BIG fish to swallow him. And God has made a way so you do not have to be punished for your sins. Isaiah 53:6 tells us, "The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." Yes, God laid all of our sins on His Son, Jesus. Jesus did not ever go his own way. He always obeyed God, His father. But God laid our sins on Him. And because of our sins, He died on the cross.

(Let each child write a sin on a sticky note and place it on the person representing Jesus.)

Because Jesus took the punishment for your sins, you can be forgiven. You can choose to go God's way.

SECTION 3:

WHAT WILL THE CHILD DO ABOUT THE TRUTH?

OBJECT LESSON: Admit, Believe, Choose

Sin is going your own way instead of God's way. Each of us makes choices every day that are about going our own way or God's way. Here's how you can make the choice to go God's way.

(Show poster, "Admit.")

First, admit that you have sinned; that you have chosen to go your own way. Admit this to God. Don't try to hide your sinfulness or make excuses for it. Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

(Show poster, "Believe.")

Then, believe that all of your sins have been laid on Jesus. He took the punishment for your sins when He died on the cross. John 3:16 reminds us, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life."

(Show poster, "Confess.")

Confess that Jesus is the Lord of your life and that you choose to go His way. "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9).

MINISTRY TIME

Invite the children to come and pray with you if they want to Admit, Believe, and Confess. Pray with each child individually, briefly reviewing these three steps.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

“Father, thank you that you have made it possible for us to be forgiven of our sins, of going our own way. We admit our sins. We believe that You laid our sins on Jesus. We believe that He took our punishment and now we are forgiven. We confess and choose to go Your way. Amen.”



Children's Lesson 2

AN INVITATION TO SIN

BIBLE TRUTH

Temptation is an invitation to sin. I choose to say “No.”

BIBLE LESSON

Jesus Says “No” to Temptation, Matthew 4:1-11.

BIBLE VERSE

“But each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed”
(James 1:14).

Materials needed:

- Bible Truth written on poster, chalk board, or slide
- Colored Paper
- Markers
- Stickers
- Magnet
- Metal items such as a penny, nail, key, pin
- Index card for each child
- Nail for each child
- Rope
- Video clip, slides, or pictures and props to illustrate Bible lesson, Matthew 4:1-11
- Letter “S” for members of Team #1
- Cross for person representing Jesus

WELCOME

ACTIVITY FOR EARLY ARRIVERS

As children arrive, have them create invitations to an event that will be going on in the near future in children's ministry or in the local church. Provide colored paper, stickers, and markers.

When all the children arrive, **review rules** in a creative way. Suggested rules are:

- Listen closely
- Keep hands and feet to self
- Stay in seat
- Participate

PRAYER

Pray with the children asking God to help them understand and apply today's Bible Truth in their everyday lives.

SECTION 1: WHAT IS THE TRUTH?

ACTIVITY TIME

Let the children share the invitations they have created. You might also share a variety of invitations such as to a birthday party, a baby shower, a wedding, or a graduation. Talk with the children about the event(s) and why they might attend or not attend. Ask if they have ever received an invitation that they refused. Let each child (as time permits) share why he or she said "No."

With the children's help, make a list of reasons why you might say "No" to an invitation (i.e. had something else to do, was sick, didn't know anyone else who was going to the party, mom and dad would not let me go.)

COMMENT

Today we are going to learn about an invitation that comes to us every day in many different situations. That invitation is the temptation to sin. Yes, every day Satan invites us to sin by tempting us. Our Bible Truth reminds us, "Temptation is an invitation to sin." But when we receive an invitation to a birthday party, or wedding, or just to go over to a friend's house to play, we can choose. We can say, "Yes, I accept your invitation." Or, we can say, "No, I refuse your invitation." We can refuse Satan's invitation to sin. Jesus will help us say "No."

Now let's say the entire Bible Truth, "Temptation is an invitation to sin. I choose to say 'No.'" (Let the children partner up. One child can say the first phrase. The other child can say the second phrase.)

OBJECT LESSON: The Magnet

Have you ever been tempted (invited by Satan) to do something you knew was wrong? *(Let children share if they are willing.)* **Yes, Satan invites each of us to sin. He tempts us to do wrong things. But what causes us to be tempted?**

(Show the children a large magnet and several metal items. Let the children share what items they think will be drawn by the magnet. Then choose children to come up and try to lift an item using the magnet.)

Why was the magnet able to pick up some items and not others? *(Let the children share their thoughts.)* **Yes, items that have iron in them are drawn to the metal.**

BIBLE VERSE FOCUS

Let's listen to our Scripture verse and see if we can find out what causes us to say "Yes" to Satan's temptation or invitation to sin. *(Read James 1:14. Ask a child to come up and circle "his own evil desire.")*

When we want something that is wrong we will say "Yes" to temptation. But God wants us to learn to say "No" to things that are wrong.

MEMORIZATION ACTIVITY

Give each child a card and a nail. Have the children write James 1:14 on the card and tape the nail to the card as a reminder of how they are tempted to sin. Ask the children to keep this card with them this week as a reminder to say "No" to temptation and to memorize the verse.

SECTION 2:

WHAT DOES GOD'S WORD SAY ABOUT THE TRUTH?

GAME: The Tug of War

Ask the children if they know how to play the game, "Tug of War." Quickly let them tell you the rules and clarify any misunderstandings about the rules. Then choose team #1. Select at least five boys and girls to be on the team. Then select team #2. Select only one child, preferably a small child.

After a brief reminder of the rules, let the game begin. The child will struggle to win but fail. Discuss the following questions with the child:

- **How did you feel when you saw who was on the opposing team?**
- **Did you try to win?**
- **How did it feel to lose even though you were trying as hard as you could?**
- **What did you need so that you could win?**

BIBLE LESSON: Jesus Says "No" to Temptation, Matthew 4:1-11

Did you know that Jesus was in a tug of war, too? Yes, he was in a tug of war against evil. His opponent, Satan, wanted Jesus to give in to temptation. If Jesus gave in to temptation, then no one would have the strength to say "No".

Jesus had gone into the desert to get ready for the work God wanted Him to do. He had gone without food and water for 40 days. He was hungry, thirsty, and tired. Then Satan came to Him. "Jesus, if you really are who you say you are, command these stones to become bread."

Jesus was hungry, but he did not give Satan any slack. He held on tight and pulled against Satan. He just used God's Word. "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

But Satan didn't give up. He kept tugging at the rope. This time he took Jesus to the highest point of the temple church. "Prove to me that you are the Son of God by jumping off this building. God's Word says that His angels will protect you."

Jesus knew He was the Son of God. He knew God would send His angels, but He refused to give in to Satan's temptations. He held the rope tight and said, "Satan, God's Word also says, 'Do not put the Lord Your God to the test.'"

Satan wasn't defeated yet. He tugged at the rope even harder. He showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world. "Jesus, if you will serve me, you can rule over all of this."

Jesus knew His Father had already promised that He would rule over all the earth, but it wasn't time just yet. So He said "No," and "Go away, Satan!"

Right then, Satan stopped tugging on the rope. He let go and ran away.

Jesus had refused Satan's invitation to sin. Jesus had said "No" to temptation. Now He is able to help us when we are tempted.

SECTION 3:

WHAT WILL THE CHILD DO ABOUT THE TRUTH?

COMMENT

Sometimes it seems that you are always in a tug of war with Satan. He tempts you to sin and to be selfish, to do what you want to do. (*Bring up Team #1 from the tug of war again. Place the letter "S" on each of them.*) Even though you try very hard to be good, to do the right things, sometimes you give in to temptation.

God wants you to win this game of tug of war. He wants you to win over temptation. When Jesus died on the cross and rose again, he once again won the tug of war against Satan.

God's Word, the Bible, tells us that when we are in a tug of war with Satan and he is tempting us to sin, we can come to Jesus. Hebrews 4: 15, 16 says, "Jesus, our high priest, is able to understand our weaknesses. When Jesus lived on earth, he was tempted in every way. He was tempted in the same ways we are tempted, but he never sinned. With Jesus as our high priest, we can feel free to come before God's throne where there is grace. There we receive mercy and kindness to help us when we need it."

Jesus was tempted by Satan just like we are but he said "No." Now we can come to Him boldly and ask Him to help us win our tug of war, too.

MINISTRY TIME

(Bring a large adult with the cross on his shirt up to help the child on Team #2. Let him win the game over Team #1.)

What tug of war are you in? Are you struggling with a bad habit or a wrong attitude or feeling? Are you struggling with a circumstance at home, school, in your neighborhood? Jesus wants to help you. Instead of trying to handle temptation on your own, come to Jesus. He will help you win.

(Give each child a piece of rope. Ask them to think of something that tempts them to sin i.e. habit, attitude, action, circumstance.) This rope represents Satan's temptations, or invitations, to sin. You can say "No" with Jesus' help. If you want us to pray with you and ask Jesus to help you, bring your rope to the circle where we will pray for one another.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

"Dear Jesus, thank you that you were tempted just like I am and said "No". Thank you for being willing and able to help me say "No." Right now I admit that I am tempted to/by _____. *(Invite the children to fill in the blank.)* **I need your help to win this tug of war with Satan. Get rid of the wrong desires in me and give me strength to say "No" to Satan's invitation. Amen."**



Children's Lesson 3

SET APART AND HOLY, GOD'S PART

BIBLE TRUTH

God sets me apart to be holy and useful.

BIBLE LESSON

Moses Is Set Apart, Exodus chapters 1–3.

BIBLE VERSE

“From the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth” (2 Thessalonians 2:13).

Materials needed:

- Poster or slide of Bible Truth
- Rules visualized
- Bible Verse written on slide, poster, or marker board.
- Bible Verse written on seven pieces of construction paper. (Start with largest print possible and then get smaller with each one. By the time it is written on the seventh piece, it is so small it can barely be read.)
- Video clip of the story of Moses, or have children reenact the story. For younger children, tell the story found in Exodus 1, 2:1–11. Emphasize that God chose Moses even as a baby and set him apart so he could be prepared to do what God had purposed for him. For older children, tell the story found in Exodus 1–3. Emphasize how God called Moses to be holy and useful.
- A large assortment of containers used for a variety of purposes, some for very good purposes and others that are used for lesser purposes. For example: a pitcher, a candle holder, a perfume bottle, a trash can, a pet's food dish, etc.
- Deep bowl filled with water, bottles of food coloring, a clear glass, piece of a paper towel with cross drawn on it for each child.

WELCOME

ACTIVITY FOR EARLY ARRIVERS

Have a large number of items such as buttons. As children arrive, ask them to sort through the items and separate ones that have a certain characteristic. For example, have the children separate out all the buttons that have only two holes or are a certain size. .

When all the children arrive, **review rules** in a creative way. Suggested rules are:

- Listen closely
- Keep hands and feet to self
- Stay in seat
- Participate

PRAYER

Pray with the children asking God to help them understand and apply today's Bible Truth in their everyday lives.

SECTION 1: WHAT IS THE TRUTH?

ACTIVITY TIME

Use this game to help children understand that sanctification is being set apart for God's purposes.

(Have children stand on a line. Stand on the opposite side of the room.)

I'm going to call out categories such as "wearing red" or "10 years old". Every time I call out a category that describes you, you will be set apart. If you fit the category, run to me as fast as you can, tag me, and shout, "SET APART!" If you don't fit the category, stay where you are and crouch down on the floor.

(Play several times with these categories: clothing colors, clothing styles [such as jeans, shorts, or dresses], ages, birthday months, school grade, number of siblings, letter in name. After the game, gather children for discussion.)

What happened in the game when I called out a characteristic that fit you? Yes, you were set apart. Today we are going to learn more about a very important truth, "God sets me apart to be holy and useful." (Have the children repeat this Bible truth several times in creative ways i.e. girls, boys, whisper, shout, standing on one leg.) During the next few weeks, we are going to learn how God sets each of us apart for His special purposes. He does this through the work of sanctification. Let's listen to today's Memory Verse to find out more about sanctification.

BIBLE VERSE FOCUS

Read the verse to the children. **“From the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth” (2 Thessalonians 2:13).**
(Have the children read the verse with you.)

DISCUSS

When did God choose you? *(from the beginning, even before you were born)*

What did God choose you to do? *(to be saved from sin, to live holy lives)*

How does God do this? *(He sanctifies or cleanses us through the work of His Spirit.)*

What must we do? *(believe in truth, do what God says and does)*

God’s part was to choose us from the very beginning and then to save us. Our part is to believe the truth that Jesus died and rose from the dead in order to save us from sin. When we believe that truth, God sets us apart and cleanses us.

MEMORIZATION ACTIVITY

Take out the words of 2 Thessalonians 2:13 written on seven pieces of construction paper in decreasing size.

Begin with largest print and have children read it together, and then go through pages 2–7, reading it together each time. By the time you get to the seventh page, the lettering will be so small the children will have to say it from memory. Repeat as needed.

SECTION 2:

WHAT DOES GOD’S WORD SAY ABOUT THE TRUTH?

OBJECT LESSON: *What Kind of Container Are You?*

Show each container you’ve gathered and discuss its use.

DISCUSS

- **If you could be any one of the containers, which container would you be? Why?**
- **Is there a container that you definitely would not want to be? Which one? Why not?**
- **Would you fill this pitcher with clean drinking water if it were dirty?** *(No, the water would become dirty, no one could drink it.)*
- **Would you want to eat your food from this pet’s food dish?** *(No. It has been used for the wrong purpose.)*

COMMENT

When Paul, one of the writers of the New Testament, wrote to a young Christian named Timothy, he said, "In a large house there are dishes made of gold and silver as well as some made from wood and clay. The dishes of gold and silver are used to serve the finest foods to the most important guests. The other dishes are used in the kitchen or to hold garbage. If you will cleanse your life from everything that is sinful, you will be like these fine dishes. You will be set apart and ready to be used by God for the very greatest purposes" (2 Timothy 2:20, 21, paraphrased).

God wants each one of you to be like the beautiful containers in a wealthy home. They are kept spotlessly clean and are always ready to be used when an important guest visits or when there is a celebration. He wants your lives to be cleansed from every evil and set apart to be used only for His purposes. If you are willing, God wants to do this for you.

BIBLE LESSON: Moses is Set Apart, Exodus 1-3

For the younger children, review Exodus 1 and 2. Emphasize how Moses was chosen and set apart while still a baby and protected from the wicked king's plans.

For older children, review the highlights of Moses' life from Exodus 1-3. Emphasize his mother's recognition of his potential, being put in the basket and saved from death, living in Pharaoh's house where he learned writing and warfare, killing an Egyptian in an attempt to do things his way, fleeing to the desert, and being called and set apart by God at the burning bush.

CREATIVE WAYS TO SHARE THE STORY

Use video clips; interview of the Bible character, Moses; form groups of older children and have them act out their portion of the story.

COMMENT

Even when Moses was a tiny baby, God set him apart. He planned every detail of Moses' life in order to place him where He wanted him to be. He knew the plans He had for Moses. He knew what would be required to prepare him and he knew when Moses would be ready. Even when Moses acted wrongly and had to flee into the desert, God was preparing Moses to be holy and useful. *(Review with the children the ways Moses' life equipped him to fulfill God's purposes.)*

SECTION 3:

WHAT WILL THE CHILD DO ABOUT THE TRUTH?

OBJECT LESSON: Set Apart to Be Useful

Materials needed:

- Deep bowl filled with water (represents the world and sin that surrounds us)
- Bottles of food coloring (represents the sinful world we live in and the sins that tempt us)
- Clear drinking glass (represents God setting us apart through Jesus' death and resurrection)
- Paper towel section for each child (represents each one of us). On each section draw a cross.

PREPARATION

(Practice before doing this activity with the children.) Crumple a paper towel section and stuff it in the drinking glass. It needs to be secure enough that it will not fall out when the glass is turned upside down. Hold the glass in the water upside down for a count of 10 and carefully lift the glass. You need to keep the glass straight throughout this experiment. Using a dry hand, pull the paper towel out of the glass and examine it. It will be completely dry. Why? Stuffed into the bottom of the glass with the paper towel is a layer of air. The air is lighter than water and cannot escape when the glass is submerged in the bowl. Water cannot enter the glass to soak the paper towel because of the layer of air.

PRESENTATION

When you ask forgiveness for the wrong things you have done and believe that Jesus died on the cross for you, you become a Christian. God sets you apart as His child and gives you a strong desire to be holy as He is and useful to Him. He sanctifies you!

(Pass out paper towel sections with a cross drawn on each one to every child in your group. Allow them to write their names inside the cross with markers.)

Our world is full of many things that are displeasing to God. Anything that is displeasing to God is sin. Can you think of some of the wrong and sinful things you see or hear about each day?

(Each time a child makes an appropriate suggestion, let him add a drop of food coloring to the bowl of water. Suggestions might include: pornography, war, poverty, prejudice, selfishness, abortion, stealing, mistreating others, being disrespectful to parents or teachers, anger, drugs, etc. . . .)

Even though God has set us apart to be holy and useful, we live in a very sinful world. Sometimes it seems very hard to be holy when we see and hear so many sinful things. Sometimes it seems very hard to be useful because there are so many bad things happening to people and we wonder how we can make a difference in their lives. But our Bible Truth reminds us that "God sets me (you) apart to be holy and useful." And our Bible Verse tells us that "God chose us and sanctified us or set us apart."

Look at this sheet of paper towel. If I drop it into this container of dirty water, what will happen? Yes, it will become very wet and dirty. And it will no longer be useful because it is wet and dirty.

That's why God has set you and me apart through sanctification. *(Have the children crumple up their paper towel sections and hold them in their hands.)* **Even though you have to live in this world filled with wrong, God has set you apart to be holy and useful. Do you believe this?**

What would you say if I told you that I can plunge my crumpled paper towel into this bowl of water and it will not get wet? Do you think that it's possible? *(Let children respond.)*

(Stuff the paper towel in the glass. Remember it needs to be secure enough that it will not fall out when the glass is turned upside down. Hold the glass upside down in the water while the children count down from 10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1, and then carefully lift the glass out of the bowl. Remember you need to keep the glass straight throughout the experiment. Pull the paper towel out of the glass and examine it. The paper towel should be completely dry. Explain that the paper towel is protected from the water by a layer of air. Because the water is heavier than the air, it cannot get past the air to soak the paper.)

Just as the layer of air set the paper towel apart from the water, God's Spirit and His Word set you apart. Even in the most difficult circumstances, you can still be holy and useful.

MINISTRY TIME

Let the children share circumstances in their lives when it is difficult to be holy and useful. Pray with each child as he shares asking God to set him apart to be holy and useful. Then let each child put his paper towel in the glass and put it in the water. When the paper towel is taken out, remind the child that God has set him apart to be holy and useful. (Let the children repeat the Bible Truth.)

CONCLUDING PRAYER

"Heavenly Father, thank you for taking away my sins. Thank you for setting me apart to be holy and useful. Continue to cleanse me and prepare me to do the good things you have planned for me to do. Amen."



Children's
Lesson 4

YIELDED, MY PART

BIBLE TRUTH

I say "Yes" to God's cleansing work in me.

BIBLE LESSON

Zacchaeus says "Yes" to Jesus, Luke 19:1-9.

BIBLE VERSE

"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10).

Materials needed:

- Poster of Bible Truth: I say "Yes" to God's cleansing work in me.
- Rules visualized
- Multiples of five small pieces of green paper (to represent money) for each child in your class.
- Small prize (stickers, pencils, erasers, etc.) for each child.
- A piece of red construction paper cut in the shape of a heart, a larger piece of cardboard
- Tape or glue
- Two magnets
- Piece of paper that reads "goodness"
- White vinegar
- Iodized salt
- Baby jars or small clear drinking glasses
- Dirty old pennies for each child
- One shiny new penny for explanation
- Paper towels
- Latex gloves to keep the vinegar off your fingers
- Yield sign

WELCOME

ACTIVITY FOR EARLY ARRIVERS: The Tax Collector

Appoint the first child who arrives as the banker. He is to pass out an equal amount of green paper pieces (representing money) to each child in your class. Appoint the next child who arrives to be the tax collector and have him levy a tax of one “dollar” (one piece of green paper) for every letter in the child’s name. This will create inequity among the children.

Appoint another child as the prize vendor. Once all the children have arrived, have the prize vendor distribute a small prize to each child who has enough money to pay for one. The children with long names in your class will not have enough to pay for their prize.

COMMENT

Today we will learn about a tax collector who collected taxes unfairly and made life very difficult for the people of Jericho. *(After making your point, distribute prizes to the children who were excluded earlier.)*

Before beginning the next activity, **Review Rules** in a creative way. Suggested rules are:

- Listen closely
- Keep hands and feet to self
- Stay in seat
- Participate

PRAYER

Pray with the children asking God to help them understand and apply today’s Bible Truth in their everyday lives.

SECTION 1: WHAT IS THE TRUTH?

ACTIVITY TIME: Yield

(Show your yield sign. Ask the children what a yield sign means.)

When a car comes to a yield sign, the driver must yield or give the right of way to the oncoming car(s). When we yield to God, we give Him the right of way. We say “Yes” to what He wants to do in our lives. Our Bible Truth today reminds us of this.

(Have the children repeat the Bible Truth as you hold up the YIELD sign, “I say ‘YES’ to God’s cleansing work in me.”)

Give specific commands that the child must yield to and obey and then have him repeat the Bible truth. Suggested commands might be:

- Take ten steps forward then repeat the Bible Truth.
- Hop on one leg for 30 seconds then repeat the Bible Truth.
- Spell your name out loud then repeat the Bible Truth.
- Count to 20 then repeat the Bible Truth.
- Touch your toes five times then repeat the Bible Truth.

BIBLE VERSE FOCUS

Read today's Bible Verse to the children: **"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10).**

EXPLAIN

This Bible verse was written by David. Can you tell me something about David? (*Help the children remember stories about David: fighting Goliath, writing songs of praise, playing for Saul, hiding from Saul, being a mighty warrior.*) **Even though David was set apart by God to be holy and useful, he did wrong things. He sinned. But when David sinned, he prayed this prayer to God saying "Yes" to God's cleansing work. David asked God to cleanse him of his sin and also give him a right spirit or attitude.**

MEMORIZATION ACTIVITY

This verse is divided into two phrases. Write the first phrase, "Create in me a clean heart, O God," on a heart-shaped poster. Write the second phrase on a yellow circle with a big smiley face, "and renew a right spirit within me."

Divide the children into two groups. Have one group read the first phrase and the second group read the second phrase. Repeat until the groups know these phrases by heart then switch phrases. Repeat until both groups can recite the verse without the words.

SECTION 2:

WHAT DOES GOD'S WORD SAY ABOUT THE TRUTH?

OBJECT LESSON: Change My Heart

Tape a large red heart to a piece of cardboard. Leave enough of the edge loose so you can reach behind it. Place a magnet between the heart and the piece of cardboard so it will repel another magnet. On another magnet, tape a piece of paper that reads "goodness."

Have the children try to stick "goodness" to the heart. If the magnets are positioned correctly, "goodness" will not stick. Take the magnet behind the heart and turn it over. Now have some children try to stick the "goodness" to the heart. It should stick.

EXPLAIN

The only way to have “goodness” in our hearts is to have Jesus change our hearts from the inside. Today, in our Bible Lesson, we are going to learn about a man whose heart was filled with greed, selfishness, and unkindness. But then he met Jesus, and his heart was changed.

BIBLE LESSON: Zacchaeus says “Yes” to Jesus, Luke 19:1-10

The following Bible lesson activity is appropriate for preschool and early elementary age children. For upper elementary age children you might want to show a video clip of the Bible story or interview the Bible character, Zacchaeus.

PREPARATION

Have the children stand an arm’s length from each other, if possible. Explain they are to move about in their own personal space and make any motions that fit the action of the story as they listen to it being told.

COMMENT

Zacchaeus was sitting at his tax collector’s table counting money when he heard people around him say, “Jesus is coming. Jesus is coming here to Jericho.”

Zacchaeus pushed back his chair and jumped up! He wanted to see Jesus.

He started running in the direction the people were pointing. He ran and ran and ran until he came to a crowd of people. Zacchaeus was a short man and he could not see over the heads of the people in front of him.

So he stood on his tiptoes. But he still could not see.

He stretched his neck up as high as he could while standing on his tiptoes. But he still could not see Jesus.

Zacchaeus shrugged his shoulders and thought to himself: “What am I going to do? The people in front of me are bigger and taller than I am and I REALLY, REALLY want to see Jesus!”

Then, over the heads of the people, he saw a sycamore-fig tree. He didn’t take his eyes off that tree as he made his way around the crowd. He climbed up on a branch, sat down, and waited for Jesus to come by. Now he could see.

When Jesus arrived at the tree, he looked up and said, “Zacchaeus, come down. I want to be a guest in your home today.”

Zacchaeus’ eyes got big! Jesus was talking to HIM!

Zacchaeus scrambled out of the tree. He skinned his knee getting down but he didn’t care. He was so happy Jesus wanted to come to his house! Zacchaeus could not stop smiling.

Zacchaeus’ life changed that day. Before he met Jesus, Zacchaeus was one of the most wicked people in town. He took more money from the people than he should have. He ended up being rich because he cheated others.

Zacchaeus looked at Jesus and said: “I will give half of my wealth to the poor. I will also give back four times as much to those I have cheated.”

Jesus smiled at Zacchaeus and said, “I see your heart Zacchaeus and I know you have been saved today!”

Zacchaeus told Jesus in front of everyone that he would become a giver instead of a taker, and he would restore what he had taken in the past. Not only would he give back to the people what he had cheated out of them, but he would give them much more! Zacchaeus trusted Jesus, yielded to, and obeyed him! Jesus cleansed Zacchaeus’ heart and gave him a right attitude. God will do the same for you as you say “Yes” to His cleansing work in your life!

SECTION 3:

WHAT WILL THE CHILD DO ABOUT THE TRUTH?

OBJECT LESSON: God’s Cleansing Work

This object lesson will work for almost any age group. Older children may appreciate the symbolism more, but younger kids will certainly understand.

Materials needed:

- 4 tablespoons of white vinegar
- 1 teaspoons of iodized salt
- several small mason jars or clear drinking glasses
- enough dirty old pennies for each child, one shiny new penny for explanation
- paper towels
- latex gloves to keep the vinegar off your fingers

PRESENTATION

After the Bible lesson, give each child a dirty old penny—the more discolored the better. Then display the shiny new penny. You can talk about how hard it would be to make those old coins as clean as the new penny.

These old pennies are like Zacchaeus was before he said “Yes” to Jesus. These pennies are also like our lives when we fail to yield to God and allow Him to cleanse our hearts and give us right attitudes.

Display the vinegar and salt solution. Have the children gently drop their coins into the liquid. Allow about a minute for the solution to work. Carefully remove the pennies and dry them with paper towels. Then, restate the meaning of the object lesson.

Hints: If kids are worried about getting the same penny back, just have them remember the date that was on each coin. If possible, do this activity in a vented room to minimize the stinky vinegar smell.

MINISTRY TIME

As each child holds his clean penny talk about these truths:

- **God set us apart to be holy and useful. Just as the penny has an important job to do, we do too. The penny is useful no matter how dirty it is, but to do God's work, we must be holy and clean.**
- **God has the power to make us clean and useful, but we must say "Yes" to His work in our lives just as Zacchaeus did.**
- **Be still before God. Tell Him about those things that keep you from having a clean heart and right attitudes. Say "Yes" to Him. "Yes, Lord, I yield to your will. Give me a clean heart and right attitudes."**

As the Holy Spirit leads, let each child come up and ask God to bring cleansing to their lives. Then, pray for all the children to be able to say "Yes" to God's continual cleansing in their lives.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

"Father, I want to say 'Yes' to your work in my life. Cleanse my heart and give right attitudes."



Children's Lesson 5

CHANGING FROM THE INSIDE OUT

BIBLE TRUTH

I am changed as I choose God's way.

BIBLE LESSON

Saul Is Changed, Acts 9:1-30.

BIBLE VERSE

"And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image" (2 Corinthians 3:18, NLT).

Materials needed:

- Animal capsule for each child, available at a party supply store or through amazon.com
- Bowl of water for each child
- Rules visualized
- Poster of Bible Truth: I am changed as I choose God's way.
- 2 Corinthians 3:18 written on chalkboard or dry erase board, and eraser
- Video clip, pictures, or actual objects of the life cycle of the butterfly
- Make 4 sets of the words of 2 Corinthians 3:18 on each of the following shapes: egg, caterpillar, cocoon, butterfly.
- Chalkboard, chalk, and eraser or whiteboard, marker, and eraser
- A bag
- An over-ripe, bruised banana
- Yellow poster paint or yellow spray paint
- Paintbrush

WELCOME

ACTIVITY FOR EARLY ARRIVERS

Give each child a foam animal capsule as he arrives. Provide a bowl of water for him to place the pellet in. Encourage him to watch as the pellet changes. Talk with the children about how the change didn't happen suddenly but gradually.

When all the children arrive, **review rules** in a creative way. Suggested rules are:

- Listen closely
- Keep hands and feet to self
- Stay in seat
- Participate

PRAYER

Pray with the children asking God to help them understand and apply today's Bible Truth in their everyday lives.

SECTION 1: WHAT IS THE TRUTH?

ACTIVITY TIME: Life Cycle of a Butterfly

Show the video clip of the life cycle of the butterfly, pictures of the four stages of the butterfly's life, or actual objects—egg, caterpillar, cocoon, and butterfly. Share how the butterfly changes gradually through each stage. Talk with the children about how these cycles were determined by God who created the butterfly.

COMMENT

God has a plan for us to change, as well. When we are saved and become God's children, we begin growing to be like Him. Our Bible Truth today reminds us of this: "I am changed as I choose God's way." (Have the children repeat the Bible truth in creative ways, i.e. whisper, shout, stand on one leg, shaking hands with a friend.) As we obey God we become more like Him. This change doesn't happen instantly, but little by little. This process is called sanctification.

BIBLE VERSE FOCUS

Our Bible Verse today also reminds us of this change: "And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image" (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Just as the butterfly changes from one form to another, God's children also change as God makes us more and more like Him. Look at the verse and see if you can answer this question, "Who makes us more and more like Jesus?"

Yes, the Lord does this. But just as the caterpillar weaves a cocoon and then the butterfly eats away at it so he can be free to fly, we must work with God as He changes us. We help Him by obeying His Word and following the Spirit's leading.

MEMORIZATION ACTIVITY

Divide the children into four groups. Give each group one of the following labels: egg, caterpillar, cocoon, or butterfly. Ask each group to develop motions for the words of the memory verse. Then invite each group to act out the verse with their motions as all the children repeat it.

SCRIPTURE REVIEW

Give each group a set of memory verse flashcards that have been mixed up. Ask each team to put the cards in order when the signal is given. When all the teams have completed the task, have each team say the verse without looking at the words.

SECTION 2: WHAT DOES GOD'S WORD SAY ABOUT THE TRUTH?

OBJECT LESSON: From the Inside Out

Pull out your bag which should hold the following items:

- An over-ripe, bruised banana
- Yellow poster paint or yellow spray paint
- Paintbrush

BIBLE LESSON: Saul is Changed, Acts 9

(As you share the story of Saul below, you will be asked to draw specific things at specific moments. Draw the objects on a whiteboard, chalkboard, or poster board or have someone else draw as you tell the story.)

Saul was a young man who worked very hard to obey God's laws. Saul thought he was very good. But on the inside, Saul's heart was filled with pride and hatred. He hated Christians—anyone who followed the teachings of Jesus. He traveled around looking for them. When he found them, he would have them thrown into jail.

(Draw jail bars.)

One day, Saul was on his way to Damascus to find Christians and put them in jail. Suddenly, a bright light flashed down from heaven. The light was brighter than the sun.

(Draw a sun.)

Saul and his men covered their eyes and fell to the ground. From heaven, a voice spoke that only Saul could hear.

(Draw a mouth.)

"Saul, Saul, why do You persecute me? Why are you fighting against me?"

Saul asked, "Who are You, Lord?"

“I am Jesus, the One you are fighting against. Get up and go into the city.

(Draw skyline.)

There you will find out what you must do.”

Now Saul knew that Jesus was truly God’s Son. He knew that what he had heard about Jesus dying on the cross and rising again was true.

(Draw cross.)

At that moment, Saul believed in Jesus and was saved.

In the city of Damascus lived a man named Ananias. Ananias loved Jesus.

(Draw a heart.)

Jesus spoke to Ananias and said, “Get up Ananias and go see a man named Saul.” Ananias was very afraid.

(Draw scared face.)

Ananias said, “Lord, I have heard lots of bad news about Saul and about how mean he has been to everyone who loves Jesus.” But Jesus told Ananias that he must go because Saul was going to change. Saul would soon travel all over the world telling others about Jesus.

Ananias went to visit Saul. “Saul, I am going to pray that you will be filled with God’s Spirit.”

(Draw hands praying.)

God’s Spirit was at work in Saul, changing him so he would become like Christ, holy and useful to do the work God had planned for him to do.

As God changed Saul, he learned to pray, preach about Jesus, and listen to God’s Spirit to know where he should go. Saul’s name was changed to Paul.

(Write the name Saul then erase the S and replace with P.)

Paul traveled all over the world preaching about Jesus. He had many adventures and suffered many things—beatings, imprisonment, shipwrecks, hunger, and sickness.

God changed Paul from the inside out.

(Draw heart.)

We know this is true because he wrote the words of our Bible Verse, “And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image” (2 Corinthians 3:18).

SECTION 3: WHAT WILL THE CHILD DO ABOUT THE TRUTH?

OBJECT LESSON

Show pictures of a child growing from baby to adult.

COMMENT

Just like you are changing every day on the outside, God wants you to be changed on the inside. He wants you to become more and more like Him every day. This process of changing to be like Jesus is called sanctification. Our Scripture verse tells us that the Lord does this. (Read the Bible Verse, 2 Corinthians 3:18, with the children.) But you and I can work with Him. What are some things we can do? (Let the children contribute ways we can work with God to become more and more like Jesus i.e. obey, read God's Word, pray, worship, etc.) Are you willing to let God work in your heart to make you more like Jesus? Will you help him?

MINISTRY TIME

Invite those who are willing to let God work in their hearts to make them more like Jesus to come forward. Pray for each child, asking God to sanctify them, to seal this work in their hearts, and to help them make good choices in the future.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

"Lord, thank you for helping us learn about holiness and sanctification. Thank you for dying for our sins. Thank you for forgiving us of all our wrong actions. Help us to serve You with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength every day for the rest of our lives as we trust only in You. In Jesus' name, Amen."