

# WHOLLY HOLY



PURSUING

HIS

GLORY

*ProTeens*

## WHOLLY HOLY

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## Preface

Holiness is a challenge for all of us. We are prone to think that keeping a list of do's and don'ts is equivalent to being holy, but it is easier to *look* holy than to *be* holy. Looking holy just involves separation from the world. Being holy involves separation from the world and separation to God. Holiness is internal. It will result in proper behavior that others can see, but trying to change your behavior before you change the attitudes that produce your behavior is futile.

The Apostle Peter said that we ought to be holy in every area of our lives, just as our God who called us to salvation is holy. In 1 Peter 1:15–16 he quotes Leviticus 11:44, which commands God's people to be holy because He is holy.

This is the command, but how do we become holy? How can we change our attitudes and our behavior so that they are holy? In commenting on this passage, R. C. H. Lenski wrote:

To be holy is our obligation, but not in the sense of an outward, legal requirement that is laid upon us, for which we must furnish the ability and the power, but as the result of God's call which furnishes the power and the ability. The gospel call to holiness always includes the bestowal of the spiritual power. The hand that points us to holiness is the hand that extends its grace to us to make us holy; by pointing us upward it lifts us upward.

Only through God's power can we become holy. And we can only get that power by thirsting for God. If we don't, we will never be holy. Hopefully, through this study, you and your students will develop that passion for God that leads to holiness.

## Elements Of This Study

### Correlating the teacher's lesson and student's lesson

For each lesson in your teacher's manual you have a filled-in copy of the student's lesson, then your teacher's lesson, the overheads for that lesson, and finally the quiz for that lesson. The teacher's lesson is actually a guide through the student's lesson to help you present the material to your teens. Study through the teacher's lesson and write down any additional thoughts or insights on the material that you have.

### Big idea

This is your lesson aim. If your students don't get this, you've missed the point of the lesson. You should revisit this point often in your teaching.

### Hook

These segments are designed to capture your students' interest. These sections are optional, but we highly recommend them because they will increase student interest and involvement and will often give your students an insight they will remember long after they have forgotten your words.

## Ask & discuss



This symbol highlights a question that you should ask the class. We firmly believe that students learn best when they are encouraged to think, and these questions give you that opportunity.

## Application

In each lesson there will be at least one section that applies the teaching in a practical way to the life of a teen. Our goal is to have teens changed by the truth, and this section is a tool to that end.

## Answers

Every word that is to be filled in by the students in their books is underlined in your teacher's manual.

## Overheads

These are provided as a visual aid for the presentation of these lessons. You may copy the overhead masters, quizzes, and handouts contained in this manual. Nothing else may be copied without written permission from Positive Action For Christ. The transparency numbers correspond to the chapters where they are used. For example, overheads 2-1 and 2-2 are the first and second overheads used in lesson two.

## Quizzes

Quizzes are provided for lessons one through seven. Quiz answers are at the end of the teacher's lesson. They are not intended to be open-book or open-Bible quizzes.


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# LESSON ONE

## BE ALL THAT YOU CAN BE


**Big Idea:** We need to work at being holy.

**Hook:** (Option 1) Bring a cage of white mice to class. Show it and ask the students the following questions:

1. What do you think of when you see this?
2. Why are white mice used in experiments? (Their anatomy is similar to human anatomy; therefore, medicine can be tested on them for expected human reactions.)
3. How do you think these mice illustrate sanctification? (They are set apart for a special purpose. Do not expect a correct answer. In fact, if someone gives the correct answer, don't confirm its accuracy.)

(Option 2) Bring a chunk of coral to class. Show it and ask the students the following questions:

1. What do you think of when you see this?
2. How does this illustrate the subject of our study? (The growth of coral and our sanctification are both gradual. Coral grows very slowly; sometimes Christians do too. Do not expect the correct answer. Let them know that they will discover the answer in the lesson.)

Startle your class by telling them that you don't believe murder is wrong. Ask them to prove that murder is wrong to you. To each answer they give, reply "But why is that wrong?" If they answer, "It hurts people," ask, "Why is it wrong to hurt someone?" If they say, "Because the Bible says it's wrong," respond, "But why does the Bible say it's wrong?" or "Why does God say it's sin? What makes God call it sin?" Soon they will have no answers left to give. To answer these questions we must first understand what sin is!

## Understanding Sin

### Sin is...

- Anything that violates the character of God.

All sins are wrong for the same reason—they violate the character of God! Romans 3:23 teaches us that all of us have sinned and fallen short of God's glory. Sin is simply falling short of God's glory. What is God's glory? It is God's character. It is all that God is.

- All that is contrary to what God is, the way God thinks, and what God wants.

God owns everything in the universe, and it is all for Him—for His pleasure and glory (Rom. 11:36).

All things in the universe are made by God and for God. They all bear His fingerprints and reflect His character. Sin tries to swim against God’s principles and character. Sin is contrary to what God is, to the way God thinks, and to what God wants. All sin can be traced to a violation of one of the attributes of God.

## Understanding Holiness

Since sin is a violation of God’s character, the more we understand God’s character, the more we will understand sin.

- Lying is wrong because God is truth. If God were not truth, lying would not be wrong.
- Drunkenness is wrong because God is sovereign. Through His work of sanctification in the life of the believer, He accomplishes His plan to change us into the image of His Son (Rom. 8:28–30). Drunkenness puts us under the influence of alcohol and interferes with the sanctifying work of the Spirit in you heart. Anything that controls us other than God is sin.
- Murder is wrong because God is life. God alone has the right to take a life. This is why abortion and euthanasia are sin. Murder in all forms takes life out of God’s hands.

What is God’s most basic attribute or characteristic? Holiness.

### How do we know that holiness is important?

- An entire book in the Bible is devoted to holiness. The purpose of Leviticus is to teach God’s people to be holy unto the Lord (Lev. 10:10; 19:2; 20:7–8, 26). In chapter 19 God tells Israel how they should live, but with each commandment He reminds them why they must be holy—because I am the Lord your God.
- The heavenly creatures praise Him in triplicate for holiness (Is. 6:3; Rev. 4:8).
- God’s holiness speaks most directly to His deity (Hos. 11:9; Is. 40:25).

### What does holiness mean?

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word translated “holiness” is *qodesh* (ko-DESH). In the New Testament the Greek word most often translated “holy” is *hagios* (HAG-ee-ahs). Both words convey the idea of separation (or set apart) for a particular purpose. In pagan cultures, an idol or a temple that was set apart for the purpose of its gods was called *qodesh* (Hebrew) or *hagios* (Greek).

In the New Testament *hagios* is translated “holy,” (hundreds of times), “saints,” “sanctuary,” “sanctified,” and “hallowed.” All of these words convey the same idea of “separation for a particular purpose.”

Christian sanctification (separation) means that God has separated believers from the world to serve and glorify Him. Two aspects of sanctification are essential: 1) separation to God, and 2) separation from evil (1 Thess. 1:9).

## What Are The “Tenses” Of Holiness?

🗞️ Ask: Which statement is most nearly correct? (Discuss before answering. After your class has discussed this, have them read the references that correspond to the questions.)

- I am holy (Heb. 10:10, 14).
- I am striving to be holy (Matt. 5:48).
- I will be holy (1 Thess. 5:23).

In reality, all three statements are equally true because Christian sanctification (holiness) may be viewed as past, present, and future.

Time	Type	Applied to believers	How we get it	When we get it	Duration
Past	Positional	What we are	By grace through faith	The instant we are saved	Eternal
Present	Practical/ progressive	What we are becoming	By groaning & growing	From salvation to death	Momentary
Future	Perfected/ prospective	What we will be	By going to heaven	At death	Forever

### Believers are holy—positional sanctification.

The Bible teaches that all who trust Christ are instantly made holy. We are holy in the sense that God has set us apart for the distinct purpose of glorifying Him. This is our “position” in Christ and is therefore called “positional” sanctification.

We are washed, sanctified (set apart), and justified (1 Cor. 6:11) the moment we believe in Christ. It happens the instant we are saved. All believers are called “saints” (separated, sanctified, holy).

Positional sanctification lasts forever. Hebrews 10:10, 14 teaches that God has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

- We are sons of God (1 John 3:1).

All believers are sons of God. This is our position in Christ. It is what we are, and it will never change.

- We are the temple of God (1 Cor. 6:19–20).

When God saves a person, He comes to live inside them. Therefore, our bodies become “holy” in the sense that they are set apart to house the person and presence of God. Our bodies belong to God and exist solely for His use.

- We are saints of God (1 Cor. 1:2).

What is a saint? The word “saint” comes from the same root as the words translated “holy” or “sanctified.” All believers are “saints” while they live! Some churches canonize people after they die, and declare them to be saints. However, the Bible teaches that “if a man is not a saint he is not a Christian; if he is a Christian he is a saint” (William Evans, *The Great Doctrines of the Bible*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1948, pg. 166). Therefore, it is correct to call each other Saint (*student’s name*).



Remember, positional sanctification is what we are now, and it will never change!

## **Believers are to become holy—practical/progressive sanctification.**

Hebrews 10:14 declares that we are perfect, but we sure don't always act perfect. There's often a huge gap between what we are and how we act.

So, the Bible exhorts us to “be what we are.” In 1 Corinthians 6:19–20 Paul first tells us what we are (“the temple of the Holy Ghost”), then tells us how we should act (“glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's”).

It's wonderful to know what we are in Christ, but it is of little value if we don't live up to it. Practical sanctification is where the rubber meets the road. It is something with which we must struggle each day. The Bible teaches that if we are genuinely saved, there will be continual growth in this area (2 Cor. 5:17). We are new creatures (our position), so we will notice old things passing away and all things becoming new (practice).

Positional sanctification occurs the moment we are saved; practical/progressive sanctification only begins the moment we get saved, but it is never complete on this earth. It is a life-long process. (This is how sanctification is like coral. It grows slowly and gradually throughout its entire existence.)

Progressive sanctification changes daily, perhaps hourly! We should not be tomorrow what we are today. Every day we should be stronger in our faith and more like Christ. Second Corinthians 7:1 says that we are bringing holiness to its fulness or completion in the fear of God.

### **What it means**

- It means that we are to grow continually (2 Pet. 3:18).
- It means that we are to increase and abound (1 Thess. 3:12; 4:1, 10).
- It is the reason we have pastors and teachers (Eph. 4:11–15).
- It means that the Christian life is a constant struggle to be all that we can be, and it is a struggle to be what we already are (Phil. 3:12–14).

Progressive holiness is often expressed as growth. It is a gradual changing into the image of Christ.

Growth into His image is not like the growth of a mushroom; it is not something that occurs overnight. Rather, practical holiness grows as coral grows: little by little, degree by degree, day by day, hour by hour, struggle by struggle.

It is this aspect of holiness (practical) that is the focus of the next seven weeks.

## **Believers will be holy—perfected/prospective sanctification.**

Even though we are holy and are struggling to be holy, perfect holiness will not be attained until we are with Christ in eternity. We will one day be sanctified “wholly.” This “wholly holiness” is what we call “perfected sanctification” (1 Thess. 5:23).

Not until Jesus returns in the rapture and takes us to be with Him will we be “wholly holy.” The word “wholly” in this verse means complete in every part, perfect in every respect. Jude 24 speaks of that

day when Christ will present us blameless before the presence of His glory with great joy. We will then be holy forever.

## **What it means**

We should strive to be all that we can be. Paul tells us in Philippians 3:12–14 what it should mean to us. We should continually “press on,” stretch ourselves out, and give it all we have to be all that we can be. After all, we are special people—set apart to be God’s trophies of grace!

## **Challenge**

When Christ returns, we want Him to find us spotless, blameless, and at peace (2 Pet. 3:14). Will you be ashamed when Christ comes? Will He find you unclean, unholy, living in the world, with a heart that is set on the world and not upon Him? Or will He find you striving to serve Him and to glorify Him with all your heart?

# LESSON 1

## BE ALL THAT YOU CAN BE

*Why is lying wrong?*  
*Why is murder wrong?*  
*Why is drunkenness wrong?*  
*Why is sin sin?*

### UNDERSTANDING SIN

#### Sin is...

- Anything that violates the character of God.
- All that is contrary to what God is, the way God thinks, and what God wants.

### UNDERSTANDING HOLINESS

Since sin is a violation of God's character, the more we understand God's character, the more we will understand sin!

What is God's most basic attribute? Holiness

#### The importance of holiness

- Holiness is the only attribute of God to which an entire book in  
the Bible is devoted.

The purpose of Leviticus is to teach God's people to be holy before the Lord. Sixteen times in Leviticus 19, God tells Israel to be holy because "I am the Lord your God" (19:2–4, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 25, 28, 30–32, 34, 36–37). Because God is holy, Israel must be holy.

- Holiness is the only attribute for which the heavenly creatures \_\_\_\_\_ *praise* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ *Him* \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ *triplicate* \_\_\_\_\_ (Is. 6:3; Rev. 4:8).
- Holiness is the one attribute of God that speaks most directly of His \_\_\_\_\_ *deity* \_\_\_\_\_ .  
Hosea 11:9 says that He is God, not man—the “Holy One” among His people.  
Isaiah 40:25 asks to whom the “Holy One” can be compared.

### The meaning of holiness

Old Testament Hebrew word—*godesh* (ko-DESH)

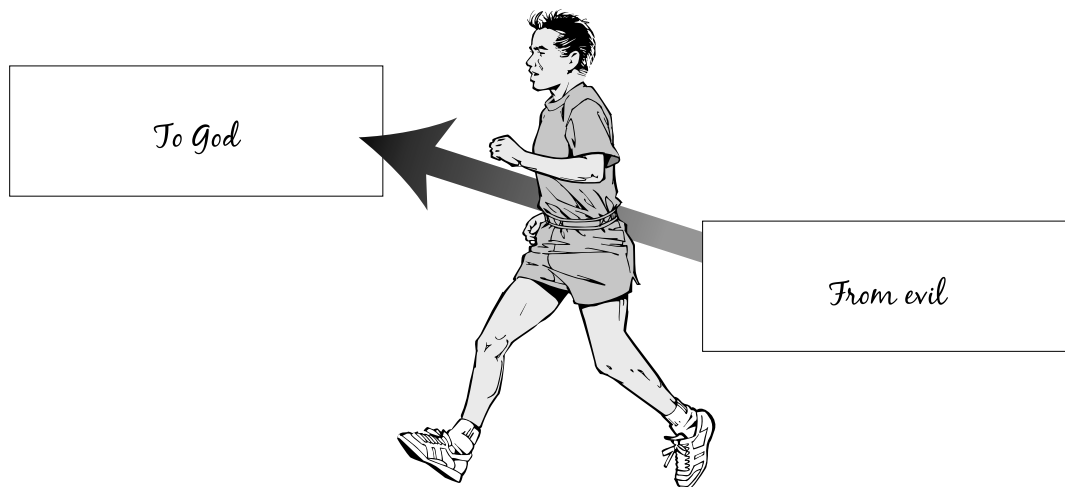
New Testament Greek word—*hagios* (HAG-ee-ahs)

**Holiness is:**

*Separation (or set apart) for a particular purpose*

*There are two aspects of separation (1 Thess. 1:9).*

One aspect of separation without the other is not true separation.



## THE “TENSES” OF HOLINESS

Christian sanctification (holiness) may be viewed as past, present, and future. Consider this chart:

Time	Type	Applied to believers	How we get it	When we get it	Duration
Past	Positional	What we are	By grace through faith	The instant we are saved	Eternal
Present	Practical/progressive	What we are becoming	By groaning & growing	From salvation to death	Momentary
Future	Perfected/prospective	What we will be	By going to heaven	At death	Forever

### Believers are holy—positional sanctification.

At the moment of salvation a believer is positionally sanctified. What does this mean? Among other things, it means that...

- We are \_\_\_\_\_ *sons of God* \_\_\_\_\_ (1 John 3:1).
- We are the \_\_\_\_\_ *temple of God* \_\_\_\_\_ (1 Cor. 6:19–20).
- We are \_\_\_\_\_ *saints of God* \_\_\_\_\_ (1 Cor. 1:2).

Positional sanctification is what we are in Christ right now. It will always be true in our lives, whether we are presently living in victory over sin or not.

### Believers are to become holy—practical/progressive sanctification.

- Hebrews 10:14 declares that we are perfect, but we sure don't always act perfectly!
- First Corinthians 6:19–20 tells us what we are (the temple of the Holy Spirit), then tells us how we should act (to glorify God in our body and spirit, which belong to Him).

*What does this mean in our lives?*

It means that...

- We are to \_\_\_\_\_ *grow* \_\_\_\_\_ continually (2 Pet. 3:18).
- We are to \_\_\_\_\_ *increase* \_\_\_\_\_ and abound (1 Thess. 3:12; 4:1, 10).
- We need \_\_\_\_\_ *pastors* \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ *teachers* \_\_\_\_\_ (Eph. 4:11–15).
- The Christian life is a constant \_\_\_\_\_ *struggle* \_\_\_\_\_ to be all that we can be and to become what we already are (Phil. 3:12–14)!

**Believers will be holy—perfected/prospective sanctification.**

Though we are holy, and though we are struggling to be holy, perfect holiness will not be attained until we are with Christ in eternity. Consider 1 Thessalonians 5:23, which teaches that we will one day be sanctified “wholly.” This “wholly holiness” is what we call “perfected sanctification,” and will occur when Christ returns to rapture His church.

What does this mean to a believer? It means that we should strive to be all that we can be.

When Christ returns, we want Him to find us at peace, without spot or blemish (2 Pet. 3:14). Will you be ashamed when Christ comes? Or will He find you striving to serve Him and glorify Him with all your heart?

# LESSON TWO

## DESTINED FOR HOLINESS

**Big Idea:** God plans for believers to be holy.

**Hook:** Bring a mouse or some other seemingly meaningless creature to class. A cockroach or a cricket could also work. ➡ Ask, “How is this mouse like a believer?” Discuss. Answer: It’s set apart for a particular purpose planned by God, just as Christians have been separated for God’s glory. ➡ Ask, “How is this creature different from us?” (It does not have a spirit; it cannot reason; it will never go to heaven.)

There is another difference between animals and humans—animals have no capacity for holiness! This poor creature will never appear righteous before God; it is destined to end up as dust. We, on the other hand, are destined for eternity.

This week we will focus on the necessity of practical holiness. We will discover that holiness is not optional for us. We will find that unlike all other creatures on earth, believers are destined for holiness.

### God Is Holy.

The most significant attribute of God is His holiness. The following verses reveal the holiness of God:

Have your class look up the following references and fill in the blanks in their student manuals:

- Exodus 15:11—He is glorious in holiness. Here His holiness is unique. No creature in heaven and earth is as glorious in holiness.
- Psalm 99:3—His name is holy. “Name” refers to all that God is; therefore, everything about Him is holy.
- Isaiah 1:4—He is the Holy One of Israel. This means that He has set Himself apart for Israel and He has set Israel apart for Himself.
- Hosea 11:9—His holiness means He is God. God’s holiness seems to speak most directly to His deity. It is proof that He alone is God. Other nations have their “gods” but none are holy! Only Israel’s God was said to be absolutely holy, marking Him as distinct from all the gods the world concocted.
- Psalm 89:35—God swears by His holiness. Since nothing is higher than God, He cannot swear an oath by anything higher than Himself. Therefore, all of His promises depend on

His holiness. If He is not holy, we can't trust that He will fulfill His promises. But since He is perfect in holiness, we can know that His promises will be completely fulfilled. Psalm 93:5 declares that God's testimonies are very sure and holiness is fitting for His house forever. God's holiness is tied to the integrity of His Word.

The fact that God has absolute integrity should be a challenge to you. Do you live a life of integrity? Do you tell the truth? Do you keep your promises?

## These verses teach us two important truths about God's holiness:

### 1. *He is above all things.*

Nothing compares to God. He stands alone at the top of the ladder. Note Psalm 99:2–9. God is “higher” than all things. Moses, Aaron, and Samuel don't begin to compare to God. We are so small in comparison that we are like tiny creatures worshiping around His footstool!

Here holiness refers to the incomparable greatness of God. He is so much higher than all creatures that He is holy (unique) and should be worshipped for being unique (cf. Is. 57:15; 1 Sam. 22).

### 2. *He is morally perfect.*

God alone is absolutely separate from all evil and moral corruption. No other being in the universe can make such a claim. Note how the Scriptures describe God's moral holiness:

- He cannot look upon sin (Hab. 1:13).
- He cannot lie (Tit. 1:2).
- Only the pure can come before Him (Ps. 24:3–4).
- He is righteous in all His ways and holy in all His works (Ps. 145:17).

## God Designed Us To Be Holy.

God intends for believers to be holy! He placed in each of us the capacity for holiness (Heb. 3:1). Here is where we differ from animals. Only people can experience practical holiness. God designed us that way. He placed within us a soul and spirit that is capable of communicating with Him. Unlike animals, men were created “in the image of God.” And God has given believers the capacity to be holy.

Let's look at some passages that explain this.

- Matthew 25:14–30; Luke 19:12–27—All believers have been given a life endowment (talents, abilities, resources) to be holy. They will all be held accountable for what they have done with it.

🗨️Ask: What would some of those talents or resources be in this group? Discuss.

- Ephesians 1:4—Believers are chosen by God to be holy.
- Ephesians 2:10—Believers are created to do good works. God prepared the ability to do these good works before we were ever born! Therefore, we are His workmanship. That means that God gave each of us the personality, the mind, the heart, the skills, and the aptitude to do what He wants us to do.



- Ephesians 5:24–27—All that Christ has done and is doing is designed to make us holy. He loved us, He gave Himself for us, He is sanctifying us, He is cleansing us, He is washing us with the Word, and He will one day present us to God without spot or wrinkle, but rather holy and without blemish.
- 2 Peter 1:3—God has given us all the resources we need to be holy. We have the unique capacity to be holy.

➡ Ask: What are some of these resources He has given us to further our holiness? Discuss. Answers may include the Word of God, the Holy Spirit, prayer, those He has put over us to watch for our souls (Heb. 13:17), the church, the new orientation towards Him that He has created in us (the “new man”—Rom. 6; 2 Cor. 5:17), etc.

No excuse for sin will stand before God! God lives in all believers to accomplish His purpose in them. He designed us for a specific purpose, saved us to accomplish that purpose, and indwells us to accomplish that purpose. To buck God and to refuse to accomplish that purpose is to oppose the eternal plans and designs of a sovereign God.

### **God commands us to be holy.**

Since all that pertains to God must be holy, and since God made man for holiness, it logically follows that God requires us to be holy.

The Apostle Peter wrote in 1 Peter 1:14–16 that we ought to be holy in every area of our lives, just as our God who called us to salvation is holy. In these verses he quotes Leviticus 11:44, which commands God’s people to be holy because He is holy.

### **Living a holy life is God’s will.**

Paul reminds us that holiness is God’s will for our lives (1 Thess. 4:3). People often ask how they can know God’s will. One part of God’s will that we know plainly is that we must be holy before the Lord! When we are not obedient to the will of God he has revealed clearly, we have no reason to believe that we will be able to make decisions that please Him in the areas of our lives that are less clear. Holiness is not an option. It is the purpose for which we are placed on this earth.

### **Living a holy life means growth and change.**

God’s command that we be holy implies growth. God knows that we cannot instantly be all that He wants us to be. His commands imply that believers must grow all their lives. Note the ways God has commanded us to grow:

- Ephesians 4:15—In all things
- 1 Thessalonians 3:12—In love
- 1 Peter 2:2—In your knowledge of the Word
- 2 Peter 3:18—In grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ

Spiritual growth is sanctification. It should be as natural to us as a baby’s hunger. Do you hunger for the Word? Do you have a deep desire to know and do God’s will?

## Challenge

Believers are destined for holiness. They have the capacity for it, they are designed for it, they are saved for it, they have the indwelling Spirit to accomplish it, they have the desire for it, and one day in heaven they will experience the full realization of it. But meanwhile, they find themselves struggling to accomplish holiness in their daily lives.

Do you have this kind of heart? If not, it could be that you have never been saved. God has placed in the heart of all believers the desire for Him. Those who do not have that desire are in need of salvation.

## L E S S O N 2

# DESTINED FOR HOLINESS

This week we will focus on the necessity of progressive holiness. We will discover that holiness is not optional for our daily lives. We will find that unlike all other creatures on earth, believers are destined for holiness!

### GOD IS HOLY.

Look up the following references and record what they teach about God's holiness:

- Exodus 15:11—God is glorious in holiness.
- Psalm 99:3—His name is holy.
- Isaiah 1:4—He is the Holy One of Israel.
- Hosea 11:9—His holiness proves He is God.
- Psalm 89:35—God swears by His holiness.

**These verses teach us two important truths about God's holiness.**

1. *He is* above all things (Ps. 99:2–9).

He is so much higher than all creatures that He is holy (unique) and should be worshipped for being unique (Is. 57:15; 1 Sam. 2:2).

2. *He is* morally perfect.

Note how the Scriptures describe God's moral holiness:

- He cannot look upon sin (Hab. 1:13).
- He cannot lie (Titus 1:2).
- Only the pure can come before Him (Ps. 24:3–4).
- He is righteous in all His ways and holy in all His works (Ps. 145:17).

## GOD DESIGNED US TO BE HOLY.

God intends for believers to be holy! He placed in each of us the capacity for holiness (Heb. 3:1).

- We have a life endowment for holiness (Matt. 25:14–30; Luke 19:12–27).
- Believers are chosen by God to be holy (Eph. 1:4).
- Believers are created to do good works. God gave each of us the personality, the mind, the heart, the skills, and the aptitude to do what He wants us to do (Eph. 2:10).
- All that Christ has done and is doing is designed to make us holy (Eph. 5:25–27).

He loved us, He gave Himself for us, He is sanctifying us, He is cleansing us, He is washing us with the Word, and He will one day present us to God without spot, wrinkle, or other blemish.

- God has given us all the resources we need to be holy (2 Pet. 1:3).

**God** commands **us to be holy (1 Pet. 1:14–16).**

**Living a holy life is** God's will **(1 Thess. 4:3).**

**Living a holy life means** growth and change **.**

God's command that we be holy implies that we must be growing spiritually. God knows that we will not instantly be all that He wants us to be. His commands imply that believers must grow all of their lives.

Note the ways God has commanded us to grow:

- In all things (Eph. 4:15)
- In love (1 Thess. 3:12)
- In your knowledge of the Word (1 Pet. 2:2)
- In grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3:18)

Spiritual growth is sanctification. It should be as natural to us as a baby's hunger. Do you hunger for the Word? Do you have a deep desire to know and do God's will?

# LESSON THREE

## SEPARATION FROM SIN

**Big Idea:** God wants us to fight against sin in our lives.

**Hook:** Start by showing the class a coin and asking the following questions:

- What facts do we know about this coin (the amount, the words on it, the metal it contains, its size and shape)? Coins come in different sizes, shapes, amounts, metals, and with different engravings. But one thing is the same for all coins. They have two sides. So does sanctification (1 Thess. 1:9).
- What are the two sides to sanctification? (We are separated to God, and we are separated from evil.)

If I flip this coin over, I am automatically turning it from the other side. Likewise, we cannot turn to God without turning from idols.

In the next six lessons we will look at these two sides of sanctification. In lessons 3–5 we will consider our separation from idols, and in lessons 6–8 we will discuss our separation to God.

Today we are going to look at five passages and learn what the Bible says about our individual struggle against sin (Rom. 6:11–13; 2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 5:3–5; Col. 3:5–10; 1 John 1:9).

### **God Commands Separation From All Sin.**

If these verses reveal anything at all, they reveal that God wants His people to separate themselves from personal sin. God uses strong language in these verses:

- Certain sins should not ever be named among believers (Eph. 5:3).
- We are commanded to put to death (mortify, kill, destroy) sin in us (Col. 3:5). God is serious when it comes to sin. Nothing less than “murdering sin” will suffice.
- We were saved from such sins (Col. 3:6–7). The conclusion is that personal sins such as those named are characteristics of the ungodly, not the godly.

The words used in these passages are strong words. They are commands, not requests. (Note the list of commands in the student manual.) These are absolute commands requiring full obedience on the part of all believers.

## God Commands Separation From Specific Sins.

Give the students time to record the sins in their student manuals that God specifically names in the following passages:

- 2 Corinthians 7:1—Defilement of the flesh and spirit
- Ephesians 5:3–4—Sexual immorality, impurity, covetousness, filthiness, foolish talking, jesting (wording may vary)
- Colossians 3:5–7—Sexual immorality, impurity, sinful passions, evil desire, covetousness (wording may vary)
- Colossians 3:8–9—Anger, wrath, malice, slander, filthy communication, lying (wording may vary)

God names seventeen different sins from which we are to separate, and this list is not exhaustive. There are other lists in the Bible, and there are scores of sins God doesn't mention from which we should separate. But when God does get specific, you can know that He means business. If we are going on a killing mission to destroy sin, let's make sure that we deal with these seventeen.

The sins on God's "Most Wanted" list include the following:

### **Defilement of the flesh and spirit (2 Cor. 7:1)**

This is a broad category that includes all forms of lust and immorality, both internal and external.

Ask: What is the difference between defilement of the flesh and filthiness of the spirit? Defilement of the flesh refers to external sins, and defilement of the spirit refers to internal sins.

Filthiness of the flesh refers to sins of attitude (greed, lust, selfishness, harshness, lightheartedness to the things of God, disdain for authority, mocking, arguing, etc.).

Filthiness of the spirit refers to sins of atmosphere (Atmosphere encompasses a person's body language, facial expression, and voice. It is the aura that surrounds us, and it is the sum total of our personality, dress, body language, and appearance.)

☞ Ask your teens, "How can you identify a gang member?" They may have several answers, but all of them will probably correspond to how the gang member is dressed. Point out that you can identify a gang member without them even saying a word. Their appearance and body language create an atmosphere or are a reflection of their spirit. God wants our spirit—the atmosphere surrounding us—to be clean and pure.

### **Sexual immorality—A lack of self-control**

Sexual immorality, or fornication, refers to all forms of sexual sin. Our translation comes from the Greek word *porneia*, from which we get the word pornography. The root word means a lack of self-control, or "fatness." It is giving in to immoral sexual temptations without restraint.

## **Impurity—Indecent gestures and language**

Impurity, or uncleanness, also refers to sexual sins but would include indecent gestures and indecent language as well.

## **Filthiness—Disgraceful talk**

Filthiness refers to obscene language or gestures and all talk that is shameful. The root word means “disgraceful.”

## **Jesting—Immoral jokes**

Jesting is making something dirty and degrading of something innocently said. The “jester” can see something immoral or suggestive in someone’s innocent remark.

It includes speech that is full of sexual innuendoes. It is double-entendres—words or phrases having a double meaning. Many modern comedians are experts at jesting.

Do you find this kind of humor amusing? Do you laugh at jokes with double meanings, especially when the second one is vulgar?

## **Sinful passions (Col. 3:5) and evil desire—Sexual passion and mental lusting**

These two words are similar in meaning. Sinful passion, or inordinate affection, is the Greek word *pathos* from which we get our word passion. It refers to the physical cravings for sexual gratification. Mental lusting, or evil concupiscence, refers to the cravings and longings in our mind for sexual gratification. Paul commands believers to avoid these lusts that are characteristic of those who do not know God (1 Thess. 4:5).

## **Slander (or blasphemy)—Defaming others**

The Greek word that appears here was used two ways in the Greek culture. When used in relationship to God, it meant to dishonor His name. When used in relationship to people, it meant to slander. When we defame others, mock them, call them names, and make fun of them, we are in essence blaspheming God. Why? Because God made them.

This is why God denounces those who call someone a “fool” (Matt. 5:22). John MacArthur commented, “People are to be treated with dignity because they are made in the image of God. The believer’s speech must not be marred by insults or disparaging remarks directed at others” (John MacArthur in *Colossians & Philemon, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1992, pg. 144).

## **Separation From Sin Can Be Both External And Internal.**

When we think of sin, we most often think of external sins. Likewise, when we think of the subject of this book (separation, sanctification, holiness) we usually think of things we do outwardly. However, God is just as concerned with internal sins that no one ever sees. We can, due to outward pressures, appear clean on the outside while we are filthy on the inside (Matt. 23:25–28).

Have the students look at their list of sins on pages 12–13 and circle those that are internal. The list should include the following: filthiness of the spirit, covetousness, inordinate affection, concupiscence, anger, malice.

Of the seventeen sins mentioned in these verses, six are internal! Even the eleven external sins often begin with an internal problem. Therefore, true cleansing from sin begins with purification of the heart, not with reformation of the actions. Our problem is often one of attitude and spirit more than action.

## **Separation From Sin Requires Effort.**

### **It requires correct thinking (Rom. 6:11).**

The word that Scripture uses here means to count, to calculate, or to compute. It is like adding up your checkbook. If you calculate that you have \$25 in the bank when in reality you have \$10, you are not thinking correctly about what is true, or reckoning accurately. Romans tells us to consider ourselves dead to sin on a daily basis. We should be concerned daily with victory over sin.

### **It requires yielding (Rom. 6:12–13).**

Separation from personal sins requires the simple exercise of saying “no” to sin. It requires willpower on our part. We must not allow sin to get a foothold in our lives; rather, on the positive side, separation from sin requires yielding yourself to God. “Yielding” is offering ourselves afresh to God for usefulness every morning. It is beginning each day by praying, “Lord, here are my hands, here are my feet, here is my mind, here are my eyes, ears, mouth, and heart. Take me; use me this day.”

### **It requires putting to death (Col. 3:5).**

This word has often been translated “mortify,” which means to kill, to slay, to murder, or to destroy. God takes sin so seriously that nothing less than murder is appropriate for this evil! The terrible thing about sin is that it keeps resurrecting. Sin is a terrible monster that may be beheaded today and rise from its grave tomorrow. You must arise every morning, take up your sword, and kill the same sins over and over again.

### **It requires putting off and putting on (Col. 3:8, 10).**

The word used here is the same one used of a person simply taking off their clothes. We must learn simply to take off our sins and lay them aside. On the positive side, we must put on the new man. That is, we must get in the Word every day. Here is our victory. This is putting on our armor.

### **It requires cleansing and confessing (2 Cor. 7:1; 1 John 1:9).**

We defile ourselves with sin every day, so we need to bathe every day. Confessing our sins is one way we cleanse ourselves from sin. Separation from personal sins is not something that just happens. It requires blood, sweat, and tears on our part. It is a daily struggle, and only those who refuse to quit will have success.



## Separation From Sin Is Possible.

While none of us will ever be free from the effects of sin on this earth, we can have victory over sin! We learned last week that God has given us all the resources we need for victory (1 Cor. 10:13).

➡ Ask: What resources has He given us to overcome sin? Discuss. Answers will probably include others besides the ones highlighted below.

- The Word of God (Ps. 119:9, 11)
- The Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:13; Gal. 5:16, 22; Eph. 3:16)
- Prayer (Eph. 6:18)

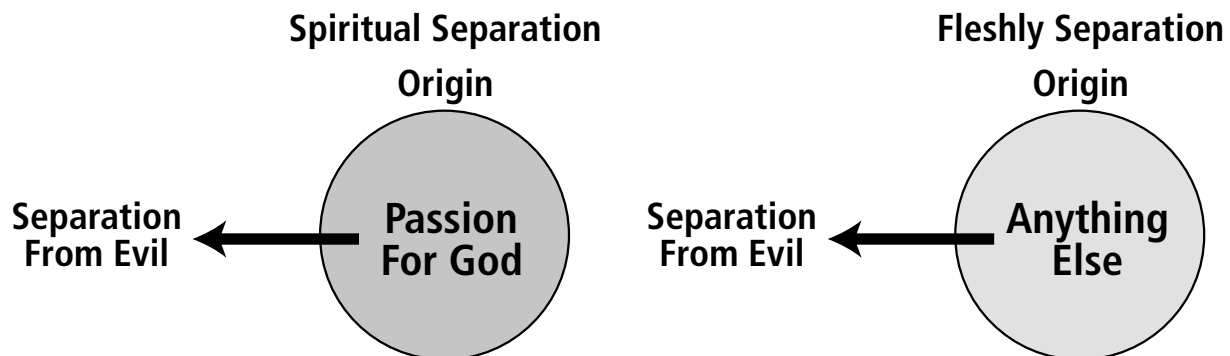
Armies that win wars may lose many battles. We will lose a few battles too. If we arm ourselves with the Word daily, yield to the Spirit, make much of prayer, learn to say no to sin, refuse to quit, confess our sins, and struggle to slay sin daily—we will experience the benefits of the victory Christ has already secured.

While separation from sin is possible, you may be separated from sin and still not be holy. How can you be separated from sin but not be holy? (The answer lies in our opening illustration of the coin. There are two sides to holiness—separation *from* and separation *to*. Just because one is separated from sin does not mean he is separated to the Lord.)

Separation from sin is ceremonial holiness; separation to God is moral or ethical holiness. God wants both in our lives, and neither is complete without the other.

## Challenge

Practical sanctification is not so much an act as an attitude. It is not separation from something that makes me holy. It is a passion for God that leads to separation from sin that is true holiness. Biblical separation finds its origin in a deep love for God. Separation that is produced by anything else is not true holiness. Those who separate from sin for any motive other than a passion for God are not truly holy. It is only separation that is caused by our passion for God that can be called real holiness.



## LESSON 3

# SEPARATION FROM SIN

**Just like a coin, sanctification has two sides:**

1. Separation \_\_\_\_\_ *to God* \_\_\_\_\_
2. Separation \_\_\_\_\_ *from evil* \_\_\_\_\_

In the next six lessons we will look at these two sides of sanctification. In lessons 3–5 we will consider our separation from idols, and in lessons 6–8 we will discuss our separation to God. It is impossible to separate from idolatry unless we are resolved to worship and serve the true God, so we will conclude this study with a strong emphasis on Him.

We are going to look at five passages and learn what the Bible says about our individual struggle against sin (Rom. 6:11–13; 2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 5:3–5; Col. 3:5–10; 1 John 1:9).

**SEPARATION FROM ALL SIN IS \_\_\_\_\_ *Commanded* \_\_\_\_\_ BY GOD.**

If these verses reveal anything at all, they reveal that God wants His people to separate themselves from personal sin. The words used in these passages are strong words. In the Greek they are commands, not requests.

### The commands

1. Consider yourselves dead to sin.
2. Do not let sin reign.
3. Do not yield yourself to be used as a tool of unrighteousness.
4. Yield yourself to God.
5. Do not let sins be named among you.
6. Put to death the part of you that desires to sin.
7. Put off personal sins.
8. Do not lie to others.

## SEPARATION FROM \_\_\_\_\_ *Specific Sins* \_\_\_\_\_ IS COMMANDED BY GOD.

Some sins are so blatantly wrong that God emphasizes how they have no place in a Christian's life. They are to be eradicated completely from our lives. Read the passages and record the sins.

- 2 Corinthians 7:1— \_\_\_\_\_ *Defilement of the flesh and spirit* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Ephesians 5:3–4— *Sexual immorality, impurity, covetousness, filthiness, foolish talking, jesting (wording may vary)*  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Colossians 3:5–7— *Sexual immorality, impurity, sinful passions, evil desire, covetousness (wording may vary)*  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Colossians 3:8–9— *Anger, wrath, malice, slander, filthy communication, lying (wording may vary)*  
\_\_\_\_\_

This list is not exhaustive. There are other lists in the Bible, and there are scores of sins God doesn't mention from which we should separate. But when God does get specific, you can know that He means business!

### The sins on God's "Most Wanted" list include the following:

- *Defilement of the flesh and spirit (2 Cor. 7:1)*
  - Filthiness of the flesh refers to sins of \_\_\_\_\_ *attitude* \_\_\_\_\_ (greed, lust, selfishness, harshness, light-heartedness to the things of God, disdain for authority, mocking, arguing, etc.).
  - Filthiness of the spirit refers to sins of \_\_\_\_\_ *atmosphere* \_\_\_\_\_. Atmosphere encompasses a person's body language, facial expression, and voice. It is the aura that surrounds, and it is the sum total of our personality, dress, body language, and appearance.
- *Sexual immorality*— \_\_\_\_\_ *A lack of self-control* \_\_\_\_\_  
It is giving in to immoral sexual temptations without restraint.
- *Impurity—Indecent* \_\_\_\_\_ *gestures and language* \_\_\_\_\_
- *Filthiness*— \_\_\_\_\_ *Disgraceful talk* \_\_\_\_\_

- *Jesting*—Immoral jokes
- *Sinful passions (Col. 3:5) and evil desire*—Sexual passion and mental lusting
- *Slander (or blasphemy)*—Defaming others

### SEPARATION FROM SIN CAN BE BOTH

External AND Internal.

Look at the list of seven sins above and circle those that are internal. How many are internal?

6

True cleansing from sin begins with purification of the heart, not with reformation of the actions! Our problem is often one of attitude and spirit more than action.

When a tree has no leaves, the roots are the problem. So it is in our lives. Our outward sins (like leaves) are a reflection of our inner spiritual condition (the root).

### SEPARATION FROM SIN Requires Effort.

We cannot remain passive and expect to grow in sanctification. Growth in holiness requires effort on our part.

**It requires** correct thinking **(Rom. 6:11).**

The word the Bible uses in this verse means to count, to calculate, or to compute. It means that we need to have an accurate understanding of how God has set us free from sin. We should be just as careful that we deal with sin biblically as we are careful that we have enough money in the bank to pay our bills!

**It requires** yielding **(Rom. 6:12–13).**

Separation from personal sins requires the simple exercise of saying “no” to sin. On the positive side, separation from sin requires yielding yourself to God.

**It requires** putting to death **(Col. 3:5).**

The word the Bible uses means to kill, to slay, to murder, or to destroy. Sin is a terrible monster that may be beheaded today and still rise from its grave tomorrow. We must deal with sin in our lives as a fearsome beast that cannot be permitted to remain in any form.

**It requires** \_\_\_\_\_ *putting off and putting on* \_\_\_\_\_ **(Col. 3:8, 10).**

Dealing with sin is like getting dressed. Every morning we must “put on” the Word. Every night we must “take off” our daily sins by confessing them to God.

**It requires** \_\_\_\_\_ *cleansing and confessing* \_\_\_\_\_ **(2 Cor. 7:1; 1 John 1:9).**

Separation from personal sins is not something that just happens. It requires blood, sweat, and tears on our part. It is a daily struggle, and only those who refuse to quit will have success.

### SEPARATION FROM SIN IS \_\_\_\_\_ *Possible* \_\_\_\_\_ FOR A CHRISTIAN.

God has given us all the resources we need for victory (1 Cor. 10:13).

- \_\_\_\_\_ *The Word of God* \_\_\_\_\_ (Ps. 119:9, 11)
- \_\_\_\_\_ *The Holy Spirit* \_\_\_\_\_ (Rom. 8:13; Gal. 5:16, 22; Eph. 3:16)
- \_\_\_\_\_ *Prayer* \_\_\_\_\_ (Eph. 6:18)

Separation from sin is ceremonial holiness; separation to God is moral or ethical holiness. God wants both in our lives, and neither is complete without the other.

Practical sanctification is not so much an act as an attitude. It is not separation from something that makes me holy. It is a passion for God that leads to separation from sin that is true holiness. The diagram illustrates both fleshly and true biblical separation. Biblical separation finds its origin in a deep love for God. Separation that is produced by anything else is not true holiness.

