

**EXPLORING GOD'S WORD
TEACHER'S GUIDE: LESSON 9B**

*[Assigned Reading: Ephesians 4-5]
[Themes to Teach: Holiness]*

2 Corinthians 6:17–7:1 (NKJV)

17 Therefore “Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.”

18 “I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty.”

1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

God has always called His people to be set apart. This was true of Abraham and the Children of Israel in the Old Testament, and it is no less true today. The New Testament is comprised of 27 books. 21 of those books deal almost entirely with the way Christians live.

(Read Ephesians 5:8-11; 1 Peter 1:15-16)

I. HOLINESS DEFINED:

Holiness is about separation for the purpose of dedication.

In a marriage each spouse chooses to be separate from all others so that they may be dedicated to each other. Likewise, as Christians, we are called to be separated unto the Lord. Our hearts, minds, bodies, and families should be consecrated to and for Him.

Romans 12:1 (NKJV)

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

Holiness is also called sanctification, and it is an ongoing process in the life of every Christian. It is a journey of maturity.

II. THE THREE MOTIVES OF HOLINESS:

We pursue a lifestyle of holiness for three important reasons:

1. To please and glorify God:

1 Corinthians 6:19–20 (NKJV)

19 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?

20 For you were bought at a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

We should never try to live for God with minimums. Instead, we should offer our lives to Him in worship and dedication.

Holiness is more about relationship than it is rules. Just as we would give of ourselves and make sacrifices to please someone we love on earth; we should give of ourselves and make sacrifices to please the One we love in heaven.

2. To be a witness and shine as a light for others:

Matthew 5:16 (NKJV)

16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

If Christians are not distinct in their attitudes and lifestyles, the world will never see Jesus in them. We must not hide our light.

3. To protect ourselves and our walk with God:

Romans 13:14 (KJV 1900)

14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

When we live with holiness standards in our life, we establish boundaries against the flesh and the world.

III. CHRISTIANS SHOULD REJECT CONFORMITY TO THE WORLD:

Christians should not pattern their lives after the standards, definitions, opinions, and priorities of the culture around them. (Read 1 John 2:15–16)

Romans 12:2 (KJV 1900)

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

We should never allow the world to establish our definitions. We should question the world's standards of beauty, success, happiness, truth, goodness, etc. We must use Kingdom definitions, not cultural definitions.

Just because a behavior is legal or considered normal by the culture, it does not mean that it is acceptable to God.

IV. THE THREE TEACHERS OF HOLINESS:

There are three ways that God teaches His people how to live a holy life:

1. Through the Bible:

Psalms 119:9 (NKJV)

9 How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word.

- a. Commandments: These are behaviors or attitudes that are specifically addressed in the scriptures. Such as adultery or drunkenness.
- b. Principles: These truths are not as specific as commandments, but they are still relevant. They are timeless truths that must find contemporary application in our lives. Example of Biblical principles:
 - i. 1 Thessalonians 5:22 – Abstain from all appearance of evil.
 - ii. Psalm 101:3 – Guarding against looking at ungodly things.
 - iii. 1 Timothy 2:9 – Modesty in our appearance.

Cultures and technology may change, but Biblical principles never do. The way those principles are applied may be adjusted.

2. Through pastors and spiritual leadership:

Hebrews 13:17 (NKJV)

17 Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

God will use ministry to help the church apply biblical principles in a contemporary way.

Biblical principles never change, but the way they find application in our lives may change with developments in culture. For example, the internet did not exist in the 1st Century. Nevertheless, Biblical principles should still guide our usage of streaming services and social media.

God calls pastors to watch for our souls, as shepherds would watch for their flock. We should listen humbly when they guide us in the application of Biblical principles.

3. Through the Holy Spirit within us:

John 16:13 (NKJV)

13 However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

The Spirit of God will give believers personal convictions regarding attitudes, thoughts and behaviors that are not pleasing to God. The key is for us to be sensitive and responsive to the prompting and the leading of the Spirit. We do not grieve the Holy Spirit. (Read Ephesians 4:30)

V. CONCLUSION:

We must remember that the pursuit of holiness is not about learning and living a list of rules. It is about responding humbly to the Bible, spiritual leaders, and the Spirit of God. We do this because we love God, we want to grow in our witness to others, and we do not want to compromise our walk with God in any way.