

The Pursuit of Holiness - Session 1 - Chapters 1-2

Chapter 1 — “Holiness Is For You”

Small Group Discussion Questions + Leader Notes

1. Bridges says many Christians struggle with holiness because they have a wrong idea of what it means to live a holy life.

What misconceptions about holiness have shaped your own understanding?

Leader Notes / Potential Answers:

- Some think holiness = legalism, rule-keeping, or perfection.
- Others see it as optional or only for “super Christians.”
- Some assume it happens automatically without effort (“let go and let God”).
- The goal is to help the group see holiness as *grace-enabled obedience*, not moralism.

2. How does Bridges define holiness in this chapter, and which aspect challenges you most?

Leader Notes:

- Holiness means being set apart for God and growing in Christlikeness.
- It involves both putting off sin and pursuing righteousness.
- People will often say the call to intentional discipline or “mortifying sin” is challenging.

3. Bridges emphasizes that holiness is both a privilege and a duty.

Why must both be held together?

Potential Answers:

- **Privilege:** We belong to God; holiness flows from identity (1 Cor. 6:19–20).
- **Duty:** God commands us to be holy (1 Pet. 1:15–16).
- Overemphasizing privilege → passivity.
- Overemphasizing duty → legalism.
- Holiness thrives when rooted in grace *and* obedience.

4. “Being holy is not an option for the Christian.” Why is holiness essential—not for salvation, but as evidence of salvation?

Leader Notes:

- Scripture teaches “without holiness no one will see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14).
- Holiness doesn’t earn salvation but proves genuine faith (James 2).
- True believers bear fruit; sanctification flows from justification.
- Discuss the tension between imperfect obedience and genuine growth.

5. What does the command “Be holy, for I am holy” reveal about God’s character and His expectations?**Potential Answers:**

- God’s holiness is the standard; He calls His people into His likeness.
- Holiness reflects His purity, moral goodness, and separateness from sin.
- God desires a people who represent His character to the world.

6. Where do you feel the tension between the desire for holiness and the reality of ongoing sin?**Leader Notes:**

- Encourage openness without forcing confession.
- Common examples: impatience, lust, anger, comparison, speech, pride.
- Point to Romans 7—the believer’s real struggle with sin.
- Emphasize the Spirit’s ongoing work (Phil. 1:6).

7. Bridges says believers often fail because they don’t take sin seriously enough. What “respectable sins” are we tempted to tolerate?**Potential Answers:**

- Gossip, complaining, subtle pride, small compromises, greed, envy, laziness, sarcasm.
- Bridges wants readers to see that “small” sins hinder holiness just as much as obvious ones.

8. Why are we easily motivated to pursue excellence in hobbies or work but not holiness? What does this reveal about our hearts?**Leader Notes:**

- We naturally pursue what brings immediate pleasure or recognition.
- Holiness is often slow, unseen, and costly.
- Reveals misplaced priorities or an incomplete view of God’s worthiness.
- Helps expose idols of comfort, achievement, or approval.

9. How does the gospel provide both motivation and power for holiness?

Potential Answers:

- **Motivation:** Gratitude for Christ's finished work draws us to obedience (Titus 2:11–14).
- **Power:** The Holy Spirit enables us to kill sin and pursue righteousness (Rom. 8:13).
- Without the gospel, holiness becomes a burden or a performance-based identity.

10. If holiness is our God-given goal, what practical step do you sense the Spirit prompting this week?

Leader Notes:

- Examples: increased Scripture intake, fasting, boundaries with media, confession, accountability, prayer rhythms, repentance in a relationship.
- Encourage specificity and grace—not perfectionism.

Chapter 2 — “The Holiness of God”

Small Group Discussion Questions + Leader Notes

1. Bridges says a right view of God's holiness is foundational. How has your understanding of God's holiness shaped your spiritual life?

Leader Notes:

- A high view of God → a high view of sin and a stronger desire for holiness.
- A low view of God → casual attitude toward sin, shallow worship.
- Encourage honest reflection without judgment.

2. When you think about God's holiness, what emotions rise in you—fear, comfort, awe, distance, worship? Why?

Potential Answers:

- Many experience a mix of fear (God's purity), awe (His majesty), and comfort (His grace).
- Bridges wants believers to see holiness as both terrifying and beautiful—drawing us near through Christ.

3. Isaiah's “Woe is me!” response (Isa. 6:5) illustrates the effect of encountering God's holiness. Why is this awareness essential to repentance and growth?

Leader Notes:

- Seeing God clearly reveals our sinfulness.

- True repentance requires honest self-assessment.
- God humbles us so He may transform us—"God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

4. Bridges writes that God's holiness exposes sin not to crush us but to lead us to grace. How does this reshape your response to conviction?

Potential Answers:

- Conviction becomes a gift, not condemnation (Rom. 8:1).
- Leads to deeper dependence on Christ.
- Helps believers repent quickly rather than hide or excuse sin.

5. In what ways does the modern church tend to downplay God's holiness? How does this impact obedience, worship, or discipleship?

Leader Notes:

- Overemphasis on God's love without His holiness.
- Casual worship, lack of reverence, low bar for discipleship.
- When holiness is minimized, sin becomes normalized.

6. How does God's holiness make the work of Christ more precious and necessary?

Potential Answers:

- God's holiness shows the seriousness of sin and the impossibility of self-salvation.
- Only Jesus' righteousness can bring us into the presence of a holy God.
- The cross reveals God's holiness *and* love simultaneously.

7. Bridges argues that a low view of God inevitably leads to a low view of sin. Do you agree? How have you seen this in yourself or others?

Leader Notes:

- Discuss examples, e.g., justification of behaviors, lack of confession, casual disobedience.
- Help the group connect theology → practice.
- Encourage reflection on how worship shapes holiness.

8. What is the difference between being *afraid* of God and fearing God? How does biblical fear draw us closer rather than push us away?

Potential Answers:

- Being *afraid* = terror without relationship; running from God.
- *Fear of the Lord* = reverence, awe, joyful submission, running to God.
- Helps us obey, worship, and trust Him more deeply.

9. How should the holiness of God shape our daily habits—thought life, media consumption, attitudes, relationships?

Leader Notes:

- Encourage practical connections, not vague generalities.
- Examples: guarding your mind, purifying speech, limiting influences, pursuing integrity, expressing forgiveness.
- Bring in 1 Thess. 4:3–7 and Col. 3:1–17 as supportive Scriptures.

10. Where do you personally need to grow in your understanding of God's holiness, and what is one practice that could help?

Leader Notes:

- Practices may include meditation on Scripture, confession, reading Isaiah 6 or Revelation 4–5, journaling, worship, or accountability.
- Reinforce grace-filled growth, not shame or fear.