

The Pursuit of Holiness - Session 10 - Chapters 13-14

Chapter 13: "Holiness and Our Wills"

Small Group Discussion Questions + Leader Notes**

This chapter emphasizes the crucial role of the **will**—our decisions, commitments, and choices—in pursuing holiness.

1. Bridges argues that the will is the "hinge" on which holiness turns. Why is the will so important in the pursuit of holiness?

Leader Notes / Potential Answers:

- The will determines our choices and direction, not just our desires.
- Holiness requires intentional decisions, not just good intentions.
- Our emotions may pull us one way, but obedience follows the will.
- The Spirit empowers us, but we must choose to respond.
- Bridges wants readers to understand that godly desire without godly decision leads nowhere.

2. Why do you think many believers wait to feel motivated before obeying? How does Scripture challenge this mindset?

Potential Answers:

- Feelings fluctuate; waiting for motivation delays obedience.
- Scripture emphasizes action: "Be doers of the Word" (James 1:22).
- Jesus obeyed even when obedience was painful (Luke 22:42; Heb. 5:8).
- The will must lead; feelings follow.
- Bridges warns against emotional dependency in the spiritual life.

3. Bridges distinguishes between "willpower" and a "Spirit-renewed will." How are these different? Why does this distinction matter?

Leader Notes:

- Willpower: human strength, pride-driven, short-lived, discouraging.
- Spirit-renewed will: empowered, sustained by grace, aligned with Scripture.
- The Spirit changes desires and strengthens resolve.
- A renewed will fights from identity in Christ—not self-improvement.

- Avoids burnout and legalism.

4. How does submitting our wills to God's will reshape our approach to spiritual disciplines and temptation?

Potential Answers:

- We seek God's way rather than convenience or comfort.
- Temptation is reframed as choosing allegiance to God.
- Disciplines become acts of worship rather than duty.
- Christ's example ("not my will, but Yours") becomes the pattern.
- Bridges emphasizes the surrender of the will as foundational.

5. What role does the fear of sacrifice or hardship play in resisting holiness? How does the will help overcome this fear?

Leader Notes:

- We often resist holiness because it feels costly.
- The will decides to obey despite discomfort.
- Growth requires saying "no" to self, "yes" to God (Luke 9:23).
- The Spirit strengthens our will to endure hardship.
- Bridges stresses choosing obedience even when the path is difficult.

6. Can you identify an area where you know God's will clearly but your will often resists? What does this inner battle reveal?

Potential Answers:

- Areas: speech, purity, forgiveness, pride, patience, anger, discipline.
- Reveals ongoing spiritual immaturity, pride, fear, or misplaced desires.
- Shows the need for a renewed will shaped by Scripture and prayer.
- Encourage honest reflection—not shame.

7. How can believers practically strengthen their wills toward holiness?

Leader Notes:

- Regular Scripture intake
- Prayer for resolve and strength
- Accountability
- Practicing obedience in small things
- Setting boundaries and plans
- Meditating on Christ's willingness to obey

- The will is strengthened like a muscle—through repeated use.

8. What are some ways we unintentionally weaken our wills in the battle for holiness?

Potential Answers:

- Constant distraction
- Overindulging in entertainment or comfort
- Lack of margin or rest
- Neglect of Scripture
- Avoiding accountability
- Feeding sinful desires through small compromises
- Bridges wants believers to recognize patterns that erode resolve.

9. How do God's promises strengthen our will when obedience feels difficult?

Leader Notes:

- Promises remind us of God's presence, reward, help, and faithfulness.
- They give hope beyond immediate struggle.
- They redirect the focus from earthly comfort to eternal perspective.
- Examples: Phil. 2:13, Isa. 41:10, Heb. 13:5–6.

10. What is one step you can take this week to align your will with God's will in a practical area of life?

Leader Notes:

- Keep the commitment specific and grace-dependent.
- Encourage steps like daily Scripture, confession, forgiveness, discipline of speech, accountability, etc.
- Reinforce that the Spirit strengthens even small acts of obedience.

Chapter 14: "Habits of Holiness"

Small Group Discussion Questions + Leader Notes**

This chapter highlights how spiritual habits shape a life of holiness and how repeated obedience forms godly character.

1. Bridges says habits play a crucial role in holiness. Why do habits have such power to shape the Christian life?

Leader Notes / Potential Answers:

- Habits turn occasional obedience into consistent obedience.
- They shape desires over time—what we repeatedly do forms who we are.
- Habits reduce friction between intention and action.
- Bridges emphasizes that holiness is not built on occasional moments but on lifelong patterns.

2. Why is it difficult to build good spiritual habits but easy to fall into sinful or lazy ones?

Potential Answers:

- The flesh naturally leans toward comfort and ease.
- Sinful habits form passively; holy habits require intentionality.
- Spiritual disciplines bring delayed, not immediate, gratification.
- Satan and the world encourage distraction.
- Bridges wants believers to recognize the spiritual opposition to holy habits.

3. What are some examples of “habits of holiness” that Bridges highlights? Which of these do you find most important or most difficult?

Leader Notes:Common habits include:

- Regular Scripture reading
- Prayer
- Worship
- Confession and repentance
- Stewarding time
- Guarding speech and thought life
- Serving others
- Encourage discussion about which habits need strengthening.

4. How does the Holy Spirit work through habits? Why doesn't He just instantly transform us instead?

Potential Answers:

- Habits train the heart and renew the mind gradually.
- God values endurance, faithfulness, and perseverance.
- Transformation through habits fosters maturity rather than dependence on emotional highs.
- The Spirit often works through means—not instead of them.

5. What role does consistency play in spiritual growth? Why is consistency more important than intensity?

Leader Notes:

- Consistency creates spiritual stability and growth over time.
- Intensity without consistency leads to burnout and discouragement.
- Daily obedience forms deep spiritual roots (Ps. 1).
- Bridges stresses ordinary perseverance over occasional spiritual zeal.

6. Why do small, seemingly insignificant choices matter so much in forming holiness?

Potential Answers:

- Small choices accumulate and shape patterns.
- No one suddenly becomes holy or sinful—it happens through repeated decisions.
- “Little sins” tolerated become big sins practiced.
- “Small obediences” practiced become deep character formed.

7. Bridges says the mind is a primary battleground for habits. What habits of thought do believers need to cultivate?

Leader Notes:

- Meditation on Scripture
- Rejecting lies; replacing them with truth
- Thankfulness
- Purity of mind
- Prayerful awareness
- Habits of mental discipline guard against temptation and anxiety.

8. What are some unhealthy habits—spiritual or otherwise—that tend to undermine holiness? How can believers break those patterns?

Potential Answers: Unhealthy habits may include:

- Excessive screen time
 - Neglect of Scripture
 - Unchecked emotions
 - Poor sleep patterns
 - Isolation
 - Gossip or negative talk
- Breaking habits involves:
- Repentance
 - New routines

- Accountability
- Replacement with godly habits
- Depending on the Spirit's enabling power.

9. How can Christian community help establish and maintain habits of holiness?

Leader Notes:

- Accountability
- Encouragement
- Shared spiritual practices
- Corporate worship
- Bearing one another's burdens (Gal. 6:1–2)
- Community reinforces habits and helps break sinful patterns.

10. What is one practical habit of holiness you sense the Spirit leading you to cultivate or strengthen this week?

Leader Notes: Encourage small, concrete steps such as:

- 10 minutes of Scripture each morning
 - Specific prayer times
 - Gratitude journaling
 - Limiting media
 - Daily confession and repentance
 - Serving a family member intentionally
- Keep the tone grace-filled and hopeful.