

# The Pursuit of Holiness - Session 2 - Chapter 3

## Chapter 3 — “Holiness Is Not an Option”

Small Group Discussion Questions + Leader Notes\*\*

**1. Bridges opens this chapter by stressing that holiness is not merely recommended—it is required. Why do you think Scripture speaks so strongly about the necessity of holiness?**

**Leader Notes / Potential Answers:**

- Scripture: Hebrews 12:14 — “Without holiness no one will see the Lord.”
- Holiness is evidence of transformation and belonging to Christ.
- God is holy; therefore His people must reflect His nature.
- The strong language is meant to break casual attitudes toward sin.
- Holiness is not salvation *by works*, but salvation *proved* by fruit.

**2. Bridges says many Christians make a “duty out of holiness” but not a “delight.” What do you think he means? How does this show up in real life?**

**Leader Notes:**

- Duty-only holiness = obligation, drudgery, performance.
- Delight = joy in pleasing God, gratitude-driven obedience.
- Real-life examples: checking spiritual boxes vs. enjoying the presence of God.
- Help your group see the difference between legalistic effort and grace-fueled desire.

**3. What does the phrase “holiness is a process” mean, and how does this encourage or challenge you personally?**

**Potential Answers:**

- Holiness is lifelong—progressive sanctification (Phil. 1:6).
- We grow gradually through Scripture, Spirit, community, and obedience.
- Encouraging because failure doesn't disqualify us; Christ is patient.
- Challenging because it requires daily vigilance, effort, and repentance.
- Important: growth is real, even if slow.

#### **4. Bridges confronts the belief that holiness is impossible. Why do many Christians believe this? What makes holiness feel “out of reach”?**

##### **Leader Notes:**

- People assume holiness = perfection, so they give up.
- Past failures create discouragement and resignation.
- Cultural influences normalize sin; holiness feels countercultural.
- Lack of understanding about Spirit-empowered obedience leads to defeatism.
- Misbelief that God wouldn't expect what He doesn't enable.

#### **5. According to Bridges, holiness is something we *must* pursue, not simply wait for. Why is passivity dangerous in the Christian life?**

##### **Potential Answers:**

- Sin grows in the absence of intentional pursuit (Gal. 5:16–17).
- The flesh does not drift toward holiness—only away from it.
- Satan exploits passivity; spiritual laziness leads to spiritual bondage.
- Holiness requires active engagement: prayer, discipline, Scripture, fellowship.
- Passivity also rejects the command of God and quenches the Spirit.

#### **6. Bridges says that true holiness is not achieved by willpower alone. Why must holiness involve both our effort and God's power?**

##### **Leader Notes:**

- Key text: Philippians 2:12–13 — “Work out your salvation... for God works in you.”
- Our effort without the Spirit leads to pride or burnout.
- Dependence without obedience leads to stagnation and presumption.
- Holiness is cooperation with God's sanctifying work.
- The Spirit empowers, but we respond in faith and obedience.

#### **7. Bridges highlights several Scriptures that command holiness. Which one stood out to you, and why is it significant?**

##### **Potential Answers:**

- Hebrews 12:14 — holiness necessary to see God.
- 1 Peter 1:15–16 — “Be holy, for I am holy.”
- 1 Thessalonians 4:3 — holiness is “God's will” for believers.
- Romans 6 — sin no longer has dominion; holiness is the new identity.
- The goal is to help participants consider Scripture's weight and clarity.

## **8. What are some ways Christians excuse or minimize their lack of holiness? Which ones are you most prone to?**

### **Leader Notes:**

- Common excuses:
  - "That's just my personality."
  - "No one's perfect."
  - "God will forgive me."
  - "At least I'm not as sinful as others."
  - "I've tried to change; it doesn't work."
- Bridges pushes readers to reject rationalizations and embrace Spirit-enabled change.
- Encourage humility but avoid shaming.

## **9. In what ways does a proper understanding of grace actually compel us toward greater holiness—not less?**

### **Potential Answers:**

- Grace trains us to renounce ungodliness (Titus 2:11–12).
- Grace frees us from condemnation, which liberates us to pursue obedience.
- Gratitude produces love, and love produces obedience (John 14:15).
- Grace doesn't lower the call to holiness; it empowers it.
- Grace fuels joy in obedience rather than obligation.

## **10. What is one specific area of life where God is calling you to stop making excuses and begin a fresh pursuit of holiness?**

### **Leader Notes:**

- Provide space for reflection without forced disclosure.
- Examples: speech, purity, anger, self-control, forgiveness, stewardship, habits, pride, busyness.
- Key pastoral note: emphasize **dependence on God's empowering grace**, not self-reliant striving.