

The Pursuit of Holiness - Session 3 - Chapter 4

** Chapter 3 - "The Holiness of Christ"

Small Group Discussion Questions + Leader Notes**

1. Bridges begins by emphasizing that Christ is the perfect model of holiness. Why is it important that holiness is first defined by *Christ's* life rather than by our attempts?

Leader Notes / Potential Answers:

- Christ gives us a concrete, living example of holiness—not abstract moralism.
- We imitate a person, not a list; holiness is relational.
- Christ's holiness exposes the inadequacy of human righteousness (Isa. 64:6).
- His holiness is the ultimate standard and the ultimate hope—He fulfills what we fail to do.
- The goal is to shift focus from self-effort → Christ-centered imitation.

2. Which aspect of Christ's holiness stood out to you most in this chapter—His obedience, compassion, purity, humility, self-control, or something else? Why?

Leader Notes:

- Participants may highlight Christ's humility (Phil. 2), His perfect obedience (Heb. 5:8), or His purity in temptation (Matt. 4).
- Encourage real-life connections: "How does seeing Christ this way challenge or encourage you?"
- The point is to draw attention to Jesus' character—not just His works.

3. Bridges highlights that Jesus never sinned—not even in His thoughts, desires, or motives. How does this deepen your understanding of Christ's holiness?

Potential Answers:

- Holiness isn't just external behaviors—it includes internal purity (Matt. 5).
- Jesus' internal life was perfectly aligned with the Father's will.

- This makes His obedience even more astonishing and His sacrifice even more precious.
- It also reveals how deeply sin has affected us and how much we need grace.

4. Why is it essential to see Jesus not only as our example *but also* as our righteousness? What happens if we only view Him as an example?

Leader Notes:

- If Jesus is *only* an example, Christianity becomes moralism—we try harder and fail harder.
- If He is also our righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21), we pursue holiness with assurance, not desperation.
- Example alone → discouragement.
- Righteousness alone (without imitation) → cheap grace.
- Christ is both substitute *and* pattern.

5. Bridges says we often “study ourselves too closely” and “Jesus too little.” Why is focusing on ourselves spiritually harmful? What does looking at Christ produce instead?

Potential Answers:

- Self-focus leads to discouragement, pride, insecurity, and performance-based identity.
- Christ-focus produces worship, gratitude, hope, and desire to obey.
- Hebrews 12:2 — “Fix your eyes on Jesus.”
- The Spirit transforms us as we behold Christ’s glory (2 Cor. 3:18).

6. How does seeing Christ’s holiness clarify the seriousness of sin? How does it simultaneously magnify grace?

Leader Notes:

- Christ’s purity shows sin is not a small thing—it is rebellion against God’s holiness.
- His perfect obedience shows how far short we fall.
- But grace shines brightly: the Holy One died for the unholy (Rom. 5:6–8).
- Jesus’ holiness heightens both conviction and comfort.

7. Bridges writes that Christ’s obedience was not automatic but required real struggle, discipline, and suffering. How does this impact the way you understand your own pursuit of holiness?

Potential Answers:

- Jesus obeyed *as a man* empowered by the Spirit (Heb. 4:15).

- Holiness is often difficult—Jesus shows the costliness of obedience.
- His struggle encourages us: temptation is not sin—yielding is.
- His victory gives us confidence that holiness is possible by the Spirit’s power.

8. What role does meditating on the holiness of Christ play in pursuing personal holiness? What practical ways can we “behold” Christ more intentionally?

Leader Notes: Practical ways may include:

- Reading the Gospels regularly to observe His character.
- Memorizing Scriptures about Christ (Col. 1, John 1, Heb. 1).
- Worship and singing Christ-centered songs.
- Journaling reflections on His attributes.
- The more we behold Jesus, the more we become like Him (2 Cor. 3:18).

9. Bridges argues that true holiness grows out of loving Christ. Why is love a stronger motivator than fear, guilt, or duty?

Potential Answers:

- Love produces glad obedience (John 14:15).
- Fear may restrain behavior temporarily but cannot transform the heart.
- Guilt leads to despair; love leads to devotion.
- Duty can feel heavy; love feels joyful.
- The goal is to help the group see holiness as worship.

10. After reading this chapter, what is one specific way you feel led to imitate Christ’s holiness this week?

Leader Notes: Encourage concrete, grace-filled commitments such as:

- Practicing patience or gentleness
- Resisting a specific temptation
- Serving someone sacrificially
- Speaking with truth and love
- Responding to conflict with humility
- Spending time in the Gospels

Avoid legalistic resolutions; focus on Spirit-dependent steps.