

The Pursuit of Holiness - Session 8 - Chapter 11

Chapter 11 — “Holiness in Body”

Small Group Discussion Questions + Leader Notes**

1. Bridges says holiness must be pursued not only in the heart but also “in the body.” Why do you think he emphasizes the physical aspect of holiness?

Leader Notes / Potential Answers:

- Scripture makes it clear: our bodies belong to God (1 Cor. 6:19–20).
- Sin often manifests through bodily actions—lust, gluttony, laziness, impurity, speech, aggression.
- Christianity is not merely internal; it is lived out physically.
- Bridges wants to correct the misconception that holiness is only a matter of “heart intentions.”

2. What are some ways Christians tend to separate physical behavior from spiritual life? Which of those tendencies do you identify with?

Potential Answers:

- Believing motives matter more than actions.
- Treating spiritual disciplines as “soul work” but ignoring bodily habits.
- Excusing behaviors like overeating, lust, or laziness as “just struggles.”
- Assuming as long as the heart is sincere, the body doesn’t matter.
- Encourage gentle honesty—these are sensitive areas.

3. Bridges points to 1 Corinthians 6:12–20 to show that our bodies are “temples of the Holy Spirit.” What does this imply about daily obedience?

Leader Notes:

- Our actions physically reflect who we belong to.
- Self-control, stewardship, sexual purity, and disciplined habits matter deeply.
- Honor God with your body → obedience in tangible, practical ways.

- This truth strengthens the believer's seriousness toward bodily sins.

4. Bridges writes that Christians often tolerate sins of the body because they seem "respectable." Which bodily sins do believers often excuse, and why?

Potential Answers:

- Gluttony ("I deserve this," "It's just food").
- Laziness or sloth ("I'm tired," "I need a break").
- Impurity (lustful thoughts, media choices).
- Sharp or careless speech ("I'm just being honest").
- Encourage participants to see the heart beneath the habit—but without shaming.

5. What makes sins of the body particularly challenging to deal with compared to more "private" sins of the heart or mind?

Leader Notes:

- Bodily habits are often repeated, ingrained, and pleasurable.
- Physical urges feel powerful and immediate.
- Cultural influences normalize bodily indulgence.
- Bodily sins are sometimes easier to hide behind excuses like stress or fatigue.
- Help your group articulate why resisting these sins requires intentionality and dependence on the Spirit.

6. Bridges emphasizes the biblical call to "learn to control your body in holiness" (1 Thess. 4:3–4). What does learning look like in this context?

Potential Answers:

- Ongoing process—not instant, but progressive growth.
- Developing new habits, disciplines, guardrails (e.g., accountability, boundaries).
- Training the body like an athlete trains physically (1 Cor. 9:24–27).
- Practicing repentance and renewal when failing.
- Emphasize that learning requires perseverance and grace.

7. Why must holiness of the body involve both restraint (what we say no to) and proactive obedience (what we say yes to)?

Leader Notes:

- Restraint: resisting lust, gluttony, laziness, harmful actions, sinful speech.

- Proactive obedience: serving others physically, using the body for good works, developing discipline.
- Holiness is not only avoiding sin but cultivating righteousness (Rom. 6:13).
- This dual approach guards the group from legalism or passivity.

8. Some believers feel defeated when it comes to bodily habits (addictions, overeating, pornography, lack of discipline). Why is hope essential in pursuing holiness in these areas?

Potential Answers:

- The Spirit empowers change—Romans 8:13.
- Identity in Christ provides both the power and the motive to persevere.
- Failure is not the final word; grace restores and strengthens.
- Shame paralyzes, but the gospel liberates for change.
- Encourage empathy—these struggles are common and sanctification is gradual.

9. What practical steps can believers take to cultivate holiness in their bodies? Which step is the Spirit pressing on you?

Leader Notes:

- Practical steps may include:
 - Establishing boundaries with technology/media
 - Fasting or dietary discipline
 - Exercise/stewardship of health
 - Accountability for sexual purity
 - Developing routines of rest and work
 - Confession and community support
- Encourage practical, small, grace-dependent commitments—not drastic vows.

10. How does viewing your body as belonging to Jesus reshape the way you think about temptation, discipline, and daily habits?

Potential Answers:

- Helps believers fight sin with identity-based motivation.
- Produces gratitude-driven obedience rather than guilt-driven striving.
- Encourages treating the body as a sacred space, not a personal possession.
- Reinforces that every part of life—including the physical—is lived under Christ's lordship.