

## Living Holy isn't Automatic February 12, 2023

1 Peter 1:14-16 (NLT) So you must live as God's obedient children. Don't slip back into your old ways of living to satisfy your own desires. You didn't know any better then. <sup>15</sup> But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy. <sup>16</sup> For the Scriptures say, "You must be holy because I am holy."

What exactly does it mean to be holy? Is it to be perfect, sinless, or to dress, talk, and behave in a certain way? Does this imply that we leave society to live in a monastery?

To be holy means to be distinct from all that is common. Only God is distinct from everything else. He is holy; holiness is in His nature, and according to the passage we just read, He chose us to be holy.

Ephesians 1:4 (NLT) Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes.

Being holy begins with an inward change, not with outward behavior. When God changed our hearts, He made us unique and distinct.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

We cannot live the holiness required by God unless we are made holy. That is, unless we are born-again and transformed on the inside.

Ephesians 2:10 (ESV) For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

True transformation starts on the inside and manifests on the outside. A change from the inside out.

Holiness is associated with both outward behavior and inward nature.

Luke 6:43-45 (NLT) "A good tree can't produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can't produce good fruit. <sup>44</sup> A tree is identified by its fruit. Figs are never gathered from thornbushes, and grapes are not picked from bramble bushes. <sup>45</sup> A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. What you say flows from what is in your heart.

Holiness begins with a change of heart. God transforms the sinful heart bent on self-centered living into a heart bent on living in a way that reflects that He, the Holy One, lives in us.

1 Corinthians 3:16 (NLT) Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?

The presence of God's Spirit within us does not imply that we will automatically live a holy life.

### **Living holy isn't automatic**

Yes, if we are a born-again believer in Christ, our hearts have been changed, and we have a new desire to live a holy life, but this does not imply that we have become robots with a new program that makes decisions for us.

1 Peter 1:15-16 (NLT) But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy. <sup>16</sup>For the Scriptures say, "You must be holy because I am holy."

Every day, we choose whether to conform to the world and its godless mindsets or to be transformed by God's word and its call to live holy.

Romans 12:2 (ESV) Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

1 Peter 1:14-16 (NLT) So you must live as God's obedient children. Don't slip back into your old ways of living to satisfy your own desires. You didn't know any better then. <sup>15</sup> But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy. <sup>16</sup> For the Scriptures say, "You must be holy because I am holy."

Life's pressures and the enemy's temptations are designed to entice us to return to our old ways of life. We didn't know any better before Christ because we were ruled by our fallen nature. But now we know better because we have a new nature and the presence of the Holy Spirit within us.

The Holy Spirit lives within us, leading and guiding us, but we must respond and submit to Him.

There are four things we need to do to keep from regressing to our old way of living:

- Get rid of evil behavior
- Give ourselves to the word
- Keep away from worldly desires
- Be careful to live properly

1 Peter 2:1-3 (NLT) So get rid of all evil behavior. Be done with all deceit, hypocrisy, jealousy, and all unkind speech. <sup>2</sup> Like newborn babies, you must crave pure spiritual milk so that you will grow into a full experience of salvation. Cry out for this nourishment, <sup>3</sup> now that you have had a taste of the Lord's kindness.

1 Peter 2:11-12 Dear friends, I warn you as “temporary residents and foreigners” to keep away from worldly desires that wage war against your very souls. <sup>12</sup> Be careful to live properly among your unbelieving neighbors. Then even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable behavior, and they will give honor to God when he judges the world.

When we abandon evil behavior and give ourselves to the word, we will be able to live properly among those who do not know Christ.

### **What does it mean to live properly or holy?**

1 Peter 3:8-12 (NLT) Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters. Be tenderhearted, and keep a humble attitude. <sup>9</sup> Don't repay evil for evil. Don't retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and he will grant you his blessing. <sup>10</sup> For the Scriptures say, “If you want to enjoy life and see many happy days, keep your tongue from speaking evil and your lips from telling lies. <sup>11</sup> Turn away from evil and do good. Search for peace, and work to maintain it. <sup>12</sup> The eyes of the LORD watch over those who do right, and his ears are open to their prayers. But the LORD turns his face against those who do evil.”

- When we are of one mind, sympathizing and loving one another as brothers and sisters, we demonstrate that we are God's children.
- When we refuse to pay evil for evil and instead choose to bless those who insult us, we demonstrate that we are Jesus Christ followers.
- When we choose to do what is holy and right rather than sin, we demonstrate that the Holy Spirit lives in us.

Peter emphasizes that our prayers are more powerful when we do what is good and resist doing what is bad.

**Conclusion:** The Holy Spirit is guiding us through the process of sanctification. The sanctification process is not a one-time event. It is something that occurs throughout our Christian lives.

Living holy entails working with the Holy Spirit and being open to His direction. Only by regularly learning to respond to and cooperate with the Holy Spirit will we be able to live in a way that truly honors God.

The Holy Spirit begins the process of sanctification with a changed heart at the new birth and continues to change us as we yield.

Galatians 5:16-17 (NLT) So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. <sup>17</sup> The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires.

May we learn to pay attention when He tells us to get rid of or avoid something. May we learn to devote ourselves to reading the Bible and praying.

It is not always easy to live holy, but it is possible with the help of the Holy Spirit.

People who are far from Christ must see that we are different, not better, but simply different because of Jesus.