

LESSON 12

EXCEPT YE BE HOLY

Scripture Texts: *Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:15-16; Romans 6:14, 8:1; 1 John 1:9; Titus 2:11-12*

In the time of the Law, God commanded the high priest to wear on his forehead a golden plate bearing the words, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. Holiness is the offering God desires and requires from His people. His church is made up of holy people. God does not accept anything short of holiness. One is either holy or unholy, righteous or unrighteous.

Today we study, very briefly, Bible teachings on holiness. We may find that holiness is a deeper experience than righteousness, which we studied in Lesson 11. Most people believe in holiness. The question is, How and when and where are we made holy?

MEMORY VERSE: *"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."*

Hebrews 12:14

The Necessity of Holiness

Ephesians 1:4—The holiness of man has been God's plan from the first. Man with his nature, abilities, and desires was made to suit a holy life and no other. Unholy living brings pain, for it does not fit.

1 Peter 1:15-16—God's children are born of Him and must be like Him. Holiness is of such great necessity that no man shall see the Lord without it. Unholiness of the heart damns. This answers the question "Is holiness necessary?" (Hebrews 12:14).

Romans 6:14—When Jesus died as our sacrifice for sin, He broke sin's dominion over everyone who accepts His sacrifice. But He did even more than save us from our sins. He brought in a dispensation of grace in which God's life is put into men to enable them to do what they never could do in their own power. The Law commanded righteousness but gave no power to help them do it. He not only saves us, but through consecration of ourselves and setting ourselves apart for His holy use, we are given power to live holy every day.

The Possibility of Holiness

Some differ with teachers of holiness because they are really opposed to the doctrine. Ask these ones, "If it were possible to live holy, would you desire to?" Note the answer that you receive. Others differ because of misunderstanding of terms. Holiness is sinlessness, we say. Yes, but it is more. Negatively, it is sinlessness, or the absence of sin. Positively, it is the presence of godliness—of the nature of God. God is holy. Holiness is God-likeness.

God's nature in a man makes his character holy. The saint has the power of God at his disposal to enable him to have victory over sin. If we are continually conscious of this fact, we will continually depend upon God for victory over trials and temptations, which Satan is sure to send.

1 John 1:9—God meets the repentant sinner with forgiveness and cleansing from all that is contrary to God. When that is done, the man is holy.

Romans 8:1—There is a people who are not condemned—no blame, no guilt, no accusation from God. They live holy lives because they are in Christ Jesus. They are still on earth just as other people; eating, sleeping, and working

as usual. But they do not walk after, that is, they do not follow the lust of the flesh. The best argument for holiness is a holy life. God requires holiness, but He provides all we need to obtain it.

The Meaning of Holiness

Titus 2:11-12—Holiness is simply being godly right here in this present world. Not in some future time, but now. Holiness is not freedom from mistakes. We all make mistakes. A godly person corrects them when possible. An oft heard remark is, "No one is perfect." No, not perfect from mistakes, but perfect regarding sin. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). Some may believe that sinless living is impossible because of misunderstanding the difference between sin and mistakes.

Mistakes may bring undesirable results but never guilt. Examples: Giving wrong information while thinking it is true, having an auto accident, etc. These are mistakes not sins. Sins are done from wrong motives, knowing it is wrong with a disregard for God's will.

Holiness is not the impossibility of sinning. Anyone can turn from God and sin if he chooses. Holiness is the ability to keep from sinning, made possible by the power of God within. Our hearts can be perfectly clean, our motives perfectly pure, and the love of our hearts perfectly set upon God.

What we do may not be much, but it must be pure all through to meet God's approval. We are all weak and make many mistakes. That is why God has not left the issue depending upon our own strength, but upon HIS.

JUST A THOUGHT

**The fellow who is pulling the oars does not have
any time to rock the boat.**