

PURSUING HOLINESS

What image comes into your mind when you hear the word holiness?

Holiness is a Biblical Concept

The word ‘Holy’ occurs more than 600 times in the Bible.

God instructs us to be Holy.

Leviticus 11:44a (nlt) I, the LORD, am your God. You must be holy because I am holy.

To be Holy is to be Morally Blameless

Paul used the term ‘holiness’ in contrast to a life of immorality and impurity.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-7 (nlt) God’s will is for you to be holy, so stay away from all sexual sin. ⁴ Then each of you will control his own body and live in holiness and honor ⁵ not in lustful passion like the pagans who do not know God and his ways. ⁶ Never harm or cheat a fellow believer in this matter by violating his wife, for the Lord avenges all such sins, as we have solemnly warned you before. ⁷ God has called us to live holy lives, not impure lives.

Peter used ‘holiness’ in contrast to living according to the evil desires when living outside of Christ.

1 Peter 1:14-16 (gw) Because you are children who obey God, don't live the kind of lives you once lived. Once you lived to satisfy your desires because you didn't know any better. 15: But because the God who called you is holy you must be holy in every aspect of your life. 16: Scripture says, "Be holy, because I am holy."

To live a holy life, is to live in according to the moral principles of the Bible and not to the sinful ways of the world.

Ephesians 4:22-24 (nlt) Throw off your old evil nature and your former way of life, which is rotten through and through, full of lust and deception. 23: There must be a spiritual renewal of your thoughts and attitudes. 24: You must display a new nature because you are a new person, created in God's likeness, righteous, holy, and true.

We purify ourselves by turning away from sin and by yielding to God.

2 Corinthians 7:1 (kjb) perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

(niv) perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

Fear Gk. *Phobos* - Put to “**flight**,” which is caused by fear and/or dread.

It's a 'reverential fear,' of God - a wholesome dread of displeasing Him.'

Old Testament ‘Religion’ was one of Barriers

This is not so of religion in the Old Testament where the people possessed a fear of God ‘*punishing*’ them as a result of their sins.

The Hebrews lived in dread of a personal encounter with God (*Yahweh*).

Judges 6:22-23; Exodus 19:10-13; Exodus 20:18-21

Old Testament religion kept the people separated from God! But now, because of Jesus’ death on the cross we now have a;

Gospel of Invitation

Hebrews 10:19-22 (nlt) And so, dear brothers and sisters, we can boldly enter heaven’s Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus. ²⁰ By his death, Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain into the Most Holy Place. ²¹ And since we have a great High Priest who rules over God’s house, ²² **let us go right into the presence of God** with sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ’s blood to make us clean, and our bodies have been washed with pure water.

Hebrews 4:16 (nkjv) Let us therefore come **boldly to the throne of grace**, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Here is a promise of limitless access to God and limitless help from God.

Christ Endured Separation from God so that we may Draw Near to God.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (nlt) For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

Jesus' death created the way for us to be reconciled back to God.

Reconciliation Gr. (katallasso) “to receive and to return one back into favour.”

Romans 5:8-11 (tev) But God has shown us how much He loves us - it was while we were still sinners that Christ died for us! 9: By His sacrificial death we are now put right with God; how much more, then, will we be saved by Him from God's anger! 10: We were God's enemies, but He made us His friends through the death of His Son. Now that we are God's friends, how much more will we be saved by Christ's life! 11: But that is not all; we rejoice because of what God has done through our Lord Jesus Christ, who has now made us God's friends.

A Desire for Holiness comes from a Reverence for God

“*perfecting holiness*” means we are to make a clean break from our sinful nature and give ourselves totally unto God.