

Living a Life of Holiness and Sanctification

Holiness is not some a lofty ideal reserved for saints or mystics; it is the divine calling for every believer. The Bible consistently calls the Lord's people to lives of purity, dedication, and sanctification.

"Because it is written, You shall be holy; for I am holy." (1 Peter 1:16; Leviticus 11:44; 19:2; 20:7) To embrace holiness is to bring oneself in line with the will of God, rejecting the corruption of the world and seeking spiritual transformation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

What is the meaning of holiness, and how it is connected to sanctification, and what are some practical ways to cultivate a life pleasing to God?

Holiness denotes being set apart, distinct from sin and dedicated to God. The term "holy" (Hebrew: *qadosh*) conveys the idea of separation from the profane and the pursuit of divine purity.

In the Old Testament, God sanctified the Israelites, setting them apart as His chosen people. "For a holy people are you to Jehovah your God: of you has Jehovah your God made choice, that you should become his people as a treasure, above all the peoples that are on the face of the ground." (Deuteronomy 7:6) Holiness is not self-achieved; instead, it is the result of divine grace. Through faith in Christ, believers are made righteous and called to walk in holiness.

Sanctification is the ongoing process whereby believers become increasingly conformed to the image of Christ. The Apostle Paul wrote: "And such were some of you: but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God." (1 Corinthians 6:11)

Sanctification unfolds in three stages:

1. Positional Sanctification. When a believer accepts Christ, they are spiritually set apart and justified before God (Hebrews 10:10).
2. Progressive Sanctification. The lifelong journey of becoming more Christlike, marked by daily repentance, prayer, and obedience (2 Corinthians 7:1).
3. Final Sanctification. The perfection of the soul in glory, where sin is completely eradicated (1 John 3:2).

Some Practical Steps to Living a Holy Life

As Christians, we should commit to daily prayer. A life of holiness begins with communion with the Lord. Through prayer, we are strengthened to resist temptation and cultivate spiritual discipline. The psalmist said, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." (Psalm 51:10) Regular prayer humbles us, deepens faith, and aligns our heart with Jehovah's will.

We must immerse ourselves in the Scriptures in a serious way. The Bible teaches us that His Word is the foundation of sanctification. "Sanctify them in the truth: your word is truth." (John 17:17) Through diligent Bible study, we are equipped with the wisdom and discernment necessary to navigate life's trials while remaining steadfast in holiness. It also helps us to be equipped to teach others about the Gospel. (Read 2 Timothy 3:16)

Another step in living a holy life is the practice of self-denial and discipline. Jesus Christ calls His followers to deny themselves. "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." (Luke 9:23) Fasting, abstaining from sinful habits, and cultivating self-control are essential to nurturing a life devoted to our God.

Even when we are isolated from our brothers and sisters, fellowship with believers is essential. Community is vital in the pursuit of holiness. The Body of Christ serves as a place of accountability, encouragement, and mutual growth. The Bible says, "Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works." (Hebrews 10:24, NLT) The spiritual support of fellow believers strengthens us to overcome sin and strive for holiness.

Christians should be in the habit of serving others with love. Holiness is not self-focused but is expressed in love for others. As Paul reminds us in his epistle to the Romans, "In love of the brothers be tenderly affectionate to one another; in honor prefer one another." (Romans 12:10) Charity, compassion, and selfless service reflect the heart of Jesus and draw us nearer to God's holiness.

The pursuit of holiness is usually met with many challenges. The world entices with vanity, pride, and immorality, but as believers we are called to resist such influences. The Scriptures tell us that we are not to love the world, "neither the things that are in the world." (1 John 2:15) Spiritual vigilance, accountability, and reliance

on the Holy Spirit are crucial in overcoming these temptations that surround us on a daily basis.

Living a life of holiness comes with a divine reward. Holiness is not a burden but a pathway to peace, joy, and eternal communion with the Lord. The book of Hebrews says, "Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord." (Hebrews 12:14) A life dedicated to holiness leads to an intimate relationship with our Lord, bringing blessings both in this life and in eternity.

Brothers and sisters, for real believers in Christ, living a life of holiness and sanctification is not an option; it is the expectation of every follower of Christ. As we commit ourselves to prayer, the Word of God, and self-denial, we are transformed into vessels of Jehovah's glory. Though the path will be difficult, the reward is eternal — to dwell with the Almighty in His radiant presence.

"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me." (Galatians 2:20)

—JA.

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