



BIBLICAL HOLINESS





How not to Sanctify

1

Do not depend on your strength.

2

Do not forget your responsibility.

3

Do not become sin-conscious.

4

Do not give excuses for failures.

5

Do not overlook the sins of omission.

6

Do not practise seclusion.

7

Do not belittle relationships.

8

Do not slacken devotional disciplines.

9

Do not be blinded by success.

10

Do not stop growing in holiness.



How not to Sanctify

Introduction

- Holiness the most outstanding character of our God

Isa 6:3 ... *Holy ... Holy ... Holy*

Rev 4:8 ... *Holy ... Holy ... Holy*

No other character so repeated.

“Holiness” (or Holy) occurs over 900 times in the Bible.

- The Trinitarian Godhead known for Holiness

The Father is Holy (Lk 1:49; Jn 17:11)

The Son is Holy (Lk 1:35; Acts 3:14)

The Spirit is Holy (Mt 1:18; Lk 1:15)

- The first subject of worship by Moses and the people

Ex 15:11 ... *holiness ... praises ... wonders*

Today we are overoccupied with

“*praises*” and “*wonders*,” but not “*holiness*”

- Personal sanctification is the blessing of blessings
in Christian life

Acts 3:26 ... *to bless you ... turning from iniquities*

The very name of Jesus states this supreme purpose

Mt 1:21 ... *save **His** people from their sins*

- Holiness is the most neglected subject

So many Faith Seminars, Power Seminars,

Gifts Seminars, etc,

but what about Holiness Seminars?

Popular slogans:

Jesus Loves, Jesus Redeems, Jesus Calls,
Jesus Lives, etc.

How about “Jesus Watches” or “Jesus Cleanses”?

— Three outstanding characteristics of God:

Omnipotence, Omnipresence, Omniscience

The stress today is more on His Omnipotence

rather than His Omnipresence and Omniscience.

Purity must precede Power:

2 Chr 16:9 ... *eyes of the Lord ... mighty ... perfect*

— Holy Spirit

The emphasis today is on “Spirit”

and not on “Holy!”

■ God’s will and call concerning us:

1 Thess 4:3a ... *will of God ... your sanctification*

:7 ... *call ... holiness*

God is more interested in making us holy

than we are desirous of becoming holy!

What an encouragement!

How not to Sanctify

1. Do not depend on your strength.

- Each Book of the Bible revolves around a particular theme—
Leviticus is a Book on “Holiness.”

The word “holy” or “holiness” occurs over 80 times in this Book.
God introduces Himself with an unusual Name in this Book—

“I am the Lord who makes you holy!”

7 times in Leviticus eg) Lev 20:7,8

This is actually one of the compound Names of Jehovah:

“Jehovah-Mekaddeshcem”

= *“I am the Lord who sanctifies you!”*

The stress here is : **“I”** *am the Lord who sanctifies you!*

This is **the** basic difference between the God of the Bible
and all other religions —

He is not only holy; He makes us holy!

Hallelujah!

This is the first lesson to learn on holiness.

i.e. I cannot do it myself ...

I cannot depend on my strength ...

I must primarily and totally and ultimately

depend on God for my sanctification!

- This is God’s supreme purpose in bringing the Hebrews
out of Egypt —

Lev 11:44,45 ... *“holy”* ... so many times!

Canaan is not Heaven;
it's a life of victory and holiness on **earth** —

1 Pet 1:15-17 ... *“Be holy ... sojourning here”*

Too many Christians have come out of Egypt,
but they never enter Canaan;
they die in the wilderness.

- Let's trace through the Bible to understand this truth:

It is **God** who sanctifies us and it is **not** by our strength.

- Psa 130:3,4,7,8 ... *If You mark iniquity ...*
— falling flat before Him for His mercy
That's why Psa 143:1,2 ... *Do not judge me ...*
no one is righteous

- This was the lamentation of Job —
Job 14:4 ... *Who can bring a clean thing out of unclean?*
No one! God alone can!

- That's why Isaiah said —
Isa 64:6 ... *all ... unclean ... filthy rags*
Even what we think is “good” in us is rubbish
and garbage before God!

We have no problem with “our iniquities;” —
but how about “*our* (so called) *righteousness?*”

- Sometimes we have the audacity to think
that our unrighteousness is a loss to God;
and our righteousness is gain to Him —
Elihu in Job 35:6-8 ... *If you are righteous*
what do you give Him?

God is absolutely absolute;
perfectly perfect;
completely complete.

We cannot add anything to Him;
we cannot delete anything from Him!

It is when we forget this truth,
we begin to stink with self-righteousness.

- Prophet Jeremiah emphasises the same truth —
Jer 13:23 ... *Ethiopian ... leopard ...*

We have no power/strength in ourselves to change
ourselves!

- Even intellectual stamina (strong will-power/sane
thinking) will not fetch us holiness —
Isa 35:8 ... *Highway of Holiness ... even a “fool” shall*
- Hannah had prophetically captured this truth
in her Song—
1 Sam 2:9 ... *He guards ... by strength*
no man shall prevail.

- The NT writers also captured this truth quite well
and have written about it several times in their Epistles —
Especially Apostle Paul

- Nothing happened in Paul’s life
until he cried out his helplessness —
Rom 7:18 ... *nothing good in me ... no strength*
:24 ... *Who shall deliver me?*
His strict adherence to Law did not make him holy —
8:3 ... *“weak through flesh”*

This was not because he was failing in legal requirements —

He says he was “*blamless*” (Phil 3:6-8)

The point is: *No “flesh” should glory in His presence.*

1 Cor 1:29 ... *no flesh ...*

:30,31 ... *Christ is our Righteousness*

and Sanctification

Yes, never ever depend on your strength!

■ A few more texts from Paul’s Epistles —

Rom 5:6 ... When we were “*without strength*”

(not only just *sinners* — v8)

The moment we think we are accomplishing something
by our strength, we actually “*fall from grace*” —

Gal 5:4 ... “*estranged = divorced*” from Christ

A serious matter!

That’s why Paul warns —

1 Cor 10:12 ... *He who thinks ... lest he falls*

Context: *temptation* (v13)

■ Peter learnt this lesson the hard way —

Mt 26:33 ... *I shall not stumble*

Why he failed: He depended on *flesh* (v41)

Finally Peter began to celebrate the

“*exceedingly great and precious*” promises —

2 Pet 1:3,4 ... *divine nature*

■ Apostle James endorses this —

Js 2:10 ... *fail in one point ...*

Therefore cling on to *His mercy* (v13)

- The writer of the Hebrews presents this truth even more graphically —

Heb 4:15,16 ... *sympathises with our weaknesses*
... *therefore ... Throne of Grace ...*

- To conclude, a promise from Jude 24 —

He is able to keep you from stumbling ...

Then comes a question;

Does it mean I don't need to do anything
for my sanctification?

You will have the answer in the next chapter.

How not to Sanctify

2. Do not forget your responsibility.

- Truth is parallel.

It has 2 sides.

Biblical holiness is a balance between

God's Sovereignty and Man's Responsibility.

Leaving one for the other leads us off the track.

- The Bible abounds with passages which bring both these sides of the coin, God's Sovereignty & Man's Responsibility, together:

- Beginning with the text in Leviticus —

Lev 20:7,8

It is God who sanctifies us;

but He also says, "*Be holy as I am holy!*"

- Prophet Hosea —

Hos 10:12 ... "*Sowing*" righteousness: Our part

Showering" righteousness: God's part

- Salvation is a "free" gift

Eph 2:8,9 ... No boasting about it ...

Not of works ...

But —

Lk 13:23,24 ... "*Strive*" to enter ... *saved*

- It's God *who works in us both to will and to do* —

Phil 2:13

At the same time,

we are to *work out our own salvation* (v12)

- Jesus has cheered us that “He” has *overcome the world*—

Jn 16:33 ... *Be of good cheer* ...

What does “world” mean?

1 Jn 2:15-17

... *lust of the flesh*

... *lust of the eyes*

... *pride of life*

This means, we are to overcome these 3 temptations with His help.

The good news —

A Christian does not struggle towards a possible victory, but he proceeds from a victory already won!

Hallelujah!

Then we will share the “Throne of Victory” with Jesus!

(Rev 3:21)

- Let’s look at a few other passages also which explain this two-sided truth —

- Christ’s victory is our victory.

How does this become practically possible?

Rom 6:11-14 ... (a) *Reckon* ... (b) *Resist* ... (c) *Surrender*

This is the **Road** to Sanctification

(v22) ... *fruit* ... *holiness* ... *eternal life* ...

Fruit: “*Holiness*” — This is Canaan (Earth).

End: “*Everlasting life*” — This is Heaven.

Total identification with Christ —

“*Risen ... seated ... with Christ*” (Eph 2:4-7)

Therefore, *walk worthy of your calling* (4:1)

- **Standing** (where we are placed) vs. **State** (what we are to practise)

Position vs. Condition

i.e. Positional Sanctification vs. Practical Sanctification

A few passages to explain this —

- Already “*complete*” (Col 2:10) — Standing
To be presented “*perfect*” (1:28) — State
- Already *put on the new man* (Col 3:9,10) — Standing
To *put off the old things* (vv 5,8) — State
- Already a *holy nation of priests and kings*
(1 Pet 2:9,10) — Standing
Therefore *abstain from fleshly lusts* (v11) — State
- Even the Corinthian believers (so much of carnality)
1 Cor 6:11 ... *washed ... sanctified ...*
:12,13 ... *Therefore don't get addicted.*
Position: Sanctified (1 Cor 1:2) ... “*who **are** sanctified*”
Condition: To repent of many sins

i.e. All the children of God are **saints**;

they must walk **saintly**.

- Privilege: **God Almighty is our Father** (2 Cor 6:18)
Responsibility: *Perfecting holiness in the “fear of God”* (7:1)
Not taking advantage of His Fatherhood!
- God’s part: *Salvation thro’ grace* (Tit 2:11)
Our part: *Deny ungodliness and lust* (v12)
Only then we will be ready at His Return (v13)
- The exceeding greatness of His promises to give us
“*divine nature*” does not exclude our responsibility —

2 Pet 1:3,4 ... Great promises
:5-7 ... *Add + + + + +*
“... *for this very reason* ...”

- Our part: *Awake ... Arise ...* Eph 5:14
God’s part: He will make us “*afame*”
Context: Holiness (v9) vs. Darkness (v11)
- God possesses us to the extent we yield to Him.
This is the process of sanctification —
2 Tim 1:12b... “*What I’ve committed...He’ll keep* ...”
- The climax:
1 Jn 3:2 ... *We shall be like Him.*
:3 ... *this hope ... purified himself ...*

Temptations will increase and intensify towards the last days;
but, the wicked one cannot touch us (1 Jn 5:18c)
Because, the believer “*keeps himself!*”

■ **A few statements in conclusion:**

- Every man is as holy as he really wants to be! (A.W. Tozer)
- Do not try to do what only God can do;
do not fail to do what you are supposed to do!
- Without God I cannot; without me He will not!

How not to Sanctify

3. Do not become sin-conscious.

- God primarily forgives the “sinner;”
and his “sins” are automatically taken care of.
Why? We are not sinners *because* we sin;
we are sinners *so* we sin!
Adam became a sinner when he sinned;
we are sinners by birth as Adam’s descendants (Rom 5:14)
- Prayer of the Publican
“God, be merciful to **me** a sinner” (Lk 18:13)
- *God in Christ forgave “you”* (Eph 4:32)
- *Christ forgave “you”* (Col 3:13)
- What does God do when He forgives **us**:
He removes our sins ... *East ... West* (Psa 103:12)
He throws our sins ... *behind His back* (Isa 38:17b)
He removes our sins ... *as the clouds* (Isa 44:22)
He sinks our sins ... *in the depths of the sea* (Mic 7:19)
The breadth, length, height and depth of His love
(Eph 3:18)
So many pictures to show that —
He “remembers” *our sins no more!* Heb 8:12
sins confessed ... sins forgiven ... sins forgotten!
- When we believe on Christ,
our “rags” of self-righteousness are replaced by
Christ’s “robe” of righteousness (Isa 61:10)
(bridegroom & bride!)

Similar to what the father did to the prodigal son —
Lk 15:21,22 ... *robe ... ring ... sandals* (son & father)
God sees us always “through” Christ.
Christ has become *our righteousness!* (1 Cor 1:31)

CELEBRATION!

- But the devil will remind us of our sins and accuse us —
Rev 12:10,11 ... *overcame ... blood ... testimony*
Testimony: Confess that all your sins are covered by the “blood!”

Paul’s challenge:

Who is he who condemns?

Rom 8:33,34 ... *Christ died*

and “furthermore” interceding!

- Even if you happen to fall in sin —
1 Jn 2:1 ... *“Advocate ... Jesus Christ the **righteous**”*
His righteousness!

Devil: Accuser / Jesus: Advocate

Who will win?

Jer 50:34 ... *Redeemer ... strong ... thoroughly plead ...*

1 Jn 4:4 ... *He ... in you ... greater than the devil*

- Even when there are “floodlike” temptations —
Psa 93:3-5 ... *floods ... mightier ... holiness*
- Even in the OT, this truth is so vividly presented —
Num 23:21... *“No iniquity in Jacob! Shout of a mighty King!”*
Shout aloud your victory!
- Even if you **frequently** fall —
Prov 24:16a ... *righteous ... seven times ... rise*
- Even if you fall, you will not perish —
Psa 37:23,24 ... *steps ... fall ... not utterly cast down*

- Even if you are caught up in a mire —
Psa 69:14 ... *let me not sink* ...
eg) Peter (Mt 14:30)

- This is where Judas failed —
Peter vs. Judas

Peter sinned but he did not think
his sin was too dark to be forgiven.

Judas sinned:

though he regretted (Mt 27:3)
though he confessed (v4)
though he named his sin (v4)
though he made restitution (v3)
(brought back money)
he thought his sin was too wicked to be forgiven.
He gave up!

Peter came under conviction;
Judas came under condemnation.

The Holy Spirit convicts, never condemns (Rom 8:1).

Max Lucado: God's grace is older than your sin;
God's grace is greater than your sin!

Otherwise,
how could David say, "*I was blameless before God?*"
2 Sam 22:24

It was because of Psalms 32 & 51
eg) 32:1,2 ... *transgression ... covered ... no guile* ...
Referred to by Paul in Rom 4:6-8

When Christ washes us with His blood, it's **thorough** —
Psa 51:7 ... *whiter than snow!* (no guile Psa 32:2)

This is the meaning of —

*The **just** shall live by **faith!*** (Rom 1:17)

- The devil has duped many believers into the thinking
that Holiness is opposed to Happiness!

This way, he keeps them under sin-consciousness.

This is false.

The truth is: Holy Life is Jolly Life!

Heb 1:9 ... *righteousness ... oil of gladness*

Neh 8:10,11 ... *day ... holy ... joy of the Lord ...*

All happy people may not be holy people;

but all holy people are happy people!

- Another lie of the devil —

You have not confessed “ALL” your sins!

Truth: No one has confessed “ALL” his sins;

but only those sins he could remember!

The Bible says: 1 Jn 1:9

“If we confess our (known) sins ...

*He forgives **US** ... He cleanses **US** ...”*

Next time the devil reminds you of your past,

remind him of his future!

How not to Sanctify

4. Do not give excuses for failures.

- Man is basically known for giving excuses and blame-shifting.
We have inherited it from our first parents.

Did not Adam throw the blame on Eve,
and Eve on the serpent? (Gen 3:11-13)

We will not make any progress as long as we give excuses!

- Let's look at some common excuses regarding holiness—

- Only some are called to be “saints.”

Both in Roman Catholicism & Protestantism,
the word “saint” has become a special “title”
for outstanding persons —

This is **not** the Biblical teaching:

“All” believers all called to be saints —

1 Cor 1:2 ... Even the carnal believers

like those in Corinth!

Eph 1:1; 5:3 ... All believers in Ephesus

were called “*saints*”

Phil 1:1 ... All believers in Philippi, **with** the Bishops!

(i.e. non-Bishops were also saints!)

It's God's will that every believer becomes “perfect”

Col 1:28 ... “*every... every ... every ...*”

Conclusion:

All believers in Christ are “saints;”

as saints they must walk “saintly!”

Therefore, sainthood is not a “title” for a few,
but a “calling” of every child of God!

Next excuse —

□ This is my “nature.”

Yes, we all have the sinful nature.

But temperaments vary from individual to individual.

eg) Some are soft; others are short-tempered.

But the Bible calls us to bring these temperaments
under the Holy Spirit’s control —

Prov 16:32 ... *rules his spirit ... takes a city ...*

25:28 ... *no rule over spirit...a city without walls*

What’s implied here is that

we are responsible to control our temperaments.

That’s why we are filled with the Holy Spirit —

Rom 8:12-14 ... *debtors not to the flesh ...*

put to death by the Spirit...

God has given us ample provisions to control

our undesirable personality traits.

We are to use them.

One of the fruits of the Spirit: “*self-control*” (Gal 5:23)

The Bible repeatedly mentions the “promise” and “possibility”
for changing our nature —

Ezek 36:26,27 “*cause (enable) you to walk*”

Next excuse —

□ Holiness is not possible in this corrupt world.

Certain situations are just impossible!

Zech 14:20,21 ... *Holiness to the Lord...pots, bowls, bells...*
i.e. in all areas of our lives

How did Joseph overcome temptation? (Gen 39:9)

Eccl 7:26 ... *please God ... escape ...*

How did Ananiah, Azariah & Mishael overcome?

1 Cor 10:13,14 ... *No temptation ... idolatry*
(Corinth known for idolatry)

How did Lot escape the sin of Sodom & Gomorrah?

2 Pet 2:8,9 ... *Lived according to his conscience ...*
delivered by God!

Are these simply OT examples?

What's our call?

Phil 2:15 ... *blameless ... perverse generation ...*
Even in Sardis: Rev 3:4 ... *not defiled ...*

Another excuse —

□ Did not the Bible characters fail?

Did not Abraham tell a lie?

Did not Moses lose his temper?

Did not David fall for lust?

Did not the Apostles fight?

They are all to only "*warn*" us — 1 Cor 10:11

Look at the good examples —

Did not 11 out of 12 disciples make it? (Jn 17:12)

Clouds of witnesses (Heb 12:1)

■ Instead of inventing excuses,

let's develop a passion for holiness —

blessed ... hunger ... thirst ... righteousness (Mt 5:6)

Similarly, Isa 26:9 ... *desire ... learn righteousness*

- A prayer by Robert Murray McCheyne (1813-1843),
a Scottish preacher:

“Lord, make me as holy
as a pardoned sinner can be!”

- A hymn of prayer by Bishop Stephen Langton:

*Exalt our low desires,
Extinguish passion’s fires,
Heal every wound;
Our stubborn spirits bend,
Our icy coldness end,
Our devious steps attend,
While heavenward bound!*

How not to Sanctify

5. Do not overlook the sins of omission.

- Sins (a) of commission (You shall not murder, lust, etc.)
(b) of omission (Definition: Js 4:17)

Commission: Doing what we ought not to do.

Omission: Failing to do what we ought to do.

We call the sins of commission as “sins,”
but the sins of omission as mere “failures!”

But before God both are equally sinful.

eg) Stealing is a public offence.

But failure to give to the needy not considered so serious.

But God’s Word combines both—

Eph 4:28 ... *not steal ... but give ...*

Similarly, “bad words” are antisocial;

but failure to impart grace to hearers
is not considered so bad.

But God’s Word —

Eph 4:29...*no corrupt communication... but edification*

- Let’s look at some of the sins of omission —

- Failure in Charity

Holiness & Charity:

Dan 4:27 ... *righteous ... show mercy ...*

Lk 11:41 ... *Sell ... give ... all will be clean*

Neh 8:10 ... *Holy ... day ... send portions ...*

Isa 1:16,17 ... *Wash ... do good ... fatherless ...*

1:18 ... *sins though red like crimson ...*

58:7,8,10 ... *bread ... righteousness ...*

— The problem of the young Ruler

Mt 19:16-22

It was easier for him to overcome the
sins of commission ... (v18)

“You shall not ... You shall not ...”

No problem with the general: Love your neighbour✓

But when it became specific: Sell for the poor✗

— Righteousness and deeds of charity — Mt 25:37,40

But the unrighteous —

vv 42,43 ... *You did **not** ... You did **not** ...*

Righteousness brightened by charity —

2 Cor 9:9,10 ... *given to the poor ... increase righteousness*

The very definition of “pure” religion —

Js 1:27 ... *orphans ... widows ...*

God called Cornelius “*cleansed*”

as he was generous in almsgiving — Acts 10:2,15; 11:9

As much as we generally set aside one tenth for God’s work,
we can set aside another one tenth for the poor.

Or out of whatever you set aside for God,
50% for God’s work, 50% for the poor.

— Help beggars like Lazarus, platform-dwellers,
poor students, destitutes, etc.

Don’t always depend on organisations to do charity;
you can do it personally or as a family.

Need not be always connected to evangelism;
we must be free from the motive of using charity

as a bait for conversion.

Help the poor because he is poor,
and ours is a God of the Poor!

- A few more sins of omission —
 - Unfulfilled vows
 - Dt 23:21-23 ... *sin* ...
 - Repeated in Eccl 5:4,5
 - What we are to think Phil 4:8
 - Not enough if we avoid evil thoughts;
 - it's necessary to cultivate virtuous thinking.
 - Indifference towards missions
 - Num 32:23 ...*Gad...Reuben... Jordan... sin find you out!*
 - God points out our non-involvement (Neh 3:5)
 - General “good works”
 - Tit 2:14 ... *purify ... good works* ...
 - Definition of “good works” —
 - (a) glorifying God, (b) blessing people
 - Jesus: “*Let your light so shine ...*
good works ... glorify ...” (Mt 5:16)
- Anglican *Common Prayer Book* —
 - Sin Confession:
 - “We have not done what we ought to,
but did what we ought not!”

(See also Pages 34-37, 423-425, 560-562, 571-610)

How not to Sanctify

6. Do not practise seclusion.

- The word “sanctify” means, in the original, “set-apart” or “separate.”

This is God’s will for His people —

Turn to Leviticus, the Book on Holiness —

Lev 20:26 ... *be holy ... separated from peoples*

God scattered His people all over the world to bless the peoples of the world, and not learn their idolatrous and sinful ways. But they failed ...

Instead they learnt their evil ways.

God rebuked them through His men —

eg) Nehemiah

13:26 ... quoting Solomon

:30a ... *cleansed of everything “pagan”*

This truth is carried over in the NT also —

eg) 2 Cor 6:16-18 ... **My** People ... **My** sons ... **My** daughters ...

- But the religious Jews of Jesus’ time started practising “seclusion” in the name of “separation”—

Jesus rebuked them and corrected it —

Mt 9:9-13 ... Matthew’s house ... *eating with sinners ...*

*physician ... **mercy** ... not sacrifice ...*

This truth was oftspoken by the prophets —

Isa 1:11,17/Am 5:21-24/Mic 6:7,8/Hos 6:6

Jesus knew that only by becoming a “friend” of sinners, He could bless them!

eg) “*salt*” — What’s the use if kept in the bottle
without shaking & spraying it on the food?

eg) “*light*” — The light must be placed
where there’s darkness!

Our citizenship may be in “*Heaven*” —
(Phil 3:20)

but, we are to *shine* in this “*world*” —
(Phil 2:14b,15)

Even though God is seated in Heaven,
His feet are on the earth! (Isa 66:1a)

We are **not** called to be the “*salt*” of the “Church!”

We are **not** called to be the “*light*” of the “Church!”

□ Did not Isaiah live among the people of “*unclean*” lips?
It’s there God sanctified him (Isa 6:5-7).

□ Was not Titus sent among *liars and gluttons*?
Tit 1:12,5

■ Let’s look at some of the Scripture passages
which speak about “separation”
and find out what they really mean —

□ Psa 1:1 ... It is not the *ungodly* we are to avoid,
but their “*counsel*.”

Similarly, “*path*” of sinners, “*seat*” of the scornful

It’s summarised in v6 —

“*way*” of the *ungodly*

i.e. We must hate sin, not the sinner;

hate evil, not the evildoer!

□ 1 Cor 15:33 ... *evil company corrupts* ...
What does this mean?

Next verse: “*awake*” to righteousness ...
i.e. Don’t get sedated by them.

Here the reference is to a wrong doctrine & false philosophy—

v32 ... living like *beasts!*

Denying resurrection.

We cannot embrace such a philosophy.

□ Js 4:4 ... *Friendship of the “world”*

Context: lust and covetousness (vv1-3)

It’s not the people of the world,
but the sinful *things of the world* — 1 Jn 2:15,16

■ Otherwise you will have to run away from the world —
1 Cor 5:9-11

The context: Church discipline ... “*those inside*” (v12)

That’s why Jesus prayed **specifically** —

Jn 17:15-18 ... *sanctify them “in” the world.*

This was the way Jesus lived —

Friend of sinners (Mt 11:19)

but “*separate*” from sinners (Heb 7:26)

i.e. kept Himself “*undefiled*”

■ Friendship is actually a prelude to bring others into fellowship:
— 1 Cor 10:31-33

3 groups: Jews, Greeks, Church

— Acts 2:47 ... *favour with all people ... added to Church*

— Cornelius called his friends (Acts 10:24)

■ Let’s look at some specific areas for the
practical application of this truth —

□ Unbelieving spouses

1 Cor 7:12-14 (Ezr 9:1-3)

If not married yet, seek a believing partner.

- Food offered to idols

Read 1 Cor 8

The summary:

- Idol is nothing; so whether or not it's offered to idols makes no difference (v4)
- This strong conviction everyone does not have:
 - a) When **you** don't have this knowledge,
it's sin when you eat it.
 - b) When **others** don't have this knowledge,
it's sin that you offend them (vv 8,9)

- General virtues of the world —

The world is corrupt;

but every man still has the “*image of God*”
to some extent (Js 3:9)

Therefore, learn to respect the general virtues of the world.

Don't look at the world with dark glasses —

Tit 1:15 ... *To the impure ... all are defiled!*

■ Conclusion

- The greatest miracle is that God takes an unholy man from the unholy world, makes him holy, puts him back into the unholy world, and keeps him holy!
— *Leonard Ravenhill* (1907-1994)
- Another old saint prayed like this:
“O God, make me intensely spiritual,
but keep me perfectly natural,
and always thoroughly practical,
even as Jesus was!”

How not to Sanctify

7. Do not belittle relationships.

- Holiness: Two sides— God’s part & Man’s part
i.e. God’s Sovereignty vs. Man’s Responsibility

In the area of man’s responsibility,
maintaining sound interpersonal relationships is a vital part.

- Holiness can be defined as —

Rom 14:18 ... “*acceptable to God*”
“*approved by men*”

Therefore, we are to “*pursue*” it (v19) —
Cannot be casual about it.

Another classic text:

Heb 12:14... “*Pursue*” *peace* **and** *holiness*...

Therefore we are to *diligently* uproot all *bitterness* (v15)

- Jesus spoke so much about “righteousness”
in the Sermon on the Mount;
but more than that He largely dealt with
“Relationships”

- He spoke about anger (Mt 5:22)
- He spoke about speaking truth (Mt 5:37)
- No resistance ... cheek (Mt 5:39)
- Loving the enemies (Mt 5:44)
- Forgiveness (Mt 6:14,15)
- Against judging others (Mt 7:1)
- Doing what we want others to do to us (Mt 7:12)

Take time to study this Sermon —

It's God's "Highway of Holiness."

- Let's us look at some more Scripture passages which connect "relationships" to "holiness" —
 - Psa 15:1 ... *who ... dwell ... **holy** hill?*
 - :3 ... *backbite ... evil ... reproach*
 - :4 ... no change after promising ...
 - :5 ... money matters with others
 - Js 3:17,18 ... "**pure** wisdom and fruit of **righteousness**"
*peace... gentleness... yieldedness... mercy... no partiality...
no hypocrisy ... (again) peace*
"sown in peace!" (v18)
i.e. Seed: Peace
Fruit: Righteousness
 - Similarly, Apostle Peter —
1 Pet 1:22 ... *purify souls ... purify hearts*
through "*sincere love.*"
Closely knit to each other.
 - Similarly, Apostle John —
1 Jn 3:10 Children of God — Righteousness
Children of devil — lovelessness
How strongly worded!
Not a new message (v11)
 - Sin confession basic to sanctification;
no forgiveness if we don't forgive.
 - Holiness —
Negative side: Forsake the *works of the flesh*
Positive side: Cultivate the *fruit of the Spirit*

Works of the flesh: Gal 5:19-21...9 out of 17 (relationships)
Similarly, *fruit of the Spirit:* Gal 5:22,23 ...
At least 7 out of 9 (relationships)

- Some classic examples —
 - Daniel: Dan 6:22 (To king Darius)
... before God ... before you ...
 - Jesus: Lk 2:52b
... favour with God ... with man ...
(The Father was pleased with Him;
people were blessed thro' Him.)
 - Apostles: 2 Cor 8:21 ...
in the sight of the Lord ... in the sight of men ...
- Our sins affect other members in the Body of Christ —
 - Psa 69:5,6 ... *"because of me ... because of me ..."*
 - My walk with God and my walk before men affect each other!
That's why, Prov 16:7... *When a man's ways please the Lord...*
- Do not avoid those who correct you —
 - Be like Herod, not Herodias!
Mk 6:18-20 ... *"heard him gladly"*

Another lesson —

- Never ever defame another person for his sin —
 - eg) Joseph & Mary (Mt 1:19) ... *"... being righteous ..."*
- Relationships to be set right not only with those in the Church and the Society, but also with the **family** members —
 - Between parents & children
 - Lk 1:16 ... *turn hearts **to** the Lord*
 - :17 ... *also ... fathers **to** children*
 - That's why, Say "*peace*" to every house (Lk 10:5).

A peaceful atmosphere is conducive to holy walk,
being free from strife and bitterness.

□ Between spouses

1 Cor 7:14 ... even *“unbelieving” spouse is sanctified!*

1 Pet 3:7 ... *“grace of life”*

prayers not hindered

:12 ... *“prayers and righteousness”*

■ *“Greet one another with a **holy** kiss”*

5 times in the NT Epistles!

Yes, holiness and relationships are inseparable.

(See also Pages 38-39, 98-100, 198-201, 751-754)

How not to Sanctify

8. Do not slacken devotional disciplines.

- As we have often pointed out that it is **God** who sanctifies us, but it does not mean we have no part in it.

Our primary responsibility is to maintain spiritual disciplines which will strengthen us in our holy walk.

Let's look at 4 of them —

a) Regular Bible Meditation

- God primarily uses His Word to cleanse us —

Jn 15:3 ... *already clean* — initial work

17:17 ... *Sanctify them*— ongoing sanctification

The ultimate purpose of the Scriptures —

2 Tim 3:16,17 ... fourfold benefit

Doctrine + Correction + Reproof ▶ *Righteousness*

However **strong** the temptation may be —

Psa 119:9 ... *How shall a **young man** ... Word*

Memorization: v11 ... *I've hidden Your Word in my heart*

that I may not sin

- This was the discipline of Jesus from His youthhood —

That's why ... *"It is written ... It is written again ..."*

(Mt 4:4-10)

"The Law in heart ... none of his steps slide" —

Psa 37:31 (Daily morning quiet time)

As we keep on studying the Word, we grow in the knowledge of God which leads us to a walk that pleases Him (Col 1:10)

b) Vigilant Prayer

- E.M. Bounds, a lawyer by profession, was a man of Prayer. His books are classics on Prayer —

Quote:

“Between holiness and prayer,
the absence of one is the absence of the other!”

That’s why Jesus connected prayer and temptation —

Mt 26:41 ... *watch ... pray ... temptation*

Good intentions of the disciples were not sufficient.

War between “*willing spirit*” and “*weak flesh*”

- The “whole armour” of God in Eph 6 is called the “*armour of righteousness*” (2 Cor 6:7)

Prayer sharpens all weapons —

Eph 6:18 (after vv13-17) ... *praying always* ...

Even the apostles needed prayer of saints for their holy walk—

Heb 13:18 ... *Pray for us ... good conscience*

What a solemn thought!

- *Pray without ceasing ... God will sanctify you ...*
1 Thess 5:17,23

c) Consistent Fellowship

- Heb 3:13 ... *exhort daily ... deceitfulness of sin ...*
otherwise “*hardening*” (3:7,8/3:15/4:7)

Similarly, Heb 10:24-26 ... *some forsake assembling ...*
... *sin willfully ...*

- The Lord's Prayer

*"forgive **us** ... deliver **us** ..."*

Corporate cleansing —

Eph 5:25-27... *spotless...wrinklefree...holy... unblemishness...*

1 Pet 2:5 ... *holy "priesthood" = company of priests*

... spiritual house = a family

:9 ... *holy "nation"*

- Occasional falls are only too common —

Eccl 4:10 ... *Woe to him who is alone when he falls!*

Have a couple of praying friends

with whom you can fellowship regularly.

d) Periodic Self-examination

- Portrayed in footwashing —

Jn 13:8-10

Already *bathed* — *washed* —

now for the dust deposited during walk!

- A classic prayer by David —

Psa 139:23,24 ... *Search ... try ... know ...*

Use sin lists:

Prov 6:16-19 ... 7 sins

Mk 7:21-23 ... 13 sins

Rom 1:29-32 ... 22 sins

Gal 5:19-21 ... 17 sins

2 Tim 3:2-5 ... 18 sins

- Be specific! Don't generalise!

We sin retail, but confess wholesale!

Use self-examination questionnaires.

Deal thoroughly with failures —

Why I failed?

Where I failed?

When I failed?

How I failed?

We learn so much from our failures —

more from failures than from victories!

The motivation for rigorous self-examination is His **love** —

Psa 26:2,3 ... *examine me ... for Your lovingkindness*

Believe in the instant cleansing by the Blood (1 Jn 1:7-9).

Study: “*How not to Repent*” (Pages 13-44)

■ A Hymn by William Longstaff (1822-1894):

*Take time to be holy.
Speak oft with thy Lord;
Abide in Him always,
And feed on His Word.
Make friends of God's children;
Help those who are weak,
Forgetting in nothing
His blessing to seek!*

(See also Pages 68-70, 385-388, 651-656, 691-695, 735-737)

How not to Sanctify

9. Do not be blinded by success.

- It's popularly thought that when a man is blessed in his life, family and work, that means God is pleased with him.

But this is not the Biblical teaching whether it relates to material blessing or even spiritual blessing —

- Eccl 7:15 ... *just man vs. wicked man*

8:14 ... *just man vs. wicked man*

This is referring to “immediate” blessings.

“Ultimate” blessing is of course for the righteous (8:12,13)

But we normally draw conclusions

based on immediate and apparent blessings.

The reason is, God does not punish us immediately (8:11)

The blessings from God are not because of “our” goodness, but “His” kindness and grace!

- God's punishments are not only not immediate, they are also much less than what we deserve —

Psa 103:10 ... *not according to our sins*

This was acknowledged by Ezra —

Ezra 9:13 ... *less than what we deserve*

- Victories in our lives may not be because of “our” righteousness, but because of the wickedness of “our enemies.”

Dt 9:4,5 ... *not ... but ... not ... but ...*

- The Corinthian Christians had so many spiritual gifts but they were full of carnality —
 - 1 Cor 1:7 ... *short of no gift*
 - (even eagerly awaiting the II Coming)
 - but 3:3 ... *still carnal*

- If we don't have proper understanding of this truth, we will never be motivated to live holy —
 - Hos 4:7a ... *the more they increased ... sinned*
 - Apostle Paul warns us of this danger —
 - Rom 6:1,2 ... *Shall we continue in sin ... grace*
 - Compare 5:20b

- It's possible to be regular in spiritual disciplines, yet live a life that does not please God —
 - 1 Cor 10:1-5 ... *baptized ... spiritual food ...*
 - but with **most** of them ...*

 - This is not just a historical record,
but a direct warning (vv 6,11)

- We normally increase our ministerial activities to cover up sin—
 - King Saul
 - 1 Sam 15:22,23 ... *obedience vs. sacrifice*
 - People of Judah
 - Jer 7:3-5 ... *Amend your ways ... Temple Temple*
 - At the same time, don't stop everything and sleep off !
 - You will sink further into sin!

Deal with sin thoroughly with a burden to **continue** the ministry —

 - eg) King David (lost two years)
 - Psa 51:12,13 ... *Restore joy ... then I'll teach ...*

There is an encouraging truth —

“The fruitful branch pruned ...” (Jn 15:2b)

Don’t fall into the trap of the “Perfection Doctrine.”

God is not looking for “perfect” vessels,
but *“purified” vessels!* (2 Tim 2:21)

■ A closing warning:

Because God does not withdraw His gifts immediately,
or punish us at once,

we need to beware of beginnings of deviation from God’s ways—

Psa 19:11-13 ... *“errors ▶ faults ▶ sins ▶ transgression”*

This is where Samson failed:

He first went into a prostitute (Judg 16:1)

Then he fell in love with one Delilah (v4)

When the Philistines came upon him,
he overcame them on **three** occasions (vv 6-15).

He should have become alert during this period!

*“A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself;
but the foolish pass on and are punished!”* (Prov 27:12)

Finally he played with his “anointing” —

“Nazarite vow to God” (Judg 16:17)

He didn’t know that the Lord had left him (v20)

Even after that the Lord answered his prayer and
strengthened him to kill about 3000 men & women (vv 27-30)

But his 20-year reign came to a sad end!

■ A few more thoughts —

- Holy Spirit: *grieved ... quenched ...* does not quit (Psa 51)
- *Little foxes* (SS 2:15); *Little folly* (Eccl 10:1)
- *God's gifts and calling irrevocable* (Rom 11:29)
- Not consequences but *conscience* (Rom 13:5)
(Discipline early)

Therefore, do not be blinded by blessings.

How not to Sanctify

10. Do not stop growing in holiness.

- The Biblical call:

2 Cor 7:1 ... *“perfecting” holiness ...*

Rev 22:11,12 ... *He who is holy ... holier still ...*

When we stop growing,
we start backsliding —
It’s like mountaineering!

- Biblical sanctification is experienced in three stages —

- a) Positional Sanctification

This is a **crisis** experience at the time of Rebirth.

1 Cor 6:11 ... *washed ... sanctified ... justified*

We are declared as “saints!”

We are made complete in Christ.

- b) Progressive Sanctification

This is a **process** which begins at Rebirth.

This goes on all thro’ our Christian life.

- c) Perfect Sanctification

This is a **crisis** experience at the Return of Christ.

Phil 1:6 ... *begun a good work ... will complete ...*

At positional Sanctification,

we were delivered from the PENALTY of sin.

During progressive Sanctification,

we are being delivered from the POWER of sin.

At perfect Sanctification,

we will be delivered from the very PRESENCE of sin.

Commencement — Continuation — Completion
(By God) (By God & us) (By God)

- Now being in the process of progressive sanctification,
we have lot of responsibility —

- Be watchful at any age in the lifespan —
1 Jn 2:15,16 ... 3-fold sin

The introduction to this passage (vv12-14)—
... *childhood ... youthhood ... fatherhood ...*
young age ... middle age ... old age

You can never slacken your pursuit of holiness.

You can never be too young or too old to be tempted!

- Keep striving all the time —
Heb 12:4; Rev 12:11 ... *bloodshed in striving against sin*
(Temptation is a battle.)
Mt 5:10 ... 8th Beatitude: *Persecuted for righteousness*
1 Pet 3:14,15a ... *suffer for righteousness ...*
don't be afraid ...
Prov 28:14 ... *Blessed ... always reverent*
Immediately after v13 ... *cover ... confess ... forsake*

- Never be satisfied —
Prov 20:9 ... *Who can say ... I'm clean?*
Job 42:5,6 ... *my ears ... my eyes ... repent in dust ...*
Phil 3:12 ... *not attained ... but pressing on*

As the end approaches, become more and more serious —

2 Pet 3:11,12 ... *melting ... holy conduct ...*

Rom 13:11,12 ... *salvation nearer...sleep... darkness... light*

■ In conclusion,

let's us look at the promises of God:

- Prov 4:18 ... *brighter everyday* ...
- 2 Cor 3:18 ... *by the Spirit ... image ... glory to glory*
- 1 Thess 5:23 ... *whole spirit ... soul ... body* ...

(ENTIRE sanctification)

Why? God's call (1 Thess 4:7)

His fulfillment (1 Thess 5:24)

This is the time when our "standing" and "state"
will become the same! (Lesson 2)

A perfect Bride for our Bridegroom —

Eph 5:27 ... *no spot ... wrinkle ... or any such thing!*

The wedding dress —

Rev 19:7 ... *made HERSELF ready!*

:8 ... *fine linen GIVEN!*

(See also Pages 332-334, 540-542, 778-780)
