

## HOLY, By God's Design – 1 Peter 1:13-17

1 Peter 1:13-17 expresses a non-negotiable call to holiness, which involves a change of heart and in turn a change in life. To be Holy means that you separate yourself from evil things and from their common uses and you dedicate yourself for the particular purpose of avoiding that which is unholy. Why is this important? Holy is the way God is. To say that He is holy means he doesn't conform to a standard but is instead, THE STANDARD! God has always been holy, which means this thought concerning Him is absolute truth. He is holy with an infinite, incomprehensible fullness of purity that is incapable of being anything other than it is. Because he is holy, all his attributes are holy; that is, whatever we think of as belonging to God, or encompassing Him must be acceptable as holy.

In both Old and New Testaments, the term holy is applied to things, to persons, and to God Himself. If we believe the Bible is the true source of all authority in questions of doctrine and practice, then this means The Word of God is in itself a holy document. It is a book that never gets out of date. It is a book that is full of everything you could possibly imagine. There is authentic History in this book. There is authentic Prophecy in this book. There is beautiful Poetry in this book. And yes, there is Commandments from God (Law) in this book. The Greatest Love Story ever lived is in this book and everything else for life and godliness and the pursuit of holiness is in this book. Every time you read it you get something new out of it. It is a mirror to the soul and truly a love letter from God to the greatest of His creation. This is why, like Peter does in our text tonight, Paul in 2 Corinthians 7:1 says *“Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.”*

Now, the most basic meaning of the word “holy,” is one we should be familiar with - **“sanctify” means to separate from the world and to consecrate or dedicate everything to God.** So, if something is sanctified, it is not influenced by the world and stands completely and wholly dedicated to God. 1 Thessalonians 4:7 says, *“For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.”* So, this idea of pursuing holiness has to do with adjusting our behaviors. The problem for most people then becomes a lack of awareness concerning behavior and attitude. Honestly speaking, most people find it difficult to see fault with either one. For the believer, where does one's behavior come from, or where should it come from? Behavior is something which flows out from the relationship a person has with Christ Jesus. When we are fully aware of who we belong to, who we have given our dedication to, who bought and paid for our life, then, because of the communion there, with Christ, the behaviors of Christ are then intrinsically produced in us. **It is the pursuit of a life so fully surrendered to fellowship with Christ, day by day, that the inner spirit and outward expression are ruled by the spirit of Christ and not the vile spirit of man.**

The holy man is not one who cannot sin. The holy man is one who chooses to avoid sin. God is far more interested in who you are than what it is you do. God is much more concerned about our character than and our attitude than He is with anything Jesus did not die on the cross just so we would always live comfortable, well-adjusted lives. His purpose is far deeper: He wants to make us as much like himself before he takes us to Heaven, but we must want that as well.

As we discussed this morning, the true Christian ideal is not to be happy, but to be filled with joy and to be holy. The whole purpose of God in redemption is to make us holy and to restore us to the image of God. Becoming a holy person requires change. Holiness is a deliberate choice to seek wholeness in the world. We must remove old habits and develop new ones. When a person understands the truth about Biblical Holiness, it becomes the most desirable possibility in all human experiences. There is nothing so beautiful, so satisfying and so natural in all human life. The very reason for your creation, the purpose for which God made you and the most complete life, is found in Biblical holiness. Therefore *“Pursue holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord”* (Hebrews 12:14).