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# **The Grace of Holiness: Is It All Relative?**

**#1350-A**

**Series: God's Amazing Grace**



**DISCIPLESHIP TAPE MINISTRIES, INC.**  
**INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO**



# The Grace of Holiness: Is It All Relative?

*Our gracious God, Creator and Sustainer, Savior and Friend, we come into Your presence with thanksgiving and into Your courts with joy. Truly, thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever, and it is Your grace and Your grace alone that sustains us.*

*May we crawl up into Your loving arms and rest this morning, praising You for the grace You have given us and learning minute-by-minute in the days and weeks to come, to more perfectly rest in that grace and let You become in us all You desire to become.*

*This morning, we come and lay ourselves at Your feet. We acknowledge, Father, our weaknesses and our frailties, and we acknowledge that You alone can teach us. And yet, that's Your heart's desire. So, we lay ourselves at Your feet and ask You to open our eyes that we might behold wondrous things out of Thy law.*

*For these that we have brought to You this morning, Father, whose bodies are failing and some who face the possibility of eternity in a very short time, we thank You for the presence of the Spirit of God in their lives, and for the encouragement and excitement of their testimony to us. We pray that comforting grace and even dying grace might be theirs in such a way, that anyone around them—doctors, nurses, relatives, friends—might see the joy that is ours in the presence of eternity. We pray, Father, for Your healing where healing is Your will. We pray for Your grace upon grace in every situation.*

*Now, Father, we are Yours. Do with us as You please, this morning, we pray.*

*In Jesus' name. Amen.*

Throughout history there has been a struggle in the church with this one issue. Satan seems to have a field day no matter which way it goes. The subject and the issue is holiness. Both the

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definition of it and the performance of it, really in the history of Christianity, has been typified by a pendulum that swings from one extreme to another.

Part of the reason, I believe, is we as Christians have been called out by God to be separate, distinct and different. We are told that we are holy ones, that we are not to be contaminated by the sin in the world nor drawn to it. It's a concept that is somewhat foreign to the natural mind. The flip side of it is, we are also told that we were sent into the world to be lights; and as such, we are to infiltrate a sinful, lost, and dying world so the Spirit of God can penetrate the darkness. Jesus is our perfect example of holiness. He spent time with publicans and sinners and unlike the Scribes and Pharisees, He touched lepers, blind men, tax collectors and thieves; people nobody else wanted to touch.

He was accused by the religious leaders of fellowshipping with the wrong crowd and of being unholy. He healed on the Sabbath. He forgave prostitutes and murderers of their sins. Holy? To the Scribes and the Pharisees, He didn't understand the meaning of the word, holiness. Holiness meant uncontaminated. Holiness meant that the man by the side of the road must not be touched, or you would be unclean.

But not Jesus. He lived and died for common folk, many of whom had no place in society at all. He loved lepers and nobody in his right mind loved lepers. He spent the bulk of His time visiting sick people, dying people, outcasts and rejects; people the religious leaders of His day would not so much as touch or be contaminated by.

So, either Jesus didn't understand the concept of holiness or they didn't. Of course, we know which way it was because they were at opposite ends of the spectrum. They had so separated themselves from the real world, they didn't understand the needs real people have. Jesus, on the other hand, condemned their hypocrisy and called them "play-actors" on the stage of life. He kept saying over and over, "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites."

The problem was complicated by some of God's specific instructions to the church. In II Corinthians 6, Paul wrote these words.

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Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

(II Corinthians 6:14-18)

God was calling us to come out and be separate. That doesn't seem on the surface to fit with the life of Christ. It has to do with something called "yoking." It has to do with two people or two groups of people joining together in a common spiritual goal as equals. We are told you cannot join light and darkness, and you cannot join the temple of God with the temple of Satan. You can't. That is why Israel was told never to intermarry with non-Jews. The reason was, it would be a spiritual union and they would be non-compatible spirits.

Now when these things were done, the princes came to me, saying, The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites... [and all the other "ites"].

For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass.

And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head [that's what happened to me] and of my beard, and sat down astonished [astonished]. [I couldn't believe it!] (Ezra 9:1-3)

Beloved, that does not mean that we do not infiltrate or become friends with non-believers for the sake of taking light into darkness and leading them to Christ. Jesus is our example. That's our position; that's our responsibility. But it does mean that any relationship that creates a union of two people, only

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one of whom is a believer, is a contradiction to the will of God. Instead, God wanted us to be separate, whatever that means. He had literally severed or cut us off from spiritual relationships with unbelievers.

And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the **LORD** am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine.  
(Leviticus 20:26)

What does that mean? That word separate, used in II Corinthians 6, and in other places, can be found in your concordance like this. The Greek word ἀφορίζω aphorizo {af-or-id'-zo} means to mark off by boundaries, to separate. In the bad sense it means to exclude as something that doesn't belong or is disreputable. In the good sense it means to appoint or set apart for something special.

In this case it literally means to be placed in a different sphere based on ownership. It means you can divide the whole world into two categories. That's simple, isn't it? It's those who rightfully could claim God as their Father by virtue of the divine adoption, and those who couldn't. Those who were His were asked by God, or commanded by God to come out from among them; to not blend into the woodwork; to not be indistinguishable as children of the King. If the world looked at them and couldn't differentiate between those who represented royalty and those who didn't, God had a problem.

He had placed a seal upon them, the emblem of His ownership. That seal was called the Holy Spirit, and it gave them the capacity to be holy the way God was holy. And when the world saw them, if they didn't see the holiness of God, there would be a world of darkness with no light.

God told His children not to touch the "unclean" thing. Touching is a crucial issue, isn't it? Eve reached out and touched what God told her not to touch. It wasn't what it appeared to be. It appeared to be a way out, a way to become independent. It turned into bondage. Instead of becoming independent, Eve just changed images. Now she began to reflect the image of Satan, and unless God intervened, she would never again experience the love of God.

Touching involves a choice. It doesn't have to be a physical act of touching; it involves any act of the will that chooses something or someone or some course of action that causes it to be no

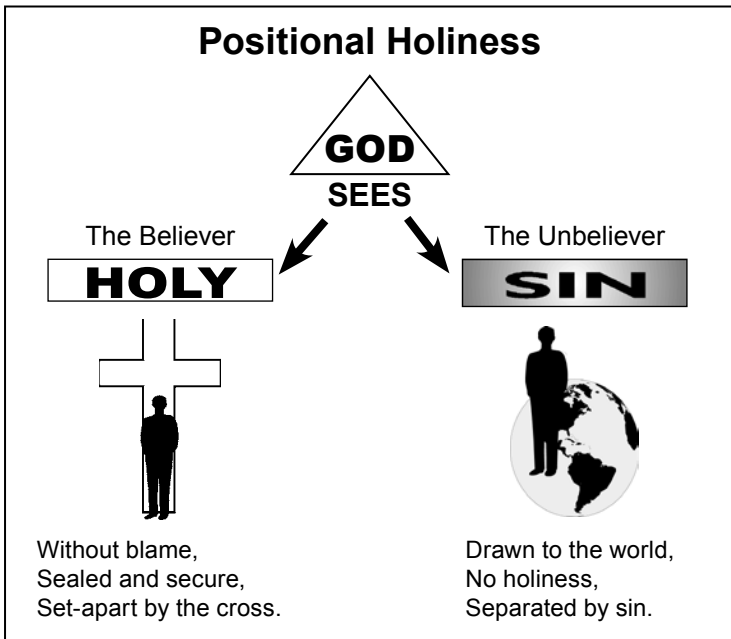
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different than the world. We are told:

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world,  
(I John 2:15a)

Everything we reach out and touch that does not draw us closer to the person of God, is violating His desire for us to be separate. While the world is reaching out for things and thrills, the believer is reaching out to God for strength, wisdom, and spiritual blessings even at the cost of material gain. I think there are two kinds of holiness. There is “positional” holiness, and if you’ll forgive the use of a word that doesn’t exist, “possessional” holiness.

Positional holiness is how God sees us. He sees us “in Christ,” and thus totally freed from the penalty of sin by virtue of our divine adoption and what Jesus did on the Cross.

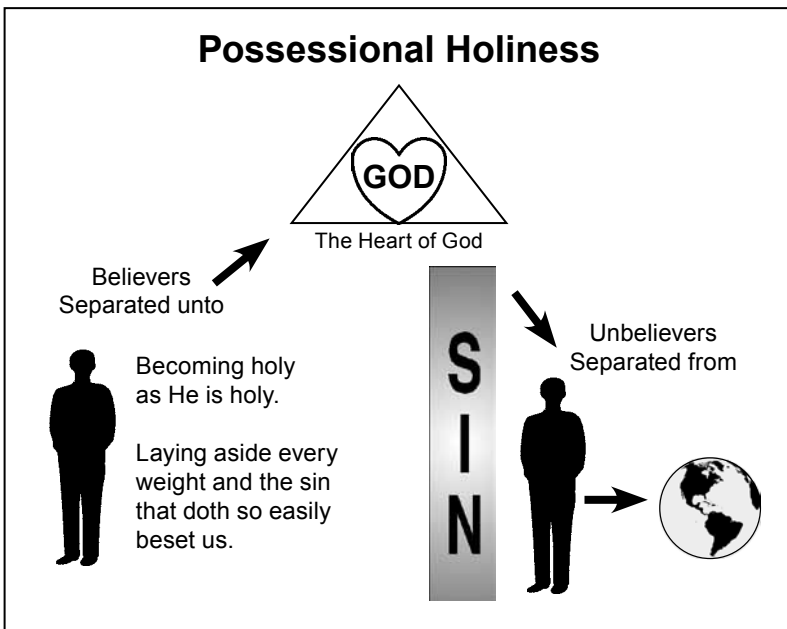


Now what you’ll find in this lesson is that old adage, if you don’t have a lot to say, draw charts. So, I’ll give you several this morning, and you can draw your own conclusions. If we have been born again, God looks at us through the blood of Christ and sees us as holy and pure. We are saved, sealed, and secure. We

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have been lifted up, and in His heart been set apart, separated from the rest of the world in the mind of God. There is no doubt about our ultimate destination, and there is no doubt about the source of our salvation. We are “in Christ” and we are children of the King, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. It’s by virtue of grace, free and undeserved, that we have been adopted into the family, and the holiness of God has been imputed to us. That’s what we have learned from the last few lessons.

“Possessional” holiness on the other hand, (if there were such a word) might better describe the day-to-day struggles we have as Christians. It might better describe the sheer wonder of what awaits us if we dare to close the eye gate and the mind gate that gives Satan access. This allows the grace of God to really demonstrate Himself through our weakness. What happens is, we begin to be humbled. We begin to confess sin for what it is, an affront to God. We begin to get nearer and nearer to the heart of God.



As we begin to possess the holiness that is ours, things that used to be acceptable to us begin to break our hearts because they break the heart of God. The closer we get to the heart of



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God, the more sensitive we become to sin. We can't stand to look at things God wouldn't look at. We can't stand to think about things God wouldn't think about. We can't stand to do anything that would bring harm to another or to the reputation of God. Something is happening inside of us.

Instead, we long just to sit at His feet and spend time in worship; to hear His Word as He brings it to us through His Spirit. To see others come to Him. To impact the lives of others who long to know Him will bring us more joy than a new house, a new car, or a thousand promotions. Every thought we think begins to relate to Him. Every desire of our heart begins to center around Him. We, who have been set apart unto holiness, are in the process of becoming the holy men and women we are. We are possessing experientially what we already are positionally, and life begins to make sense. Isn't that what you want?

We don't chafe over Hebrews 12:1 anymore. We don't struggle to let go of things that defile the name of God.

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

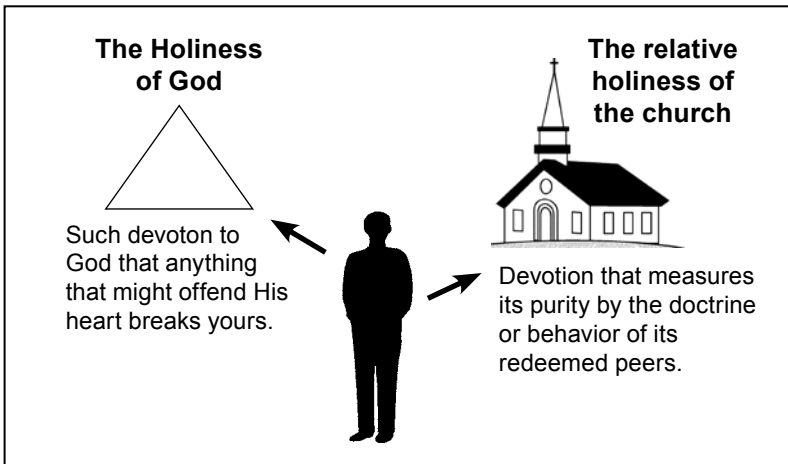
(Hebrews 12:1,2)

The laying aside of weights becomes a joy. And the reason is, all we care about is running the race in the energy of the Lord rather than in our own energy. Then, we can mount up with wings as eagles. But we can't run with besetting sins strapped on our backs, or even the weight of supposedly good things that are not of God. So, joyfully, willfully, we begin to strip ourselves of those weights and sins because our eyes are on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. And if we are going to run in His energy, we don't want to be encumbered with our sin. Do you get the picture—possessional?

What's happening? We are progressively becoming holy, but God is doing it. All we are doing is letting Him. It is called grace. It is the grace of God making us into the holy, set apart men and women we already are in the mind of God. But we have to be willing to ask Him and progressively humble ourselves and reject and resist sin or it won't happen.

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Now, let's get down to the real world. In the real world, most of us don't experience that level of grace day-by-day. We just don't. If I were to interview you with our roving microphone—that I have never had the courage to do yet, but someday might—the last Sunday I teach I'm going to do it if I know ahead. But, if I were to do that, and I were to ask you, you would say, "That's what I want." Wouldn't you? And in our better moments, we even long for it. But we get caught up believing one of Satan's lies. And one of Satan's chief lies where holiness is concerned, is that there is such a thing as "relative" holiness. That doesn't relate to the holiness of your relatives either. What it literally means is, Satan has convinced us that God is pleased when we devote our lives to spiritual mediocrity, as long as we stay a step better or above our Christian peers. We cannot see and touch Jesus, so we mistakenly begin to believe the absolutes of Scripture need to be measured in their effectiveness based on the most spiritual people we know. Or, better still, on the average Christian we know.



A wife will justify her bitterness based on the fact that her husband is a deacon, and to her he is a fraud. Therefore, if God is allowing him to be recognized as spiritual, He should put up with her bitterness without any problem. And besides, she says, "I'm justified." A teenager justifies his or her bent toward immorality based on the hypocrisy he or she claims to see in their Christian parents. It doesn't matter anymore what they tell them; it's what they are.

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As society allows moral values and family values to plummet, the church scrambles to redefine absolute holiness based on what it calls reality, when, in reality, it is defying the plan of God and breaking the heart of God. God's standards of moral purity have not moved one trillionth of an inch since they were formed in His heart, and they never will. Thou shalt not commit adultery has always been an absolute; it always will be an absolute. God will not change His Word to adjust to a degenerate society. What He will do, is let that society sow its seeds of immorality and destroy itself; as all societies have before that have done so. But God's elect, His set apart ones, must become increasingly holy as the world's standards decline.

It is the opposite of what's happening, beloved. This is the hour in which the church needs to stand up and be counted morally. This is the hour to which we have been called. When the darkness descends, the light shows up more beautifully. When man has no hope; when life has no meaning, God's Word and God's people get put on center stage and the spotlight of eternity shines on our hearts. And in essence, we are to be men and women of moral purity who are living set apart lives to which we have been called, not only outwardly but inwardly, as we never have before.

That means, when morals decline, God is calling His people to repent in a way they never have before.

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

Seeing then that all these things [are imminent, they're going to happen] shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness [holy in behavior and in character],  
(II Peter 3:10,11)

Satan wants us to respond to relative holiness. He wants us to judge what is acceptable by what is normal in Christian circles. And we find ourselves with some kind of self-righteous pride that we are a cut above the world. Dear God, help us. Unless we return to standards of Biblical holiness that are progressively drawing us nearer and nearer to the heart of God and further and further from the mainstream of moral hypocrisy that characterizes the world we live in, we are in trouble. Man's double standard must not become ours. The declining moral values in the world today

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are indicators of what man can do in the flesh. The constant moral values of God are what man can do supernaturally by grace. An unbeliever cannot live in that realm.

Grace is the answer. We are to draw near unto God, and He will draw near unto us. We are to resist the devil, and he will flee from us. But it is a constant, consistent process. If we get satisfied just that we are not losing ground as a church and as individuals, forget it. We are to grow in ever-increasing splendor from one degree of glory to another. That means there ought to be a tenderness in our hearts toward sin that was never there a year ago. There ought to be a sensitivity to the needs of hurting people in our hearts, that was not there a month ago. And Jesus ought to be more real to us today than He has ever been before.

If He is anything less than that, we are not letting the Holy Spirit continue the process of making us holy. We have been set apart by God. We are His chosen ones. He wants to give us His very nature. How can we be satisfied with less than all He has to give us? The answer is, we have been deceived by this thing called relative holiness.

We point to the great revivals in history with a sense of fondness and we say, "I wish I had lived in a time like that." Beloved, we do live in a time like that. Anytime God's people who are called by His name, humble themselves, pray, turn from their wicked ways and seek His face, He will hear from heaven, He will forgive their sins and He will heal their land (II Chronicles 7:14). He will. Anytime!

The promise is based on our willingness to be holy, and the time is now. I believe we are living at the edge of time. I believe the Scriptural prerequisites for the return of Christ have one-by-one, quietly been placed in the vault of eternity. I believe our great God even this moment, could be calling for the archangel to unpack his trumpet. I believe God, Himself, could be ready to shout! And the question is, if God is preparing to call us into His presence, and if He is preparing to come again and every eye will see Him, dare we waste a moment planting our feet on the soil of this earth as though it's our home?

If you live in one country and you're sent to another for a few days on a special business assignment, would you take everything you own with you? Knowing you are only on a brief visit, wouldn't you travel light, confident that when you got home

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everything of value would be there? I was talking to a member of our class this week who's fixing to pack up and be sent to China for a period of time on business. I thought about calling him and asking if he's going to take his sofa, his car, and all his clothes. And, of course, he's not.

The reason is, in the light of eternity, we are only here for a day. We are here on a special assignment, and it makes no sense to invest in this foreign soil. It's all going to burn. Only that which is eternal will be saved. But all of that will be saved, and it will be a treasure with our name on it.

The only thing that matters then, is that which pertains to the Spirit; to the kingdom of God. When we get to heaven, the issue won't be how successful we were, what cars we drove, what football team we rooted for, how much money we made, or how popular we were. The issue will be the degree to which we allowed the grace of God to pour the holiness of God in us and through into the lives of other people. The issues will be, were you faithfully bathing in His presence? Did you spend hours at His feet just drinking in His holiness, or were you too busy investing in things that would pass away? Did appropriating that holiness hold such a high priority that you were willing to guard the gateway to your eyes and not let anything in that would damage your spirit; that you would guard your heart and not let any compromises pass through?

Those are the questions we have to answer today. Not tomorrow. Today. Tomorrow may not come. Tomorrow may usher in eternity. And we must face honestly before God how serious we are about what we want to be and what we want to do with whatever days remain in our lifetime, or before the Lord returns. We have been called unto holiness. That is what we have been called to become. Our ministry will flow out of who we are if we let it, but we cannot manufacture a ministry or program it and bring glory to God. God is glorified when grace is expressed. Grace is expressed when we can't do it, and know it.

The question I would ask you is, how holy are you willing to become? We know what God desires. The issue is, what price are we willing to pay to let the price God already paid, pay dividends?

I want to ask you in closing to look at three principles in Scripture that have to do with this crucial issue.

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1- You and I are now the temple of God. Either the temple is kept holy or God's name is defiled.

But the **LORD** is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him. (Habakkuk 2:20)

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

(I Corinthians 3:16,17)

The temple of God is the dwelling place of God. Now think about it. As you approach the temple, you ought to be in awe. As you near the Holy One; as you enter the Holy place, there ought to be a hushed silence contemplating just the wonder of being in His presence. Would it ever enter your mind to enter that temple with anything less than respect and purity? Never would you take it lightly, I would think, the privilege of entering into the once forbidden Holy of Holies.

Now, go home and look in the mirror. I know it's frightening, but do it anyway. You are looking at the temple rebuilt. You are now the temple of God, and you are holy, because the Holy Spirit dwells in you. How dare we be careless or apathetic as we worship. God alone is our witness. Should we defile that temple with lustful thoughts or unbridled anger or seething bitterness? That would be like trashing the dwelling place of God. You say, "I would never do that." But you have if you in any way hinder God from taking you to the next stage of intimacy that leads you to the next level of conviction and holiness. The temple is holy, beloved. You are the temple.

2- These temples of ours are now to be the place where the sacrifices take place. The sacrifice represents our act of worship. It's a different kind of sacrifice because the sacrifice for sin has been paid once and for all. What kind of sacrifice is God looking for now? Romans 12:1 tells us.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your [whole being] bodies a living sacrifice, holy, [set apart] acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service [that is the reasonable thing to do.]

(Romans 12:1)

The only sacrifice God wants from you and from me from this point on is our lives. He wants our bodies filled with holiness. It is the reasonable thing to do. That word, sacrifice, literally is the

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word, λογικω thusia {thoo-see'-ah}. It means a victim laid on the altar. It is a picture of a person or an animal that has been laid on the altar and placed there to die.

Scripture says, that is the reasonable thing for you to do. That word, reasonable, is logikos {log-ik-os'}. It means pertaining to reason or logic; spiritual, pertaining to the soul.

In other words, it is that which makes logical sense from a spiritual perspective. That is the reasonable thing to do. If you look at life through the eyes of God nothing else makes sense. Our lives ought to be laid on the altar daily, and it ought to be a privilege to die daily. But in our own energy we can't even die. It is not something the natural man will do. It is a choice followed by an act of surrender; an acknowledgment that apart from the free, undeserved grace of God, we can't die. We will try to do it ourselves. Jesus, on the other hand, died daily. He said, "I do only those things that please the Father." What does that mean? It means that only as He died to His own will could the Father enable Him supernaturally, to live apart from sin and unto holiness. So, Jesus died and died and died and died and died.

Even as He faced Calvary, He knelt in the garden and died again to His own feelings and to His own plans. He said, "Lord, if it be possible, nevertheless..." And that "nevertheless" was death again. It ultimately meant His dying—period. He who knew no sin became sin for us. He became a living sacrifice.

3- To be a living sacrifice, you have to die, and to die you have to humble yourself until you begin to see sin the way God does. Next week, if you want to plan to stay home, we are going to look at this principle. Isaiah 57:15 would a great memory verse for this week. It says this:

For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.  
(Isaiah 57:15)

Listen to who is speaking. His name is Holy. He's the one who inhabits eternity; the one who spoke the worlds into being. The one whose name causes the angels to fold their wings and worship. The one whose sinless life made holiness a reality. He is speaking. Now shouldn't we be very still? Shouldn't we be very quiet? When the Holy One speaks, like the angels, shouldn't we

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bow in adoration and listen? So don't say a word, just listen. The Holy One speaks. He says:

...I dwell in the high and holy place, [and guess who dwelleth with me] with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit...  
(Isaiah 57:15)

God is saying that He has called those who are of a contrite and humble spirit to live with Him, near to His heart. What does that mean?

The **LORD** is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. (Psalm 34:18)

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. (Psalm 51:17)

For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word. (Isaiah 66:2)

A literal translation of the word contrite is dust; matter which has been ground into its lowest form, shattered and scattered into nothingness. That's what it means. It is a broken heart. It is a heart that trembles at everything God says because it has been broken. It thinks nothing of itself and everything of God; therefore, every violation of God's Word causes it to tremble, not just in fear, but in grief.

Ask yourself, do you tremble over your sins? Is there such grief when you have violated the best God has for you that your heart begins to weep? Or is there a kind of compromise that has settled into your life because for years you have been able to compromise and there have been no major consequences. So, you have become somewhat calloused and cold about breaking God's heart. Let me remind you, God does not deal with most sin in an immediate cause and effect way because we then would become legalistic, and we would serve Him in direct response to the penalty. He wants us to be faithful because we love Him, not because He is going to zap us if we don't. Look at Israel. The sin-zap-repent plan didn't work for them. It doesn't work for us, either.

Revival, according to Isaiah 57, can only come to those who see sin as God does and repent in dust and ashes, filled with a contrite heart and a humble spirit. You don't become contrite by programming it. You become contrite the way Job did. You spend



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hours looking at God until you see Him as you've never seen Him before. Job finally cried out:

I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.

Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

(Job 42:5,6)

Having reached the end of himself and having gone from strength to weakness, he fell at the feet of God, and listened to what He had to say. Once Job saw who God was, what he was became very clear. He was a self-centered sinner who had gauged his own holiness on self-evaluation and peer acceptance, rather than on his nearness to the heart of God. And when he saw God, he saw his sins and he repented in dust and ashes.

This may be foreign to our way of thinking in today's society, but nothing short of that kind of repentance will bring about revival—in you, in me, in the church, in the world. Revival will not be something we do; it will be something God does, and it is predicated on our seeing sin for what it is.

I beg you, take the next week and just ask God in your quiet time to peel off a new layer of self from your spirit. Ask Him to show you sin in your life that maybe you have not seen for what it is before. The secret is, spend enough time in His presence to let Him do it. Don't be in a hurry. Wait on the Lord. For one week, instead of focusing on what God can do for you, focus on what you have done that needs to be confessed and repented of.

If He convicts your heart of sin—I don't care how seemingly insignificant you justify it to be—write it down. Then go before God and say, "I will do whatever it takes. If it means to be cleansed, if it means making restitution, I want to be renewed and changed in a way I've never known before. Don't be afraid to ask Him for a miracle. You say, "God, You don't understand. My heart is so hard." God understands. He's in the miracle business. Ask Him to transform your spirit into one of humility and contrition. Ask Him to make sin so real to you that He can make His grace real to you in a way you never dreamed.

Then drive a stake in the ground. Write it down. Draw a picture. Write a song. Do something to remind you in days to come, what a wonderful God you have. You are a child of the King. You have broken the King's heart, and He has forgiven you.

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Now tell the King that you never want that sin to break His heart again. Left up to you, you can't do it. Praise God, it is not left up to you. There is a thing called grace, the grace of holiness. And praise God, it is ours for the asking.

Let's pray.

*Our Father and our God,*

*It's a tough prayer to pray, but we ask You to help us see sin this week that we have never seen before. Peel away, Father, the façade that we have pasted on the concepts of ourselves and help us to see our hearts the way You see them—the pettiness, the foolishness, the lust, the anger, the resentment, the bitterness, the faithlessness, the inconsistencies, the lack of forgiveness.*

*And as we bow in Your presence this week, and just linger there beholding the holiness of our God, may the light of Your Spirit shine upon us so clearly that we begin to see the process of repentance in a way we never thought we could.*

*Dear God, help us to begin to become, by possessing by grace, the holiness we already have positionally in Christ. Work it into the fabric of our lives, Father. Change us. May we not be satisfied to live another year, another five years, another ten years, just the way we are.*

*Father, may we not be satisfied to live another day just the way we are. May we be progressing from one degree of glory to another, into the likeness of a Holy God. For this we pray.*

*In Jesus' name. Amen.*

## The Grace of Holiness: Is It All Relative?

### For Further Study and Application

1- Read and reread II Corinthians 6:14-18 again. Find Old Testament passages that were the foundation for this principle. Based on these verses, *what kinds of yoking relationships do you think God does not approve of?* Make application in today's world. Do you think this is an absolute? How does the principle of being under the authority of unbelievers differ from that of yoking with them? How can you be "separate" and still evangelize their world?

2- Read I Corinthians 3:16,17 again. How does this passage tie in with II Corinthians 6? What does your body being God's temple say to you? Cross-reference this passage and see what else the New Testament has to say on the subject.

### A Challenge to Further Application

1- Try to imagine the difference between "positional holiness" (how God sees you in Christ) and "possessional holiness" (what God desires you to become in experience). Try to view it through the lens of how you see your children growing up. You see them *based on their potential to become*. Because of that, you are patient as they learn to walk, learn to talk, as they respond both correctly and incorrectly to rebuke. You give them room to grow. Your desire, however, is that they progressively become what you envision them to be: men and women of integrity and faith. Thank God that He is so patient with us.

2- Find a picture of yourself (don't stop to admire it) and write across it: "God's Remanufactured Temple; Under Construction." Put it in your Bible or somewhere where you can see it privately when you need to. Use it to remind yourself that whatever happens to that body is happening to the temple of God. Whatever thoughts and pictures it is fed are becoming paintings on the walls of His Holy Temple, *and your signature is at the bottom of the painting*. Ask His forgiveness, and begin immediately removing those that are offensive to Him.

## The Grace of Holiness: Is It All Relative?

3- Study the word “contrite.” Cross-reference it. Ask God to give you an experiential understanding of the principle of contrition and repentance this week. Be ready for Him to answer your prayer. He will. As He does, be sure to write down what He teaches you. It needs to be remembered for the rest of your life.

### A Challenge to Scripture Memory

Memorize Isaiah 57:15. Look up each word. Personalize it and pray it back to God as an act of commitment.

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(07.22.22.dvd)