

Holiness

Unto the Lord

While on my pilgrimage through this world, I have met with God; who told me, "Be ye holy, for I am holy". This has led to a quest on my part to understand and live in accordance with holiness: and to seek the companionship of fellow pilgrims striving for the same. The following is given to "whosoever will" that may benefit from it. It is by no means a thorough study of the matter; this would take a lifetime or more. Neither is it the final word; it is an "Ebenezer" along the way that may help another gain ground faster than I have. But do not stop at this monument. Go on from glory to glory, from grace to grace.

DEFINING THE TERM

It would be unfair to dive into this subject without clearing the air somewhat as to what is meant by "holiness". Two people could preach or write a sermon on this (or other subjects) and say the same words, but mean different things.

A look in a dictionary, concordance, and lexicon should bring anybody to the common ground that in a basic manner the word "holy" and its derivatives have a meaning of "purity" and "separation". But the question remains, "Pure from what? Separated from what, to what? Pure from air pollution? Pure from sexual deviations? Separated from the Chinese? Separated to an agrarian lifestyle?"

Peter tells us in his first general letter, "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy." Without doubt, he was referring (at least in part) to a beautiful verse in the law to the Levites, Leviticus 20:26. This is the foundation for our call to holiness.

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.

How is God "pure"? How is He "separated"? Actually, the two terms could be reduced to one idea. Purity means separated from impurity. Separation means pure from something else; not mixed. God is love, so this would mean He is not mixed with selfishness. God is truth, so this means he is pure from hypocrisy. A short, concise definition could be that God is holy because he is:

SEPARATED UNTO ONE THING: THE SPIRITUAL

The closest God has been to physical and carnal is when he assumed the body of Jesus, and walked for 33 1/2 years as a man. But during this whole time, he did not defile his holiness. He was in the world, but not a part of it. He was tempted in all points like as we are (which is a sign that he was in a body just like ours), yet without sin. And He calls us to the same. "Follow me", he told us. Then He walked here on earth without serving the desires of his flesh in this world: not even for a second. "I leave you an example", he told us, then He lived a holy life; a life separated and dedicated to the spiritual things, while in a depraved body and a wicked society, with the Devil walking about as a roaring lion. This is holiness. Surrounded by fleshly desires that crave to be fulfilled, surrounded by a society bent on pleasure, and pestered by demonic accusations and temptations: yet without giving any of them a moment's gratification.

LIVING OUT OUR CALLING

THE CALL

We have looked at the call already. "Be holy, for I am holy". This is not an option. Besides the fact that Paul tells us in Hebrews 12:14 "...and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord", we can see from the above-mentioned verses in 1 Peter and Leviticus that unless we are holy, we cannot have a relationship with God. God is holy. That is His nature. That is just the way He is, was, and shall

forevermore be. Neither he, nor you, nor I, can change that. And His nature cannot be contaminated by something impure. Anything less than perfect holiness cannot enter into His presence, neither can His presence enter into something not completely dedicated to the things spiritual and eternal. So, to walk with Him, we have to be sanctified. By nature, we are the opposite. We are dedicated to the pleasure that seeing pretty things with our eyes brings us. We are bent on seeking some gratification that our body seeks, be it food or a thrill ride in a roller-coaster. And we are by nature always seeking something to boost our ego- alias self: the old "me, myself, and I".

So, in trying to be reconciled to a holy God, we find ourselves on a collision course with His nature. His, separated, pure, and untainted with any carnality. Ours, anything but that, except in occasional moments when we muster all our strength and do a few good deeds. No wonder Jesus said "Ye must be born again..."

THE LAW OF THE ANOINTING OIL

The Old Testament laws provide us with the laws of the kingdom of God. Not in their letter form, but in the types and shadows of things to come. The kingdom is spiritual; unseen and eternal. The OT laws are physical; tangible and temporary. But we can learn the realities of the kingdom by carefully examining the shadow to see what reality has caused it.

Please read Exodus 30:22-33.

This is clearly a prophecy of the Holy Spirit, our anointing. Now let us see some laws about the Holy Ghost.

- verse 30- the high priest and the regular priest had to be anointed to be able to serve in the temple. And so it is in the kingdom of God!
- verse 32- it was to be a unique oil. There is no other like the Holy Spirit!

- verse 33- to try and imitate it was a serious misdemeanor. We cannot really imitate an anointed meeting, message, or consolation, can we?!

You may be able to draw out more from this portion than these points. In fact, I have purposely left out the point I want to expound upon. The above points could make a message in themselves. What I want to look at closely though is:

- verse 32- it cannot be poured on flesh.

As much as we may try, God cannot anoint our unholy hearts or actions. It is against the law of the anointing oil for it to be poured on flesh. The oil is a holy oil. It cannot be mixed with any flesh-centered, carnally inspired action or person. Impossible! God's holiness cannot be defiled! Simply put, the oil is holy, and to receive it we have to be holy.

What does this mean in practical terms? It means if we make our decisions in life based on the flesh and its desires, our life will be un-anointed. We may dream of an anointed life, read books of others, hang around a church that has some anointed brothers; but when all is said and done, our life will not have the sweet smell of that unique oil. It will still stink like the flesh.

THE LAW OF THE HOUSE

In the book of Ezekiel we find God showing the prophet the plan for the New Testament church. This was done in the form of showing him a vision of the city and temple. In chapter 43 and verse 12 we find a law, called "the law of the house". And since we are the house of God, this law is for us; for our life. *"The whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy."*

How is it in your life? Do you feel that only the inner sanctuary (holy of Holies) of your heart needs to be set apart for spiritual

things, and the flesh does not matter much (reflected in the thought pattern- "it's the heart that counts")? Or, perhaps you allow that holiness is to affect our outward actions as well, that is, the outer sanctuary of our body is also to be holy?

According to the law of the house, not only the inner and the outer sanctuaries are to be holy, "But the whole limit thereof round about"! And not only holy, but "most holy"! Dear reader, holiness unto the Lord is not an option!!! Either we are entirely holy (every aspect round about our life that we are in control of), or we are not a part of the house.

PENTECOST- THE OIL POURED ON THE HOUSE

Admittedly, the oil being poured on the house is not a phrase used in the Bible. I am putting the two metaphors together. Even though this phrase is not used, this is what happened. Let's look at Acts chapter 2 now for a moment.

For the oil to be poured out, the recipients had to be separated from the flesh. Their lives had to be dedicated, separated to the living God. Was it so? In chapter 1, verse 14 we find "these all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication". In chapter two we find them "with one accord in one place". Sounds like they were in a position to receive the oil. Dedicating themselves to the spiritual life (not meaning they didn't take care of the physical needs-we will touch this later), in the love of God. Was their sanctification perfect? Were there no faults? Undoubtedly no. But we do not find Peter having to be rounded up from a fishing expedition where he was out to gain a few more drachmas so he could decorate his new sail. John was not out at the local music festival soaking up the newest tune. Andrew was not at the local university striving for a degree. They were putting their hearts and lives into the kingdom of God—and the oil fell!

After their spirits were born fresh from the Life (Yes, that always existing, eternal Life) of God, we find them later in the chapter in the same course. A key phrase is in verse 46. "Singleness of heart". This indicates a single purpose. A pureness. A separation unto one thing. Holiness.

A single heart has one thing in it. A desire to serve God. If a heart has two desires in it, even though the secondary one only consumes 1% of the heart, it is not a single heart. Every ounce of strength and desire is put into the "one thing necessary". Everything else falls to the side, or is purposely thrown out.

So we see the first Christians receiving the Holy Spirit in nothing less than a holy attitude. The cleansing fire doubtless purged their hearts even further. But to come to God with a heart that is not striving for "singleness of heart" will be of no avail. The oil cannot be poured on flesh. The house has to be "most holy round about".

Does this mean we have to already be perfect and purified before we can come to Christ? By no means. What it does mean is that our desires and intentions have to be in a state of repentance. In a state of vehement desire for the holiness of God. In a state of recognition that we are utterly self-centered and God is not: and we desire to be changed. But to come to God with a heart that is not single, a heart still desiring the temporary pleasures of this life, will not let the oil fall. It cannot fall on flesh.

THE FRUITS OF THE OIL

While we are here, let's look at some of the fruits of the anointing.
Acts 2:41-47

- added to the body. Anyone born of God will automatically have a desire to be a part of Christian fellowship.
- prayers. Fellowship with God becomes precious.

- fear. A healthy respect for God, understanding who He is and who we are.
- all things common. Community of goods: a spirit of *commonness*
- one accord. All striving for one goal.
- praising God. Praise that is natural and not pumped up.

What is missing? I mean in terms of today's popular thought? Youth meetings with popcorn and volleyball games. Pastors retreat with a prayer breakfast of ham and eggs. The musical festivals and accompanying skits. Bake sales for the new building fund. And why are they missing in the NT church? And why is the anointing missing from these modern-day activities? There is one answer for both questions. The holy anointing oil cannot be poured on flesh. Holiness is purity, and holiness is separation; purity and separation from the natural desires for pleasures of self-gratification and glorification that lie within mankind.

One common question comes up in almost every church when you speak like I have just spoken: “What's wrong with that?” Which brings us to the next point.

HOLINESS Vs. MORALITY

Morality is a term used to explain our relationships one with another. It can be summed up in the golden rule- “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”. Many individuals and churches have fallen into this comfortable rut—that is, they live up to morality, but not of holiness. Holiness has to do with our relationship with God, our purity and separation unto Him. Thus, while a window-shopping spree does not interfere directly with anyone else's rights, it is considered an “innocent diversion”. And morally speaking it passes the test. In the holiness aspect it is a complete flunker. Sports are in the same bucket. What's wrong with a church volleyball team? (I mean, it doesn't hurt anybody,

and is better than drinking...) Morally, nothing. In terms of holiness, it falls into the category of the desire of the flesh for a thrill.

The rich young ruler is an example of this. He would make an ideal church member in many of these "morality churches". He would not smoke, drink, steal, lie, or beat his wife. He had lived this way from "his youth up". He probably meant from the time of his *bar mitzvah*, the time when a man becomes accountable to the law—usually at about 13 years of age. But he had a great spiritual fault or two. He was not walking in holiness. He loved his money. In essence, he was still a self-centered, morally upright man. But sadly, he walked away from an opportunity to walk with God.

Many do this today. At a young age, they repent from certain moral sins. No stealing, no lying, no drunkenness. But sadly no holy, separated life. Which means no anointing oil.

Holiness is more than morality. Morality is a necessity to a relationship with God. But, morality is not enough. In fact, morality is a secondary requirement. The first is holiness.

THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT OF ALL

When asked what the greatest commandment was, Jesus did not answer "charity". He answered "holiness". "Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul; and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength".

If we put all we have into some effort, how much is left for anything else? Zero, of course. And so to put all our efforts, desires, goals, hopes, and aspirations into loving God, there is not one ounce of strength left for some little fleshly pleasure seeking. So to do this (love God with all our heart) would make us holy; separated unto God and His kingdom. Jesus taught holiness as the first commandment. The second will actually be a result of the first. If

you do the first, the second will come. But it does not work the other way around. And many Christians and churches are stuck here. Moral, but not holy.

My personal testimony is similar to this very dilemma. I grew up as a basically moral person. I had my "innocent pleasures" that were looked upon by most as nothing to be worried about. I hunted, and fished, and played ball... never hurting anybody. In my musings, I began to think about this. Why do we teach against gambling? If I can spend several hundred dollars on a gun that I did not need, and is only for pleasure, why is the next man condemned for buying a few lottery tickets? If that is what gives him a little pleasure, and he can afford it (just as I could with my hobbies), why condemn him?

And my thinking was right. If a week-end of sport-hunting was okay, then a trip to Las Vegas for a week-end was, too. And the man that wanted to buy an ounce of marijuana and go to his cabin and get high for a few hours— well, that was his pleasure, as long as he did not hurt anybody.

So, sports, sport-hunting, gambling, pool-playing, TV watching, marijuana smoking... they are all in the same boat—if you're not harming anyone else in your pleasure. This is a truth. There is no difference in a volley-ball game and a high from marijuana on a moral level. And on a holy level they are just as equal. If wasting money on lottery tickets is wrong, then wasting money on a hunting license (for sport-hunting) is wrong.

So, I had to repent. I laid my guns, music, and sports aside and began to seek the kingdom.

And the oil flowed!

Uncleanness

This word, used so often in the Scriptures, is of such importance that I put it as a major heading. After being in churches for more than 30 years, studying the Bible intensely on my own for half that many, it was still only some months back that its meaning and importance came clear to me. Perhaps I can help another gain ground faster than I did.

In Ezekiel 22:26 and 44:23 we find a comparison that helps us with a definition of unclean. "between the holy and profane...between the clean and unclean". I think a further search would reveal more of the same, but from these two occasions we will now define "uncleanness" as anything that defiles a 100% pure consecration to spiritual things. Holiness is 100% of our heart loving God. Purity is not having even a drop of selfishness in us. Uncleanness is defiling our separation unto our God. Suddenly, holiness unto the Lord takes even a greater importance. Uncleanness is mentioned well in the front of the list of the "works of the flesh" in Galatians 5:19. In Ephesians 5:3 and Colossians 3:5 it is linked right up with such "gross" sins as fornication. Oh, that we could wake to the fact that a simple self-centered gratifying of our natural desires is equal to fornication in the eyes of our holy God! 1 Thessalonians 4:7 sums it up like this:

For God has not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

All through the law and prophets we find references to "uncleanness". As was mentioned at the beginning of this article, this is not a thorough study of the matter. But let us look at a few instances. Isaiah 35:8 will be first.

THE HIGHWAY OF HOLINESS

This beautiful prophecy of Isaiah tells of the coming of the kingdom of God and the redemption of Israel. What a blessing to see these prophecies fulfilled in our day, and to read the history of the church

and find them again and again coming to pass in the hearts of the people of God in all ages and places through the centuries! But these promises are conditional. One condition is that the "unclean shall not pass over" "the highway of holiness". Those that are defiled with selfishness simply cannot enter the kingdom, walk therein, nor dwell there. Holiness and the kingdom of God are inseparable!

JERUSALEM-THE CITY OF GOD

In Isaiah 52 we find more prophecies of the gospel and redemption. Jerusalem (a type of the church) would be set free from her oppressors. But just as importantly, in verse 1, is the promise to be cleansed within. No more would the unclean or uncircumcised come into her. Both of these words speak of separation from the world. And it is prophesied that in the New Testament dispensation the church would be cleansed from this "uncleanness". The revelation to John tells us the same. In 21:27 we find that the city of God (again the church) cannot be entered by "any thing that defileth". As has been already said- holiness is not an option!

SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD

A very common, misused, and misunderstood term we use today is "the world". For years, I thought "the world" meant any person not "saved". This is only a partial truth. "The world" is synonymous with carnal desires. And everybody born into a human body has it within them by nature of this fact. John says "for all that is in the world, the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world." An honest assessment of the human race will find that this is the common lot of us all. I have replaced the KJV use of the word "lust" by "desire". This was a purposeful act on my part. And I did so because we have lost the meaning of the word lust. So often nowadays lust is not recognized as lust unless it manifests itself in an outstanding way; way out of control. Lust and desire are the same, and are used to translate the

same Greek word in the KJV. So, lust here also means simple desire, as well as the out-of-control type. And we need to think of worldliness in these terms—the simple desire to fulfill what the eye desires to see. The simple desire to give the flesh pleasure. And letting these desires guide our decisions makes us "unclean": unable to enter the city and kingdom of God.

Basically, uncleanness is defiling our consecration to God by letting self-centered desires affect the decisions of our life. It can be in a major way, as we often think of in the term "lust". Or it can be just a small deflection in what we would think of in the term "desire". Thus we can defile our holy walk with God in the simple act of choosing a cherry pie to eat instead of some green beans when we know that we have eaten enough sweets already. Our flesh wants the sugar. Our body needs vitamins (and we know this). The simple decision is before us—our lust (desire) or God's will?

ASCETICISM

I purposely chose a very common situation like the one just mentioned. I'm tired of preaching that does not get into practical applications and challenges us. As well, the above situation can help clarify an error of going to extremes. This is the error that says all pleasure is sin. Pleasure in itself is not sin. What is sin is self-centered pleasure seeking. Many decisions we make that bring us pleasure do not distract from our holy walk with God. The decision to sit on a chair, instead of standing. The decision to sit towards the sunset while resting after work. The decision to take a walk in the woods to refresh ourselves after a long day of sitting in revival meetings. When we are doing the will of God and pleasure comes with it, praise God! But a holy person does not make decisions based on self-centered pleasure.

Asceticism says pleasure is wrong. If we see a pretty flower, we should turn our head, or if we are offered a soft bed, we must

choose the floor. While fasting and other chastening of the body is good at times, when doing what is necessary brings pleasure, we can accept the pleasure as a "fringe benefit" of serving God. As well, if doing the will of God brings us a jail cell, or has us laid open with a public whipping—"Praise God!" (by His grace).

One difference lies between need and want. The body needs food. It needs rest. When we defile our separation from the carnal desires is when we gratify them in a selfish way. Asceticism says it is wrong to please the body any time. One famous man lived for years on the top of a pillar, subjecting himself to all kinds of weather. We are called to take care of our bodies—but

YET NOT TO SERVE THEM

In spite of this error, this world has a thousand who are unclean because they gratify their carnal desires for every one that is stuck in asceticism. It is not natural to deny the eye beauty. It is natural to spend our time, money and efforts just so the eye can be pleased. Billions and billions of dollars are spent on adornments for clothes, cars, houses and every other part of this life. Why do men spend hundreds of dollars for some chrome rims when the regular ones serve just as well? Why do men spend hundreds of dollars to put a false dormer on a house? It does nothing but add to the appeal of the eye and also to the chances of a leak in the roof. Why do women like to put lace or ruffles on their clothes? The lust (desire) of the eye to see pretty things.

Why do we overeat (gluttony)? Why is fornication a great temptation? Why are we lazy? Why do we buy expensive overstuffed chairs and...? The lust (desire) of the flesh (body) to feel good sensations and be "comfortable".

Why do we dominate others? Why do we like to listen to music? Why do we want recognition from others? Why do we want an education? The desire of the ego to be somebody: the pride of life.

We have been called to dedicate ourselves to God and His kingdom. We are to take care of the needs of our bodies, the same as we take care of a tool—so it can be used for a good purpose. Thankfully, God made many of our duties pleasurable. Foods taste good. Fresh air is a blessing to breathe. Rehearsing the songs of Zion is harmonious. Gazing on the stars while walking home at night fills us with amazement. Sadly, we seek these things for ourselves. And we defile ourselves thereby...

The Foolishness of the Cross

The natural man despises a holy life. He can respect a moral man, but a holy one will often cause a sneer of reproach. It seems the reason for this is that holiness strikes at the very core of our selfishness. I mean, to stop beating your wife is respectable, but to give yourself to prayer and fasting...

To stop drinking beer can be accepted as a good step, but to throw your fishing rod away? To be faithful to your wife is admirable, but to put off your snazzy shirt for a plain one? So the carnal man finds it a reproach to walk in holiness. And for this reason persecution to the church has somewhat ceased also. A moral church will receive but a fraction of the reproach that a holy one will.

And so the message of the cross becomes a reality to the man that walks in holiness. His eyes and his flesh clamor every day, a thousand times a day, to be gratified. And he kills these cries. He walks by what would be pleasing to God and his neighbor. His own comforts and "wants" will have to die. But to a world looking on, he has lost his balance.

For Jesus to come to this world and teach others to be respectable was something admired by many. The social outrages of his day and ours are recognized by most as viruses infecting society. And so Jesus' teaching about morality raised cheers and cries of "Crown Him king!" Then he taught about holiness. And the cheering stopped, and they crowned him with thorns.

So it will be in the life of any church or individual that practices and teaches holiness unto the Lord. Holiness and the cross are inseparable. This is because our self-centered nature cries daily to be pleased. And without a cross to put him on daily, it will rise up and dominate us.

FORSAKING ALL

In Luke 14:33 we find Jesus' message of the cross and holiness. It contains three important words. We will start with

- "all"- This little word fits in with the rest of the message of holiness. In the most important commandment, we found the same word, "all your heart, all your soul...etc." This leaves not even .0001% left untouched. And what are we to do with "all that he hath"?
- "forsake"- A look in a lexicon will tell us that in the original Greek this word had connotations of saying good-bye. Not a "see you later", but a good-bye. This would indicate a leaving behind, without any plans to return, unless specifically directed by God to do so. So, putting these two parts together, we find a complete leaving of all we have and are, and putting all we have into loving God. Simply put, this is holiness. Unfortunately, I feel the need to park here a little. We have explained this verse away. "You don't have to literally do this, just as long as you are willing to"; so

goes the common exception clause. But let us look at the words again. Does it say "...that is not willing to forsake all..." or, "...that forsaketh not all..."? Multitudes are saying "I am willing", but they are not doing it. Do it, friend! Unless you do it, you cannot be a disciple! "Wait a minute! (I can hear it already...) you don't have to literally leave your house and family..." Yes, to be a disciple we have to say good bye to all, with no intentions of returning unless God commands us to. (Most likely God will tell most to return to their families, but that is His decision.) And this is why we see so much deadness in the churches. Churches are full of people who are saying they are willing, but when it boils down to it they have not done it. It is a scary endeavor for the carnal man. Most of what we leave, God is not going to tell us to turn back and get it. So we comfort ourselves by saying all we need to be is willing. We say, "If God calls me to leave this or that, I am willing." Listen, my friend, God has already called you to leave it. Read the verse again! He is simply waiting with his bowl of anointing oil to dump it on you when you do it! Which brings us to the third important word...

- "cannot"- If we have not said good bye to all, it is impossible to be a disciple of Jesus. It does not say that those who do not will be a poor disciple, or a second-rate one, or a troubled one. He simply is not one. Enough said.

LET'S CHANGE THE RULES

Most of us Christians live by a simple rule. We do not realize it, and likely have never verbalized it, but it is a very basic principle that governs our life. It is this: "Everything is okay for my life, unless God specifically says it is wrong." I put a challenge before you to change your thinking. Try living by this rule for a week: "I will do

nothing, or put anything in my life, unless God specifically tells me to." Such a change of principles completely eliminates the "innocent things" that are clogging many a life. If a whole church would begin to live this way, Satan would be in a rage! How his kingdom would suffer!

Now Let's Get Practical!

Personally, I'm tired of mere talk of great principles; that is, great principles without any day-to-day outworkings. As was said in the beginning, two men can say the same words, but mean different things. As I understand holiness, it is to affect our daily lives, in all parts, and at all times. Let us take another look at some more "all" verses at this time.

- Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or *whatsoever* ye do, do *all* to the glory of God. 1 Cor 10:31
- *Whatsoever* ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men. Col 3:23
- *Whatsoever* ye do in word or deed, do *all* in the name of the Lord Jesus... Col 3:17
- Abstain from *all* appearance of evil. 1 Thes. 5:22
- It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor *anything* whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. RO 14:21
- But fornication, and *all* uncleanness, or covetousness, let it *not once* be named among you.

With these verses, let's now consider a practical, sanctified daily life.

A HOLY MOUTH

We will start with the mouth. A sanctified mouth will not let anything come out, or go in, unless it is for the glory of God. In the

"in" section we immediately see why gluttony is sin. Gluttony is eating for pleasure's sake instead of health's sake. A holy person does all for the glory of God, nothing for "self". So when it comes time to eat, this is done for God's glory and honor, not for mere pleasure. If we eat for mere pleasure, we are serving ourselves; letting self dictate what we do. For some reason, gluttony is one of those common sins of the flesh that is rarely disciplined in the churches. Dozens of overweight people sit at the communion table, while one smoker gets put out.

In the "out" section we have, of course, unholy talk. Foolish talking, joking, and jesting are not supposed to be named once among us. Why? It does not edify the spiritual man, but rather entertains the carnal one. In several hundred pages of the Biblical writings, we do not find God cracking one joke. He is holy, separated to the spiritual. And he calls us to the same, so that He may be one with us. Try this for a while: "I purpose to say nothing unless directly prompted by the Holy Spirit." Even to meditate about this makes one realize just how much of our (me included) talk is "unclean": defiled by self.

HOLY EYES

Next we will consider holy eyes, looking only at what edifies the spiritual man (realizing some things we cannot prevent). This, of course, knocks pornography in the head immediately, as well as partially-clothed live people. But this is not all that is contained in "the lust of the eye".

For years I thought "the lust of the eye" only in terms of the above paragraph. Actually, the problem of pornography/ reproductive lust is better put under the heading of "lust of the flesh". But since it fits both sections, we will leave it here. But let's consider something more...

Under the above heading of lust of the eye we talked a bit about the difference between "lust" and "desire". They are essentially the same, from the same Greek word, with the only difference in the KJV being the translators tended to use "lust" where there was a negative connotation, and "desire" where there was a positive. However, we have tended to put a connotation to the word "lust", as explained above, that is not there. Lust can be a small desire, it can be an overwhelming, vehement one. With this in mind, what does the eye desire to see? Simply this—anything that gives us pleasure, be it pornography, or be it a rose.

Mankind's root problem is that we use our senses to *self-centeredly* bring us good sensations, pleasures, and feelings. And we spend our lifetime (unless changed by God, of course) seeking these sensations. The desire of the eye that John mentions as the first phrase in his description of "worldliness" simply means when we spend our time, money, or efforts seeking things that bring pleasure to the eye. This world is full of it, busting at the seams. (This is because the majority of the people in this world remain unconverted.) Above, I mentioned the examples of adornments on clothing, chrome wheels, and false dormers. Women have their particular weaknesses in this area, and men theirs. A dress all printed over with flowers will not mean much to a man, while a woman's emotions will start rolling. Likewise, white-letter tires and chrome wheels won't attract a woman, but a man will lay hundreds of dollars on the altar of "lust of the eye" for them.

When churches begin to slip into the rut of morality instead of holiness, one will usually see this happen: adornment comes in, but immodesty is still barred. Why? Immodest apparel is a moral issue. Adornment is a holiness issue. And one starts hearing, "What's wrong with it, it doesn't hurt anybody..." This is because we have lost a vision of **HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD**; and have fallen into the morality trap.

HOLY EARS

Holy ears will not listen to anything that is not holy. Music comes to my mind at this time. Music is a powerful medium. A simple violin has been made to known to make a grown man cry. Stores play soft music to induce people to buy more. A strong, steady beat stirs up sexual excitement. No, music is not an "innocent" toy.

How does this affect a holy people? For several centuries, from all I have been able to gather, the newly-born church rejected musical instruments. This was in the face of a society that sought them, and a Jewish tradition of their use in worship. Why? I cannot give any more of an explicit verbatim quote than what I will share below, but I think I know the principle. Music moves the soul; but truth moves the spirit. Holiness is dedication to the spiritual, with the soulish (emotional) and fleshly part of man only used as needed. As well as putting out musical instruments, "colorful singing" was rejected, at least by Clement. What was left? A simple tune sung together by the church. Singing a tune helps to memorize, and it is something that can be done together by many in unison. And a holy heart with holy ears will sing in a holy manner—dedicated to the spiritual—and done with all the heart! The carnal man will try to add something superficial to gratify the "lust of the ear".

Now for the aforementioned quote from Clement of Alexandria who lived at the close of the second century: "For if people occupy their time with pipes, and psalteries, and choirs, and dances, and Egyptian clapping of hands, and such disorderly empty things, they become quite immodest and unmanageable, beat on cymbals and drums, and make a noise on instruments of delusion;..." "Let the pipe be resigned to the shepherds, and the flute to the superstitious who are engrossed in idolatry." "...and we must be on guard against whatever pleasure excites eye and ear, and effeminates..." "We no longer employ the ancient psaltery, and trumpet, and timbrel, and

flute..." "Colorful harmonies are therefore to be abandoned to immodest revels, and to ornamented and fleshy music."

Compare this with the modern "Christian" music. A steady rhythm that moves the flesh, sometimes accentuated by hand-clapping. A galore of musical instruments that please the ear. And a few "Christian words" tacked on; usually they can hardly be heard. The emotions are moved, but the spirits remain dry of anointing...

A HOLY BODY

We will round off the rest by a general term of the whole body. The nose desires sweet savors, the sense of touch lusts for a good sensation. Paul tells us in 1 Thessalonians that are bodies are for holiness, not for pleasure seeking. Fornication is sin for two reasons. It is a moral issue. It affects others' lives. But it breaks the first commandment, which is more important. Our bodies are for God's glory, not for our pleasure. But because fornication brings such intense pleasurable sensations, this sin is common to all unregenerate humanity. We have a bent to fulfill the desire for good feelings!

WHILE WE'RE HERE, LET'S TALK ABOUT PLEASURE

It is a common teaching that there is nothing wrong with pleasure. This is true, as explained above. But in view of the fact that this often equates into "nothing wrong with pleasure-seeking", a few verses are called for.

1 Timothy 5:6- A widow "that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." Strong words, understanding that from the original language, "liveth in pleasure" has the idea of one that seeks after it (more literally, one given to the pleasing of the senses), not one that happens to enjoy what God has given her. James 5:5 condemns the rich that live in pleasure. Jesus taught us in the parable of the sower that the "pleasures of this life" choke out spirituality. Titus

3:3 tells us we were "serving divers lusts (various desires) and pleasures.

Let us park here again for a moment. A very simple test you can give yourself, or anyone else, as to what they serve, is this: First, do not listen to what a person says they serve or do not serve. Many Christians are deceived in this. The mouth testimony is not always accurate. A 100% accurate test is this: When all the needs of the day have been met (eating, sleeping, working for necessities, not wants, etc.), in what do you spend the rest of your time? Working to buy some gadget? Playing games? Fasting? Reading novels? Helping a needy neighbor? Hobbies? Enlarging the kingdom of God?

Now, after you wrote this down, figure up how much was for self-pleasure, and how much was holiness unto the Lord. Are you serving God, or "divers desires and pleasures"? What you spend your free time in (Be honest with your NEEDS!), this is what you serve.

2 Timothy 3:4. Let's "park" here a little also. "Lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God." A common mentality seems to be "as long as love to God is greater than our love to pleasure (51% for God compared to 49% to pleasure), all is fine." There are two points to make now:

1. As has been explained, holiness unto the Lord is the same as "loving God with all (*all* equals 100%, doesn't it?) your heart, soul, mind, and strength. How much of our life is left to put into loving pleasure?
2. The phrase "more than" can be misleading. Several other reputable translations use "rather than". Strong's #3123 gives as its definition: "*more (in a greater degree) or rather*". Thayer's lexicon puts this verse under "*it is opposed to something else and does away with it; accordingly it may be rendered 'the rather'*", and he puts

it in the same sense as John 3:19 where men loved darkness rather than the light. (same Greek word).

So, is the KJV wrong? No, but we get a sense of what the phrase "more than" means. It means their love for God is replaced by a love for pleasure. It means if the choice comes to give themselves to some spiritual exercise, they will instead choose pleasure.

"From such turn away". Very powerful words. As I was saying, holiness unto the Lord is not to be tampered with. Not even for a little pleasure.

WHAT ARE WE TO ENJOY?

The same Paul that wrote to the same Timothy about loving pleasure rather than God had earlier told him that God "giveth us richly all things to enjoy". Sadly, this is taken out of context many times. What did God give us richly to enjoy? LSD and cocaine? Atomic bombs and machine guns? Of course not, but how about roses, and t-bone steaks, and classical music?

If you look, you will find six things listed immediately after this phrase:

1. doing good
2. good works
3. distributing your things
4. communicating (sharing)
5. treasuring up blessings for eternity
6. grasping hold of eternal life (God himself)

I realize it could be a debatable subject to insist that these are the things that Paul meant when he said "richly to enjoy". But consider that not one of these six things violates the principle of holiness. All are in contradiction to a self-centered life. **GO AHEAD AND**

INDULGE IN THESE SIX THINGS. GOD HAS GIVEN YOU AN OPPORTUNITY TO RICHLY ENJOY THEM!

A HOLY "Ego"

How can this be? Ego equals self. How can our "self" be holy? Our image that we leave behind us, and usually try to portray before us, is of equal importance to God as our outward actions. John calls it the pride of life. To the carnal man, his clothes, vehicle, and house need to speak. His position needs a name. He needs something to boost his ego; his image of himself. This needs to be sanctified. And the only way to sanctify it is to kill it.

Why is a reproof so hard to receive? Because our image has been marred; someone thinks we need help. Why do we not forgive? It feels good to our ego when we think in our mind just how we can tell so-and-so how wrong he is. Revenge is not only wrong because it is a moral issue; holiness unto the Lord forbids it. Because it often springs from the ego, and the desire (lust) we have to maintain an image. Yes, holiness affects our attitude. In fact, this section could be headed A HOLY ATTITUDE.

What Holiness Is Not

If you have ever read much of Finney's writings, you will find him addressing a subject by explaining what it is, and then directly explaining what it is not. I will try the same.

CONCERNING PURITY

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." This could be written, Blessed are the holy in heart. Thankfully, it does not say, Blessed are the pure in all details of life. Holiness starts in the heart and works out. You cannot start the Christian life without a pure heart. But you may start it in ignorance. Our ignorance may even be extreme; we may not know that adultery and

drunkenness are sin. In other words, our hearts have to be devoted 100% to God to enter the kingdom, even though our life is a mess. Purity is not outward perfection; that comes step by step. However, inward purity *is* a necessity.

CONCERNING SEPARATION

Separation from the world is not "being different from society". Holiness will make you different, but merely doing things differently than others around me does not equal holiness. Since everyone else wears their shirt with the buttons in the front, am I now holy if I wear mine backwards? No! Separation from the world is separation from the carnal desires within humanity. But if you do live a holy life, separated to live for God, believe me, *you will be different!*

Separated to What?

I have learned a little trick in eating watermelon. Usually we start eating the heart first, and finish with the part closest to the rind, which is usually a bit less tasty. Somewhere along the line I started cutting out a section of the heart, and laying it aside until all the rest was done. Then, I finish with the heart. Here is the "heart" of holiness unto the Lord.

If you remember the first verse I quoted, it was Leviticus 20:26. Here it is again:

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.

The whole reason for holiness is contained in this one precious phrase of five words: let them sink in. **That ye should be mine.**

God loves the human race. He loves each one of us in particular. He longs for a special spirit-to-spirit relationship with all of us, individually, and by a miracle of oneness, corporately. But we are

born with a nature absolutely contrary to His. They cannot be mixed. Just as you cannot mix fire and ice and retain both, God and the carnal man cannot dwell together. And God cannot change. So, we have a problem.

That problem has been remedied, in part, by the death and resurrection of Jesus. He died to pay our death penalty that we deserved. He rose again to conquer our enemies. And He has gained the victory. The power of sin in the natural man has been conquered. The kingdom of God has come.

If you noticed, the first sentence of the last paragraph said "in part". The part that is missing is each individual person's part to accept and believe this. Believing this, and accepting this, means something. It means a recognition that my heart is contrary to the heart of God. I have been living in the pursuit of my own desires. And I need to turn.

This turning is called repentance. It is a surrender of the will to the lordship of Christ, loving Him with 100% of my heart. It is an acceptance to submitting oneself to the commandments of God—holiness to Him, and charity to my neighbor.

Why do we need to be holy? Because He is, and to be joined to Him we have to be also. He desires to separate us from our own ways, and the ways of those around us, not because He desires to make life miserable for us. But listen again to the reason God calls us to repentance, to turn *from* ourselves and turn *to* consecrating 100% of ourselves to Him, creator of all things:

That ye should be Mine!

Will you do it?

-Mike Atnip