

Wholly to the Lord

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The Holy Bible. The Holy Place. The Holy Spirit. The Holy One. We don't have any trouble understanding what holiness means when it is ascribed to these things or Persons. But what about when the Scripture says, "like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves" (1 Pet. 1:15)? How can I be holy?

"Holy" means separate and "other than." The call to be holy involves the understanding that God has separated us from sin and consecrated us exclusively for His use. We are "set apart" and holy to the Lord. What is a "saint" but one who has been "sanctified"? There are attributes of our Father's deity that we cannot imitate: His omnipotence, His omniscience, His omnipresence. But we can be holy as He is holy. He commands such.

Life is full of decisions. Every day, we make choices about what we will say, what we will do, and where we will go. When faced with some difficulty or temptation this week, ask yourself a very simple question: "Will this help me be holy?"

Holy in thought. "Gird your minds for action" (1 Pet. 1:13). To "gird" something is to make it so there are no hindrances. This speaks to being prepared, a concept that went back to the night of the Passover Feast in Egypt. When Jesus said, "Be dressed in readiness" (Luke 12:35), that literally says, "let your loins be girded." This starts with preparing your mind.

Being holy in thought is to be single-minded. "Fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1:13). Our minds need to be focused and concentrated, eliminating any obstacle that hinders our goal of holiness. When we consider our entertainment choices, we often justify watching certain things so long as we don't participate in them. But will letting your mind dwell on what is unholy help you be holy in thought? Even if all we have on is the 24-hour news cycle, is that going to help you fix your hope completely where it needs to be?

Holy in speech. "Keep sober in spirit" (1 Pet. 1:13). We usually think of soberness as the opposite of drunkenness, but this is sobriety of spirit. To be sober in spirit is to be self-controlled or self-restrained, to be "in possession of your senses." You are free from rashness or passion out of control; instead, you are balanced and temperate. That will have an effect on what you say.

Does your speech betray you? At the trial of Jesus, Peter was identified as being with the Lord when one of the bystanders said, "the way you talk makes you evident" (Matt. 26:73). The way we talk needs to make it evident that our desire is to be holy. When someone is rude or angry, remember to ask yourself this question before you respond:

“will this help be holy?” And there are some words, though they are not recognized as “cuss” words, that are just unholy.

Holy in dress. “Do not be conformed to the former lusts” (1 Pet. 1:14). Conformed here literally means “not fashioning yourselves.” God is to be our pattern, not the world. He calls us to be holy “as I am holy.” As Paul wrote in Romans 12:1-2, we are not to be conformed to the world, but to be transformed.

These former lust were “yours in ignorance” (1:14). There was a time when the Gentiles were not exposed to the gospel. Now, they knew better. In the same way, we now understand the standard of holiness and should fashion ourselves accordingly. Just ask: “Can I wear this and still be holy?” Or even, “Can I wear this and help other people be holy?” If not, you need to change clothes.

Holy in conduct. “Be holy yourselves also in all your behavior” (1:15). That is also translated “in all manner of living” (KJV) and “in all you do” (NIV). Does that leave anything out? Does that not cover every day of the week and every circumstance of life?

“Conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay upon the earth” (1:17). A “sojourn” was a stay a traveler made in one place while on his way home. We would not be so concerned with fitting in with the world if we would remember that we are not staying here. A vagabond has no home. A fugitive is running away from home. A pilgrim is going home.

One day, you will stand before the Almighty God who is holy, holy, holy. Why not prepare by being holy and wholly to the Lord?
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