Called to be Holy

1 Peter 1:14 – 16; 2 Peter 1:5 – 8

As I was pulling together my ideas for a sermon, the thought of holiness kept popping into my mind. When I was young in my faith I thought, “Wow! Holiness…that’s huge. That’s for spiritual giants like Moses and Peter. There’s no way I can be as awesome as them!” So what is holiness and how are we supposed to do this? The most basic and literal meaning of holiness is “being set apart”. Holiness is the condition of being set apart, being removed from all that is sinful or worldly. J.I. Packer puts it this way, “Holiness means not only desiring God, but also loving and practicing righteousness, out of a constant exercise of conscience to discern right from wrong and an ardent purpose of doing all that one can to please God.” So let’s look first at why we need to be holy and then some steps to take for holy living.

1. Why do we need to be holy?
   1. Because God commands it -
      1. 1 Peter 1:14 – 16 - 14As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. 15But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; 16for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”
      2. God commands it. Over and over throughout the Word of God we are told to flee immorality, to flee wickedness, to pursue that which is righteous and good and to be holy.
   2. Because our God is holy
      1. [Leviticus 19:2](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+19:2&version=NIV) “Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: ‘Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy.
      2. Our Father in heaven wants us to be identified as His children. He wants others to know Him through what we say and do.
   3. Because our world is watching us
      1. 1 Peter 2:12 (ESV) “Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so than when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.”
      2. As a Christian, you are an ambassador of God in this world. The world is watching us. They are watching to see if what we say matches what we do. We should walk a life that glorifies God.
      3. D.L. Moody – “A holy life will make the deepest impression. Lighthouses blow no horns, they just shine.”
2. Seven characteristics for a holy life- Supplements for a holy life
   1. Live a holy life by adding goodness
      1. According to the NT, goodness is the attitude which the Christian is to maintain in all circumstances
      2. The practical issue of goodness is the kind of person you are becoming in character and conduct – much to do with the human heart
   2. Live a holy life by adding knowledge
      1. Knowledge of God and His will for us
      2. Christians are challenged to stretch and expand their knowledge not only through study, but through learning from daily experience
   3. Live a holy life by developing self-control
      1. We can be overtaken by our own lusts and passions – eating, drinking, working
      2. For the Christian, self-control comes from submission to the control of the indwelling Christ. Peter honestly noted the necessity to restrain our sinful impulses and wayward thoughts that interrupt spiritual progress. We can do this through the grace of God.
   4. Live a holy life by the means of endurance
      1. Perseverance in the face of trial and disappointment packs power. Life is not a short sprint to the finish but a marathon.
      2. Holy living means patiently keeping on in the service of Christ regardless of what life may bring our way. The more you continue in the Christian life, the more holiness happens
   5. Another quality is godliness
      1. Godliness implies devoutness, piety, fear of God. It involves reverence and awe of God.
      2. It is related to the experience of worship and attentiveness to the holiness of God.
   6. Live a holy life by developing brotherly affection
      1. Do you feel so close to other believers that you think of them as sisters and brothers? That is what they are you know.
      2. Brotherly fondness for a new Christian or feel deep respect and love for one who is your big brother or sister in the faith.
      3. You may become concerned about a backsliding Christian brother or sister.
   7. Learn to be holy by adding love
      1. Christian love has a universal extent.
      2. Paul prayed for his brothers and sisters in Thessalonica, “May the Lord make your love for one another and for all people grow more and more and become as great as our love for you,” (1 Thes. 3:12)
      3. Christian love includes love of neighbor and even love of enemy.
      4. Jesus perfectly exemplified what it means to love others, even those who are enemies.

Conclusion: We are God’s children and are bound together by His love for each and every one of us. We are the people of God and we are to be an example of the presence of God to the rest of the world. We have been called to be different and we are called to be holy. Let us remember why God has called us to holiness and think about it throughout the week. Let us be a light and a beacon for those lost without Jesus Christ.

It is not what men eat, but what they digest that makes them strong  
Not what we gain, but what we save that makes us rich  
Not what we read, but what we remember that makes us learned  
Not what we preach or pray, but what we practice and believe that makes us Christians

– Francis Bacon

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. (2 Thess. 3:18)