



Different from the World

Understanding Personal Holiness

God is concerned about the behavior of His people. After our conversion we are to grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord. (2 Peter 3:18) We should look for ways to please Him every day. We are supremely blessed. We have been "made holy" by the perfect sacrifice of Jesus. (1 Corinthians 6:11; 2 Corinthians 5:21). Out of deep gratitude for this unearned favor of God we should do all we can to completely surrender our lives to Him. Who can look at the undeserved forgiveness we have received and not be compelled from within to want to please Christ?

Understanding Holiness or Sanctification

The words "holy," "holiness," "sanctified," and "sanctification" are related. They all come from the same root word that means "separated" or "set apart." Under the Old Testament Law the utensils used in the preparation of animal sacrifices had to be holy. They were cleansed and set apart for specific use in the temple worship. They were no longer involved in common use. They were holy or sanctified. A Christian is holy or sanctified in that he/she is cleansed and "set apart" from sin and for God's use. We are instructed in the New Testament that this has taken place and that we have an obligation to remain holy.

1. According to 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, the Corinthian Christians had been washed and sanctified (set apart) from what?

2. What is it that makes such sanctification of Christians possible? (Hebrews 10:10)

3. If it cost the life of God's Son to sanctify us (set us apart from the evil of the world so that we can be acceptable to Him) would it make sense for a Christian to heedlessly rush back into the practice of evil?

4. How does 1 Thessalonians 4:3 relate to this?

5. According to 1 Corinthians 1:2 and Acts 26:18, is sanctification referred to as a finished act or something that is continuing to happen? (Note the tense: "...have been sanctified....")

The Bible indicates that sanctification is something done at our conversion. But there is another sense in which we are to be holy or sanctified.

6. According to 1 Peter 1:15, we are to be holy in what other part of our lives?

7. From Hebrews 12:14 we learn that we are to pursue what two things?

8. Is this pursuit of sanctification mentioned in Hebrews 12:14 optional for the Christian?

The New Testament speaks of both a sanctification which we already have in Christ before God and a sanctification we are to strive for. The sanctification we already have is the righteousness of Christ that was conferred on us when we first obeyed the gospel. It was purchased by His death on the cross. We did not earn it. The sanctification or holiness we are to strive for is a personal, practical holiness. It is striving to bring our lives into conformity with what God has made us. We could say that God has set us apart - now we need to act like it! The pursuit of practical holiness is not optional. (See your answers above.)

Set Apart from What?

1. We learned from 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 some of the things from which we are set apart. Reproduce that list in the space below:

2. A similar list is found in Galatians 5:19-21. Reproduce that list in the space below:

3. What words in Galatians 5:19-21 indicate that this is not a complete list?

We are saved from our sins through the blood of Christ. Now God wants us to strive to live apart from sin.

New Testament Principles that Guide Our Behavior

The Bible doesn't catalog every sin from which we are to separate ourselves. Such a list would be cumbersome and impractical. Also, since man is an "inventor of evil" (See Romans 1:30) such a list in a finished book like the Bible would be incomplete. Rather than a book of lists, the New Testament is largely a book of principles that help us decide between right and wrong in any age. The following principles are distilled from New Testament teaching. There are more to be found with careful study. They will help you begin to learn about proper Christian behavior.

1. IS THE ACTIVITY RIGHT IN ITSELF? (1 Thessalonians 5:22; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21) If an activity or behavior is forbidden by name it is wrong for the Christian.

2. WILL IT HARM ME OR OTHERS PHYSICALLY? (1 Corinthians 6:19-20) As a Christian I can no longer say, "It's my body. I'll do with it as I please!" I now belong to Christ.

3. WILL IT HARM ME SPIRITUALLY? (Hebrews 3:12-13) Sin is deceitful. It will dull my appetite for spiritual things. Be honest here. Don't fall into the trap of thinking you can handle something when you are actually in danger.

4. WILL IT PUT ME IN WITH THOSE WHO WILL DRAG ME DOWN? (1 Corinthians 15:33) Others will influence us in close association. We should find our primary companionship among those who will build us up. Associations should be pursued cautiously.

5. WILL IT HURT MY INFLUENCE FOR CHRIST? (Romans 2:24; 1 Peter 2:12, 15; 3:16; 2 Corinthians 8:21; Philippians 2:15) People will watch and notice things we do far sooner than things we say. Will involvement in this behavior or activity bring reproach on Christ or His people?

6. WILL IT CAUSE SOMEONE TO STUMBLE? (Romans 14:13; 1 Corinthians 8:7-13; Matthew 18:6-7) I *am* my brother's keeper when it comes to stumbling blocks. God is not pleased with I do something that causes another who is weaker to sin.

7. DO I HAVE DOUBTS ABOUT IT? (Romans 14:23) God has left us no other alternative in doubtful areas but to avoid them. That is always the safest course.

8. DOES IT HAVE AS ITS ROOT THE LOVE OF MONEY? (1 Timothy 6:10) The love of money has ruined many.

9. IS IT A WASTE OF TIME? (Ephesians 5:15-16) As stewards or caretakers of what belongs to another we will one day give an account of how we used what we are given.

10. CAN IT BE DONE IN THE NAME OF JESUS? (Colossians 3:17) Would Jesus sanction this if He were present? (He is!)

We have this life to show God by our faithfulness where we wish to live eternally. These issues, and others like them, ought to be the concern of every Christian. They will affect how we live, how we treat others, what recreational activities we choose, what habits we make and keep, how we dress, how we spend our time, the friends we choose, an other areas of our lives. Be sure to make choices that will please God.