



Teaching God's Word to Train Disciples

Fellowship BIBLE CHURCH

Audio of Pastor Don Griffin's sermons is available at
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Unless you live under a dark rock, it should be very obvious to you that our nation has some real problems that seem to have no good answer. We have come a long way away from leave it to beaver, I love Lucy or bonanza. What has taken us from a time when our streets were relatively safe, where businesses were basically honest and a man's word was his bond? How did we get to where we are? Is it the media's fault? Is it the democrats or the republicans that have brought us to where we are?

The biggest problem we face today is that our nation has turned its back on that God who raised it

up. In fact, many of us have forgotten who God really is.

Several years ago Life Magazine devoted an issue to God. On the front cover was one big question: "When You Think of God What Do You See?"

If that magazine came out today, how would we, here in America, answer that question?

I believe there are some people who see a god who looks like Santa Claus, and really doesn't care whether we are naughty or nice.

If we ever hope to come out of the moral catastrophe that we're in today, we will have to learn to relate to God as God is, not as we think that he is.

Last week, we began this study by learning to relate to God as he is as creator. We saw that God is an eternal being who without effort created all that is

Today, I want us to learn how to relate to God as he is in his holiness.

We have lost sight of a God who is all powerful, all knowing and completely holy, and we have replaced him with a God whose word to us is more like fatherly advice than it is the word of a sovereign Creator.

As much as anything else, American needs a fresh vision of God. Once you understand him to be who he is, you will not and cannot ever be the same again.

GOD'S HOLINESS

A DEFINITION OF HOLINESS

Exodus 15:11, "Who among the gods is like you, O LORD? Who is like you— majestic in holiness, awesome in glory; working wonders?"

Psalms 111:9, "He provided redemption for his people; he ordained his covenant forever—holy and awesome is his name."

Writers say that holiness is the most difficult part of God to define because it deals with the essence of God's character. In other words, defining holiness is like defining God! It can't be done completely. Sanctification and "holiness" both mean to be "set apart."

1. Holiness refers to anything that is "set apart" for God

That's why we call Israel the Holy Land because it is the land he chose for his own people. The angels are holy angels because they belong to God. And when Moses stood before the burning bush, he was told to

Learning to Relate to God

Holiness

Part 2

purposely and perfectly.

take off his shoes because he was standing on "holy ground"-ground that God had set apart for himself.

2. Holiness refers to the fact that God separates Himself from certain things

Something that is holy is completely pure and separated from sin.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-8, "It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; 4that each of you should learn to control his own body] in a way that is holy and honorable, 5not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; 6and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. 7For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. 8Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit."

I have a baseball in my closet that is signed by players on the Cleveland Indians baseball team in about 1964. That baseball is "set apart" from other baseballs in that it will never be used to play baseball with. Paul says that your body is like that. Your body is never to be used for certain things because it belongs to God.

AN ILLUSTRATION OF GOD'S HOLINESS

Isaiah 6:1, "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple."

The year was 739 BC. If you are wondering "was that an important year?" Well, it was if you were King Uzziah! Uzziah was one of the greatest kings of Judah. Because he honored God, God blessed him with a reign of prosperity. There were two chariots in every garage and a turkey over every fireplace. King Uzziah won every war he fought because the good hand of God was upon him.

Uzziah died, but God was still on the throne. God's throne was high and exalted which means that it is

greater than all other thrones. The train of His robe filled the temple.

Some of you remember the wedding of Diana and Prince Charles. Diana's train was so long that there were people there to carry the train of her dress! Why? It is a symbol of royalty. The train of God filled the entire temple! His glory far surpasses anything we can imagine.

At his side were angels.

Isaiah 6:2-3, "Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. 3 And they were calling to one another: "Holy; holy; holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory: "

If God says something about his character once, that's enough to settle it. When he says it twice, that's emphasis. But when he says it three times, that means it's of supreme importance.

Seven out of every twelve references to the name of God in the Old Testament refer to Him as holy.

Holiness is God's primary characteristic, and until you begin with the holiness of God, you will never understand any of the other attributes of God the way they really are.

For example, you may hear someone justify something that he is doing by referring to God's love.

The argument goes this way, "I know that what I'm doing is not wrong because God loves me, and he would not take away something that makes me happy." The problem with that is the God's love will never contradict his holiness.

Someone else may say, God loves people too much to send them to hell." The problem with that is the fact that God's holiness demands justice. Holiness is God's primary characteristic.

OUR CALL TO HOLINESS

1 Peter 1:13-16, "13Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. 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: "

How do we become holy?

1. MEDITATE ON GOD'S HOLINESS

Isaiah 6:4, "the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty."

To his peers Isaiah was a man of unquestioned integrity and righteousness, but when he caught a glimpse of the Holy God, he understood his own guilt.

The Hebrew word for "ruined" means to come apart at the seams. Isaiah had been totally exposed for who he was and what he was before the gaze of a holy God.

Few people would be convicted by thinking about the kind of God we have created in our own minds, but when you think about the true God as he is, you can't help but be convicted.

When the Apostle Peter came in contact with the holy Christ, he said "depart from me lord because I am a sinful man."

2. GUARD YOUR THOUGHT LIFE

2 Corinthians 7:1, Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God."

Verse 1 makes it very clear that sin contaminates.

The word "contaminates" means to stain, defile, to pollute.

We have a pond in our back yard. It's full of green "growy" kinds of stuff.

Frogs, fish and insects of various kinds live in that pond. Raccoons, stray cats and who knows what else drink from its water.

What if you were visiting at our house, and you asked for a drink of water. In reply, I said, "sure." I picked up a glass, went outside and scooped up a glass of that pond water and brought it to you to

drink? Would you drink that water? You wouldn't drink that water because it has been contaminated.

That's what sin does to your life. It contaminates it.

How can my life become contaminated? It all starts with what you think.

Such sins as adultery, fornication, theft, murder and all the rest don't just happen. You don't just get out of bed one day and stop by the bank on the way to work and rob it. The seeds for robbing that bank have been growing in your mind.

Jesus taught us in the Sermon on the Mount that is not enough to not do the wrong thing, we must avoid thinking the wrong thoughts.

It's not enough that we don't kill someone. We must also not hate them.

It is not enough to not commit adultery; we must not entertain lustful thoughts.

All true holiness begins in your mind. God wants your life to be a glass of crystal clear spring water to be offered to those who need Christ. In order for that to happen, you have to learn to think right because holiness begins with the way you think. The following are some insights on how to think right.

a) DON'T BE SORRY-BE REPENTANT

2 Corinthians 7:8-10, "Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while—yet now I am happy; not because you were made sorry; but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. 10 Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death."

The scripture here speaks of two ways you can be sorry for what you've done wrong.

Worldly sorrow is really nothing more than remorse.

After Judas had betrayed to Christ, he went down and hung himself. His sorrow for what he did was great, but that does not mean that he repented.

Worldly sorrow simply means that you're sorry for how things turned out; it does not mean that you would do it any different if you had it to do over again.

There was a time when I was growing up when I did not pay much attention to my schoolwork-I just wanted to have fun. As a result, my parents grounded me for the next six weeks, and I was really, really sorry, but I was not sorry that I had not studied as I should. I was sorry that I was grounded. That is worldly sorrow.

Godly sorrow, on the other hand, is a true turning away from the sin you have committed. You are sorry that you have offended God, and you want to be right with him.

b) DON'T JUST RESIST-REPLACE

How do you overcome sinful thoughts that just don't want to go away?

You might think you need to resist those thoughts, and to some degree, that is true.

The problem with resisting temptation is that you have to think about it in order to resist it, and the more you think about it, the more you are tempted to do it.

The more you think about it, the more you have an appetite for it.

The best way to eliminate sinful thoughts is to replace those thoughts with Godly ones.

If you're filled with worry and doubt, memorize scriptures concerning God's faithfulness and replace the sinful worrying with thoughts about God's faithfulness. Don't just resist - replace.

c) DON'T SETTLE FOR THE ACCEPTABLE- PURSUE THE BEST

Many Christians are afflicted with what can be called "cultural holiness." They adapt to the character and behavior pattern of Christians around them.

As the Christian culture around them declines in holiness, so do they. But God has not called us to be like those around us. He is called us to be like himself, and that means to be separate from sin.

2 Corinthians 7:1, "Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God."

Look at the words, "perfecting holiness out of reverence for God." The standard is not what is acceptable to the Christian world in the U.S.A. The standard is perfection.

I am amazed and very concerned about Christians who want to live on the edge.

A person who is striving for holiness is not trying to see how much he can get by with. He is trying to rather to see how close he can get to God's standard.

Instead of trying to see how close you can get to the flame without being burned, why not do everything you can to stay away from the fire.

There are certain people that you may have to stay away from, certain places you can't go and certain things you can't do. Why? Because doing those things bring you too close to the flame.

Over 200 years ago, Susannah Wesley wrote, "Whatever increases the strength and authority of your body over your mind-that thing is sin for you."

d) PRAY THAT GOD WILL HELP YOU TO SEE HIM AS HE IS

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord
Open the eyes of my heart
I want to see You, I want to see You

To see You high and lifted up
Shining in the light of Your glory
Pour out Your power and love
As we sing holy, holy, holy

As I said in the beginning, we need to have a new understanding of who God really is.

He is not Santa Claus, and he does care whether we've been naughty or nice.

The irony of this whole thing is that people are living unholy lives in order to try to be happy. The problem with that sin does not make you permanently happy.

Sin brings long-term brokenness to your life. It is holiness that brings wholeness and happiness.

A.W.Tozer once prayed: "Oh God, time is running, flying like a frightened bird. The bird of time is on the wing and has a little way to flutter. The wine of life is oozing drop by drop, and the leaves of life are falling one by one. Soon, every man must appear to give an account for the deeds done in the body. Oh, Father, keep upon us a sense of holiness that we can't sin and excuse it, but that repentance will be as deep as our lives. This we ask in Christ's name. Amen."