

Jesus on the Inside, Working on the Outside

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation”
(Acts 2:40).

Immediately following the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost we are admonished to separate ourselves from this wicked generation. The preaching of the Gospel requires repentance, remission of sins, and the infilling of the Holy Spirit. This is followed by living a life of holiness and separation from the world as we wait on the soon coming of Jesus Christ. The writer of Hebrews encourages us to, “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14).

What is Holiness?

Holiness is considered to be separation from sin and the world, and to be dedicated to God, set apart for Him. Separation is moving away from worldliness and moving toward holiness. We are not to love the world, identify with it, become attached to its things, or participate in its sinful pleasures (James 4:4; James 1:27).

Holiness causes us to have the desire “To Be Like Jesus.” Our mind begins to think, “I want to be like Jesus.”

Jesus looks for holiness in our lives. In the days He walked on the earth, the Pharisees expressed their supposed holiness by keeping 248 commandments and 365 prohibitions. Jesus called us to a greater righteousness, living a life of purity and faith that goes beyond the bondage of legalism. Holiness cannot be measured by a long list of do’s and don’ts.

How Can We Identify Holiness and Worldliness?

How can you identify those things that are of the world and not take part?

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 John 2:15-16).

How to Judge?

When we receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit we realize Jesus Christ comes inside. “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27).

We can judge whether an activity is holy or not by asking the question, “What would Jesus do?” Since Jesus is living on the inside we must allow Him to influence each area of our lives. When He comes inside there are changes that must be made both on the inside and outside. We will not look the same. We will not act the same. We will not speak the same. Things become different.

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are” (1 Corinthians 3:16-17).

Our physical temple (body) is important since God dwells inside.

“I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; saith the Lord, and I will receive you” (2 Corinthians 6:16-17).

Lois Blanchard Eades has been circulating a poem that has stimulated Christians for years. It asks a question, “What would you do if Jesus came to your house?”

“When you saw Him coming,
Would you meet Him at the door,
With arms outstretched to welcome your Heavenly Visitor?
Or would you have to change your clothes before you let Him in?
Or hide some magazines, and put the Bible where they would have been?
Would you hide your worldly music and put some hymnbooks out?
Could you let Jesus right in, or would you rush about?
And I wonder if the Savior spent a day or two with you,
Would you go right on doing the things you always do?
Would you go right on saying the things you always say?
Would life for you continue as it does from day to day?
Would you take Jesus with you everywhere you’d planned to go?
Or would you maybe change your plans for just a day or so?
Would you be glad to have Him meet your closest friends?
Or would you sigh with great relief when He, at last was gone?
It might be interesting to know the things that you would do,
If Jesus came in person to spend some time with you.”

The Bible presents general principles that permit us to determine the rightness or wrongness of actions (even those not mentioned in the Bible).

We can ask the following questions:

1. "Can it be done for the glory of God? (1 Corinthians 10:31).
2. Can it be done "in the name of the Lord Jesus" asking His blessing on the activity? (John 14:13).
3. Can it be done while sincerely giving thanks to God?
4. Is it a Christlike action? (1 John 2:6).
5. Will it weaken the sincere convictions of other Christians? (1 Corinthians 8:10-11).
6. Will it weaken my desire for spiritual things, God's Word, and prayer? (Luke 8:14; Matthew 5:6).
7. Will it weaken or hinder my witness for Christ? (Matthew 5:13-16)" (Author Unknown).

From Holiness Back to Worldliness

In the Old Testament we find the story of Abraham's nephew, Lot. As we study we can see the steps he made into worldliness. Sodom is a type of the world.

1. He looked at Sodom (Genesis 13:10).
2. He chose the land near Sodom (Genesis 13:11).
3. He pitched his tent toward Sodom (Genesis 13:12).
4. Moved into Sodom (Genesis 14:12).
5. Became like Sodom (Genesis 19).

Study Questions

1. According to Acts 2:40, what are we admonished to do? Explain. _____

2. What does Hebrews 12:14 encourage us to do? _____

3. What is "holiness"? _____

4. What is "separation"? _____

5. Holiness causes us to have a desire to be like who? _____

6. Pharisees felt they were doing "holiness" through keeping what? _____

7. How can we identify those things that are part of the world? _____

8. How can we judge an activity to see if it is good to take part in? _____

9. What are some of the general Bible principles that help us determine whether something is right or wrong? _____

10. What are the steps Lot took to move toward worldliness rather than separation? _____

Additional Notes
