

The Path to Righteousness – A “Holiness” Highway

(Adapted from *Path to Righteousness* by Linda Poitras)

“And an highway shall be there, and a way; and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those; the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein” (Isaiah 35:8).

Introduction

Now that we understand the plan of salvation and have obeyed it, we are no longer searching for the *Path TO Righteousness*. We can walk on the *Path OF Righteousness* .

It is no simple thing to follow the *Path of Righteousness*, living righteously in an unrighteous world. The child of God must appear blameless and harmless in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation. “*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ*” (Titus 2:11-13).

We must:

- Deny ungodliness (a pagan-like disregard of God in thought and action)
- Deny worldly lusts (a strong desire and passion for things of this present world)
- Live soberly (seriously considering the laws/commands of God’s Word)
- Live righteously (doing things in a right way as identified by the Bible)
- Live godly (according to the plan of God)

All should be done in this present world, as we carefully prepare and look for the return of our Savior. What is the thing that teaches us all this? The Grace of God. God has equipped us so we will be able to do it with His salvation and grace. His Spirit in us gives us hope: “*To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory*” (Colossians 1:27).

What is this righteousness, this holiness we need before we shall see God? *The Webster’s Encyclopedic Dictionary* defines holiness as:

- 1) The quality or state of being dedicated for spiritual use.
- 2) The state of being spiritually perfect or pure, untainted by evil or sin.

This holiness refers to separation from the world and sin, and dedication to God.

What is the Purpose of Holiness?

There are three basic purposes for a life of holiness:

- 1) To please God (1 Peter 2:9),
- 2) To communicate Christ to others (Matthew 5:16; 2 Corinthians 3:2-3), and
- 3) To benefit ourselves both now and in eternity (Hebrews 12:14).

Why is Holiness Necessary?

Since the Lord God is holy and perfect, He demands holiness and perfection from all who come to Him.

Old Testament Call To Holiness

- 📖 He said to Abraham in Genesis 17:16: *“I am the Almighty God; walk before me and be thou perfect.”* To the children of Israel after they had come out of Egypt (a type of sin and slavery) He demanded holiness of them saying: *“Sanctify yourselves therefore and be ye holy; for I am the Lord your God”* (Leviticus 20:7).
- 📖 In the Old Testament, after God had reaffirmed His covenant with Abraham and the children of Israel, He decided to live among His people.
 - He demanded an offering (a sacrifice) from the people and a sanctuary (a holy place) for Him to dwell in (Exodus 25:1-2, 8-9).
 - Moses prepared this sanctuary according to the pattern and materials God had revealed to him so God could live among His people (Exodus 40:33-35).
 - During their wandering in the wilderness, the Lord again spoke of dwelling with His people, this time not in the tabernacle or in the temple made by hands as in King Solomon’s day (1 Kings 8:10-11; 2 Chronicles 7:15-16), but with human flesh and using the human body as His temple (Joel 2:28).

New Testament Call to Holiness

- 📖 In Acts 17:24, Paul preached to the people of Athens on Mars Hill, and he said this about the temple dwelling place of God: *“God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands.”*
- 📖 In the Old Testament, when God dwelt among the children of Israel, He gave Moses the plan for building the Tabernacle. Today, in the building not made with hands, God still has a plan – just any old way will not do. Paul, in his writings to the church at Corinth, said: *“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).
- 📖 Peter, in his epistle to the church in general, spoke of this also: *“But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy”* (1 Peter 1:15-16).

The preparation of the body as a sanctuary or temple, and the dedicating of it for the Lord's use, is what the Bible calls "holiness."

Preparation of the Body

It was important in the construction of the Tabernacle that the outer covering was properly arranged. This made it possible for the inner furniture to fulfill God's intended purpose.

It is the same with the preparation of the body as God's dwelling place: both inward and outward preparation is necessary. The Psalmist David understood this when he wrote: *"Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation"* (Psalm 24:3-5).

Inward Preparation – This involves a change of heart, or repentance.

- 📖 It is forsaking sin and never going back to it again. *"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon"* (Isaiah 55:7).
- 📖 It is giving oneself to baptism in Jesus' name for the washing away of one's sins: *"To him gave all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins"* (Acts 10:43).
- 📖 It is yielding to God's Spirit as He comes to live in our hearts: *"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin"* (Romans 6:3-6).
- 📖 Paul in his letter to the church at Ephesus had this to say: *"That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish"* (Ephesians 5:26-27).

With repentance and baptism, the inner part of the body is prepared as God's dwelling place. The Holy Ghost, by faith, can now reside in this temple.

"That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God" (Ephesians 3:16-19).

But holiness does not end here.

Outward Preparation – We all like to eat delicious food, prepared and arranged beautifully so that we enjoy looking at it before we eat it. Who will eat a beautiful meal that is served out of a chamber pot (toilet bowl)?

The body, as the temple of God, should be seen in a way that reveals the attitude of God. Thus, the outward preparation of the body is important. This outward preparation involves the transformation of the individual from his old ways of life. Paul said: *“I beseech (beg) you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God”* (Romans 12:1-2).

What is “this world” that we should not conform to? The Apostle John, in his first epistle (1 John 2:16) defines the world as:

- The lust of the flesh
- The lust of the eye
- The pride of life

John made it a point to emphasize that whoever has his love in these things has no love of God in him. *“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. And the world passeth away; and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever”* (1 John 2:15-17).

Given these Scriptures and an understanding that friendship with the “world” is enmity (hatred) of God (James 4:4), there are seven questions you should ask yourself before you begin to do, say, think or enjoy any questionable activity:

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

The Reason for Holiness Standards – Standards are supposed to protect us in one or more of these areas. A standard is a fixed rule or measure that is established by authority. God has never wanted His people to be frustrated about what will or will not please Him. So He has

given us some biblical principles which have been applied throughout the centuries of time and still apply today.

📖 We have already learned that in this present day, our bodies are the temple of the Lord. What are we supposed to do with His temple? Paul wrote the Corinthian church in 2 Corinthians 6:16-18; 7:1 and explained it like this: *“And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, 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; and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”*

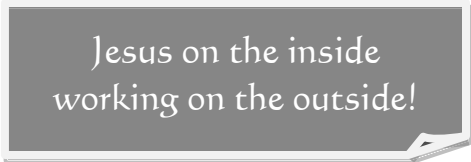
- 📖 The life of holiness is a continual striving for perfection (Philippians 3:12-17). No one is perfect. But we are holy if we:
- Place our faith in Christ,
 - Live a repented life according to God’s Word, and
 - Seek to grow progressively more Christ-like by the power of the indwelling Spirit.

God expects continued growth in grace and knowledge and increasing production of spiritual fruit (2 Peter 3:18).

📖 We may not be perfect, but we are supposed to be walking on a road that leads to heaven – a straight and narrow, holy road. The prophet Isaiah said: *“And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein”* (Isaiah 35:8).

Conclusion

Why is “Path of Righteousness” a special path? It is the road where God walks, leading us to heaven, our eternal home. God knew we wouldn’t be able to walk a holy walk without His help, so He provided all we need in the Comforter He sent us – that Comforter who works inside of us to make us holy, like He is.



Study Questions

1. According to Titus 2:11-13, what four (4) things must we do to walk on the Path of Righteousness?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____

4) _____

2. What one (1) thing teaches us all of this about life in this present world? _____

3. How does *Webster's Encyclopedic Dictionary* define holiness? _____

4. This holiness refers to _____ from the world and _____, and
_____ TO _____.

5. List (with Scripture reference) the three (3) basic purposes for a life of holiness.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

6. Why is holiness necessary? _____

7. Quote the Scripture (with reference) for each of the following examples of God's call to holiness as found in the Old Testament.

1) God said to Abraham: _____

2) God said to the children of Israel after they had come out of Egypt (a type of sin and slavery): _____

3) During their wandering in the wilderness, the Lord again spoke of dwelling with His people, this time not in the tabernacle or in the temple made by hand as in King Solomon's Day, but with human flesh and using the human body as his temple: _____

8. Quote the Scripture (with reference) for each of the following examples of the New Testament's call to holiness.

1) Paul, in his writings to the church at Corinth, said: _____

2) Peter, in his epistle to the church in general, spoke of this also: _____

9. Explain what David was talking about in Psalm 24:3-5. _____

10. List (with Scripture reference) the three (3) things involved in inward preparation of the body as God's dwelling place.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

11. The outward preparation of the body (as God's dwelling place) involves _____ of the individual from his old _____ of _____.

12. List the three (3) things defined in 1 John 2:16 as "this world."

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

13. List the seven (7) questions you should ask yourself before you begin to do, say, think or enjoy anything. Support your answer with Scripture if possible.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

6) _____

7) _____

14. Explain and define holiness standards. _____

15. Give a brief explanation for how each of the following verses provide reasons for a need of holiness standards.

1) Isaiah 35:8 _____

2) 2 Corinthians 6:16-18; 7:1 _____

3) Philippians 3:12-17 _____

4) 2 Peter 3:18 _____

Additional Notes