

The movement of these studies from the beginning to where we have come is meant to move along a path of meaningful progression. I want us to keep this path in perspective as we move forward. The path starts with a holy God and sinful people. God saves sinners from the punishment that they deserve and from the corruption in which they languish. He justifies and sanctifies. He saves people to be holy in life as they are holy in position before him. It is by being united with Christ that believers have been sanctified and enabled to be increasingly holy in life. Sin is no longer master over those in Christ; they are alive to God and able to make progress in godliness. Nevertheless, the presence of the flesh means a battle continues to rage, and growing in holiness demands a fight. God has given His Spirit to His children and that Spirit empowers them for victory over their “old man.” Living in the power of the Holy Spirit is the only way to grow in holiness.

With this understanding and by this power, believers are prepared to set forth in a life pursuit of putting ungodliness to death and replacing it with patterns and behaviors that correspond to the new self, created after the likeness of God himself. It will require the approach of disciplined training as that of a determined athlete—healthy nourishment, strenuous exertion, strategy, commitment, perseverance, and a driving hope. These are the elements of sanctification we have covered to this point. So where do we go from here? In the coming three sessions, we are going to consider specific manifestations of holiness in the three basic interrelated areas of life—body, mind, and relationships. The focused, empowered pursuit of holiness must take place in each of these three areas. Tonight we look at holiness of body.

### **Romans 6:13**

Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.

### **Romans 12:1-2**

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed . . .

### **Galatians 5:22-23**

But the fruit of the Spirit is . . . self-control;

### **1 Corinthians 6:19-20**

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

## 1 Corinthians 9:27

But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

## Matthew 5:29-30

If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

## Philippians 1:20

... it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.

Your body is your house. You are not your body. Your body is your clothing, so to speak. Our physical bodies are our sensory connection to the material world in which we live. And though you are not your body, your body is a reflection of you. What you do with your bodies says a lot about who you are. These bodies have abilities. They are capable of both good and of harm to others. What we put into our bodies can affect our minds as well as what we do with these bodies.

But the verses above indicate that if we are in Christ, our bodies are also temples of the Holy Spirit. The state of our bodies and the actions of our bodies reflect not only ourselves but God himself. Our bodies are instruments of righteousness or sin. The glory of God is at stake in our bodies. We are told to glorify God with our bodies. We are told to present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. So our pursuit of holiness includes attention to these bodies. Pursuing godliness, then, demands identifying ways in which our bodies are involved in glorifying God.

Largely, holiness in body is related to the spiritual fruit of self-control. The desires and appetites we experience as embodied people must not be allowed to sit in the driver's seat. They must be made to submit to our Spirit-empowered wills for the purpose of godliness. What must we control in this way?

### 1. We must control input.

The Bible condemns drunkenness. Ephesians 5:18 says "do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit." Putting your body under the influence of mind-altering substances opens you up to all manner of evil influences. Since the path to holiness is empowered by the Spirit of God, when you cause substances other than the Holy Spirit to affect your mind, it is not an encouragement to holiness.

The Bible also condemns gluttony. When the Jews said Jesus was a glutton and a drunkard, it was not a compliment.

Proverbs 23:20-23. Be not among drunkards or among gluttonous eaters of meat, 21 for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and slumber will clothe them with rags.

Proverbs 28:7. The one who keeps the law is a son with understanding, but a companion of gluttons shames his father.

Dt. 21:18-21. If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother . . . 19 then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city . . . and they shall say to the elders of his city, 'This our son is . . . is a glutton and a drunkard.' 21 Then all the men of the city shall stone him to death with stones. So you shall purge the evil from your midst, and all Israel shall hear, and fear.

## **2. We must control the tendency to laziness.**

Multiple proverbs condemn laziness.

Proverbs 6:9-11. How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? 10 A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, 11 and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man.

Proverbs 15:19. The way of a sluggard is like a hedge of thorns, but the path of the upright is a level highway.

Ephesians 4:28. Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

Jerry Bridges – There is no place for laziness and indulgence in a disciplined pursuit of holiness. We have to learn to say no to the body instead of continually giving in to its momentary desires. We tend to act according to our feelings. The trouble is we seldom “feel” like doing what we should do. We don’t feel like getting out of bed to have our morning time with God, or doing Bible study, or praying, or anything else we should do. That is why we have to take control of our bodies and make them our servants instead of our masters.” (The Pursuit of Holiness, Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1978, p. 114)

### **3. We must control sexual desires.**

Our society glories in sexual desire. In general it is moving more and more towards the idea that whatever your sexual desire may be, the very fact that you experience that desire makes it legitimate to seek satisfaction. Sexual desire is part of being a human, but God has established strict guidelines for sexual holiness. There must be control. Sexuality is a gift of God for experience between one man and one woman only in the context of marriage. Every other sexual indulgence is immoral.

1 Corinthians 6:13b-18. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. . . . 15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! . . . 18 Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.

### **4. We must control the desire to stand out physically.**

1 Peter 3:3-4. Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart . . .

1 Timothy 2:9-10. likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, 10 but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works.

These verses are specifically applied to women, but we all face the temptation to impress with how we look or what we wear. Holiness does not look to flaunt outward appearance but gives prime attention to inward character. It understands that is where real beauty is and matters.

### **Conclusion**

Jerry Bridges – “Quite possibly there is no greater conformity to the world among evangelical Christians today than the way in which we, instead of presenting our bodies as holy sacrifices, pamper and indulge them in defiance of our better judgment and our Christian purpose in life.” (112)

*All scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version.*