

Personal Holiness

Countryside Bible Church – Spring 2022

Part I: The Basic Principles of Personal Holiness

Lesson 1: The Definition and Significance of Personal Holiness

“You shall be holy, for I am holy” (1 Peter 1:16).

Three categories: Unclean, Clean/Common, Holy—to be extraordinary, in a class by Himself.

Personal holiness is not less than clean, but it is more than common.

“Pursue...holiness, without which no one will see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14).

If you are united to Christ, you receive the whole Christ—both as righteousness and as sanctification.

Lesson 2: The Holiness of God

The goal of personal holiness is *godliness*, not manliness (virtue).

God is holy in His infinite attributes, but even more in His personal attributes of grace (freely-given goodness).

Ultimately, God’s inherent goodness is due to the Trinity and the *outgoing* essence of the Father.

Lesson 3: Real Transformation in Christ

In seeking holiness through the gospel, we are pursuing what is promised.

The put-off/put-on principle asks, “When is a thief no longer a thief?”

In order to put off Adam and put on Christ, we must be renewed in the deep attitude (“spirit”) of our mind.

Key Questions: *What is the replacement activity? What is the truth that sets us free?*

Instead of “fake-it-until-you-make-it,” we need the gospel and the Spirit to transform us from the inside out!

Part II: The Inner Preparations of Personal Holiness

Lesson 4: Faith, Expectations, and Love

Hope builds on faith and results in love.

Hope brings holiness, but despair breeds lust.

Future-oriented believers become holy, but past-oriented doubters

Hope is experienced as joy and peace—joy is the energy of the soul, and peace is the protection of the soul.

Therefore, quit listening to yourself and start preaching to yourself (Psalm 43:5; D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones).

Pray once a day for a burden with thanksgiving for a future good, then leave it with God until the next day.

Lesson 5: Reckoning My Justification

As imitative beings made in God’s image, we truly “look and live” (Matt Papa).

Having a *certain* hope in heaven leads to a life of holiness, not a life of sin (1 John 3:3).

Justification is God’s judicial act of reckoning us righteous in Christ—free of guilt due to the blood of Jesus.

As a psychological necessity, justification excludes boasting and denies an identity independent of Christ.

As a positional reality, justification leads to presentation—we reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God, then we present ourselves and our members to God, as those alive from the dead (Romans 6:11-14).

In short, we renounce our works and pronounce our status in Christ.

Spiritual growth occurs within a secure relationship of grace.

Lesson 6: Assurance of Salvation

First-order assurance is a positional hope based on justification:

We believe in Christ as both “I am” and “I-am-whatever-you-need” (cf. John 8:58; 14:6).

Positional hope is a corollary of faith (cf. Hebrews 11:6).

Second-order assurance is a practical hope based on sanctification:

We examine our lives and assure our hearts before God (cf. 1 John 3:19).

Practical hope is a confirmation of positional hope.

When we question our salvation, we must resort to first-order assurance in the gospel.

When we step out of the boat in faith, we are often healed as we go (cf. Matthew 14; Luke 17).

Lesson 7: Handling a Guilty Conscience

Having a good conscience is necessary for peace with oneself and love for others (1 Timothy 1:5).
Believers with an oversensitive conscience need to learn of more options than simply confessing their sin.

Handling a guilty conscience has two options:

For real guilt, we plead the blood of Christ.

For false guilt, we gently calibrate the conscience through faith.

Because the conscience can be wrong, it is sometimes right to disobey the conscience, but only in firm faith.

Part III: The Outer Expectations of Personal Holiness

Lesson 8: Progress, Not Perfection

A Christian stands between addiction and perfection.

Due to justification, a Christian is freed from addiction and guaranteed heaven (Romans 6).

Due to indwelling sin, a Christian will continue to sin and lives a “schizophrenic” life of flesh and mind:

While the mind delights in the law of God, the flesh remains hostile to the law of God (Romans 7:22; 8:7).

The flesh is never redeemed in this life; therefore, we must always be on guard against inner temptations.

Our real identity is not in the flesh, but in Christ; therefore, we think of ourselves as a saint, not as a sinner.

While inner temptation is not a personal sin, the “law of sin” in the members of our body is not morally neutral.

While perfection is impossible (Romans 7), progress is inevitable due to the leading of the Spirit (Romans 8).

Through hope in God, we must learn to accept our moral limits (Psalm 130) and our human limits (Psalm 131).

Lesson 9: The Psyche, Satan, and Medications

We are psychosomatic beings in a spiritual world.

Therefore, we are influenced by a triplex of factors—the body, the mind, and Satan.

Each factor is treated accordingly—the body with medication, the mind with truth, and Satan with the word.

However, if a root cause is identified, other factors can be endured or treated with temporary, minimal means.

In the broken present, we define our body by the distant Past (Eden) and our identity by the distant Future.

Lesson 10: Discipline as Purposeful Pain

By definition, discipline is outer training for either correction or development (e.g. Hebrews 5:8-9).

Discipline is always painful (Hebrews 12:11)—a father teaches through planned pain (e.g. Deuteronomy 8:1-5).

Beware of monasticism and mysticism; instead, let the grace of the gospel train you (Titus 2:11ff).

Beware of being your own dad, especially after sinning—let God determine if pain is needed for correction.

Gospel discipline consists of principled preparation (Titus 2) and patient pain (Hebrews 12).

Discipline may occasion growth by providing space (form), but only God causes growth (fullness).

Lesson 11: Conscience and Christian Unity

Earnest Christians often constrain their consciences with lists over issues.

In reaction to this feel of legalism, Christians will often turn to antinomianism by mistake.

In reality, legalism and antinomian share the same root cause of not delighting in the law of God.

The gospel affirms the moral law of love—what is loving is right, and what is right is loving (1 John 3).

The gospel affirms liberty of conscience for *adiaphora*—all areas other than the gospel and the moral law.

Christians with weak faith should not judge the strong, and the strong should not despise the weak (Romans 14).

In areas of *adiaphora*, the goal is worship and loving community—not uniformity and getting it “right” always.

Christ alone is Lord of the conscience—spiritual abuse (“stumbling blocks”) should be rebuked (Luke 17:3).

Lesson 12: Personal Holiness in the World

Worldliness is a serious sin that bars individuals from heaven (1 John 2:15-17).

In response, Christians often guard against worldliness through an external list that *ironically* is still worldly.

True separation from the world—to be salt and light—means being in the world, but not of the world (John 17).

Personal holiness in the world involves our vocation, not our location.

Personal holiness in the world begins with the heart as the source of all word and deed (Matthew 12, 15).

Personal holiness in the world flees from idolatry and immorality—the Beast and the Harlot (Revelation 17).

Personal holiness in the world pursues love of one’s enemy and one’s brother in Christ.

Personal holiness is ultimately the full transformation of the person into the image of Christ (Psalm 16).

To God be the glory!