

# That We Should Be Holy

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**Bible Text:** Ephesians 1:4  
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That we should be holy, Ephesian chapter one and verse four.

In his chapter you have, first, the inscription of the epistle, verse 1, and therein is declared both the penman, Paul, and his office, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God. Also the persons to whom the Epistle was written, the saints, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus, which are at Ephesus.

Secondly, a salutation, verse 2, and therein is expressed the matter of the salutation, grace and peace; the persons saluted you, to wit, the saints; the author from whom grace and peace comes to the saints: from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, a congratulation, verse 3, for spiritual blessings in general. To God who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings or with every spiritual blessing. Whereof the Apostle mentions some particularly, in the following verses; to wit, election, predestination, adoption.

In this 4. verse Saint Paul hints at us, first, that there is an election; secondly, that the elect are chosen in Christ; thirdly, that election was before the world was founded and, fourthly, that the elect of God should be holy, and without blame in his presence, in love.

Thus you see the occasion, and dependence of the words of the text, which offers to your religious consideration, this plain doctrine. God will have his people to be a holy people.

This point of doctrine needeth no explanation. It is a truth so generally assented to by all professors, that I shall give you but one Scripture, to confirm it 1 Thessalonians 4:3. This is the will of God, your Sanctification. And indeed it appears manifestly in the Scripture of truth, that this is Gods holy will. first, because God hath chosen them in Christ to this end, Ephesians 1:4, that they should be holy.

Secondly, God calls his to holiness, 1 Thessalonians 4:7. God hath not called us to uncleanness, but unto holiness.

Thirdly, God hath given to every one of his the Holy Spirit to sanctify them, Romans 15:16. being sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

Fourthly, God affords them his holy Word, which is a means of sanctification, John 17:17. Sanctify them through thy Word. Thy Word is truth. Yea, when they sin against God he will chastise them for their profit that they may be partakers of his holiness, Hebrews 12:10, so that God would have his people holy.

Reason number one: God will have his people to be holy, that he may be justified in justifying the ungodly, Romans 3:26. That he might be just, that justifieth the ungodly, Romans 4:5. God justifieth the ungodly, that is, He finds men and women in their blood, or in their sins, Ezekiel 16:6, 8, and He in the time of love forgives them all their sins, covers their nakedness with the skirt of Christ's righteousness, and bids them live.

This is done when God enters into covenant with them and so they become his. Now that God may be justified in so doing, though he found them ungodly, unbelievers, impenitent, profane, he doth not only forgive them all their sins and so leave them ungodly to go back in their wicked ways, but he gives them his Holy Spirit of sanctification, who changeth their hearts, renews the spirit of their mind, sanctifies their wills and affection and produces all those fruits of the spirit in them mentioned, Galatians 5:22,23, whereby they are made holy in all manner of conversation, 1 Peter 1:15, 16. And this reason the Apostle gives, Ephesians 1:4, 6, that we should be holy to the praise of the glory of his grace, and verse 12, that we should be to the praise of his glory. And herein is God justified in justifying the ungodly in that he doth make and keep them holy, Jude 1.

Reason number two: God will have his people to be holy, for the honor and glory of his Son Jesus Christ to whom he hath given them. "All mine are thine" (saith Christ in his prayer to his Father, John 17:1, 10, and thine are mine and I am glorified in them," also verse 19. "And for their sake, I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified."

Christ shall be glorified in his saints, especially in his kingly office, Revelation 15:3,4.

Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, oh Lord and glorify thy name, for thou only art holy. And albeit, now Christ, and his poor saints are scorned, and despised of men; yet that prophecy of Enoch, the seventh from Adam, will have its accomplishment, Jude 14. Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints. The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, 2 Thessalonians 1:7, 10. And in that day it will appear to all the world that it is the great glory of Jesus Christ that his Father hath given him so many ten thousands of saints to be his subjects and himself to be their King, Isaiah 33:22.

Reason number three: God will have his people holy that they may enjoy spiritual communion with him in this life and eternal communion with him in heaven. The saints do enjoy spiritual communion with God in this life, 1 John 1:3. Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ and with the Spirit, Philippians 2:1.

They shall have eternal communion with God in heaven, in that kingdom prepared for them, which then they shall receive, Matthew 25:34.

Now this communion with God, none can have without holiness, Hebrews 12:14. Therefore God will have his people to be holy.

Consider, then, these uses. Will God have his people to be holy? Let it be useful to us, first, for enquiry what holiness is, how God makes His holy?

Holiness or Sanctification is a real change of the whole man from the pollution of sin to the purity of the Image of Christ. Romans 6:22. "But now being made free from sin and become servants of God, ye have your fruits unto Holiness". Here was a real change in them from the pollution of sin, 2 Corinthians 3:18. But we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are changed into the image.

Here was the other part of that real change in them; to wit, into the purity of the image of Christ. For as men in their natural estate bear the Image of the earthly first Man Adam; so men in their spiritual estate bear the Image of the heavenly second man Christ, 1 Corinthians 15:47-49. This holiness or sanctification if you have respect to the author and efficient cause thereof is called the sanctification of the Spirit, 2 Thessalonians 2:13, and 1 Peter 2. If unto the divine act of God it is called renovation or renewing of the mind, Ephesians 4:23 and Romans 12:2.

If unto the acts and fruits of holiness in believers it is called faith, love, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance, Galatians 5:22.

If unto the root, fountain, and foundation of holiness the Scriptures saith; "Christ is our sanctification," 1 Corinthians 1:30.

Thus you hear what holiness is. Now God maketh His holy by his Spirit and Word. Whereby he doth convince them that they are without Christ, Ephesians 2:12; maketh discovery to them of the worth of Christ, their need of him, and God's offer of him in a covenant of grace upon gospel terms; changing their hearts into the image of Christ, 2 Corinthians 3:18, gives them faith in Christ, repentance from dead works, love to all the saints, "And so the very God of peace sanctify this people," 1 Thessalonians 5:23. Thus much may suffice concerning the inquiry.

Use number two: Will God have his people to be holy? Let us make use of this, to discover who are the people of God and who are not. Those people, that are ungodly, unsanctified are not the people of God. Such may boast of their justification, but they deceive themselves, for God hath not justified unsanctified people, 1 Corinthians 6:9,-11.

They may talk of the free grace of God manifested to them, and bringing them salvation, but they are deluded; for the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, teacheth us to deny ungodliness, and to live godly, Titus 2:11,12.

Now there are three sorts of professors, who would be esteemed the people of God and yet are not sanctified by the Holy Spirit, they are not holy and therefore are not the Lord's people in covenant.

The first sort are all those legal professors who having been by the Spirit and the Word much convinced of sin, John 16:8, sorely wounded in their consciences, Proverbs 18:14 and somewhat reformed in their conversations, by hearing godly preachers, as Herod was, Mark 6:20, who after all this go about to establish their own righteousness and rest upon their duties, humiliation, and legal reformation and have never had their hearts changed and renewed, nor Christ given of the Father unto them. These are not sanctified, are not the Lords. Hear what the apostle speaks to such among the Galatians. "Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit are you now made perfect by the flesh? Have you suffered so many things in vain? If it be yet in vain."

Well such of you as God hath chosen in Christ, that you should be holy, he will also by his Spirit and Word convince you of righteousness, to wit, that all your own righteousness are as filthy rags, Isaiah 6:6, that being ignorant of God's righteousness, you have gone about to establish your own righteousness and that you must be found in Christ not having your own righteousness which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith, Philippians 3:9.

The second sort are all those formal professors who seem to be only religious, James 1:26. "Having a form of Godliness, but denying the power thereof." 2 Timothy 3:5.

These will tell you they rest not on duties, trust not to their own righteousness, confide not in their humiliation, as legal professors do, but they after much trouble of conscience for their sins got comfort, joy, and peace in applying some promises of the gospel to themselves.

Consider, I pray you, the parable of the stony ground hearers. They on the Rock are they, which when they hear receive the Word with joy and these have no root, which for a while believe and in time of temptation fall away, Luke 8:13.

Here was some plowing though it went not deep enough and some harrowing also to cover the good seed. After this there was some joy, but no root. Here was the Word convincing and wounding and comforting but no Christ who is called the root, Colossians 2:7, to quicken, renew, and sanctify. And, therefore, though they believed a while yet they fall away, in the time of temptation.

And this is the condition of formal professors. They get comfort in promises, but they receive not Christ and his sanctifying comforting Spirit in the promises. Let such hear what the Lord by his Prophets speaks to a formal professing people, Isaiah. 50:11, "Behold all ye that kindle a fire that compass your selves about with sparks. Walk in the light of your fire and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have at my hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow."

The third sort are all those carnal professors who say they are the people of God and hold the common faith, Titus 1:4, which is the faith of God's elect, Titus 1.1, and believe the common salvation, Jude 3. That is to say common to every one that believeth, both Jew and Gentile, Romans 1:16.

But notwithstanding this profession of general redemption, they themselves are the servants of corruption, 2 Peter 2:19. For they take liberty to live in sin and walk after the flesh, fulfilling the lusts thereof, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness and denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ, Jude 4.

They are so far departed the Faith, which they sometime professed and seemed to have, 1 Timothy 4:1, that they question whether the Scripture of truth be the Word of God, whether Christ be the Son of God, whether the first day of the week be the sabbath of God and they are so far from living godly and walking in the way of holiness that they totally omit all holy duties. They refrain prayer. They do not speak not the Word of God when they rise up, nor when they lie down, nor as they sit at the house together with their families. They do not partake of any ordinances, nor perform any worship to God. And as for sin, they make a mock at it. Some of them say God takes no knowledge of their sins, he sees no iniquity in them. Others affirm that they have no sin. They are borne of God and they cannot sin. And others are bold to say they are justified persons and therefore all their works and actions are alike acceptable to God and well pleasing in his sight. But these carnal professors are not holy, are not the people of God. This may make some discovery of those whose hearts are not right with God to whom I would give the apostles' exhortation, Acts 8:22.

Use number three: Will God have His people to be holy? Then may this doctrine occasion a deep humiliation and godly sorrow in believers for their unholiness, carnalness and unfaithfulness in heart or life.

Oh, beloved, let you and I commune with our own hearts how much unbelief, hypocrisy self filthiness, formality and wickedness shall we upon diligent examination find still remaining in us? What vanity of mind and carnality is in our heart? How many hard thoughts of God have we still? Notwithstanding all the experiences God hath given us of his unchangeableness, his faithfulness, and his everlasting loving kindness in Jesus Christ? How apt are we by an evil heart of unbelief to depart from God? Alas what sinful contemplations have we in our spirits? What evil desires? How do our hearts run out after the creature comforts of this world and how are our affections still set upon the things below Christ and God? How many idols are set up in our hearts? How great is our self love, self seeking, self confidence, self dependence, and self sufficiency?

Oh, what high thoughts have we sometimes of ourselves, our gifts, our graces, our experiences, our performances? Surely we have just cause if God will in mercy work in us godly sorrow to be ashamed to mourn after a godly manner and to loath ourselves for the abominations of our own hearts.

But, my brethren, let us examine our lives, and search and try our ways, as well as commune with our hearts, for the eye of the world is open upon us. God and Angels, men and devils all observe us who are believers. They hear what we say and take knowledge what we do.

Oh, beloved, how much vain, carnal and sin full communication comes out of our mouths that ministers no grace to the hearers? How many idle words do we speak? What unprofitable talk have we among ourselves and with others, not gracious, not seasoned with the salt of truth and holiness, but very unsavory speeches? And when we meet together and speak one to another of religion we are apt to speak slightly, rashly, formally, inconsiderately, and not soberly, humbly, and graciously as becomes the saints.

Yea, our conferences sometimes turns to vain janglings, and unedifying disputes wherein we strive for victory or to maintain our own opinion more than truth. But besides all this, how much ungodliness is there in our actions? Albeit God preventeth us by his grace from doing actions simply and grossly evil and ungodly as drunkenness and uncleanness, yet in doing lawful things we often miscarry. The Messengers of Christ do sometimes preach themselves. Fathers of families do correct their children sometimes after their pleasure, provoking their children, being bitter to their wives sometimes. Oh how uneven do we walk in our callings and relations wherein we should especially show forth the power of godliness?

Oh, had we tender hearts and were we truly sensible of our sinful miscarriages we could not speak of those particulars without tears of godly sorrow. Can we consider how many years we have possessed the Gospel, how long we have enjoyed the Word preached in season and out of season unto us and yet how little our conversation is as becomes the Gospel, how little we have profited, how little we have grown in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ and not be affected to mourn under the feeling of our unprofitableness and great barrenness. But I hope God will give us repentance unto salvation not to be repented of for all our unrighteousness.

Use number four: Will God have his people to be holy? Let it be useful for the consolation of every true believer, especially such as at present groan under the tyrannical power, or captivating bondage of any corruption and sigh to God for supply from Christ of any grace wanting, or weakness in their apprehension, sense and feeling.

Hearken, poor mourning souls, and consider what may be said for thy comfort and search the Scriptures, whether it be so or not.

First, know that God's eternal purpose toward thee who art a true believer in choosing thee in Christ, was, that thou shouldest be holy, Ephesians 1:4. and Romans 8:30. "I have purposed it, saith God, I will also do it," Isaiah 46:11.

Secondly, that God hath made with thee an everlasting covenant of grace and holiness, wherein he hath given thee many great and precious promises, to pardon sin, to subdue

iniquity and to put his Law in thy mind, and write it in thy heart. Jeremiah 3:31,34 and 32:40, with Hebrews 8:10-12, Malachi 7:18-20, with 2 Peter 2:3,4, 11.

Thirdly, know that Christ has prayed to his Father for thee that he would sanctify thee, John 17:1 and 17:20.

Fourthly, that Christ sanctified himself for thy sake that thou also might be sanctified, John 17:19,20.

Fifthly, know that God hath given thee the Spirit of his Son, Galatians 4:6, who is a comforting sanctifying Spirit, yea the Comforter, John 14.16,17,18, And he that sanctifieth all the people of God, 1 Thessalonians 5.23.

Sixthly, know that faithful is God who called thee, who also will do it, 1 Thessalonians 5:24. He called thee unto holiness, 1 Thessalonians 4:7, and he will both make thee holy. He hath said thou shalt be holy, Leviticus 11:44,45. and 19:2. That is such a command, as hath the force of a promise in it; and therefore be of good comfort, thy sinner are forgiven thee, Matthew 9:2. And sin shall not have dominion over thee, Romans 16:14. The grace of Christ is sufficient for thee, 2 Corinthians 12:9. He is full of grace, John 1:16. According as his divine power hath given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, 2 Peter 1:3.

Use number five: Will God have his people to be holy? Let me conclude with a use of exhortation to holiness. "As he that called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation," 1 Peter 1:15. God will have his people holy at all times, in all relations and in every condition.

Therefore I beseech your brethren, and exhort you in the Lord and for his sake to be holy in all manner of conversation, holy in your callings, for godliness is great gain: holy in your families, in your shops, in your journeys in all your ways and in all your relations, for godliness hath the promise both of this life and that which is to come.

Piety hath a majesty in it and it will give you a throne in the consciences of others, that they dare not sin in your presence. Holiness is an ornament to your callings, to your persons, to your families, to the place where you live. The more holy, the more like your heavenly Father, the more you glorify your heavenly Father and the more you adorn the doctrine of Christ, yea, the more communion you have with the Father and with Christ.

Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness of the flesh and Spirit. "Perfecting holiness in the fear of God," 2 Corinthians 7:1, 4. Great is my boldness or speech toward you in this exhortation, because I desire fruit that may abound to your account and give me leave to press this exhortation upon such believers present who have carnal parents, yokefellows, or other carnal friends. You would have your natural friends converted and to that end you pray for them, mourn over them. Many a sigh, and many a tear, it may be, they have cost you, but they live in the flesh still, are carnal still.

Oh let not an holy conversation be wanting, that may further their conversion, 1 Corinthians 7:16, 17. And if any obey not the Word, they also may be won, without the Word, by your godly conversation, 1 Peter 3:1. And if they be not drawn thereby to a love of the truth, yet their mouths will be stopped that they cannot speak against it.

Would it not be a comfortable thing, to have a carnal father speak thus of his godly son or daughter; to wit, I was unwilling my children should go so often to hear sermons, and be so often at conferences and private fasts and the like but I have observed that since they professed religion and gave themselves to pray and read the Scriptures, they have been much more dutiful to us their parents then before and they are more diligent in their callings. If this be the worst, they shall have liberty to profess the gospel still. The like I might speak of other relations.

But should carnal parents or friends have cause by your loose or uneven walking to speak evil of the ways of God, it would be very uncomfortable to you and dishonorable to the gospel. I shall conclude in the words of the apostle, Philippians 4:8. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are truth; whatsoever things are honest, just, pure, lovely, or of good report, If there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things, and the God of peace shall be with you," verse 9.

But, one objection had need to be answered, before I end, and that is this: Some may say, "You have exhorted us to holiness and the apostle tells us, 2 Timothy 3:12. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution."

But, how may we be encouraged and strengthened against the fears of persecution?

I answer, first pray to God, that he will furnish you with suffering graces, against persecuting times, Colossians 1:9-11.

Secondly improve your interest through Christ in the promises and believe that the more sufferings for Christ, the more comfort by Christ, 2 Corinthians 1:5. The more sufferings, the more holiness, Hebrews 12:10. The more sufferings, the more happiness, 1 Peter 4:14.

Only take heed of sufferings as an evil doer, verses 15,16. And if any suffer as a Christian, Christ will suffer with him, Isaiah 63:9. Christ will share with you in your suffering persecution, Acts 9.4,5. And you shall share with Christ in glory, Romans 8.17.

But you must be holy in sufferings, also praying for them that persecute you, as Christ taught and practiced and so did his martyr Steven, Acts 7:60. "Lord lay not this to their charge."

And so let us pray for them that now disturb us.