



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

## BIBLE FOUNDATIONS

# God's Holiness

## Knowing the God Who Is Holy

### The Short Answer

God is holy. His holiness means far more than simply saying that God does not sin. God is utterly unique, perfectly pure, completely good, and unlike anything He has made. There is no darkness, corruption, evil, or moral defect in Him. Through Jesus Christ, the Holy One brings sinners near.

**Exodus 3:1-6 · Leviticus 19:1-2 · Isaiah 6:1-7 · Hebrews 10:19-22 · 1 Peter 1:13-16**

### Opening Memory Anchor

God's holiness does not merely mean He is better than us. He is utterly unlike us in His perfect purity, goodness, and glory-and through Jesus, the Holy One brings sinners near.



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

# WELCOME

## This guide is meant to send you back to Scripture

The word “holy” appears throughout the Bible: holy ground, a holy nation, the Holy Place, the Holy of Holies, holy priests, holy sacrifices, Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit, Jesus the Holy One of God—and above everything else, the holy God.

Many Christians instinctively define holy as “without sin.” That is true, but incomplete. God’s holiness includes perfect moral purity, but Scripture presents holiness as something larger. God is utterly unique. There is no one like Him. He is Creator rather than creation. He possesses perfect majesty, goodness, purity, beauty, righteousness, and glory.

His holiness helps explain why people fall down when they encounter Him, why sin cannot be treated casually in His presence, and why Scripture gives us the tabernacle, priesthood, sacrifices, temple, Day of Atonement, cross, and the call: “Be holy, because I am holy.”

The central Gospel question is not whether sinners can make themselves holy enough to reach God. It is how the holy God Himself makes a way for sinners to be cleansed, forgiven, reconciled, and transformed through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

## PART ONE — BEGINNER GUIDE

### Memory Anchor

God’s holiness does not merely mean He is better than us. He is utterly unlike us in His perfect purity, goodness, and glory—and through Jesus, the Holy One brings sinners near.

#### 1. WHAT DOES “HOLY” MEAN?

At its most basic level, holiness communicates being set apart or distinct. When Scripture speaks of God’s holiness, however, it means much more. God is utterly unique. There is no one like Him. He is the Creator; everything else is created. He is perfectly good, righteous, pure, and glorious. Read Exodus 15:11; 1 Samuel 2:2; Isaiah 40:25.

#### 2. DOES HOLINESS ONLY MEAN “WITHOUT SIN”?

No. God certainly has no sin, but holiness also communicates His uniqueness, majesty, otherness, glory, perfection, and absolute distinction from creation. Read Habakkuk 1:13; 1 John 1:5.

#### 3. IS GOD HOLY BECAUSE HE FOLLOWS A MORAL STANDARD?

No. God is not measured by a higher moral law above Him. His own perfectly good character is the ultimate standard of goodness. He does not learn holiness or become righteous. He eternally and perfectly is who He is. Read Psalm 92:15; Mark 10:18; James 1:17.

#### 4. CAN GOD SIN?

No. God cannot deny His own character. Scripture says He cannot lie and cannot be tempted by evil. This is not a lack of freedom; His freedom is never separated from His perfect nature. Read Numbers 23:19; Titus 1:2; James 1:13; 2 Timothy 2:13.

#### 5. IS HOLINESS ONE PART OF GOD?

No. God is not divided into separate pieces. His love is holy love, His justice holy justice, His mercy holy mercy, and His power holy power. His attributes do not compete. Part Two explores this more carefully.

### Memory Anchor

God does not sometimes choose between being loving and being holy. His love is holy, and His holiness is loving.

#### 6. WHERE DO WE FIRST SEE HOLINESS IN THE BIBLE?

The word becomes especially prominent in Exodus. At the burning bush God tells Moses not to come closer and to remove his sandals because the ground is holy. The dirt was not naturally sacred; the place was holy because God uniquely revealed His presence there. Read Exodus 3:1–6.

#### 7. WHY DID MOSES HAVE TO REMOVE HIS SANDALS?

The action communicated reverence. Moses was encountering the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God’s presence transformed ordinary ground into holy ground. Moses was being taught immediately: do not approach God casually. The Creator is here.

#### 8. DOES THAT MEAN CHRISTIANS SHOULD REMOVE THEIR SHOES WHEN THEY PRAY?

No. The burning-bush event does not establish a universal rule. It teaches something deeper: God determines how He is approached. Human beings do not make God ordinary simply because He graciously allows them to know Him.



## 9. WHAT DID GOD REVEAL ABOUT HIMSELF AT THE BURNING BUSH?

God reveals Himself as the covenant God who sees Israel's suffering, hears their cries, knows their pain, and intends to rescue them. The holy God is not distant or indifferent. His transcendence does not prevent compassion. Read Exodus 3:7–15.

## 10. WHAT DOES THE EXODUS TEACH ABOUT GOD'S HOLINESS?

After God defeats Egypt's gods and rescues Israel, Moses sings, "Who is like you—majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?" God's holiness is connected with His incomparable majesty. Read Exodus 15:1–18.

## 11. WHAT HAPPENED AT MOUNT SINAI?

God brought Israel to Sinai and entered covenant with them. Thunder, lightning, cloud, fire, smoke, trumpet blast, and a trembling mountain communicate that the God entering covenant with Israel is not domesticated, ordinary, or manageable. Read Exodus 19–20.

## 12. WHY WERE BOUNDARIES PLACED AROUND THE MOUNTAIN?

Because sinful human beings were encountering the holy God. God was graciously coming near, but His nearness did not erase His holiness. This pattern becomes extremely important throughout the Old Testament.

## 13. SHOULD CHRISTIANS THINK OF GOD AS DANGEROUS?

God is not unpredictable, cruel, malicious, or unstable. Yet Scripture refuses to portray Him as harmless in the sense of being morally insignificant or under human control. His holiness exposes sin, His judgment is real, and His authority is absolute. Hebrews says, "Our God is a consuming fire." Read Deuteronomy 4:24; Hebrews 12:28–29.

## 14. WHY DID ISRAEL NEED THE TABERNACLE?

God intended to dwell among His people. The tabernacle provided a covenant structure through which His holy presence could dwell in the midst of sinful Israel. The question is not only how people get to God, but how the holy God can dwell among sinful people without destroying them. Read Exodus 25:8–9; 29:42–46.

## 15. WHAT DID THE TABERNACLE TEACH ABOUT HOLINESS?

Its design repeatedly taught distinctions: courtyard, Holy Place, Most Holy Place, priests, sacrifices, washings, altars, garments, boundaries, and purity requirements. These taught that approaching the holy God required cleansing, mediation, sacrifice, and God's own provision.

## 16. WHAT WAS THE MOST HOLY PLACE?

The Most Holy Place, or Holy of Holies, was the innermost area of the tabernacle and later the temple. Access was extraordinarily restricted. The high priest entered only according to God's appointed instructions, especially on the Day of Atonement. Read Leviticus 16; Hebrews 9:1–7.

## 17. WHY COULDN'T EVERYONE SIMPLY WALK INTO THE MOST HOLY PLACE?

Because the tabernacle dramatized a central biblical problem: God is holy and humanity is sinful. Human beings cannot simply declare themselves fit for God's presence. God Himself must provide the way of approach.

### Memory Anchor

The Bible's question is not merely, "How can we find God?" It is, "How can sinners safely come near the holy God?"

## 18. WHY WERE SACRIFICES NECESSARY?

Sacrifices belonged to the covenant system God gave Israel. They taught that sin is serious, guilt matters, atonement is necessary, life belongs to God, and reconciliation requires God's provision. They ultimately prepare readers to understand Jesus. Read Leviticus 17:11; Hebrews 9–10.

## 19. DID ANIMAL SACRIFICES PERMANENTLY REMOVE SIN?

No. Hebrews explains that repeated sacrifices could not finally perfect worshipers or permanently remove sin. Their repetition demonstrated that a greater sacrifice was needed. Jesus fulfills what the sacrificial system anticipated. Read Hebrews 10:1–14.

## 20. WHAT WAS THE DAY OF ATONEMENT?

Leviticus 16 describes an annual day when the high priest entered the Most Holy Place and made atonement. One goat was sacrificed; another symbolically carried Israel's sins away. The ceremony communicated cleansing, forgiveness, substitution, and removal of guilt.

## 21. WHAT DOES THE DAY OF ATONEMENT TEACH ABOUT GOD'S HOLINESS?

Sin cannot simply be dragged casually into God's presence. Yet God Himself provides a way for sinful people to remain in covenant relationship with Him. Holiness does not only create distance; God's grace creates a way through the distance.



## 22. WHAT DOES “CLEAN” AND “UNCLEAN” MEAN IN LEVITICUS?

“Unclean” does not always mean morally sinful. Ritual uncleanness could result from childbirth, bodily discharges, skin conditions, or contact with a dead body. These categories taught Israel through embodied symbols about life and death, wholeness, God’s presence, and sacred boundaries.

## 23. WHY DOES THAT DISTINCTION MATTER?

Because otherwise readers can seriously misunderstand Leviticus. Sinful and unclean sometimes overlap, but they are not identical categories. Purity laws should never be used to shame bodies, illness, menstruation, childbirth, disability, or ordinary aspects of human life.

### Pastoral Safeguard

Biblical holiness should never be used to teach that a person’s body is disgusting to God.

## 24. WHAT DOES “BE HOLY, BECAUSE I AM HOLY” MEAN?

God calls Israel to reflect His character in covenant life. Leviticus 19 connects holiness with honoring parents, rejecting idols, caring for the poor, truthfulness, fair treatment of workers, justice, refusing hatred and revenge, and loving neighbors. Holiness transforms everyday ethics.

## 25. DOES HOLINESS MEAN WITHDRAWING FROM EVERYONE WHO ISN’T HOLY?

No. Biblical holiness means belonging to God and increasingly reflecting His character. Jesus is perfectly holy, yet He moves toward sinners, lepers, outsiders, the sick, the poor, and morally broken people. His holiness is not threatened by compassionate proximity.

## 26. WHAT HAPPENED TO NADAB AND ABIHU?

Aaron’s sons offered unauthorized fire before the Lord contrary to His command, and fire came from God’s presence and they died. This is one of Scripture’s disturbing judgment passages. Read Leviticus 10:1–7.

## 27. WHY WAS THEIR JUDGMENT SO SEVERE?

They were ordained priests serving at the newly established sanctuary and violated God’s commands at the very place meant to teach Israel how the holy God could dwell among them. The context emphasizes God’s holiness and the responsibility of those who minister near His presence.

## 28. SHOULD NADAB AND ABIHU MAKE CHRISTIANS TERRIFIED THAT GOD WILL KILL THEM FOR A WORSHIP MISTAKE?

No. The passage should produce reverence, not panic. Its historical and covenant setting matters. Christians should not transform every Old Testament judgment into a prediction of immediate death for accidental mistakes.

## 29. WHAT HAPPENED TO UZZAH?

When David moved the ark on a cart and the oxen stumbled, Uzzah reached out and took hold of it. God struck him dead. David became angry and afraid. Read 2 Samuel 6:1–11; 1 Chronicles 13.

## 30. WHY DID UZZAH DIE WHEN HE SEEMED TO BE HELPING?

The larger context matters. God had given specific instructions for transporting sacred objects. Later David recognizes that the first attempt failed because God’s instructions had not been followed. Good intentions do not make God’s holiness irrelevant. Read Numbers 4:15; 7:9; 1 Chronicles 15:11–15.

## 31. DOES GOD CARE ABOUT MOTIVES OR OBEDIENCE?

Both. Scripture addresses motives of the heart, but sincere motives do not automatically make every action right. Outward obedience without love or faith can also become empty religion. Biblical faithfulness involves both a heart oriented toward God and a life shaped by His revealed will.

## 32. WHAT DID ISAIAH SEE?

Isaiah sees the Lord high and exalted. Seraphim cry, “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.” The thresholds shake and the temple fills with smoke. Read Isaiah 6:1–8.

## 33. WHY DO THE SERAPHIM SAY “HOLY” THREE TIMES?

The threefold declaration intensifies the proclamation. Some Christians see it as suggestive of the Trinity, but Isaiah 6 itself does not explicitly explain the repetition that way. The primary emphasis is unmistakable: God’s holiness is absolute.

## 34. HOW DID ISAIAH RESPOND?



Isaiah said, "Woe to me!" Seeing God's holiness made him acutely aware of his own sinfulness. He did not compare himself with Israel's worst sinners; he saw God and then saw himself truthfully. Read Isaiah 6:5.

### 35. WHY DOES GOD'S HOLINESS REVEAL OUR SIN?

Human beings naturally compare themselves with other people. Before perfect goodness, that comparison collapses. God's holiness removes self-righteous comparison and exposes our true condition.

### 36. DID GOD LEAVE ISAIAH IN SHAME?

No. A seraph touches Isaiah's lips with a coal from the altar and declares his guilt taken away and sin atoned for. Only after cleansing does God call Isaiah into service: holiness → conviction → cleansing → calling.

### 37. WHAT IS THE WRONG WAY TO TEACH ISAIAH 6?

The wrong way is to stop at "You are filthy and unworthy." God does not reveal Isaiah's uncleanness merely to crush him. God cleanses him and sends him.

#### Memory Anchor

When God's holiness exposes sin, His purpose is not merely to shame. He cleanses and calls.

### 38. DOES THE OLD TESTAMENT ONLY PRESENT GOD AS HOLY AND THE NEW TESTAMENT AS LOVING?

No. The Old Testament repeatedly reveals God's love, mercy, compassion, patience, and forgiveness. The New Testament repeatedly reveals holiness, judgment, wrath, and moral seriousness. Jesus reveals the same holy and loving God.

### 39. HOW DOES JESUS REVEAL GOD'S HOLINESS?

Jesus is repeatedly identified with holiness: the child will be holy, demons call Him the Holy One of God, Peter calls Him the Holy and Righteous One, and Hebrews says He was without sin. Read Luke 1:35; Mark 1:24; Acts 3:14; Hebrews 4:15.

### 40. WAS JESUS MADE UNCLEAN BY TOUCHING UNCLEAN PEOPLE?

The Gospels show the reverse. Jesus touches lepers, is touched by a woman with chronic bleeding, and touches the dead. Instead of impurity overpowering Him, His holiness brings cleansing, healing, and life. Read Mark 1:40–45; 5:21–43.

### 41. WHY IS THAT IMPORTANT?

Jesus does not merely avoid impurity; He conquers it. In Him, God's holy presence enters the world of sin and death and begins making things clean.

### 42. DID JESUS WELCOME SINNERS BECAUSE HOLINESS DOESN'T MATTER?

No. Jesus welcomes sinners because they need rescue. He forgives, heals, and shows compassion, while also calling people to repent, believe, follow Him, and leave sin. Grace brings sinners into a new life.

### 43. WHAT DOES JESUS' CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE TEACH?

Jesus confronts corruption and misuse of sacred space. His response shows that love does not mean indifference toward dishonoring God. His holiness includes zeal for His Father's house. Read John 2:13–22; Mark 11:15–18.

### 44. WHY DID JESUS DIE?

The cross has many interconnected biblical dimensions. Jesus bears sin, offers Himself, makes atonement, redeems, reconciles, defeats evil, establishes the new covenant, and opens the way to God. Read Isaiah 53; Romans 3:21–26; Hebrews 9–10; 1 Peter 2:24.

### 45. WHAT DOES THE TORN TEMPLE CURTAIN MEAN?

When Jesus dies, the temple curtain is torn from top to bottom. The boundary associated with the Most Holy Place is dramatically opened. Hebrews explains that believers may approach God through Christ. Read Matthew 27:50–51; Hebrews 10:19–22.

### 46. DOES THAT MEAN GOD IS LESS HOLY NOW?

No. The Gospel does not make God less holy. It makes sinners clean. God did not lower His holiness so humanity could reach Him; Christ dealt with sin so redeemed people could be brought near.

### 47. HOW CAN SINFUL PEOPLE APPROACH A HOLY GOD?

Through Jesus Christ—not through personal goodness, religious performance, moral comparison, ritual achievement, or pretending sin does not exist. Jesus is the mediator. Read Hebrews 4:14–16; 7:23–28; 10:19–22.

#### Memory Anchor



Grace does not make God less holy. Grace makes a way for sinners to come near the Holy One.

#### **48. SHOULD CHRISTIANS BE AFRAID TO APPROACH GOD?**

Christians should approach with reverence, but not with the terror of someone unsure whether Christ has made access possible. Hebrews holds both truths together: God is a consuming fire, and believers approach the throne of grace with confidence.

#### **49. WHAT IS THE “FEAR OF THE LORD”?**

It includes reverence, awe, humility, submission, and recognition of God's greatness and authority. It is not identical with panic. Scripture can tell God's people both to fear the Lord and not to be afraid.

#### **50. IS FEARING GOD HEALTHY?**

Yes, when understood biblically. Healthy fear says God is God, His wisdom and authority matter, His holiness and judgment matter, and His grace is astonishing. Unhealthy terror imagines God as unpredictable and acceptance as dependent on perfect performance.

#### **51. CAN TEACHING ABOUT HOLINESS BECOME SPIRITUALLY HARMFUL?**

Yes. Holiness teaching becomes unhealthy when it produces systems built primarily around shame, fear, external appearance, constant suspicion, human control, perfectionism, or arbitrary rules presented as God's commands. Read Matthew 23.

#### **Pastoral Safeguard**

God's holiness should produce reverence, repentance, worship, gratitude, and transformation. It should not be weaponized to produce chronic shame, spiritual intimidation, or fear-based control.

#### **52. DOES HOLINESS MEAN FOLLOWING LOTS OF EXTRA RULES?**

No. Personal boundaries can be wise, but personal wisdom should not automatically be elevated into universal divine law. “This tempts me” is different from “God forbids every Christian from doing this” when Scripture has not said so.

#### **53. WHAT IS LEGALISM?**

Legalism can describe attempts to earn acceptance with God through rule-keeping, add human requirements to God's commands, or measure spirituality primarily through external conformity. Obedience itself is not legalism.

#### **54. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HOLINESS AND LEGALISM?**

Holiness says: because God has saved me, I want my life to increasingly reflect Him. Legalism says: if I perform well enough, I can establish or secure my worth before God. Holiness depends on grace and produces humility.

#### **55. DOES GRACE MEAN HOLINESS DOESN'T MATTER?**

No. Grace does not merely forgive; grace transforms. Titus says God's grace trains believers to reject ungodliness and live godly lives. Christians are not saved by becoming holy enough, but those God saves are called into holiness. Read Titus 2:11–14.

#### **56. WHAT DOES SANCTIFICATION MEAN?**

Sanctification refers to being made holy or set apart for God. The New Testament speaks of believers as already sanctified in Christ and also of ongoing growth in holiness. Part Two distinguishes definitive or positional sanctification from progressive sanctification.

#### **57. WHO MAKES CHRISTIANS HOLY?**

God does. Christian holiness is Trinitarian: the Father calls and sets apart, the Son cleanses and redeems, and the Holy Spirit indwells and forms Christlike character. Christians genuinely participate through obedience, repentance, disciplines, service, and resisting sin. Read 1 Corinthians 1:30; 6:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:23–24; 1 Peter 1:1–2.

#### **Memory Anchor**

The Father calls a holy people, the Son cleanses them, and the Holy Spirit forms the holiness of Christ within them.

#### **58. WHY IS HE CALLED THE HOLY SPIRIT?**

The Spirit is God and shares the divine holiness. He brings God's holy presence into believers, convicts, indwells, teaches, guides, produces fruit, gives gifts, forms Christlike character, and sets God's people apart. Read John 14:15–17; Romans 8; Galatians 5:16–25.

#### **59. DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT MAKE CHRISTIANS INSTANTLY PERFECT?**

No. Believers genuinely receive the Spirit, but the New Testament still commands them to put sin to death, renew their minds, confess sin, grow in grace, pursue holiness, and become increasingly Christlike.

#### **60. WHAT IS THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT?**



Galatians 5 names love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Holiness is not merely avoiding behaviors. A person can appear externally strict while remaining proud, cruel, impatient, controlling, or self-righteous. Read Galatians 5:16–26.

## **61. DOES HOLINESS MAKE PEOPLE HARSH?**

It should not. Jesus is perfectly holy and also compassionate, gentle, truthful, patient, courageous, and merciful. Mature holiness makes believers more like Him.

### **Memory Anchor**

The holiest person who ever lived was Jesus. Any vision of holiness that makes us less like Jesus is distorted.

## **62. DOES HOLINESS MEAN NEVER HAVING FUN?**

No. God created food, friendship, marriage, celebration, music, beauty, work, rest, laughter, and many good gifts. Holiness receives God's gifts rightly rather than turning them into idols or using them sinfully. Read Ecclesiastes 3:12–13; 1 Timothy 4:1–5; James 1:17.

## **63. DOES HOLINESS MEAN CHRISTIANS SHOULD LOOK DIFFERENT FROM THE WORLD?**

Yes, but Scripture's emphasis is deeper than a distinctive aesthetic. Christians should differ in character, sexual ethics, truthfulness, generosity, use of power, treatment of enemies, care for vulnerable people, humility, integrity, and love.

## **64. WHAT DOES “DO NOT CONFORM TO THE PATTERN OF THIS WORLD” MEAN?**

Romans 12 calls Christians not to be shaped automatically by the values of the surrounding age but to be transformed through renewed minds. Culture is not wrong simply because it is culture, nor is something good simply because Christians do it. Read Romans 12:1–2.

## **65. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO PRESENT OUR BODIES AS A LIVING SACRIFICE?**

Paul uses sacrificial language for whole-life worship. The Christian body belongs to God, so holiness includes sexuality, speech, food, work, money, relationships, time, strength, and physical actions. Read Romans 12:1–2; 1 Corinthians 6:12–20.

## **66. DOES GOD CARE ABOUT SEXUAL HOLINESS?**

Yes. Scripture treats sexuality as morally meaningful. This is not because bodies or sexuality are dirty; the body belongs to God and has dignity and purpose. Read 1 Corinthians 6:12–20; 1 Thessalonians 4:3–8.

## **67. SHOULD SEXUAL SIN BE TREATED AS THOUGH IT IS THE ONLY SERIOUS SIN?**

No. Scripture also strongly condemns greed, pride, hatred, gossip, dishonesty, injustice, partiality, selfish ambition, lack of mercy, and exploitation. A holiness culture that monitors sexuality while tolerating pride, cruelty, greed, or abuse is distorted.

## **68. DOES HOLINESS INCLUDE HOW CHRISTIANS USE MONEY?**

Absolutely. Holiness includes honesty, contentment, generosity, fair dealing, and care for people in need. The prophets and Jesus repeatedly connect faithfulness with economic life. Read Amos 5:21–24; Luke 12:13–34; 1 Timothy 6:6–19.

## **69. DOES HOLINESS INCLUDE SPEECH?**

Yes. Christians reject lying, slander, malicious speech, gossip, and destructive talk, and pursue truth, encouragement, gratitude, gentleness, and speech that builds others up. Read Ephesians 4:25–32; James 3.

## **70. DOES HOLINESS INCLUDE HOW CHRISTIANS TREAT PEOPLE WITH LESS POWER?**

Yes. Scripture repeatedly commands care for the poor, widows, orphans, foreigners, workers, the oppressed, and vulnerable people. Holiness is not merely private morality; it includes justice and mercy.

## **71. CAN SOMEONE APPEAR VERY “HOLY” WHILE TREATING PEOPLE TERRIBLY?**

Yes. Jesus repeatedly confronts religious hypocrisy. Bible knowledge, public prayer, religious rules, and moral discipline can coexist with pride, cruelty, dishonesty, or exploitation. External religiosity is not the same as Christlike holiness.

## **72. WHY DID JESUS CONFRONT THE PHARISEES SO STRONGLY?**

Not because caring about obedience was wrong. The problems included hypocrisy, self-righteousness, misplaced priorities, love of status, burdening others, and neglecting justice, mercy, and faithfulness. Read Matthew 23:23–28.

## **73. WHAT IS SCRUPULOSITY?**

Scrupulosity is excessive moral or religious fear: preoccupation with whether one has sinned, offended God, prayed correctly, confessed sufficiently, or performed religious duties perfectly. It can involve repeated reassurance-seeking and intense guilt over uncertain or minor



matters.

#### **74. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CONVICTION AND CONDEMNATION?**

Conviction identifies sin and calls toward repentance and restoration. Condemnation declares guilt and judgment. Romans 8 says there is no condemnation for those in Christ. When God exposes sin, the Gospel provides somewhere to go: Jesus. Read John 16:7–11; Romans 8:1–4; 1 John 1:9–2:2.

#### **75. WHAT SHOULD SOMEONE DO IF HOLINESS TEACHING MAKES THEM CONSTANTLY TERRIFIED OF GOD?**

Return to the Gospel. Ask whether Scripture is actually being taught or human rules; whether repentance is connected to grace or only shame; whether Jesus is presented as sufficient; and whether the teaching produces Christlikeness or chronic fear and control.

##### **Pastoral Safeguard**

A tender conscience should be shepherded toward Christ—not exploited through fear.

#### **76. DOES GOD EXPECT CHRISTIANS TO PURSUE HOLINESS?**

Yes. Hebrews says to make every effort to be holy; Peter says to be holy in all you do; Paul commands believers to put away sinful patterns and pursue righteousness. Grace never becomes permission to stop caring about obedience.

#### **77. HOW CAN CHRISTIANS PURSUE HOLINESS WITHOUT TRYING TO EARN SALVATION?**

Keep the Gospel order clear: God saves by grace → believers belong to Christ → the Spirit indwells them → they learn to obey → they grow in Christlikeness. Obedience is the fruit of salvation, not the purchase price.

#### **78. WHAT PRACTICES HELP CHRISTIANS GROW IN HOLINESS?**

God commonly forms His people through Scripture, prayer, worship, fellowship, the Lord's Supper, baptismal identity and remembrance, confession, repentance, service, generosity, accountability, and ordinary obedience. These do not earn God's love.

#### **79. DOES BAPTISM RELATE TO HOLINESS?**

Yes. Baptism identifies believers with Jesus Christ and His saving work. Romans 6 connects baptism with Christ's death and resurrection and calls believers to live in light of that identity. Christians differ over baptism's precise relationship to regeneration, covenant membership, timing, and mode, but historic traditions connect baptism with belonging to Christ and being set apart as His people.

#### **80. DOES THE LORD'S SUPPER RELATE TO HOLINESS?**

Yes. The Supper centers believers on Christ's body and blood and the new covenant. Paul warns against participating carelessly while mistreating Christ's body. The meal joins grace, remembrance, communion, self-examination, and love for the Church.

#### **81. IS THE CHURCH CALLED HOLY?**

Yes. The New Testament calls Christians saints or holy ones and describes the Church as a holy nation, royal priesthood, God's temple, Christ's body, and a people being prepared for Him. God is forming a holy people, not merely isolated holy individuals.

#### **82. WHAT SHOULD CORPORATE HOLINESS LOOK LIKE?**

A holy church increasingly reflects God's character through faithful teaching, Christ-centered worship, truthful relationships, care for vulnerable people, responsible leadership, accountability, sexual integrity, financial honesty, generosity, careful discipline, reconciliation where possible, and refusal to protect serious wrongdoing.

##### **Memory Anchor**

God is not merely making holy individuals. He is forming a holy people who together reflect the character of Christ.

#### **83. WHAT DOES CHRISTIAN IDENTITY HAVE TO DO WITH HOLINESS?**

Those who belong to Christ have been called, cleansed, sanctified, adopted, and given the Holy Spirit. The commands of Christian life flow from this identity: become in practice what God has called you to be in Christ.

#### **84. WHAT IF A CHRISTIAN'S GROWTH IS SLOW?**

Slow growth can still be real growth. Some sins fall away quickly; others involve long battles. Christians should not excuse sin, but neither should ongoing struggle automatically be treated as proof that God has abandoned them.

#### **85. WHAT IF A CHRISTIAN FALLS INTO SERIOUS SIN?**





Serious sin should be treated seriously. It may require repentance, confession, accountability, church discipline, restitution, removal from leadership, legal consequences, or long-term rebuilding of trust. Grace does not erase consequences, but genuine repentance is not beyond Christ's forgiveness.

## **86. DOES FORGIVENESS AUTOMATICALLY RESTORE SOMEONE TO MINISTRY LEADERSHIP?**

No. Forgiveness, fellowship, trust, qualification, and leadership restoration are distinct questions. Especially after abuse, exploitation, serious dishonesty, or misuse of authority, protecting others and honoring biblical qualifications matter.

### **Ministry Safeguard**

Grace should never be used to bypass accountability or return unsafe leaders quickly to positions of power.

## **87. WHAT IS THE GOAL OF CHRISTIAN HOLINESS?**

The goal is Christlikeness, not merely stopping bad behavior. God forms people who increasingly reflect Jesus in love, truth, purity, humility, justice, mercy, faithfulness, courage, gentleness, and obedience. Read Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18.

## **88. WILL CHRISTIANS EVER BE PERFECTLY HOLY?**

Ultimately, yes. God's saving work will be completed. Believers will be glorified, sin will no longer corrupt them, and they will see Christ and be made like Him. Whether complete sinlessness is attainable before glorification is debated and is explored in Part Two.

## **89. WHAT DOES REVELATION TEACH ABOUT GOD'S HOLINESS?**

Revelation repeatedly portrays heavenly worship centered on God's holiness: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty." Holiness is not a temporary Old Testament concern. Read Revelation 4:8–11.

## **90. WILL PEOPLE BE AFRAID OF GOD IN THE NEW CREATION?**

Revelation presents God's redeemed people living in His presence, seeing His face, with curse and death gone. Perfect holiness and perfect fellowship finally coexist without sin.

## **91. WHAT HAPPENS TO THE BIBLE'S HOLINESS PROBLEM?**

The storyline resolves: Eden's presence is lost through sin; Sinai brings nearness with boundaries; tabernacle and temple bring mediated presence; Jesus comes among humanity; the cross deals decisively with sin; the Spirit dwells in God's people; and in new creation redeemed humanity dwells with God forever.

## **92. WHAT SHOULD GOD'S HOLINESS PRODUCE IN CHRISTIANS?**

Awe, worship, humility, repentance, gratitude, obedience, trust, joy, and wonder at grace. The more clearly someone understands God's holiness, the more astonishing the Gospel becomes.

## **93. WHY DOES GRACE BECOME MORE BEAUTIFUL WHEN WE UNDERSTAND HOLINESS?**

Because grace is not a holy God casually shrugging at evil. Grace is the holy God making a way for guilty people to be forgiven and brought near without denying His righteousness. Read Romans 3:21–26.

## **94. WHAT IS THE BIGGEST MISTAKE PEOPLE MAKE ABOUT HOLINESS?**

One mistake is reducing holiness to "God doesn't sin." Another is reducing it to "Christians follow stricter rules." Biblical holiness is larger: God is utterly unique, glorious, pure, righteous, and good, and Christian holiness means belonging to Him and increasingly reflecting His character through Christ and the Spirit.

## **95. WHAT SHOULD SOMEONE DO WHO FEELS TOO SINFUL TO COME TO GOD?**

Come through Jesus. Do not wait until you have made yourself clean enough. Confess, repent, trust Him, and receive mercy. Hebrews tells struggling Christians to approach the throne of grace through their great High Priest. Read Hebrews 4:14–16.

## **96. WHAT SHOULD SOMEONE REMEMBER ABOUT THE HOLY GOD?**

God is utterly unique and perfectly pure. His holiness does not compete with His love. Sin is serious because God is holy; grace is astonishing because God is holy. Jesus reveals the Holy One and makes sinners clean. The Spirit dwells in God's people, the Church is being formed into a holy people, and one day God's people will live in His holy presence without sin, shame, death, or separation.

### **Beginner Memory Anchor**

The holy God does not tell sinners to make themselves clean enough to approach Him. In Jesus Christ, He provides the cleansing that brings them near.

## **BEGINNER SUMMARY**



God is holy. His holiness includes perfect moral purity, but it means far more than simply being without sin. God is utterly unique. His holiness is inseparable from His love, justice, mercy, truth, goodness, wisdom, and glory.

At the burning bush, Sinai, the tabernacle, and the Day of Atonement, Scripture teaches both the seriousness of sin and the astonishing truth that God Himself provides a way for sinful people to dwell near Him. Isaiah saw the Lord, confessed his uncleanness, was cleansed, and then was sent.

Jesus brings the holiness storyline into astonishing focus. The Holy One moves toward the unclean. He touches lepers, heals the sick, raises the dead, welcomes sinners, deals with sin at the cross, and opens access to God. The Father calls a people, the Son cleanses them, and the Spirit dwells within them and forms Christlike holiness.

Christian holiness is not an attempt to earn salvation. It is the fruit of belonging to the God who saves. It is not legalism, chronic shame, spiritual superiority, external appearance, or fear-based control. Biblical holiness looks increasingly like Jesus.

The story ends with God's redeemed people seeing His face. Sin, death, and the curse are gone. The holy God dwells with His holy people forever.

### Final Part One Memory Anchor

God's holiness shows us the seriousness of sin. Jesus shows us the astonishing way the Holy One brings sinners home.

## PART TWO — WANT TO GO DEEPER? — INTERMEDIATE

### Reader Safeguard

Part Two introduces theological terms, difficult passages, and genuine areas of Christian disagreement. You do not need to master these categories to understand the central truth: God is perfectly holy, Jesus makes sinners clean, and the Holy Spirit is forming God's people into the likeness of Christ.

### 97. WHAT BIBLICAL WORDS HELP EXPLAIN HOLINESS?

In the Old Testament, qadosh and qodesh belong to the primary holiness word family. In the New Testament, hagios commonly means holy and hagiasmos can describe holiness or sanctification. Word studies illuminate theology but do not replace reading passages in literary, covenant, and historical context.

### 98. DOES “HOLY” PRIMARILY MEAN “OTHER”?

God's otherness captures His radical distinction from creation, but holiness cannot be reduced to difference alone. Biblical holiness includes God's perfect goodness, purity, righteousness, majesty, and glory.

### 99. WHAT IS GOD'S TRANSCENDENCE?

God is above and beyond creation. He is not one being among many inside the universe. Creation depends on Him; He does not depend on creation. Read Isaiah 40:12–26; Acts 17:24–25.

### 100. DOES TRANSCENDENCE MEAN GOD IS FAR AWAY?

Not necessarily. God transcends creation while also being present and active within it. Christian theology speaks of transcendence and immanence together. The transcendent Holy One draws near, speaks, covenants, dwells among His people, comes in the Son, gives the Spirit, and promises eternal fellowship.

### 101. IS GOD MORE HOLY THAN HIS OTHER ATTRIBUTES?

Scripture gives extraordinary prominence to holiness, but God is not composed of competing attributes. His character is perfectly unified.

### Optional Deeper Concept

The next questions introduce divine simplicity, a historic way of describing the unity of God's character. Understanding the term is not necessary to grasp the central truth: God is never divided against Himself.

### 102. WHAT IS DIVINE SIMPLICITY?

Divine simplicity is a classical Christian term meaning God is not composed of parts. His love, holiness, justice, mercy, wisdom, and power are not detachable pieces. The terminology is theological rather than biblical vocabulary, but it protects the truth that God's perfections are unified.

### 103. DO ALL CHRISTIANS USE THE LANGUAGE OF DIVINE SIMPLICITY?

No. The doctrine has deep roots in Catholic, Orthodox, Reformed, Lutheran, and other classical traditions, though contemporary theologians debate its precise formulation. The central truth remains that God is not internally divided.

#### **104. DOES GOD'S HOLINESS COMPETE WITH HIS LOVE?**

No. God's love is holy love and His holiness is loving. At the cross, God's righteousness and saving love appear together. Read Romans 3:21–26; 5:6–11.

#### **105. DOES GOD'S HOLINESS COMPETE WITH HIS MERCY?**

No. Exodus 34 places compassion, patience, steadfast love, forgiveness, and justice together. The same holy God who judges evil delights in mercy. Read Exodus 34:5–7; Micah 7:18–20.

#### **106. WHY WERE PURITY LAWS SO IMPORTANT IN ISRAEL?**

Israel's purity system created categories of holy/common and clean/unclean. These embodied practices taught that life with the holy God involved boundaries, cleansing, reverence, and covenant order.

#### **107. ARE MORAL SIN AND RITUAL UNCLEANNESS THE SAME THING?**

No. Ritual uncleanness could arise from childbirth, menstruation, seminal emissions, corpse contact, or skin conditions without implying moral guilt. The categories sometimes interact but must not be collapsed.

#### **108. WHY DOES DEATH CREATE SO MUCH UNCLEANNESS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT?**

Death represents a deep consequence of the fall. Purity imagery contrasts God's life-giving presence with the corruption and disorder associated with death. This becomes especially important when Jesus touches the dead and makes them live.

#### **109. HOW DOES JESUS FULFILL THE PURITY SYSTEM?**

Jesus cleanses lepers, heals bodily impurity, raises the dead, forgives sin, and offers Himself as the decisive sacrifice. Hebrews describes Him as accomplishing the cleansing the earlier system anticipated. Read Mark 1:40–45; Hebrews 9:11–14; 10:1–22.

#### **110. WHY DON'T CHRISTIANS FOLLOW ALL OF LEVITICUS' RITUAL PURITY RULES?**

Christians understand those laws within the covenant storyline fulfilled in Christ. The New Testament shows major changes concerning food laws, temple worship, priesthood, sacrifices, circumcision, and ritual purity. Read Mark 7:14–23; Acts 10–11; Colossians 2:16–17; Hebrews 8–10.

#### **111. DOES THAT MEAN THE PURITY LAWS HAVE NOTHING TO TEACH CHRISTIANS?**

No. They continue revealing truths about God's holiness, human uncleanness, sin and death, cleansing, sacred boundaries, and God's provision for approaching Him.

#### **112. WHAT DOES "WITHOUT HOLINESS NO ONE WILL SEE THE LORD" MEAN?**

Hebrews 12:14 should be read within Hebrews' larger message of grace, perseverance, discipline, and access through Christ. It does not teach earning heaven through flawless morality, but it does teach that holiness is not optional to Christian discipleship.

#### **113. WHAT DOES "OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE" MEAN?**

The image communicates God's holiness, jealousy, majesty, and judgment. Grace has not made God trivial. Believers receive an unshakable kingdom and therefore worship with reverence and awe. Read Deuteronomy 4:23–24; Hebrews 12:18–29.

#### **114. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SERVILE FEAR AND FILIAL FEAR?**

Christian theology sometimes distinguishes servile fear—the terror of punishment—from filial fear, the reverence of a beloved child who does not want to dishonor a loving Father. The terminology is not biblical vocabulary, but the distinction can be useful.

#### **115. DID JESUS FEAR THE LORD?**

Isaiah 11 describes the Messiah as delighting in the fear of the Lord. Jesus perfectly honors, obeys, and loves the Father, showing that fear of the Lord cannot simply mean sinful terror.

#### **116. WHAT HAPPENED TO ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA?**

Acts 5 describes them dishonestly misrepresenting the proceeds of a property sale. Peter confronts the lie to the Holy Spirit; both die, and great fear comes upon the Church.

#### **117. WHY IS THIS STORY IMPORTANT IN A STUDY OF HOLINESS?**

Like Nadab and Abihu near the inauguration of tabernacle worship, Ananias and Sapphira appear in a formative covenant-community moment. The story communicates that God's holiness did not disappear at Pentecost.

#### **118. SHOULD ACTS 5 MAKE CHRISTIANS AFRAID GOD WILL KILL THEM FOR EVERY LIE?**



No. Acts does not portray every later sin receiving immediate physical judgment. The event is extraordinary and teaches the seriousness of hypocrisy and lying before God. The response should be reverence and truthfulness, not obsessive panic.

### **119. WHAT IS DEFINITIVE SANCTIFICATION?**

Definitive sanctification describes the decisive way believers are set apart to God through union with Christ. Paul can call deeply imperfect Christians “sanctified in Christ Jesus” and “called to be his holy people.” Read 1 Corinthians 1:2; 6:11.

### **120. WHAT IS POSITIONAL SANCTIFICATION?**

This phrase emphasizes the believer’s set-apart status in Christ: I belong to God; I have been transferred into a new relationship; I am no longer defined simply by my old identity.

### **121. WHAT IS PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION?**

Progressive sanctification describes ongoing transformation. Christians already belong to God yet are still learning to live like the people they have become in Christ. They put sin to death, renew their minds, grow in love, practice obedience, and bear the Spirit’s fruit.

### **122. HOW CAN SOMEONE BE BOTH SANCTIFIED AND STILL BEING SANCTIFIED?**

Because the New Testament speaks from more than one angle: already God’s → still being changed → one day perfectly holy. Christian sanctification has past, present, and future dimensions.

### **123. WHAT IS JUSTIFICATION?**

Justification describes God’s declaration that sinners are righteous in His sight through Christ. In Protestant theology especially, it is distinguished from sanctification so that growth in holiness does not become the basis of acceptance with God. Read Romans 3:21–28; 5:1.

### **124. DO ALL CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS EXPLAIN JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION IN EXACTLY THE SAME WAY?**

No. Protestant traditions generally distinguish them sharply while holding them inseparably together. Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox theology use somewhat different frameworks for grace, justification, transformation, and participation in divine life. Historic traditions agree salvation depends upon God’s grace and redeemed people are called to transformed life.

### **125. WHAT IS GLORIFICATION?**

Glorification is the completion of God’s saving transformation. At resurrection, believers will no longer struggle with sin or corruption. A helpful sequence is justification → sanctification → glorification. Read Romans 8:28–30; 1 Corinthians 15:42–57; Philippians 3:20–21.

### **126. DOES SANCTIFICATION CONTRIBUTE TO JUSTIFICATION?**

Within classic Protestant theology, no. A believer is justified through faith in Christ, not because enough sanctification has been achieved. Good works are fruit and evidence of living faith rather than the basis of the verdict.

### **127. DOES THAT MEAN GOOD WORKS ARE OPTIONAL?**

No. Ephesians says believers are saved by grace through faith—not by works—and immediately says they are created in Christ Jesus for good works. Grace removes boasting, not obedience. Read Ephesians 2:8–10.

### **128. WHAT DOES PHILIPPIANS 2 MEAN BY “WORK OUT YOUR SALVATION”?**

Paul tells believers to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, then says it is God who works in them. Christians act; God works. Growth is neither passive inactivity nor self-powered moral improvement. Read Philippians 2:12–13.

### **129. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO “PUT SIN TO DEATH”?**

Romans 8 and Colossians 3 use strong language about actively resisting sinful patterns. Historic theology sometimes calls this mortification. It can include repentance, avoiding temptation, accountability, renewed thinking, prayer, confession, and replacing sinful habits with faithful ones.

### **130. WHAT IS VIVIFICATION?**

Vivification is an older term for being made alive to righteousness and growing in new obedience. Christian holiness is not merely killing bad habits; it is becoming alive to the good. Read Ephesians 4:20–32.

### **Optional Deeper Concept**

The next questions explore a genuine disagreement among faithful Christians about how far sanctification may progress in this life. All traditions discussed affirm salvation by grace, genuine growth in holiness, and ultimate dependence on Christ.

### **131. CAN A CHRISTIAN BECOME COMPLETELY SINLESS IN THIS LIFE?**



Christians disagree. All historic traditions affirm serious growth in holiness; the disagreement concerns whether complete freedom from sin is attainable before glorification and what “perfection” means in relevant passages.

### **132. WHAT DO MANY REFORMED AND EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS TEACH?**

Many teach that believers can make substantial progress but continue to struggle with sin throughout earthly life. They emphasize Romans 7, Galatians 5, Philippians 3, James 3, and 1 John 1. Complete sinlessness awaits glorification.

### **133. WHAT DO WESLEYAN AND HOLINESS TRADITIONS TEACH?**

They often teach entire sanctification, Christian perfection, or perfect love. John Wesley did not ordinarily mean absolute perfection or inability to make mistakes, but a heart perfected in love toward God and neighbor and freedom from the dominion of willful sin.

### **134. DOES “CHRISTIAN PERFECTION” MEAN NEVER MAKING A MISTAKE?**

In classic Wesleyan usage, no. Human beings may still experience ignorance, mistakes, limitations, weaknesses, and imperfect judgment. The doctrine focuses especially on love and intentional sin rather than absolute flawless performance.

### **135. WHAT PASSAGES MATTER IN THIS DEBATE?**

Matthew 5:48; 1 Thessalonians 5:23–24; Philippians 3:12–14; James 3:2; 1 John 1:8–10; and 1 John 3 are among the important texts. They should be interpreted together rather than building a doctrine on one verse.

### **136. WHAT DOES MATTHEW 5:48 MEAN BY “BE PERFECT”?**

The Greek word can carry the idea of completeness or maturity. In context Jesus has commanded enemy-love and points to the Father's generosity. The verse therefore belongs to a discussion of mature, complete love. Read Matthew 5:43–48.

### **137. WHAT DOES 1 JOHN MEAN WHEN IT SAYS BELIEVERS DO NOT KEEP SINNING?**

First John contains strong statements against sin while also saying that claiming to be without sin is self-deception and that believers who sin have an advocate. John distinguishes a life characterized by rebellion from the reality that believers may still sin and need Christ's advocacy.

### **138. WHY DOES THIS DEBATE MATTER PASTORALLY?**

Two errors are harmful: treating serious transformation as impossible, or teaching that ongoing struggle proves someone lacks enough faith or a necessary second experience. The New Testament calls believers to vigorous holiness while grounding them continually in grace.

#### **Pastoral Safeguard**

Never use a doctrine of sanctification to shame struggling believers into hiding sin instead of confessing it.

### **139. IS SANCTIFICATION ALWAYS GRADUAL?**

Often, but not always in the same way. Some changes can be dramatic; others unfold over years. Scripture gives no single emotional or chronological template. God works through decisive moments, daily obedience, correction, community, suffering, Scripture, prayer, and ordinary faithfulness.

### **140. IS THERE A “SECOND BLESSING” AFTER CONVERSION?**

Christians disagree. Wesleyan traditions may speak of entire sanctification as a distinct work of grace; Pentecostal traditions often distinguish conversion from baptism in the Holy Spirit as empowerment; other evangelicals understand Spirit baptism as occurring at conversion and later experiences as fillings, empowerments, renewals, or growth.

### **141. DOES SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE PROVE SOMEONE IS HOLY?**

No. The Corinthians possessed impressive gifts while Paul rebuked division, pride, immorality, and selfishness. The clearest evidence of maturity includes Christlike fruit. Read 1 Corinthians 1–3; 12–14; Galatians 5:22–23.

### **142. WHAT ARE THE “MEANS OF GRACE”?**

The phrase describes practices God uses to nourish and form His people. Traditions use it somewhat differently, but common examples include Scripture, prayer, baptism, the Lord's Supper, fellowship, worship, fasting, and works of mercy.

### **143. CAN SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES BECOME LEGALISTIC?**

Yes. Bible reading, fasting, prayer, accountability, and simplicity can all become performance or spiritual superiority. The problem is not the discipline itself but using it to earn what God gives by grace.

### **144. HOW SHOULD CHRISTIANS MEASURE SPIRITUAL GROWTH?**



Not merely by knowledge, emotional intensity, disciplines, strictness, or years in church. Better questions ask whether someone is becoming more like Jesus: more loving, truthful, humble, generous, repentant, patient, courageous, compassionate, and faithful when no one sees.

#### **145. DOES HOLINESS REQUIRE SEPARATION FROM “WORLDLY” PEOPLE?**

Not in the sense of avoiding all contact. Jesus ate with sinners, Paul says Christians cannot leave the world, and mission requires relationships with unbelievers. Biblical separation primarily means refusing participation in sin and idolatry. Read 1 Corinthians 5:9–13; John 17:14–18.

#### **146. WHAT DOES “COME OUT FROM THEM AND BE SEPARATE” MEAN?**

Second Corinthians 6 warns against idolatrous partnerships and spiritual compromise. It should not automatically be turned into “Christians must avoid anyone who thinks differently.” Read 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1.

#### **147. CAN HOLINESS BECOME A SUBCULTURE?**

Yes. Christians can substitute a cultural style for biblical holiness—clothing, music, hairstyles, entertainment, vocabulary, political identity, or unwritten social rules. Some practices may involve wisdom, but culture should not be confused with Scripture.

#### **148. HOW CAN SOMEONE DISTINGUISH BIBLICAL CONVICTION FROM COMMUNITY PRESSURE?**

Ask whether the teaching is clearly grounded in Scripture and context, whether it is a biblical command or preference, whether faithful Christians across cultures would necessarily reach the same conclusion, and whether disagreement produces shame or Christlike discernment.

#### **149. WHAT IS CHURCH DISCIPLINE?**

Church discipline is the process by which a Christian community addresses serious, persistent, unrepentant sin among those who claim Christ. Goals include truth, repentance, protection, restoration where possible, and faithfulness to Christ. Read Matthew 18:15–20; 1 Corinthians 5.

#### **150. IS CHURCH DISCIPLINE UNLOVING?**

Not when practiced biblically. Ignoring destructive sin is not always loving. But discipline becomes abusive when leaders use it to control disagreement, silence victims, protect themselves, punish questions, or demand unquestioning loyalty.

#### **151. WHAT DOES CORPORATE HOLINESS REQUIRE OF CHURCH LEADERS?**

Leaders carry particular responsibility. The New Testament emphasizes character, self-control, faithfulness, hospitality, gentleness, integrity, and teaching ability. Charisma does not replace character; gifting does not cancel qualification. Read 1 Timothy 3:1–13; Titus 1:5–9.

#### **152. SHOULD CHURCHES PROTECT THEIR REPUTATION WHEN SERIOUS SIN OCCURS?**

The Church should care about Christ’s reputation, but hiding wrongdoing to protect an institution is not the same thing. Covering abuse, corruption, exploitation, or serious misconduct can dishonor Christ more deeply than honest accountability. Holiness walks in the light.

#### **153. WHAT DOES “BE HOLY IN ALL YOU DO” MEAN?**

Holiness reaches every area of life: work, money, sexuality, speech, online behavior, family, friendship, rest, leadership, and conflict. There is no neat division between spiritual life and ordinary life. Read 1 Peter 1:13–21.

#### **154. HOW DOES HOPE PRODUCE HOLINESS?**

First John says those who hope to see Christ purify themselves. Believers know the direction of God’s story: they will see Christ and be like Him. That future begins shaping the present. Read 1 John 3:1–3.

#### **155. WHAT IS THE BEATIFIC VISION?**

“Beatific vision” is a traditional phrase for the final blessed vision of God enjoyed by the redeemed. The phrase is not biblical terminology, but it reflects promises such as “They will see his face” and “We shall see him as he is.” Read Matthew 5:8; 1 John 3:2; Revelation 22:3–5.

#### **156. WHAT DOES “BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART, FOR THEY WILL SEE GOD” MEAN?**

Purity of heart is not merely sexual purity; it involves an undivided orientation toward God. The promise points toward the deepest goal of salvation: God Himself. Read Matthew 5:8.

#### **157. WHY IS SEEING GOD THE GOAL?**

Because the greatest gift of salvation is not merely avoiding punishment, receiving blessings, living forever, or enjoying renewed creation. The greatest gift is God. Revelation’s final hope is: “They will see his face.”

#### **Memory Anchor**



The goal of holiness is not merely cleaner behavior. It is unhindered fellowship with God.

### 158. DOES GOD'S HOLINESS MEAN HE WILL ALWAYS REMAIN DISTANT?

No. God is transcendent yet draws near; holy yet cleanses sinners; unapproachable in infinite majesty yet approachable through Christ. The One utterly unlike us has chosen to bring us near.

### 159. WHAT DOES REVELATION 21–22 CONTRIBUTE TO HOLINESS?

Everything reaches completion. There is no temple because God and the Lamb are its temple. Nothing unclean enters the city. The curse is gone. God's servants see His face. Holy place, holy people, and holy presence reach fulfillment.

### 160. THE BIBLE'S HOLINESS STORYLINE

Creation: humanity lives in God's presence → Fall: sin brings corruption, guilt, death, and exile → Patriarchs: God establishes covenant promises → Exodus: God reveals incomparable holiness → Sinai: the holy God comes near with boundaries → Tabernacle and Law: God dwells among and forms a holy people → Temple and Prophets: God confronts hypocrisy and promises cleansing → Jesus: the Holy One makes the unclean clean → Cross and Resurrection: sin and death are decisively confronted → Holy Spirit and Church: God dwells in and forms a holy people → Sanctification: believers increasingly become what God has called them to be → Christ's return and glorification → New creation: God's servants see His face.

### 161. WHAT IS THE GREATEST CORRECTION TO DISTORTED IDEAS OF HOLINESS?

Do not confuse holiness with mere strictness, shame, fear, external conformity, religious superiority, human rules, isolation, control, or perfectionistic self-salvation. Look at God and Jesus. Biblical holiness is pure, beautiful, truthful, just, merciful, loving, life-giving, and utterly opposed to evil.

### 162. WHAT SHOULD SOMEONE DO WHO WANTS TO GROW IN HOLINESS?

Begin with Jesus. Remember the Gospel. Read Scripture. Pray. Walk by the Spirit. Confess sin honestly. Repent quickly. Participate in Christian community. Receive correction humbly. Practice obedience. Use wise boundaries. Serve. Give. Forgive. Protect the vulnerable. Reject spiritual performance. Keep returning to grace.

#### Final Memory Anchor

Holiness is not climbing far enough to reach the Holy God. It is the life that grows when the Holy God has brought us near through Jesus and is transforming us by His Spirit.

## REFLECTION / DISCUSSION

### Questions

1. How is God's holiness larger than simply saying "God does not sin"?
2. What does Isaiah 6 teach about holiness, conviction, cleansing, and calling?
3. Why is it important to distinguish ritual uncleanness from moral sin in Leviticus?
4. How does Jesus' contact with lepers, bodily impurity, and death deepen the holiness storyline?
5. What is the difference between biblical reverence and fear-based religious terror?
6. How can holiness teaching become legalistic or spiritually harmful?
7. What does the Trinitarian pattern—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—teach about how Christians become holy?
8. How does the Church's corporate holiness differ from merely having strict rules?
9. What is the difference between justification, definitive sanctification, progressive sanctification, and glorification?
10. Why do Christians disagree about entire sanctification or Christian perfection?
11. What evidence of holiness does Galatians 5 emphasize?
12. How can spiritual disciplines help believers grow without becoming tools of self-righteousness?
13. What should church discipline look like when holiness and love are held together?
14. Why is "seeing God" a fitting final destination for the biblical holiness story?
15. Which part of this study most changes the way you think about "Be holy, because I am holy"?

## FINAL REVIEW

### Review

What does it mean that God is holy?

God is utterly unique, perfectly pure, righteous, good, glorious, and incomparable.





Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

Does holiness only mean “without sin”?

No. Moral purity is essential, but biblical holiness also includes God's uniqueness, majesty, and absolute distinction from creation.

Does God's holiness compete with His love?

No. God's love is holy love, and His holiness is never unloving.

Why did Israel need priests, sacrifices, and sacred boundaries?

They taught that sinful people cannot casually enter the holy God's presence and that God Himself must provide the way of approach.

Was ritual uncleanness always sinful?

No.

How does Jesus change the holiness storyline?

The Holy One enters a world of impurity, sin, and death and brings cleansing, forgiveness, life, and access to God.

Does grace make God less holy?

No. Grace provides cleansing so sinners can approach the God who remains perfectly holy.

What is sanctification?

Being set apart to God and increasingly made holy.

Who sanctifies Christians?

The triune God: the Father calls, the Son cleanses and redeems, and the Holy Spirit indwells and transforms.

What is definitive sanctification?

The decisive setting apart of believers to God through Christ.

What is progressive sanctification?

The believer's ongoing growth in Christlike holiness.

What is justification?

God's declaration that sinners are righteous through Christ.

What is glorification?

The final completion of God's transforming work when believers are raised and freed completely from sin.

Can Christians become completely sinless before glorification?

Christians disagree. Wesleyan-Holiness traditions and many Reformed/evangelical traditions interpret the relevant passages differently.

Does holiness mean legalism?

No.

Does holiness include justice, money, speech, relationships, and treatment of vulnerable people?

Yes.

Can a church appear strict while being unholy?

Yes.

What should holiness increasingly look like?

Jesus Christ.

What is the final goal of holiness?

Perfect fellowship with God—His redeemed people seeing His face and dwelling with Him forever.

## SCRIPTURE READING PATH

### Reading Path

Exodus 3:1–15 — Holy ground and the God who draws near

Exodus 15:1–18 — Majestic in holiness

Exodus 19–20 — The holy God at Sinai

Exodus 25:1–9 — God dwelling among Israel

Leviticus 10 — Nadab and Abihu

Leviticus 16 — The Day of Atonement

Leviticus 19 — “Be holy” expressed in everyday covenant life

2 Samuel 6:1–11 — Uzzah and the ark

Isaiah 6:1–8 — Holy, holy, holy

Isaiah 57:15 — The high and holy God who dwells with the contrite

Ezekiel 36:22–28 — Cleansing, a new heart, and the Spirit

Matthew 5:1–48 — Purity, righteousness, enemy-love, and maturity



Mark 1:40–45 — Jesus cleanses the leper  
Mark 5:21–43 — Jesus overcomes impurity and death  
John 17:14–19 — Jesus sanctifies His people in truth  
Acts 5:1–11 — Ananias and Sapphira  
Romans 3:21–26 — God's righteousness and the cross  
Romans 6–8 — New identity, sanctification, and life in the Spirit  
Romans 12:1–2 — Living sacrifice and transformed life  
1 Corinthians 1:2, 30 — Sanctified in Christ  
1 Corinthians 3:16–17 — The Church as God's holy temple  
1 Corinthians 6:9–20 — Washed, sanctified, and bodily holiness  
2 Corinthians 3:18 — Transformation into Christ's image  
Galatians 5:13–26 — The fruit of the Spirit  
Ephesians 4:17–5:2 — Putting off the old and putting on the new  
Philippians 2:12–13 — God working within believers  
Philippians 3:7–21 — Pressing toward completion  
1 Thessalonians 4:1–8 — God's will: sanctification  
1 Thessalonians 5:23–24 — God sanctifying completely  
Hebrews 4:14–16 — Confidence before the throne of grace  
Hebrews 9–10 — Christ, cleansing, sacrifice, and access  
Hebrews 12:14–29 — Holiness, reverence, and consuming fire  
1 Peter 1:13–21 — "Be holy, because I am holy"  
1 Peter 2:4–10 — A holy nation and royal priesthood  
1 John 1:5–2:2 — Light, confession, cleansing, and Christ's advocacy  
1 John 3:1–3 — Seeing Christ and being made like Him  
Revelation 4:1–11 — Holy, holy, holy  
Revelation 21–22 — The holy God dwelling with His people

## SCRIPTURE WORDING NOTE

### Note

This study primarily uses Scripture references, brief quotations, and careful paraphrase rather than reproducing long Bible passages. Because wording varies among Bible translations, readers are encouraged to open and read each cited passage directly in their preferred translation and consider its surrounding context.

## FINAL MEMORY ANCHORS

### Anchors

God's holiness does not merely mean He is better than us. He is utterly unlike us in His perfect purity, goodness, and glory—and through Jesus, the Holy One brings sinners near.

God does not sometimes choose between being loving and being holy. His love is holy, and His holiness is loving.

The Bible's question is not merely, "How can we find God?" It is, "How can sinners safely come near the holy God?"

When God's holiness exposes sin, His purpose is not merely to shame. He cleanses and calls.

Grace does not make God less holy. Grace makes a way for sinners to come near the Holy One.

The Father calls a holy people, the Son cleanses them, and the Holy Spirit forms the holiness of Christ within them.

The holiest person who ever lived was Jesus. Any vision of holiness that makes us less like Jesus is distorted.

A tender conscience should be shepherded toward Christ—not exploited through fear.

God is not merely making holy individuals. He is forming a holy people who together reflect the character of Christ.

The holy God does not tell sinners to make themselves clean enough to approach Him. In Jesus Christ, He provides the cleansing that brings them near.

The goal of holiness is not merely cleaner behavior. It is unhindered fellowship with God.

Holiness is not climbing far enough to reach the Holy God. It is the life that grows when the Holy God has brought us near through Jesus and is transforming us by His Spirit.



## FINAL TAKEAWAY

### Takeaway

God is holy—not merely stricter than humanity, morally better, or one being among others who happens to behave perfectly. He is the Holy One. There is no one like Him.

Sin matters because God is holy. But the Bible's story is not the story of the Holy One remaining forever behind barriers while sinners remain outside. God draws near. He reveals Himself to Moses, dwells among Israel, provides sacrifice and priesthood, cleanses Isaiah, promises a new heart and His Spirit, and then comes in Jesus Christ.

Jesus touches the unclean and they become clean. He approaches sinners and they receive mercy. He confronts evil, bears sin, dies, rises, and opens the way to God.

The Father calls a people to Himself. The Son cleanses them. The Holy Spirit dwells within them. The Church becomes a holy people learning together to reflect the character of Christ.

Christians pursue holiness not to make God accept them, but because through Christ they already belong to the Holy One.

One day sin, death, and the curse will be gone. God's servants will see His face. The story that began with humanity losing fellowship with the holy God will end with redeemed humanity dwelling joyfully in His presence forever.

The command remains: "Be holy, because I am holy."

The Gospel tells us how that can ever become possible:

The Holy One has come for us.