

# BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

**Sermon Series:** Mirroring God's Character (Exploring the Character of God)

**To be used with:** Session One, God is Holy

**Sermon Title Possibilities:**

My Holy Identity

A Holy Death

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Romans 6:1-14

**Connection to Unit Theme:** To complement the small group study of *Beyond Belief*, these sermon outlines will deal with the same topic as each small group session, but will approach it from a different Scripture passage. This way, the pastor can reinforce the study from the pulpit without rehashing the same Scripture passage.

The small group study focuses on six of God's character traits. This sermon series shows the impact that God's character has on the character of those who follow him. The fact that humans are made in the image of God means that we are to reflect his character in our lives.

The small group session this week is called "God is Holy," and the main point is "God's holiness calls me to be holy." Two big questions come from such a big declaration, "What does it mean to be holy?" and "How can I be holy?" This sermon will address both of those questions.

## Introduction:

In Leviticus 11:45, God told His people, "I am the Lord, who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy because I am holy." That sounds like an impossible command. How can humans who are flawed by sin be holy? What words or images come to your mind when you think of holiness? Do you picture a monk dressed in a flowing robe, praying in a remote monastery? Perhaps you see images of Mother Theresa, Billy Graham, or Beth Moore.

[Download images of these people from the internet to use as visuals.]

Growing up we are told as children that we can be anything we want to be if we try hard enough. This creates enormous pressure in a child to measure up to other's standards. When God tells us as his children to be holy because he is holy some of those familiar feelings of pressure and stress pop up. As teenagers or young adults we started to realize that we could not become anything we wanted to become but hopefully we realized that we were created for certain things.

We started to realize that God had a specific purpose in mind when he created us. Some of us were designed to be doctors, lawyers or CPA's. Some of us were designed by God to be missionaries, ministers, or teachers. The question turned from what do I want to be to what is God's purpose for my life? Success in life is defined by allowing God to fulfill his purpose in our life. The same can be said when it comes to the issue of holiness.

Holiness is not achieved by doing more spiritual things or even about trying harder as a Christian. Holiness is only achieved by the transformational power of the Holy Spirit. Listen to Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

[Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11]

## 1. Transformers (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

- Paul made it clear that unjust or wicked people would not inherit the Kingdom of God rather they would face the divine judgment of God.
- The Corinthian Christians were deceived into thinking that the way they lived did not matter because they were justified by God's grace. They were holy people living like wicked people.
- Paul listed lifestyles of those who were outside of the Christian community. These were not occasional sins committed by people but rather patterns they adopted into their lives. He included social sins committed against other people as well.
- Paul made it clear that these people who pursued these wicked things rather than God would not go to heaven. He reminded his readers that they once were those types of people but God changed them. In verse 11 he stated that they were like those wicked people but then they were washed, justified, and sanctified by someone else. They were changed by the Holy Spirit in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Application Points:* Christ followers are holy because the Holy Spirit makes us holy. Out of holiness we change our behavior to reflect our new identity behavior. First living in holiness starts with understanding and believing that our old ways do not have any power over us anymore. Secondly we must see ourselves washed and cleansed from our sins and see ourselves as sanctified and justified. Look at a picture of yourself from ten years ago. Now look at yourself in a mirror. You are not the same person you were ten years ago; time has transformed you. Look at your spiritual mirror. You are not the same person you were before you met Jesus. He has transformed you. Live in your new identity.

[Read Romans 6:1-14]

## 2. The Walking Dead (Romans 6:1-14)

- *The Walking Dead* is a television series about living on earth with zombies. Zombies are fictional characters also called the undead and who although they are dead still roam the earth pursuing the living. Paul called Christians in Rome to consider themselves dead to their old way of life pursuing sin. He then challenged them pursue life in Christ.
- In order to live holy lives we must first see our need to progress spiritually.
- When Paul said that Christians died to sin he used the past tense. When he asked how could a Christian live in sin he used the future tense, how could a Christian continue to live under the power of sin. Although Christians continue to sin we are not under the power of sin. We must accept this fact and live accordingly.
- Jesus shed his blood to wash away our sins and in response we must let the cross crucify us. Paul showed our connection to Jesus on the cross. He died for us and we died with him. Until we make that connection our self is still in control. Until we grasp this truth we will continue to attempt to achieve holiness through our own efforts.

- In verse 13 Paul stated that Christians must offer themselves to God. Therefore, crucifixion of the old self must take place before we can experience living in holiness.

*Application Points:* Although Christians continue to sin, we are not ruled by sin. If we find ourselves in a sinful lifestyle it is because we have chosen to live that way. It is not because we did not have another option. The key according to Paul is to not offer our bodies or minds to sin but rather to offer them to God daily. This starts with how we see ourselves and lead to how we conduct ourselves. Even times we do not feel holy we are holy if the Spirit of God lives in us.

**Conclusion:** If we are going to mirror God's character of holiness we must first recognize that we are holy. We must learn what it means to offer ourselves to him daily. We must believe that we are not slaves to sin because Jesus broke the power sin had over our lives. Once our mind is set on this truth our actions can follow. When you go home today look in a mirror and see that you are holy. Commit each morning to experience life that day as a holy person. If we do sin then we must confess it immediately and not let sin take hold of us. Remember, that is our choice.

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