

JOHANN MINISTRIES

Holiness Series 1

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Note:

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Be blessed by the teachings from the Word of God
Dr Johann Melchizedek Peter*

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CHAPTER 1 DEFINITION OF HOLINESS

One of the most important attributes of God is holiness. “Holiness” in the Bible – and all other words derived from this word such as “holy” or “holiest of all” – comes from the Hebrew word “*qodesh*” or the Greek word “*hagios*”, which means to be holy or to be separated unto Him.

The word “sanctify” also carries the same meaning as “*qodesh*” and “*hagios*”. However when we use these words “holy” and “sanctify” in English, we tend to treat them separately. We see “sanctify” as something that we need to do and “holy” as one of the attributes of God. In Greek and Hebrew however, there is no difference between these words “holy” and “sanctify” – they mean the same thing.

Another example of this concept are the words “faith” and “believe”. These are two separate English words and the dictionary gives totally different meanings on these two words. In Hebrew and Greek however, these words carry the same meaning and are considered the same word. “Faith” is a noun in English and since we do not have a verb for the word “faith”, we have invented the word “believe”.

To illustrate the point, let us for the sake of learning use “faith” as a verb in Mark 11:22-24. If you use just the pure Greek word, it will say (in verse 22): ***Have the faith of God. And then it goes on: Whatsoever things when you pray, faith that you receive them, and you shall have them.***

So while the word “faith” has constantly been used in Greek and Hebrew, we have not been able to use it the same way in English. We have had to convert the word “faith” from a noun into its verbal form – “believe” in order to use it as an ‘action’ word. This sometimes leads to the misunderstanding that “faith” and “believe” are different words in bible context when they are actually from the same word in both Greek and Hebrew.

In the same way, when we look at “holiness”, the words “holy” and “sanctify” are the same Hebrew and Greek words. Remember that it’s only in English that these two words are differentiated. Therefore, when reading the bible, remember that every time the word “sanctify” comes along, it means holy and “holy” means holy.

So what is holiness? We know that God wants us to be holy. He says so in his Word, “Be holy, for I am holy”. But what does it mean to be holy? Is Godliness holiness? Is it having freedom from sin? If we are free from sin, are we therefore sinless and equivalent to God?

We as Christians have struggled with grasping this concept for many years. How can we be holy, when we do not know what it means? Unless we are clear in our understanding on holiness, we are going to put anyone asking us a question on holiness – be they Christians or non-Christians - into a theological quagmire (quick sand) because we ourselves are confused.

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If we don't have an understanding of the concept of holiness, we cannot progress. Similarly if we do not understand the concept of faith, we cannot have faith. For what we cannot see, we cannot receive; what we don't understand, we cannot apply.

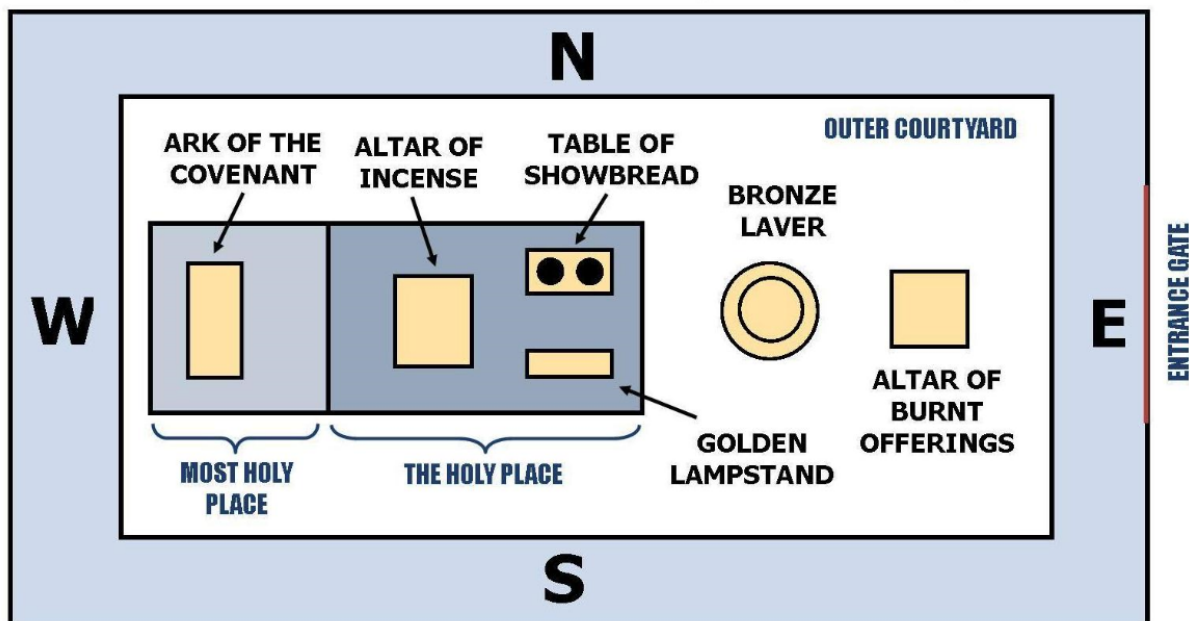
Holiness is one of the most fundamental attributes of God. God is our Father and to know him better we need to appreciate and understand this basic attribute of God, so we know how to approach him. The Bible has many examples of God saying *"I am holy"*; *"Be holy, for I am holy."* It is one of the words that occurs both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament.

Degrees of holiness

Let us look to the bible for some definitions of holiness. The easiest example for us to picture is the Tabernacle of Moses. In the Tabernacle of Moses – actually it was the Tabernacle of God, but Moses was the instrument, so in historical format, we call it the Tabernacle of Moses to differentiate it from the Temple of Solomon – there are three sections.

The outer section (called the Outer Courtyard) where you have the brazen altar and the laver made of bronze. Then there is the first veil. You enter the first veil and you enter the second section (called the Holy Place). In the second section (called the Holy Place), you have the candlestick, the table of showbread and the altar of incense, right before the second veil. And into the second veil lies the Ark of the Covenant.

THE TABERNACLE OF MOSES (EXODUS 35-40)



Now, notice the titles that God gave to those places? He called the outer sanctuary "the Outer Courtyard". He called the middle section "the Holy Place". And when you enter into the second veil, He called that "the Holiest of All", or in some translations the "Most

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Holy Place". The "Most Holy Place" in some translations, is put as the "Holiest of All". So we have this superlative description - "Holiest". To summarize, there is the Outer Courtyard, the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place.

By definition, if you use the word "most", it means that there are degrees of holiness. If you have "Holy" and something called "the Holiest", then there is a degree. Similarly you have "fast", "faster" and "fastest" in English. Simple English tells you that "fastest" is faster than "faster" and "faster" is faster than "fast". Applying the same principle, we conclude that there are different degrees of holiness as illustrated through the Outer Courtyard, the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place.

The book of Exodus provides other examples of the Holiness of God. Look at the title of some of the garments that He made for Aaron – Exodus 28:29 ***"So Aaron shall bear the names of the sons of Israel on the breastplate of judgment over his heart, when he goes into the holy place, as a memorial before the LORD continually."*** – the holy place in mention refers to the second section called the Holy Place.

Other references to the Holy Place are as follows:

In Leviticus 16:16, again the Holy Place is mentioned several times – ***"So he shall make atonement for the Holy Place..."***

In Leviticus 16:33 – ***"then he shall make atonement for the Holy Sanctuary, and he shall make atonement for the tabernacle of meeting and for the altar..."*** There is a relation to all these areas.

In Leviticus 16:3-4 – ***"Thus Aaron shall come into the Holy Place: with the blood of a young bull as a sin offering, and of a ram as a burnt offering. He shall put the holy linen tunic and the linen trousers on his body; ..."*** Do note that even his clothing is called "holy" and "separated unto Him".

The bible also shows us that God made certain qualifications in the requirements that He wanted of the priests and some of His requirements seemed to be – above normal.

Let us look at an example from Leviticus 21:1 - ***"And the LORD said to Moses, 'Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them: 'None shall defile himself for the dead among his people,'"***

If you were to read from verse 1 onwards, right down the line to all the requirements of a priest, you'll notice one thing instantly - the requirements to be a priest are higher than the requirements just to be among God's people. God set a higher standard.

In the Old Testament, God also required his priests to have beards - Leviticus 21:5. ***"... nor shall they shave the edges of their beards nor make any cuttings in their flesh."*** Does this mean that all priests of God will need to keep beards?

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This is not the case. Remember as we read this is the Old Testament, that there are some things that have been transformed or changed in the New Testament. The keeping of beards as a mandate for priests is one such example.

Even in the Old Testament, some prophets had not met those requirements, yet God used them and anointed them. As they progressed towards the New Testament, God began to show them the difference between an ordinance and the principle behind the ordinance.

This is not the only example. Another example is illustrated through the showbread that was reserved only for the priests to eat and David (as the king in a sense) violated it when the High Priest gave it to him to eat. Jesus made note of that situation and mentioned this principle in his teachings - that it was not according to the law, but it was permissible in that situation, showing the New Testament dawning on the Old Testament law.

This goes back to the point that God right from the time of the old covenant made a difference between levels of holiness or separation. When these were expressed, they were seen as commandments – a set of commandments for the priests which was higher than the commandments for the rest of the people.

To summarize, the first quality to understand about holiness – it is in degrees. There is a degree for the priests; there is a degree for the people. The degree for the priests is because the priests were required to go further in.

God got Moses to make the Tabernacle and the Tabernacle had degrees of holiness. There was the Outer Courtyard which was available for all the common people. Then there was the Holy Place which was available for the priests. And then there was the Most Holy Place which was only available for the High Priest. The more they wanted to come closer to God - because that symbolized the closeness with which they drew unto God - the holier they had to be.

For those in the Outer Courtyard, the number of rules is up to A. For those going into the Holy Place, for the Levites / the priests, the rules are A + B, more regulations. And when the High Priest wanted to go further in, for him the requirement was even higher - A + B + C. These represent outward expressions of holiness because they are entering into a depth of holiness. To summarize, the key point here is that there are degrees of holiness.

Now let us take this Old Testament principle and apply this to the New Testament. In the New Testament, all of us are given the ability to be priests and kings. We don't need a human mediator except the Lord Jesus Christ. In the New Testament, the Most Holy Place has been opened. Remember the veil that was torn into two at the moment of the Lord Jesus Christ's death?

So what degree of holiness are we talking about when we can now enter into the Most Holy Place? To put it another way, what degree of holiness do we now have when the Bible says that we have been sanctified in the Lord Jesus Christ?

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The Lord Jesus grants us holiness and says that we have been sanctified or made holy in Him, meaning that He has given us all the potential to enter into the Most Holy Place. Putting that together with the concept of holiness being in degrees, it means that He has enabled us through sanctification to enter into the Most Holy Place but whilst He has enabled us to enter, we still have our part to play in this by understanding that it is possible to progress into deeper holiness.

So why are Christians not pressing in to a higher degree of holiness? It is because of our lack of understanding. We have not understood the concept of holiness being in degrees. Many of us have thought that “holiness” is just holiness; we don’t realize that there are degrees of it and that we could press further into it.

The simple understanding on this has been: He has made us holy; by His blood He has washed and cleansed me; and “holy” is holy, there are no degrees of holiness – therefore there is nothing more that I need to do. But if holiness is in degrees, we are obligated to press further in.

Therefore we neglect the most basic thing that God is trying to tell us when He says “*Be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.*” In the Old Testament, it can be shown that God originally wanted the entire nation to be priests. It was due to their faults and their failures that only one tribe succeeded. He had always wanted all the tribes to be able to approach Him.

Let us now move into the second quality of holiness. Holiness is imparted rather than acquired. What is the difference between the two? Acquired means that you could get it with whatever strength/ability you have. But imparted means that there is a giver of it.

Holiness and sinlessness are not equal qualities. One is a subset of the other. Animals and dogs don’t stand in the same equation. Dogs are a subset of the definition of animals.

One of the results of holiness is sinlessness or freedom from sin to a different degree. But holiness is more than that. If you were to say, “All dogs are animals; therefore all animals are dogs.” – that would be wrong. Your second conclusion is wrong. Your first conclusion is right. But let’s say that that was your conclusion: “All dogs are animals; therefore all animals are dogs.” You put the two as equal. Be careful in theology where you put the equal sign. If you put the equal sign, you are making it reversible.

Sinlessness or freedom from sin is a subset of holiness. It is one of the many results of holiness. But holiness means something more than that. Holiness is a quality inherent in God. God says, “If you want to approach Me, you must be like Me.” And the outworking of what being like Him is involves freedom and separation from a lot of things, but you are being like Him in holiness.

Jesus said in Matthew 23:16-17 (when He was rebuking the Pharisees): “***You Pharisees swear in the temple and by the gold of the temple.***” Then in verse 17 of Matthew 23, He said: “***Which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold?***” It is the

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temple that sanctifies the gold, not the gold that sanctifies the temple. And so it is imparted and once it is imparted, there is a separation that takes place.

Another example lies in Leviticus 10. This story brings out the fullness of that separation. This is one of the first accidents (in the Old Testament) in the Tabernacle because they were new to all the sacrifices. And as they began the sacrifices of animals, they had one of the first accidents. Yes, they did have accidents in the Bible (and different types of accidents) because they did not follow God's word 100%.

It says in Leviticus 10:1-2 (about the two sons of Aaron): ***"Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. So fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD."*** In one day when they started the priestly ministry, Aaron lost two grown-up sons. Two sons died.

Verse 3: ***"And Moses said to Aaron, 'This is what the LORD spoke, saying: 'By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; And before all the people I must be glorified.' ... "*** In the Old Testament, if they approached God and they were not holy, the consequence was death. Moses said to Aaron, "God says, 'I must be regarded as holy.'" And then Aaron held his peace. It must have been a very sad day for him. Imagine losing two sons whom he had raised up all his life. Emotionally he would have been torn asunder.

Verse 4: ***"Then Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel the uncle of Aaron, and said to them, 'Come near, carry your brethren from before the sanctuary out of the camp.' "*** And so they carried them out.

Moses also said to Aaron in verses 6 & 7: ***"And Moses said to Aaron, and to Eleazar and Ithamar, his sons, 'Do not uncover your heads nor tear your clothes, lest you die, and wrath come upon all the people. But let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which the LORD has kindled. You shall not go out from the door of the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die, (Why did he forbid it? Because he said) for the anointing oil of the LORD is upon you.' ... "*** Notice what he said to Aaron? He didn't say, "Aaron, you cannot go out because it is against the commandment of God." He said, "Aaron, you now belong to God." For Aaron had dedicated himself to God. So God put His anointing oil on him. When God put the anointing oil on him, what was God saying?

Using the analogy of a hand transplant, our blood circulates to our organs and tissues in our body. When performing a hand transplant, it is not enough for a doctor to obtain a donated hand and to sew it on to the individual. In order for the hand to function, the body (to which the hand is attached to) needs to supply it with oxygen, blood vessels, nerve signals, etc. In other words, the body needs to accept the hand and make it part of its own. You can attach it but if the body rejects it, it is gone. Which is why many of those who have transplanted organs, have to throughout their lives take immune suppression drugs so that their bodies don't reject the foreign tissues that are attached to them.

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Aaron had a beard. In Psalms 133, it says, like the anointing oil that runs down to the beard of Aaron. So when He anoints, it runs down. Now, when He anoints, there is an impartation – God’s “nerve cell” or “connection system” now moves into that person, and the individual now belongs to God.

In the Old Testament, when the people brought their tithes to the Lord, it came in vegetables, in fruits and in animals because they didn’t use money much. They used mainly animals in barter trade and whilst they did use some money (some gold and silver) it was not in everything, and not as organized as in today’s society.

The Lord had a requirement in the Old Testament where He says that when you tithe your animal, you must let your animal pass by in random and start counting to 10. Every 10th animal belongs to the Lord. Knowing how sneaky, sly and subtly devious human beings can sometimes be, He also says that when you do that, make sure you don’t look around for the weakest number 10 or an old lamb that is about to conk out and say that’s number 10. The Lord says you must count it as it passes by in random.

So what happens when number 10 happens to be your favourite pet animal?

When I was a young child, my mother kept chickens in the backyard. My job was to scrub the chicken coop. I never liked that job but I still had to scrub it. And so to make this motivating for me, my mom gave me one of the chickens as a pet. I always fed extra food to my chicken and I liked my chicken.

Let’s for illustration purposes say that you also had a favourite chicken. Its name was Henry. You took Henry to bed with you, it slept with you, you carried and cuddled Henry all the time, your favourite little chicken. And so, you came to pay your tithes to the Lord and you are counting your chicken in random when Henry, your favourite chicken, comes up as number 10! You are aghast! You do not want to let Henry die!

Do you know what God says in Leviticus Chapter 27? Henry is now His chicken. If you want Henry back, pay for it! So you’ve actually got to buy it back from the Lord. The Lord says you can buy Henry back from Him, by paying another 20% on top.

So the next time you want to anoint something, think very carefully, because when you say “I dedicate something to the Lord”, it’s a one-way street. There is no coming back.

When the Lord anoints and consecrates, the Lord says you are also now His. It is imparted. Imparted means something came forth to make you holy. Nothing came from you to make yourself holy. You could keep all the Ten Commandments, and live your life righteously and you could live “in the eyes of the world” an upright life; yet not be holy. Holiness results in an upright life, but an upright life is not necessarily holiness. The logic behind is this: All dogs are animals but not all animals are dogs. That is the second quality. It is imparted.

When you are consecrated to God, you belong to God. When holiness is being imparted, the impartation is also an ownership claim. After the Exodus from Egypt, God said that the first born are now sanctified and they must give the yearly offering. They shall

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acknowledge that they are alive because “I saved them; they now belong to Me; they must pay Me for their lives.” So with impartation comes possession and ownership. But also consequences.

The story of Aaron in Leviticus 10 illustrates clearly the separation required and the consequences of disobedience. What do you think the New Testament consequence is?

The answer is that you will not be able to get into the realm of the Spirit. By His mercies, He spares us physical death. The New Testament does however illustrate a particular situation in Ananias and Sapphira’s case (in Acts 5) where the couple actually died because they lied to the Holy Spirit.

If you examine Acts 5 very carefully, the reason why Ananias and Sapphira died was not just because they lied to the Holy Spirit. What was behind it? The story is that they had a piece of land which they had sold and had dedicated the entire land to God. Now, if they hadn’t dedicated it to God and had said, “Look, we only want to give this portion (could be their tithes and offerings), just give this portion to God, the rest is ours.” – they wouldn’t have died.

But what they did was they said the entire portion was the Lord’s, they kept back part of what they had given to the Lord. In other words, they gave and on the one hand took back. Then they came and told Peter: “This is the whole thing.” And then Peter said: “Why do you lie to the Holy Spirit?” Now, what was happening here is that they had given to the Lord, the Lord claimed possession, and then they stole from the Lord. What was happening here? They were actually stealing back from the Lord by keeping back. They died on the spot.

The more God shows His holiness and the closer we are to Him, non-conformity bears great consequences. In the case of Ananias and Sapphira, non-conformity meant death.

The only person who can make you holy and an object holy is one who is holy. You cannot make yourself holy. It is imparted, not acquired. You are holy by the blood of the Lamb and if you want a greater degree of holiness, your progression is not by acquisition, but by impartation. In other words, you will wait upon the Lord to bring you nearer and then you experience the Lord. This is because the Lord has to prepare you to meet with Him. Each progression is by an impartation. That means you have to wait upon the Lord to impart an ability to get further. Not struggle to acquire it.

Time is still involved; effort is still involved. But notice this: An effort to receive is different from an effort to acquire. An effort to receive refers to something that is already there, assigned for you. You still do take some effort to receive what is there but it is a different type of effort from the effort required to acquire something where it’s not yours and you have to make an effort to try to acquire it.

Those in business will understand this. To illustrate with an example, the effort required to launch a product in a market where there is a need and the market is already there is very different from the effort required to launch a product where there is no demand and one requires to build a market from scratch.

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Using the example of a food crisis where there is not enough food going around, people will not be interested in purchasing anything else other than food. To try to sell them anything else will require strong effort. Thus the effort to acquire possesses very different qualities from the effort to receive.

If you understand that holiness is imparted, then you must also know how to bring yourself to the position to receive it.

The third quality is that holiness is past, present and future. 1 Corinthians 1:30 – ***“But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God– and righteousness and sanctification and redemption–”*** The word “sanctification” is holiness, so Christ has become our holiness.

In 1 Corinthians 6:11 – ***“And such were some of you. (Talking about the old lives.) But you were washed, but you were sanctified (that’s past tense), but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.”*** It’s in past tense: You were sanctified when you came into Christ.

In Hebrews 6: 1 - 2 – ***“Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.”*** So there is a foundation that is laid and he asked them to move forward to something that is yet to come.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:23. It tells us here: (Paul’s prayer for them) ***“I pray that the God of peace would set you apart or sanctify you completely; spirit, soul and body”*** Here he was speaking in future tense. ***“and preserving you blameless”*** In that same passage. ***“until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.”*** So there is your spirit, there is your soul and there is your body, and you are preserved until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ (and that is referring to the future). Until Jesus comes, He needs to preserve you in that state of sanctification. That is in the future tense.

In Hebrews 2:11 – ***“For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren,...”***

By now, you should recognise that you are holy and yet you are still progressing in holiness. These things come together when you bring the third quality in – that sanctification is past, present (He says you are being sanctified) and future. So it is an entire road that continues. This quality ties in with the first quality which talks about degrees of holiness and our progression within this. And the progression comes (we are told in 1 Thessalonians 5:23) because we are made up of spirit, soul and body. You are sanctified in your spirit; you are being sanctified in your soul; your body will be fully sanctified when Christ comes again. Spirit, soul and body. And so we need to be aware of three qualities of holiness.

CHAPTER 2 BEAUTY OF HOLINESS

What is beauty? Some people say “Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.” But unfortunately, Science has proved that wrong. Scientists have found that the average concept of what people called “handsome” or “beautiful” in another person is basically the face that everyone is used to seeing. So let’s say I take all your faces and use a computer program to morph all the faces together and make it an average face, all of you will find that the average face is nicer than any other face because you tend to see something in it.

Why do you sit in a nice place and look at the scenery that is beautiful for a long time? Because it brings you pleasure, it soothes you. Why do you like to sit at the beach and look at the scenery? Or go to a certain height and look at the scenic place? Because it is beautiful and it brings a sense of peace and calm to you.

A spider in a nice-looking spider web - unless you hate spider that is - has its own association with beauty. It looks in its right place in a spider’s web, but the spider on top of your sandwich just doesn’t look beautiful.

Beauty in the physical world is subjective and hard to define because different people have different definitions of it. Modern society provides some definition of physical beauty but if you were to visit a tribe that is not exposed to western society, they will likely have their own definition.

Some tribes define beauty based on the size of one’s lips. A mouth plate is put into the lips of their young which makes their lips grow big. In this tribe, big, giant lips are considered beautiful. If a young man in the tribe is looking to get married, he will be looking for the woman with the largest lips.

That is the concept of physical beauty. Although there is some average sense of what beauty is in humankind, there are also vast diversifications. To another tribe in Southeast Asia, beauty is defined in the length of the neck. They put rings on their neck until their necks lengthen. When a young man from this tribe is looking for a beautiful woman, he will be looking for a woman with a long neck. The longer the neck, the more beautiful she will appear to him – because that is the definition of beauty he grew up with.

Long ago in China, beautiful women were measured by their feet. The smaller the feet, the more beautiful; they didn’t care about any other parts.

There are some tribes in Southeast Asia, especially in East Malaysia, where women there don’t wear tops at all.” To them, this is nothing. It is just part of the way they dress.

Because we are all limited finite beings, we actually have to be taught what beauty is. We have all acquired our concept of beauty consciously or subconsciously through society’s influence and education. We acquire this. If you look at culture through the

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ages, what constitutes a beautiful woman in our modern society today is different from 1,000 years ago. Nowadays, the modern concept of a beautiful woman is in her figure: slim, etc. But long ago, beauty in a woman was not in her form necessarily because the most beautiful woman looked like a big giant pear, so the bigger the better.

Beauty as we as humans define it is usually limited to the physical realm. There are many other dimensions of beauty that human beings who are fallen do not see or understand; how much more the beauty of holiness.

The Bible defines beauty differently. There are many other forms of beauty than we think. Too many times we are influenced by the world's concept of what is beautiful.

In Proverbs 20:29 it says, ***“The glory of young men is their strength, And the splendor of old men is their gray head.”*** The word “splendor” is the same Hebrew word for “beauty”. Let us exchange the word “splendor” for “beauty” in the Old King James version. It says: ***“The glory of young men is their strength, and the beauty of old men is their gray head.”*** Isn't that interesting? We know that society at large, doesn't respect the elderly, the elderly themselves try their best not to appear aged. People spend thousands of dollars so that they don't look old.

The Bible says there is a certain beauty in an elderly person. There is a certain beauty that God defines in growing old in the Lord. Society fights so hard not to grow old. But the physical body? It's only temporary. When we get to heaven, there is no such thing as age anymore and we are all transformed into His likeness. But there is something about growing old graciously in the Lord and there is beauty in that. There is the beauty of wisdom upon their lives; there is the beauty of “experience” that is there reflected upon them. The Bible considers these things beautiful, but you won't find these things propagated in any beauty magazine.

The bible speaks about the inner beauty of a woman in 1 Peter 3:3-4 – ***“Do not let your adornment be merely outward – arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel – rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.”***

What this means is not to let the adornment be outwardly focused only. Some Christians have taken this verse to the extreme and they disallow women from braiding their hair, wearing gold, further quoting 1 Peter 3:3 – including lipsticks, make-up, etc. There exists in America today, a whole Christian denomination who don't do those things. The denomination is built around this doctrine and so their women don't cut their hair; they don't wear make-up; they don't use physical things to augment their beauty, whatever physical beauty. This misinterprets the Bible.

What is the position of the church?

The position of the church is not against braiding hair, not against all those things; it's just saying to do these things in “proportion”. To those who say that you shouldn't braid your hair, you shouldn't wear gold; it also says in verse 3 to not put on clothing. If you want to remove one, you must remove all, correct? If the Bible in the same passage says

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don't wear gold, it should also say don't wear clothing (which is terrible), right? So, you know, that shouldn't be correct. The Bible is saying that do not be engrossed just in the physical. There is something greater than physical beauty and that is the beauty of the spirit. And there is a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God – that's important.

Some women can be physically beautiful but ugly in their spirits. Their eyes are ugly – they reflect a hate temper, irritation, and other negative thoughts and behaviour. But the world only sees the physical; they don't see the spiritual.

On the other hand, there is such a thing as spiritual beauty, which in verse 4 says, “... **very precious in the sight of God.**” The good news is: This type of beauty never passes away; it is eternal. You have it in God and you develop it in God, you take it with you to heaven. Physical beauty, no matter how people augment it through operations, only lasts temporarily; it doesn't last forever. People fight to try to maintain their youth, but it's not a fight that they are going to win; they should just grow old graciously.

So if you are a young man looking for a bride, don't just look at the physical but also look at the spiritual. Before you get married, take a good look at your in-laws to be. In 40 years' time, your husband or wife-to-be may look like that. Physical beauty passes away but spiritual beauty is eternal and is very precious in the eyes of God.

The concept of beauty as we know it needs to be widened into a higher dimension. Our physical eyes are limited unless the Spirit opens our natural eyes to the spiritual world.

In the natural, when something is beautiful, it is harmonious, it is in proportion, it is mathematically “accurate”. Music, for example, good music has exact mathematical proportions; noise doesn't have the same synchronised form. If something has a physical proportion in beauty, you recognise that. Similarly, everything that is of beauty to God is always in harmony.

In the spiritual world, you can actually detect spiritual beauty. You can also detect a person's spiritual ugliness if it exists.

Exodus 28 gives us some insight into this, first, in reference to Aaron's garments that were made (in the Old Testament). It says in verses 2 & 3: “**And you shall make holy garments** (note the word “holy” again) **for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty. So you shall speak to all who are gifted artisans, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments, to consecrate him,** (that is, to set him apart) **that he may minister to Me as priest.**” The garments were part of the ways in which God consecrated or sanctified or separated him. Note the words in verse 2 which says that these were holy garments and the purpose of the holy garments is so that he would be clothed with glory and beauty.

1 Chronicles 16:29 gives another example. This is an exhortation to the Lord in the Psalm by David and this is what David declared in verse 29 of 1 Chronicles 16: “**Give to the LORD the glory due His name; Bring an offering, and come before Him. Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness!**”

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The Bible tells us: *“Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness!”* Holiness produces a form of beauty that gives pleasure to God. God wants us to be holy because holiness is His concept of the highest form of beauty. In the verse *“Worship Him in the beauty of holiness!”* – the *“beauty of holiness”* refers to God as well as us.

In Psalm 27:4, it says – ***“One thing I have desired of the LORD, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD, ...”*** Some translations have removed the word “beauty” and replaced it with “splendor” or “glory” or something else. The original word is “beauty”. In other words, the Lord is beautiful. And when He says *“Be holy, for I am holy.”* – He is saying *“Be beautifully holy, for I am beautifully holy.”*

You will find this verse occurring several times in the Old Testament – there is beauty in holiness. The end result of being holy is being beautiful in the eyes of God. God considers us His bride. And Jesus being the bridegroom would want the bride of Jesus Christ to be beautiful.

This concept needs to sink into us. The next time you think about holiness, think about it as being beautiful to God. It will expand your relationship with God. If you think about holiness as referring to freedom from sin, which includes that, then it will become hard to achieve as all you will be thinking about is fighting sin. But when you think about holiness as being beautiful in the eyes of God, it gives a totally different perspective. It becomes easier to fulfill because you can see its proportion.

You begin to see it from God’s perspective. What He wants is for you to look nice, to look pleasant in His eyes, and to be rid of ugliness. If you had decorated your house beautifully with nice-looking chairs, tables, silverware, plates; everything is nice: from the outside of your house all the way to the inside, and then I came in and placed some cow faeces on the living room table. It will not fit in.

Similarly, God has tremendous holiness and everything about him is beautiful. He says *“Be holy, for I am holy.”* In other words, He says *“Be beautiful, for I am beautiful.”* In Psalm 90:17, it says – ***“And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us, And establish the work of our hands for us; Yes, establish the work of our hands.”*** Now, before you do anything, the Lord says *“And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us...”* So holiness is the Lord’s beauty upon our lives.

Ugliness in the spirit realm is thousands of times worse than the physical realm. Satan is ugly. When something is terrible, ugly and an abomination, it makes you want to throw up. Spiritual ugliness is that way to God. No wonder God says, *“Be holy, because I am holy; Be beautiful, for I am holy.”*

When God sees what He defines to be the beauty of holiness in our lives, it gives Him pleasure. When we talk about being holy, we talk about giving God a smile on His face. That’s what it means. It’s not some fallen concept of just trying to keep the commandments. That is just an outcome. But the main goal is to bring a smile on the face of our Father who appreciates what true beauty is. He defines it for us as holiness, separated unto Him.

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In order to come to God in spiritual beauty, we need to understand what “beautiful” is. The Bible tells us what is beautiful and the person in the Universe that is the most glorious, the most splendid of all is our God. He is the personification of what beauty is. When the Lord says that He has beauty that He imparts, we’ve got to learn what that beauty is.

The Ten Commandments was God’s way of conveying to us what beauty is and what is needed to be in harmony with Him. Men have kept on falling as they struggled to keep the Ten Commandments because they did not understand the purpose of the Ten Commandments.

The purpose of the Ten Commandments is to make you beautiful in the eyes of God and we will acquire His beauty. So sometimes we struggle with the Ten Commandments of God as all we see is God doesn’t want us to sin. Do you know how a sinner interprets the Ten Commandments? He summarises the Ten Commandments as this: Thou shalt not have fun. Because he thinks sin is fun – that is his concept.

The Ten Commandments are not meant to rob us of fun or to rob us of joy. The Ten Commandments are the revelation of what the true concept of beauty is and God is always right. When people begin to break His commandments, things get ugly. In the end we find God is right. Let us start to understand that the Ten Commandments of God were given so that we can be beautiful in the eyes of God.

It is the same for you who are in the physical world: “Wouldn’t you like to look good?” People pay a high price for that, they spend thousands of dollars in cosmetic surgery just to look good. What is the motivation? They want to look beautiful.

If you are motivated to be spiritually beautiful and you understand what beauty is in the eyes of the Lord, then it becomes easy to keep the Ten Commandments. Hallelujah! There’s no price too high and no commandment too difficult to be beautiful in the eyes of God. Beauty comes from the Lord.

In Leviticus 10:10, the Lord said this to the priests after one of the priests fell short – ***“that you may distinguish between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean,”*** So He said: “I am giving you all these commandments so that you could differentiate between what is holy and unholy, and between what is unclean and clean.” Is there a difference between holy and clean, unholy and unclean?” There is unclean and clean; there is holy and unholy. The Bible says God wants His people to learn to distinguish between them.

Clean and unclean, holy and unholy. Is there a difference? Clean and unclean has to do with all things physical and carnal. The book of Leviticus, talks about clean and unclean animals. Some animals look physically clean and others physically unclean. Unclean animals are actually scavengers – they eat rubbish. The clean animals – they have two stomachs and they eat cleaner food.

All modern diseases of clean animals are due to men. The mad cow disease has been traced to the fact that when cows eat cows, they get mad. The mad cow disease was

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accentuated by human beings because humans made cow food out of dead animals and fed it to the cows when cows are meant to eat grass. So the cows became unhealthy, not because they knew better; because they trusted human beings and ate what was fed to them.

There are clean animals and unclean animals in the Bible. God told the Jews not to eat unclean animals because by virtue they are scavengers; they eat the dirt of the earth and they have a greater toxic content. Whilst there is an aspect in which clean and unclean refers to the physical realm; clean and unclean also refers to the ceremonial laws. However, the New Testament has gotten rid of some of the ceremonial laws. So our definition of clean and unclean needs an updating too.

In Acts 10, Peter had this vision as a Jew who hadn't touched any unclean animals and had never eaten any unclean animals all his life. In this vision that he had (Acts 10:11-14) – ***“and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth. In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. And a voice came to him, ‘Rise, Peter, kill and eat.’ But Peter said, ‘Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean.’ ”*** Peter meant that he had never eaten anything ceremonially unclean, or that is actually physically among the unclean animals. And God says here (verse 15): ***“... ‘What God has cleansed you must not call common.’ ”*** He is referring to Gentiles now, symbolically. He says the Gentiles would eat all unclean animals, and the Jews would regard the Gentiles as unclean, but whom God has now cleansed through the blood of the Lamb, must now be regarded as clean also.

In 1 Corinthians 7, the definition of clean and unclean goes beyond food. It talks about believers and unbelievers and about sanctification of holiness once again. In 1 Corinthians 7:14 -- ***“For the unbelieving husband is sanctified (or made holy) by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified (or made holy) by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.”*** What is being described here is not about physical cleanliness; he is talking about a dimension of spiritual separation. You are of the world or you are of God. If you are of the world, you are unclean; if you are of God, you are clean. So there is a dimension of separation.

Clean and unclean – what does it mean? If holiness and unholiness is different from clean and unclean, what is the difference? That is our question. So we are looking at clean and unclean – what does it actually mean?

If someone says that that they don't smoke, don't drink, don't sin, don't commit adultery, don't tell lies and therefore they consider themselves holy. That is not correct. If you don't do all those things, you aren't holy yet; you are just clean. Everything that has to do with physical sin and physical relationships, and anything to do with sin has to do with cleanliness or uncleanliness.

Let's say one of your little children runs out and plays in the mud and plays in the rain and wants to come back into the house. You say “stop right there”, and get the child straight to the bathroom. You clean your child and take away all the dirty clothes, make sure your child has a good scrubbing and then wrap him in a towel and bring your child

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out. What has happened here? Your child is clean but not dressed yet. You can take one of his old scrubby clothing to put on, but if your child is about to go out to meet grand-dad or to meet someone, what do you do? You put nice clothes on your child.

We all have two types of clothing. One set, which we call “the grubby clothes” that we wear around the house; and then we have our “nice clothes” for outings and special occasions. One set is for practical use, the other set is to accentuate your niceness, your beauty, to make you look better. So you have cleansed your child, you put clothing on your child, but make your child more beautiful.

Being holy means being beautiful; the two are equal. Being clean and unclean may not mean being beautiful. It is the beginning of being beautiful because the first step is to be cleansed. Clean and unclean is a subset of holy and unholy, which means that if you are holy, it automatically means you are also cleansed.

Because how can you clothe someone beautifully if there is mud all over him? You will make the most beautiful clothing dirty. So being clean is the first step to being holy but not yet into beauty. It’s just the first step. Being beautiful or being holy includes being cleansed but it does not stop there.

Isaiah 6 bears another example. It says here (verse 3-5) when he saw the Lord, who is of course the most beautiful and glorious being of the whole Universe. He saw the Lord and he saw the seraphim crying: **“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!”** Everything is full of His glory. In verse 5, he said: **“Woe is me, for I am undone (unclean)! ...”** If your translation translates anything else is the wrong translation; it’s the word “unclean” here. **“So I said: ‘Woe is me, for I am undone (unclean)! Because I am a man of unclean lips,** (Same Hebrew word “unclean”, so they should have been consistent and translate it that way.) **And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts.’ ”** In the end, one of the seraphim came and he took a live coal (verse 7): **“And he touched my mouth with it, and said: ‘Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged.’ ”**

Let’s differentiate this. Clean and unclean has to do with freedom from sin. It includes more than physical in that dimension. As you can see, it’s not just some physical dirt, it includes speaking wrong things and all other sin. When he was cleansed, it was sin and iniquity that was cleansed. That is what was causing the uncleanliness. So uncleanliness has to do with sin. Being cleansed has to do with purging and removing of sin and sin nature. You are then ready to be clothed with holiness, which is another step.

A lot of human concept of holiness is not a concept of holiness. It’s a concept of clean and unclean. We have fallen short of God’s definition because we have fallen short of His glory. Holiness is one step beyond being just cleansed. That is why He made the Outer Courtyard, the Inner Court and the Most Holy Place. By that making, He says there is a Holy Place and a Most Holy Place; there are degrees of holiness. But there is no such thing as degrees of cleanliness or uncleanliness. Either you are unclean or clean. Sin is sin. Either you are a sinner or you are not a sinner. Either you are cleansed from sin or you are not cleansed from sin. There is no half way.

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There are different degrees of sin. But the moment you have sin, it is sin. That makes you a sinner. So there is no such thing as different degrees of being cleansed – you are either cleansed or you are not cleansed. Even a little bit of dirt means you are unclean. But once you are cleansed, there are different degrees of holiness because there are different degrees of beauty. You can grow more and more beautiful in the Lord. Hallelujah! That's why the Bible says "holiness is the beauty of the Lord". And when it says "*Worship Him in the beauty of holiness!*", it is saying "*Put on the garments of beauty!*"

There are garments that He put on us to make us beautiful. Our God has made beautiful garments for us and they are all in spirit form – the spirit of praise and worship; the spirit of prayer and supplication; the spirit of wisdom and revelation – all these clothe us and make us beautiful in the eyes of the Lord.

Having discerned the difference between holy and unholy, and clean and unclean, and having discerned what true holiness means (which means the beauty of the Lord), let us press on to the highest beauty in the Lord possible.

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CHAPTER 3 FREEDOM FROM SIN

In the first chapter we defined what holiness is and in the second chapter we looked at holiness from God's perspective. Holiness is basically just God's sense of beauty. From human's perspective, we always see holiness to be freedom from sin and not having sin in our lives. But from God's perspective, it's much more than that; it's moving into the dimension of God's touch and healing in our lives.

Chapter 3 deals with the concept of victory over sin. Is it possible for a Christian to be free from sin in this life? One of the most important aspects of Christian lives is to be free from sin indeed, otherwise when people ask of us: "You know God and you live like that?" – it will be no testimony to God. The reason why Christians don't have victory is because they have never delved into those areas to know what to believe. Most of the time what is being preached is salvation as a ticket to heaven – that's it. What about this life?

Here's another question. When we all are redeemed, and Jesus has come, and this earth is all completed, and we are all in heaven with Him, with a new spirit, a new soul and a new body (in a sense, renewed in Him, new physical body) – the question is: "Do you think it is possible for us to sin still in heaven?" Many people will answer "No" to this question.

Here's another sub-question. If many of you believe that it is not possible for you to sin in heaven, then would we still have free choice in heaven? Now if we have free choice in heaven, can we choose to sin? If your answer is yes, then are you saying that one can still sin in heaven?

In order to be able to provide the correct answer to these questions, we have to define and understand sin, otherwise we will not be able to progress.

When we get to heaven, we won't sin again. But the question is not whether you will sin. The question is: "Can you choose to sin?" As long as we have free will, there must be a possibility. If there is a possibility, then it precedes further that there is a possibility of another fall.

To the first question: "Can a Christian be free from sin?" If you read from Genesis to Revelation, the Lord seems to show that, yes, it is a possibility. Both answers lie in free will. So if your answer is "Yes, you can be free from sin", it doesn't remove the possibility to sin.

The freedom from sin and the ability to sin are two separate things. Some people interpret the Scripture incorrectly and they say, "Oh, Jesus has removed all our sins; I can sin no more, so everything I do is no more sin." And then they go to the opposite end and they are actually sinning.

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But when you realise that you can be free from sin, but the ability to sin remains, then you realise there is a certain walk you've got to walk carefully. Lets move on to answer the second question.

The answer to the second question is: The redemption of Jesus is so great, that He not only dealt with sin for now; He dealt with sin in such a manner that when we get to heaven, even though we are free from sin with a free choice, yet we never want to sin.

Let me bring in some examples from brilliant men of God from history. John Wesley and Charles .G. Finney were "holiness" preachers and they believed that Christians can be free from sin. Today, we lack preachers that are "holiness" preachers. This is because sometimes our perspective of anthology is based on our experience rather than from the Word. As a result of the Charismatic Movement and the Pentecostal Movement, we are more into the gifts and into our needs met, into prosperity, that sometimes we neglect holiness.

Long ago, preachers were not so involved in healing or Charismatic gifts or prosperity. In fact, they didn't really care much for those things. They concentrated on the purity of the Christian character – John Wesley, Charles G Finney, and other books that were written by Christians long ago. The books published in the 20th century and the 21st century, tend to have more to do with needs, a better life etc. How many modern preachers write books like *Christian Perfection*?

Do you know what modern books today look like? *Christian Prosperity*. We are so concerned about our needs. We are no more concerned about the things that are eternal. We are too concerned about things that are temporal. We need things that are temporal but if we understand that there are things that are important to God, then we will be more balanced.

If you look at all the Christian books published in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, books like *The Imitation of Christ* (by Thomas a Kempis), *The Greater Life in God* (by Madame Guyon), *Holiness unto the Lord* (by John Wesley), *Perfect Sanctification in God* (by Charles G Finney) and if you were to analyse their teachings, you will realize they were concentrating on something that modern Christians missed.

What we need to do is to benefit from all of them. Not neglect what modern Christians have discovered, but we need to understand our heritage and bring that understanding into our modern day so that our Christianity is more balanced.

Back to Charles .G. Finney. He was the one whom God used in the Second Great Awakening (powerful revival) and he was the one who wrote the book "*Power from on High*". He was a lawyer by training, and so he sounded like a lawyer when he preached and wrote; very logical. He was a deep thinker.

Let's say we bring Charles .G. Finney to meet with you.

"Mr Finney, what is your belief in Christian sanctification?" This is what Mr Finney would have said.

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The term entire sanctification means a state of confirmed and entire consecration of body, soul and spirit, or of the whole being to God.

(1) That a soul entirely sanctified cannot sin, (he said he did not mean that) but that as a matter of fact, he does not, and will not sin.

What he means for the above is that when you are sanctified and you are holy before God, it is not that you cannot sin, but it is that you do not sin, and you will not sin.

His second line goes here:

(2) Nor do I use the term entire sanctification as implying that the entirely sanctified soul is in no such danger of sinning as to need the thorough use and application of all the means of grace to prevent him from sinning, and to secure his continued sanctification.

What the above means is that when you are sanctified and holy, it doesn't remove the possibility of you sinning, and in order to stop and not sin further, you still need the continued grace of God to work in your life. There is no such thing as you are sanctified, and thus you don't need God's grace anymore. It is not a one-time experience. It is a daily experience. That's his understanding. Third point:

(3) Nor do I mean by entire sanctification, a state in which there will be no further struggle or warfare with temptation, or in which the Christian warfare will cease.

That's plain enough. It must be because if Paul was sanctified, Peter was sanctified (in the Bible), yet they continued to have battles in their lives, it shows forth that sanctification doesn't exempt you from temptations and doesn't exempt you from struggles and warfare in Christian life. He said that there is no such state.

Many Christians are praying for an experience that will so touch them, that from then onwards they will have no more temptation, no more warfare, no more of the struggling in this life. What he was trying to say is that there is no such thing. Now, to know that there is no such thing helps you because it stops you from going down the wrong path. If you are seeking for something that isn't there, you are going down the wrong path. So it's time to go to the right path. Fourth thing he said:

(4) Nor do I use the term as implying a state in which no further progress in holiness is possible.

Remember we mentioned in our first chapter that there is progression in holiness? When you define holiness as beauty in God's sight, there is progression because you grow from glory to glory. And so he also agreed, there is progression.

(5) Nor do I mean by the term entire sanctification, that the entirely sanctified soul will no longer need the continual grace and indwelling Spirit of Christ to preserve it from sin, and to secure its continuance in a state of consecration to God.

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In other words, he said that when you are entirely sanctified, you still need the indwelling of Christ to keep you in that manner. So that is his understanding of holiness.

And so based on his words, if we were to ask Mr Finney the question: “Mr Finney, can a Christian be free from sin?” Mr Finney will say yes. Then the sub-question: “Is it possible for a Christian who is free from sin to sin again?” Mr Finney will also say yes.

So if you said yes to the first question and no to the second question, you realise that you are right in a sense. As Christians, we need to know where our understanding is right and where we need to sharpen our understanding in order for us to walk this Christian life that God has called us to.

It says in 1 John 1:8-9: ***“If we say that we have no sin,*** (in other words, if we try to be self-righteous and try to claim that we are so pure and holy, that we are no longer like other humans, and if we say that we have no sin) ***we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”*** That means we never recognised our frailty/our humanity. And then (verse 9): ***“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”***

It also says in 1 John 3:8-9 – ***“He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.*** (which includes sin and therefore sin is destroyed, which leads you to verse 9 that says) ***Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him;*** (now check your translation carefully, it says) ***and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.”***

The above scriptures present two different perspectives. Which of the two are correct?

Imagine that there were two groups of theologians, one group hanging on to 1 John 1:8-9 and say that the Bible says that we are still sinners and although we are saints, we are sinning saints, we are being forgiven by the blood of the Lamb. It sounds contradictory. But they will be quoting: “We cannot really say we are free from sin because the Bible says in 1 John 1:8-9 that if we say that we have no sin, then we are deceiving ourselves.” Strong group, they have one scripture.

Then the other group that says “yes, you can be free from sin” and take the position of 1 John 3:8-9. Now, if you just stick to 1 John 3:8-9, your position is: “Yes, we can be totally free from sin; we have been born of the Spirit of God.” And they are right. They’ve got scriptures to stand on. But the other side is also right. They also have got scriptures to stand on.

Who is right? These two positions are both scriptural. The answer to that is, we need to define sin. The Bible never contradicts itself. If there seems to be a contradiction, it is because of our lack of understanding of what it is talking about.

Do you know how Judas died? It says in Acts that Judas fell on himself, and he must have pierced a sharp rock or something and his bowels gushed out, and he died in a

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field, and they called that the Field of Blood. But in the Gospel of Matthew, it says Judas “went and hanged himself”.

So your question is: “How did Judas die, Sherlock Holmes?” Analyse the Greek words. The Bible will never contradict itself. In the Gospel of Matthew where it says Judas (some translations say) “went and hanged himself”, the Greek version actually says Judas “went to hang himself”. He never actually succeeded in hanging himself. Whereas in Acts, when he fell down in the field and died, that is a past tense; the others are in the infinitive tense, which means it hasn’t taken place yet. So when you put the two together, you get the correct picture.

Here is the crime scene: There was Judas, he had a bundle of ropes – he needed plenty of ropes to hang himself, right? He was probably heading, to a tree somewhere, and he was in a hurry to hang himself, full of guilt. In his hurry, possibly one of the ropes slipped his leg; and there happened to be a very sharp rock; and he fell and pierced his belly and his intestines all spilled out. What a terrible scene. He fell and he died on the spot. So that’s the highest possibility of what happened. The Bible never contradicts itself.

So when there seems to be a contradiction – one side says we have sin, that we acknowledge our sin; the other side says we cannot sin – there must be an understanding that can have both perspectives together. There is. It is based on our definition of sin.

In the Bible, sin and sins are two different aspects. Sometimes it seems to refer to the singular act of sin and sometimes it refers to the nature that wants to sin.

For the purpose of this study, we treat sin (singular) as the nature that draws you to want to sin; that there is some imperfection in you that draws you into that, like a magnet. A magnet can only attract materials that have magnetic or iron content. If you take a magnet and you try to attract cloth or things that don’t have metal or iron inside, it will not attract, but when an object has some iron content, the magnet works.

Sin is like a magnetic force that tries to pull you. If there is no sin nature in you, you won’t even feel a thing. But if there is a sin nature in you, it feels the attraction of sin and you’ve got to resist it. So sin refers to the nature; sins (plural) are the acts of sin. Both have to be dealt with. And the Bible does deal with them.

This is where I bring John Wesley, another brilliant man of God into the picture.

In an interesting book by J Sidlow Baxter, *Holiness* (re-studied and re-stated), he quoted John Wesley. John Wesley’s writing was in old English, and J Sidlow Baxter modernised it. This is what John Wesley commented on Romans 6:6: **“knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him,** (That doesn’t refer to your father by the way, your father didn’t die for you, Jesus died for you) **that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer** (see the word “no longer”) **be slaves of sin.”**

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So to the question: “Can a Christian be free from sin?” The answer has to be a resounding yes! So the next time when a preacher comes to you and says: “Can a Christian be free from sin?” Your answer is yes! And wait for the second question that says: “Is it still possible to sin?” Then you can answer a strong “yes!” too. And that is the balanced picture.

Let’s look at Romans 6 in further detail. What has been done away with? It says the old man (the old nature to sin) has been done away with, so that we should no longer be slaves of sin, ruled by sin. He says you are no longer slaves of sin – that means sin is your master but sin should be under you, you should be in control.

This analogy shows you that you are not free from the presence of sin and the possibility of sin. When you answered “No, we can’t be free from sin” – what you were answering is “No, we cannot be free from the presence or the possibility of sin”.

That is true. We are never free from the possibility because when you have a relationship of slave and master, there is a constant struggle. That means it exists and you have to be a master over sin.

John Wesley’s comments on Romans 6:6 in his book *Christian Perfection* – in pages 54 and 55 – “I use the word, ‘destroy’, because St. Paul does: ‘suspended’ I cannot find in the Bible.” Again he says, “The body of sin, the carnal mind, must be destroyed: the old man must be slain, or we cannot put on the new man.”

Now, what is destroyed in Romans 6:6? It’s the sin nature (the inward drawing). And if you think about it, that’s very important. If God wants us to be free from sin, He needs to deal with all our past actions and the nature to do it. Because if He doesn’t deal with the nature, is a foregone conclusion that we are going to fall again. But He makes it harder for us to fall by removing the nature.

Another Christian scholar, Dr Daniel Steele said: “The Greek for ‘destroy’ is never used by Paul in the sense of rendering inactive, as those assert who insist that the root of sin is not killed till it is plucked up by old Mortality himself.” In other words, he was trying to say that it’s not just inactive, it removes.

Then there is another guy called Asa Mahan who commented on Romans 6:6 – “All admit that the terms, ‘sin that dwelleth in us’, the ‘body of sin’, the ‘old man’, the ‘law of sin and death’, the ‘body of this death’, (all these, used in the book of Romans) mean the same thing, and constitute what is called ‘indwelling sin’.” Or what we call “the sin nature in us”.

Then what is the Bible trying to say here in Romans 6:6? J Sidlow Baxter approached it slightly differently. He differentiated between, when he said “freedom from sin” and if I were to ask the first question again “Can a Christian be free from sin?”. J Sidlow Baxter will ask the question back, based on his book: “Did you mean freedom from sin judicially or freedom from sin experientially?” He will answer the question with a question. What is judicially? The word “judicially” has to do with the legal sense. The Judiciary. So Baxter will ask the question “Are you asking whether we are free from sin legally or free

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from sin experientially?” It boils down to the definition again. What do you mean by “free from sin”?

You may ask a third question: “What is the difference between freedom from sin legally and experientially?” One has to do with the sin nature; the other with our continual action. That is what Baxter tried to bring forth when he analysed the book of Romans and this was his analysis.

In Romans 3:21 to Romans 5:11, Paul is dealing with sins (plural, our actions). And so in Romans 3:21 to Romans 4:25, he talks about justification through the substitutionary work of Christ, appropriated by faith imputed righteousness. Put it in simple English, what Paul is saying in Romans 3:21 to Romans 4:25 is that Jesus has paid the legal price for us to be free from sins (plural). So Jesus has paid legally the price for us.

In Romans 5:1-11, he is talking about the results of being free from sins – the experience of justification by faith, peace with God, His love shed abroad in us. So he is saying in Romans 3:21 to Romans 5:11, he is talking about sins. The first section deals with Jesus legally paying the price for our sins and the price needed to be paid, and how we accept this price paid through His precious blood. And so judicially we are freed and we experience love, joy, peace (in verses 1 to 11 of Romans 5) – all to do with sins.

When he touches on verse 12 (Romans 5:12 to Romans 8:39), he is dealing with a different area now. He is dealing with sin (singular) – the nature and the desire to sin, the wanting to sin. In the first section (which is Romans 5:12 to Romans 7:6), he deals with sin (singular) judicially. He deals with the legal aspect of sin nature – deliverance from death because as Adam sinned, so we have sinned. So that cannot be sins because you and I have never acted upon. From verse 12 onwards, he deals with sin (the sin nature) and it is true. He says (verse 12): “... **through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, (singular) and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned**– (past tense)”

You and I were not even born yet, how can we have sinned? Can you see the point? How can you say we have sinned when we were not born again? But he is saying everyone born through Adam now partakes of the fallen nature that is imparted through Adam. That is why from verse 12 onwards, he is talking about the nature of sin. And so in verse 12, according to him (Romans 5:12 right up to Romans 7:6), he deals with the legal aspect of the sin nature. He shows us that you are no longer attached to Adam, you are now attached to Jesus. He tries to show you that legally you are no longer of the old person, you are now legally new. He shows that your new nature is there. Then in the second part (Romans 7:7 to Romans 8:39), it is the experiential part of understanding how to tap upon that freedom from sin (singular).

Let me summarise this simply.

Romans 3:21 right up to Romans 5:11 deal with sins – the acts of sin. And the first part of that section deals with Jesus legally paying the price for your sins and my sins – past, present, future. All the acts of sin – someone has to pay the price. So Jesus legally paid

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for us; judicially it has been done. And then towards the end of that first section (which is in Romans 5:1-11), it deals with your experience of that.

It's the same when you buy a house. You legally sign for the house on paper and then you experientially move into the house. It's two different steps. You cannot have the experience if you don't have the legality done. You would otherwise have been an illegal trespasser in that house.

That's the same way Jesus deals legally with our sins and when you accept that and you experience what He legally did, you experience freedom, joy and all those things. That is freedom from sins.

On the other side, from Romans 5:12 right to Romans 8:39 – it is freedom from sin (singular). And so in the first part of it, he deals with the legal part, how Jesus has cut off our lineage with Adam (the old man was cut off, destroyed legally).

And then the end part talks about the experience of that freedom from sin (singular). Freedom from sin is also an experience and you can see that the experience of freedom from sin (singular) is harder than the experience of freedom from sins, right?

Freedom from sins is where everyone rejoices. You say, "O God, He has forgiven me, thank You." And you experience peace and joy. And in Romans, it seems straightforward – the love of God shed abroad, the peace of God, justification by faith. Hallelujah! But when you talk about freedom from sin (singular), you have Paul himself struggling – I will to do, I will not to do; I choose this; I choose this not, – he struggles because he is trying to actualise the experience of what is legally done for him.

In Romans 7, he says things like this (verse 12): **"... the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good."** Then he says (verse 13): **"Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin (singular), that it might appear sin (singular), was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful."** He says **"sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful."** Now, this phrase is very important. Think about it – **"that sin ... might become exceedingly sinful."**

Here's the wonderful thing. When mud becomes mud to you, you don't want it anymore. Can you see that? For example, if you come from a place where you're used to having things done in one room – your toilet is there, your washing is there, the floor is dirty; you don't boil your water. You have never taken a bath except maybe once in a while when you are caught in a rainstorm. If you have never been exposed beyond those conditions, you will know no better. You will not know what cleanliness habits are.

But if I take you out and put you in a society with all the conveniences are – where you bathe sometimes more than one time a day, you wash your hands before you eat, you clean yourself constantly and you don't keep mud, dirt and toilet items in the same place as your kitchen items. You separate them hygienically, your standard of physical cleanliness is different, and you will probably also be much healthier. Now, if a person has no knowledge of that, he wouldn't know. But if the person is taken out and he steps

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into that environment and then he goes back, he begins to realise “I didn’t realise what an awful pigsty my home was until that experience.”

Now, that phrase is important – *that sin ... might become exceedingly sinful* – because that is the key to our freedom from sin. The only reason people fall into sin is not because they see sin as sin, but because they see sin as good.

The only way satan can get you to fall is to deceive you, to show forth that what he is about to offer you is good for you. The whole basis of sin and falling into sin is that sin looks good. If sin looks bad, you wouldn’t want to go near. This is the secret of the victorious Christian life – how to make sin look bad and make God and the commandments of His Word look good. If you can succeed in doing that, you will be free from sin.

Understanding the things that cause us to become sinful is an important process. Things will slowly appear to you; the light slowly dawns on you. Like the Sunday school song which says: “Things I used to do, I do them no more; things I used to say, I say them no more.” You are changed and that is the process.

Paul understood this process and he struggled. And look at what he says. He is trying to experience freedom or deliverance from sin (singular) and it’s a tougher process. That is why he ends up saying in Romans 7:15-18 – ***“For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.”*** This is the person who is trying to experience freedom from sin nature. It is different from experiencing freedom from sins. Experiencing freedom from sins means receiving the cleansing of the blood, but getting free from the nature of sin is a whole different process.

Here’s where the secret to victorious Christian life lies. To the question “Can a Christian be free from sin and sins?”, the answer is “yes!” instantly for sins and “yes!” progressively for sin.

To conclude this chapter, here is the verse that will give you understanding. The main key to the experience of freedom from sin nature is in this verse (Romans 7:13) – *that sin ... might become exceedingly sinful* – that is the secret. It is a process. It is a process for us to begin to see through the eyes of God. As you begin to see it through the eyes of God, the things that are bad, you begin to give them up. And that is the secret.

Reading from 1 John 3:8-9 in the Greek version shows that there is a mistranslation in our English Bible. 1 John 3:8-9 – in the New King James version reads (let’s read from the normal New King James version first) – ***“He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.”***

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The word (in verse 9) “cannot” sin is not correctly translated because it looks like it is impossible to choose to sin anymore. But all of us now know that the choice will always be there. As long as we have free will, the choice will be there. How the choice is handled is important. Remember that phrase – *“that sin ... might become exceedingly sinful.”*?

This redemption that Jesus has made for us is permanent for eternity, that even though we are free from sin and sins and this old body is put away, we’ve got a new body and sin is totally eradicated; one of the reasons why we will never fall again is this: Because we have taken on the nature of Christ so much so that all sins become painful.

You will never, ever, for a zillion googolplexes of years, choose sin. God did something. That is why Adam’s race is exalted above the angels. Do you know why? The angels have not partaken of the nature of Jesus, like you and I have. The Bible says we are all predestined to be like Him, we are born of Him and we have tasted in Him what sin is horribly like. You will never taste that.

Many of us have experiences of things where you try it in your curiosity and you never want to go near it again. Jesus imparts that experience to us in His nature, so that sin feels the way sin should feel and for eternity you will never want to sin even though you can still choose.

Take for example drinking alcohol. It is an acquired taste. Most people acquire an addiction to alcohol because they have an acquired the taste for it. It tastes nice to them. You ask an alcoholic – it smells and tastes nice to him. And that is what God is going to change, so that it doesn’t feel nice to you and you are free.

Because who would want to taste those things that don’t taste nice to you? In 1 John 3:9, the word “cannot” needs to be explained. The Greek bible interprets this differently. It says here: *“Anyone that has been begotten of God does not practise sin because His seed is in him and abides in him.”* The word “not able” is the word *“kai ou dunatai hamartanein”*. The word *“dunatai”*, is from the Greek word *“dunamis”*, which forms the ability to sin. That is why the translator translates it as – he “cannot” sin – meaning “not able to sin”. But if you look carefully, the word *“dunatai”* also lies in your ability, not just in your impossibility.

There are two different things here. Some things are impossible to you because you are not able to. But if I say that the ability is increasing, then you are slowly able to. So the translator struggles because, strictly speaking, he can translate it as – he “cannot” sin.

This should actually be translated literally because the ‘ability to sin’ is otherwise not captured in the translation. That conveys a different message, doesn’t it? That means that God deals with something within us to enable us not to like sin, not to like the taste of sin or the pleasure of sin – the ability is dealt with.

But when you leave it as the word “cannot”, it looks like you don’t choose it anymore. When you leave it as the word “ability”, it shows that the choice is still there according

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to your ability. That's what the word means. And so we can be free from sins instantly, we can be free from sin gradually (the sin nature).

But in totality, it is God's will that He has a holy people – the Bible says He is calling out a holy nation, a holy people unto Him that He could be pleased with.

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CHAPTER 4 THE NATURE OF HOLINESS

We have established quite a few principles on holiness by now. We understand that we can grow in holiness, holiness is a gift from God, we receive sanctification from Him, which is also the word “holiness” and that we grow forth into holiness.

This chapter focuses on growing in holiness.

Is it possible on this earth to reach the fullness of holiness that God wants us to? There is more in heaven, but the fullest extent of holiness so that we walk and live like an angel on this earth. Is this possible?

John Wesley had a few ministers under his group (of the Methodist group) when he started in his revival and one of them was named John Fletcher. John Wesley said of John Fletcher – he was one of the most holy men on earth that he knew. Until that time, I had not heard of this man, John Fletcher.

I started researching on him but could not find much. In the end, I found some evangelical publishers that published a few sermons from John Fletcher (the John Fletcher in John Wesley’s time). When I read his sermons, I said this man knew God. To think of a man like John Wesley, (who really walked closely with God) recognising someone in his generation, and saying “He is like an angel of God”.

According to some stories circulating in those days, sometimes when John Fletcher stood out to preach or minister, some people saw his face glow like an angel of God. John was not really a pastor of some of those big churches in John Wesley’s time. John Wesley, George Whitfield and some of the others ministered to thousands out in the open fields. John Fletcher used to minister to a nominal-size crowd, but he was a pastor in the Methodist group under John Wesley.

There is one man in the book of Acts, to which that happened too. His name was Stephen. Just before he was stoned, the Bible tells us that he was put on trial and when they saw Stephen (sitting in a place where all the people were accusing him), his face was like the face of an angel.

That was just before Stephen died. If the bible says so, it is thus possible; it is therefore possible to walk on this earth closely with God. As we come to the last day, everyone is excited that Jesus’s coming draws near, but remember what it is said about Jesus’s coming and the bride of Christ.

In Ephesians 5, it says that the bride of Christ is to be without spot, without wrinkle, without blemish. God is not going to come for the bride (which is the Church) which is going to have spots, wrinkles or blemishes – all symbolising sin and imperfection. The Bible tells us that the Church is going to be perfected.

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If the Church is going to be perfected, we have to reach a level of the fullness of holiness. And if we have to reach a level of the fullness of holiness, we need to have knowledge about how to reach that fullness of holiness.

What do we know about holiness? The majority of Christians who have sat in churches for 20 years have never heard one sermon on holiness. They are told to be holy, but they are not told how to be holy. They are demanded to be holy, but they are not told how. They are told that they are saved, they are told that they have a ticket to heaven, they are told that they have eternal life, but they are not told what holiness is and how to be holy.

I believe one of the things that God will do in the last days: He will have to first restore our understanding of holiness, so that we can appropriate holiness and move into the dimension of holiness and then become the bride without spot, wrinkle or blemish. So we do have a long way to go. But with the Holy Spirit's help, He is going to enable us.

Up to now we know that we are born again, we have the gift of righteousness imparted unto us, and we have the gift of sanctification imparted unto us. But the question is: "How does that flow out and transform our lives?"

Let's look at Romans 7 where the struggle is against the sin nature that Paul was trying to overcome. This section is in regard to overcoming sin and our sins have been overcome and cleansed by the blood, but the nature to sin, which is sin (singular) is where the battle lies.

In Romans 7, Paul says here, in his struggle against sin, in verse 7 onwards: ***"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, 'You shall not covet.' But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead. I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. (So the sin nature took over.) And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me. (It killed the good nature in him; it killed the godly nature in him.) Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. Has then what is good become death to me? (You may be asking the question, "If the law is good, how come it is bad?" That's what Paul is saying in verse 13.) Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful. (Notice it says that sin might appear exceedingly sinful – that's what the commandment is.) For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin (that is the sin nature) that dwells in me."*** He goes on with this struggle.

Then in verses 23-25, he says: ***"But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is***

in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God – through Jesus Christ our Lord! (He says: I thank God – through Jesus Christ our Lord!) So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.”

In Chapter 3, we covered why people sin. The reason why people sin is because sin looks good to them. None of us would partake in sin if we could see it in its original form.

I have a big huge dog, named Mozart. Suppose I were to go out to the garden, taking one of the paper plates, look for one of Mozart’s droppings, pick it up and place it on a plate, and then at lunch time I come to you and say this is special for you. None of you would eat that. Because it smells terrible, it stinks, it’s awful and you know it’s bad for you. You will get sick when you eat such things. (Pardon the vivid example)

If sin in all its form looks that way to us, nobody will sin. No human being will sin. But the devil and demons make sin look delicious. He would take the same droppings from Mozart (referring to my dog not Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart) and would put all kinds of flavorings on it, make it in the shape of a chicken drumstick, fry it and serve it to you without telling you the source.

To you, it looks like a chicken, smells like a chicken; your mind says it must be chicken. And so you take it and eat it. By your second bite, you regret. All sin does that. I could imagine the face of Adam and Eve when they took that first bite. No one would sin if sin looked like sin. Satan has to make sin look good. He told Eve, “*Oh, it will make you wise.*” Every temptation that has come to you, he has tried to make it look good – this is good, nice and delicious and it makes you want to try it.

That is why the law says that the only way you and I will stop sinning is based on what the law does in Romans 7, verse 13 (the last part). It says: “*... that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.*” That’s not a word we normally use in English. But the Bible uses that as an emphasis that magnifies the horror of sin so that when you see sin as it is, you run. That’s the only way we can be free from sin. The commandment plays an important part. The commandment represents the law. The law needs to create in us an understanding to be able to see sin the way God sees it.

Jesus knows this. In His prayer (John 17:17), He mentioned this, especially when He prayed for us (the Church): “*Sanctify* (remember the word “sanctify” is the same as “make holy”) *them by Your truth. Your word is truth.*” So His word or His commandments are the key for us to reach full sanctification.

Notice how He divided it. “*Sanctify them by Your truth.*” And then He says “*Your word is truth.*” Why separate the thing? He could have easily said “Sanctify them by the word.” But He goes the long way and says “*Sanctify them by Your truth.*” And then He says “*Your word is truth.*” He is telling us that there are two processes of the Word.

The Word, this Bible can be bought at any book shop. It can even be bought by any non-Christian with enough money. But to that non-Christian and to the person who doesn’t

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know God, it is a story book. It is not truth. We believe it is the Word of God. But if he doesn't believe that it is the Word of God, then to him, it's not the truth; it's a fable, a story, historical events that may or not be accurate to him. We have the Word and there are many things that this Word says about this life, about everything. But not everything in this Word has become truth to us because we are slowly getting into the truth of God's Word.

Let me give an example of a man. There is a Singaporean man and he has shared his testimony, so it's all right to quote his testimony. Before he was born again, he lived with two women and they were both very good to him. They took care of him, they cooked for him, it was like he was living with two wives although they were not registered. He became born again one day and when he started reading the Bible, there was only one passage in the Bible that he never liked – the part that says you shall not commit adultery. He never liked that, he always wanted to avoid that, or he would try to find passages to justify himself.

When he tried to justify himself, he said, “*Oh*, in the Bible, Solomon had 1,000 wives; David had many wives; Abraham had two wives; and Jacob had two wives.” – After quoting all these things, I knew he was heading in the direction of wanting to have more.

But Jesus's answer is this: “From the beginning it was not so.” Yes, from the beginning it was not so. You may then ask: “Then why does the Bible record that?” The Bible records that to tell us that that is where the problem starts. Is there anyone in the Bible with more than one wife, who never had problems with them? Never! Not even Abraham. Yes, not even father Abraham. He had problems. Solomon had problems because of his many wives. David had problems because of his many wives. The Bible records that to tell us that these were the people who had done like that and there were the consequences. From the beginning it was not so.

So he knew the Word but the Word was not truth to him. When does it become truth? When you accept that it is for your life, that is when it becomes living. Jesus says “*I am the way, the truth, and the life.*” And so he struggled. He kept on getting convicted in the same area until finally one day after a meeting, he went back home and he said, “Look, this is the Bible. I can't do this anymore. You've got to go.” Emotionally, it was difficult because of his emotional and soul ties. But he followed the Word and in the end they both left and he was alone again. And then God started showing up in his life.

So what has happened? The Word was there but it took time to become truth to him and when it became truth to him, he was sanctified in that area and God started showing up and he became used by God mightily. There is a cost involved.

In her biography, it states that Kathryn Kuhlman had an affair with a married man. In the end, the married man divorced his wife and he and Kathryn got married. But she was never happy. If you look at circumstances, the past is the past, the person was divorced, but she was the cause of the divorce, and God was not pleased. She could have gone on with the rest of her life and become a mediocre, miserable housewife. None of us would have heard about her today. She could have lived and died, gone to heaven and received a small reward. But she kept struggling and struggling. The Holy Spirit

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wanted to use her but she wouldn't let go. In the end, she talked about one fine day when she was walking down the street (she never mentioned which street), she was walking and struggling with this conviction in her heart. The Word was trying to become truth to her. She knew that what she was doing was wrong. One day she walked until she reached a dead-end street and in the biography she said her life was like that, a dead end. Right at the dead end, she said, "Holy Spirit, I yield." From that day onwards, she consecrated her life, she chose a single life and she gave herself to the Holy Ghost. In other words, she was like married to the Holy Ghost. She chose never more to have any relationship. She chose only to be a dedicated vessel of God.

From that moment, when she consecrated herself, the Holy Spirit started working powerfully through her life - in fact, the Charismatic Move had used many other people as well - but she was like the bulwark behind the Charismatic Move that affected people far and wide. She has died and gone to be with God. Think about the reward she is now enjoying in heaven. She could have missed out on it. She had two choices: To choose to be a mediocre, miserable housewife; or to choose to be a vessel of God and honour the call of God on her life. She chose correctly and today she has won thousands to the Lord, affected millions of lives and brought miracles in ways that no one had. The truth had become hers. The Word had become truth to her.

There are many things in the Word that is speaking into our lives. Until you and I act on them and accept them, they are not truth yet. They are just the Word. It has the potential to sanctify us. When we accept it into our lives and obey the commandments of God, it becomes truth to us.

The Word is important, as we can see; it begins to make sin horrible; it begins to make sin exceedingly sinful, so that we know it's terrible and horrible. Notice the important key to holiness - there must be a change on our inside. Holiness is not changing from outside in; holiness is changing from inside out. If you try to change from the outward, it doesn't last long. You could go and get a pig, you could scrub the pig, dress the pig, put perfume on the pig, put the pig on a nice sofa, but if there is mud anywhere around it, the pig would still run to the mud because it loves the mud. Unless the pig's nature is changed, it will always run to the mud.

So the nature of sin will keep drawing us to sin. Something inside us has to change first. When we were born again, there is a new nature placed within us. Many people struggle with holiness and have a perception that holiness is way up there, higher than the Empire State building, and impossible to achieve.

The important fact to note is holiness is inherent in our nature since the time that God first made man. Not only do we have a sin nature but we also have a holiness nature from our creation. Because of that part of us that senses holiness; people who live in sin are highly convicted all the time. If you do something wrong, no one has to tell you, you struggle.

For example, how does a lie detector work? A lie detector works because when you are telling a lie - although there are people who try to train themselves against it, but generally it works because every time when you tell a lie or you say something wrong -

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your body reacts against you. Your whole body was created for holiness. Your whole being was created to tell the truth, so that when you tell the truth, your whole body is saying hallelujah, hallelujah. Every time you tell a lie, your whole body reacts against it and the lie detector catches it all.

The devil is blinding people. Somehow we have the idea that it is difficult to be holy. No, it is not, God has made it available to us. It is in our nature to be holy, that's why we are convicted of sin.

Which part of you convicts you of sin? Your conscience. There is something within us that tells us when we do wrong. That's the part created after holiness. That part can be polluted and conscience can be hardened, etc. But the fact is every criminal today, every person out there sinning and not walking with God, right now feels condemnation.

No one has to lift up their voice and condemn them because something is struggling in them. Some of them find it hard to sleep. Some of them are troubled; they have to drown their sorrows. They have to drown the terrible thoughts that are convicting them daily because they were not created for sin. We were created for holiness and every part of our being rebels against sin.

When God comes into our lives through Jesus, there is a nature of holiness imparted into our lives and it is to draw out that holiness nature from us. To draw forth that nature, we need to know where the battle lies in regard to holiness and sin, how that nature works. Pay attention to Romans 7:13 again – *that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful*. That is the whole gist of Romans 7 – the battle is not without; it is within. It's not somebody on your outside; it's from within.

If satan himself or all the worst sins were to show up at your door, if inside you there is no drawing to it, it will be impossible for satan to come against you. Your greatest enemy is not satan; it's not even the world; the greatest enemy is yourself. It's you yourself, because the devil has been defeated.

On this earth, to allow holiness to come, you need to understand that there is the world, the flesh and the devil. But if you eliminate the flesh, the world and the devil have no power over you. The devil and the world only have power over you if you are magnetically drawn to it. That is why Jesus in John 14:30 says "The prince of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me." Look at this statement (John 14:30) – **"... he has nothing in Me."** There is not a single fibre in His spirit, soul and body that is attracted to the devil or the world. That is why Jesus could walk in holiness. If you fall it is from the inside that you fall.

In James, it confirms this word that I am bringing forth. In James, it tells us in summary how sin works. James 1:13-15 – ***"Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death."***

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There is sin not unto death and sin unto death. If you check the context of 1 John 5:16, it is referring to eternal death. So that is why Christians are in-between. Not every sin is going to cause you your salvation. As a Christian, it doesn't mean that the moment you sin, you lose your salvation. You don't lose your eternal life, but you do lose your reward which is a lot in heaven. There is a sin unto death which means when you cross the point; you lose everything, including salvation which is found in Hebrews 6 – that's sin unto eternal death. All sin does have the element of destruction and death.

The source of all sin is given in James 1:15 – desire. You see, when desire is conceived, it gives birth to sin; when sin reaches its fullness, it produces death – sometimes it produces physical death without spiritual death; sometimes it produces both physical and spiritual death. There are consequences. The way to treat it is to address it where the desire is. And that is from within. Something from within you would have to be dealt with, will have to be changed. Don't worry about the devil. You have more authority over the devil than you realise.

Let me give you a few snippets of Scripture that just show forth your authority. In the same book of James, chapter 4, it tells us in verse 7: ***“Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”*** He is not talking to apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers or great leaders. He is talking to every single Christian. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. The word “flee” in Greek is a very powerful word. It didn't just say resist the devil and he will slowly draw away from you. It didn't say resist the devil and he will just pass you by. No. When you resist the devil, it says he will flee. In some translations, it says he will flee in terror from you.

The devil likes to terrify people. All the monsters they draw in all these movies try to make the devil, the ghouls and all the demons look horrifying. They try to scare the wits out of people. What fun we have to terrify the devil! He flees, he is not just walking away from you, he is fleeing! In other words, you just make the devil scared. So you go *boo*, and the devil *arrh!* There are enough scriptures to tell us we have authority over the devil. You don't have to be afraid of the devil but the devil is worried because he is wondering whether you are one of those who knows the Word. Because you can make, let me emphasise again, you can make the devil afraid of you through Jesus Christ. Every morning when you get up, the devil says, *“Oh dear, he is awake again.”* We have authority. Why doesn't that authority work then in the body of Christ? Because you must have John 14:30 – the devil must have nothing in you. Now, he is just looking for a place.

In Ephesians 4, Paul says do not give place to the devil – don't give him any room inside. The world will also lose its attraction if there is nothing in you that responds. Your disadvantage is when you are losing the battle from inside, you will lose it from outside. That's why the Bible says it is far better for a man to conquer his temper than to conquer a city. Because when you have conquered your own temper, you have conquered a city. So the battle is raging inside. If you could conquer from the inside, you will be fearless before the world and the devil – there's the flesh, the world and the devil. When you deal with the flesh, the world and the devil immediately become a simple matter to deal with. It's the flesh. Your greatest enemy is you, your unrenewed self, things within you that yield to the enemy.

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The yielding process is where the wrong desires come. There is a part of us, the sin nature that lies in our physical bodies, in its imperfect state; and then there is a part that lies in our spirit man, that is the new nature. These two are doing battle every day. The only way you and I can win is for us to be filled with the Word because the Word will sanctify you and I. We are sanctified through the truth. His Word is truth. In other words, His Word that is in the process of becoming truth in us sanctifies us. The less Word we have, the less sanctified we are. The more word we have, the more sanctified we are.

When you have a garden and you want to get rid of the weeds, you do not just get rid of your weeds by cutting the top of the weeds. You get rid of the weeds by getting rid of the roots and you try to prevent the weed seeds from falling into the garden.

My neighbor Luke - we used to chat once in a while - keeps a very nice garden. Sometimes when I am out in the garden talking with him, I say, "Your grass looks nice." He tells me how he has to maintain his grass. He says he has to keep all the weed seeds from coming, so he built a wall, so that when the wind blows, the weed seeds don't get into his grass. You have to prevent the wrong seeds from falling into the garden and it takes time to maintain a good garden. A good garden doesn't come by accident. If you neglect it for a year, it will not look like a garden anymore; it will look like a mini jungle - with weeds growing all over the place.

Christian life is very, very simple. It's a matter of spending time in the Word. If you don't believe me, do this: Take 3 months off and don't read anything except the Word of God out loud. Don't do anything else, in all your free time just worship God, pray and read the Word out loud to yourself and see whether at the end of 3 months, it is easy for you to fall into sin. You'll find it difficult. Because the Word fills you to such an extent that when other types of desires come forth - desire for God, hunger for God - the new spiritual desires overwhelm the old desires. The more you get into the Word, sin becomes exceedingly sinful. Sin smells like sin, the way it should. And you will recognise the devil. It's from our inside that we overcome - that is what God is bringing us to.

The Word is truth, so let the Word rise within us day by day. It is a daily process. The Bible says to meditate upon the Word. Christian life is not as complicated as people make it out to be. It's not like you've got to get some enormous truth or revelation of God. You have in your hands the Word. This Word just needs to become truth to you and I. When you read the Bible, you don't understand everything. But the more you read it, the more you saturate yourself with it, more of it can be translated into truth in your life and it removes all the wrong desires out of you.

I'm speaking from experience. I spent one year reading only the Word of God. After I graduated from the Baptist Seminary, I was struggling to grow in the spirit, struggling in the ministry. God gave me a vision of my spirit man and I found that I didn't have much power against the enemy. I saw demons out there; I just didn't seem to be able to get through. When I saw that, I said, "God, You've got to teach me how to feed my spirit man." And God showed me the truth of meditation on the Word. And for one full year, I spent 6 to 8 hours on the Word. Some of you have seen the green meditation book *God's*

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Meditation Food – that’s a tiny one percent extract of all the meditations that I did. I didn’t watch TV, didn’t listen to radio, didn’t read any books except the Word, just for one year because I was desperate for God by that time. Something happened during that one year. I cannot pick the exact day, but somewhere in between the 6 to 9 months’ period, after spending 6 to 8 hours on the Word, something clicked inside my mind. I suddenly began to see things that I couldn’t see before spiritually. It was like Luke 24 taking place. What is Luke 24?

In Luke 24, it says in verse 31: **“Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him...”** There was one other thing that happened in Luke 24 to the disciples (in verse 45): **“And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.”** Something happened to them on that day. They had all the scriptures. These were Hebrew people. Although they could be fishermen and common folk, they were brought up with the Torah (the law). They knew and had heard the scriptures in their synagogue many a time, but they never understood it. Something happened on that day. God made them to see things in the scriptures that they could not see before.

In the 6 to 9 months’ period, something happened. It was like your mind was operating by 10 volts and suddenly it was operating by 100 volts. It was like light coming inside. I saw things in the Scriptures that I had never seen before. I began to have strong spiritual desires that I never had before. Spiritual desires need to be strong.

People asked of me: “How can you spend 6 to 8 hours a day?” The difference is desire. The difference between a disciplined person and an ill-disciplined person is desire. It’s not muscular problem, it’s not enough sleep or not enough sleep, all of us have 24 hours. It’s not a mental area either because everyone has intelligence enough to read the Word. It’s not all those things. The issue is desire or lack thereof.

Something began to happen. I began to desire spiritual things that I never desired before. The spiritual things became more attractive to me than natural things. It was not an instant change. It was gradual. It’s just like your children growing, within a year they grow but because you see them everyday, it is not so apparent to you that they have grown; you just know that they are growing. Within a year, that started taking place and from that day onwards, all the rest of my ministry and life is founded on that one year that I dedicated to God. That one year changed my entire life; my ministry; it changed everything. It was the Word. That is why today I still love to meditate on the Word. I try to get at least 4 / 5 hours with God every day. Morning: I am praying here for 2 hours; and when I get back, I get another 2 hours in the Word; and I get another extra hour in between. I believe for every minister to succeed, he needs to spend at least 4 / 5 hours with God every day.

How do you put the desire there in the first place? By praying. Sometimes when you pray, there is an impartation of a desire. When you associate with the right fellowship, it puts a desire in your life. When you read a spiritual book, it puts a desire in your life.

For example, if you read a book about Kathryn Kuhlman, it causes you to have a desire to see miracles. So your association, your fellowship also has the effect of producing desires in your life. Sometimes one desire can lead to another desire.

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Let's say after church, you head off to the supermarket to get something. You intended to purchase only one item, but you ended up purchasing a lot of other things. One desire can lead to other desires. But as you yield to that one desire, it will start you on the road to go.

Let's say you take a survey of all the Christians in town; you gather all of them in one place and you ask the Christians: "How many of you have felt in your life that God wants you to spend more time with Him?" I can guarantee you, 99% of them will put up their hands. But then you ask a second question: "How many of you have actually done that?" You'll see the difference. The difference is one group has the desire and they know it but they don't spend time, they don't yield to that desire.

Another group yields to it and they get the rewards of more things coming. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 2:9: ***"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.*** A lot of other things.

Every minister who calls himself a full-time minister has to time to spend with God. That is what the purpose is. You go full-time, so that you can be away from secular work and be dedicated in giving yourself to God. It is a shame if someone calls himself full-time but he doesn't spend his time with God, instead he spends his time running around doing natural things, although there are lots of natural things to be done.

That is why there is no revival. If every minister would spend time with God, seek God on his face and on his knees every day, if all pastors were to spend 5 hours with God every day, I believe every church will be transformed.

The problem is not God, the problem is not the Word, the problem is not the Holy Spirit, the problem is us. We are not yielding to those desires. The only way we can see revival, the only way we can get into the depths of God, is to yield to that desire in our lives – the desire for God.

There are two desires fighting inside us – the good one and the unredeemed one. The more you grow the right desire and yield to the Spirit, all your temptations, your blemishes, your spots, your weaknesses and wrinkles will disappear.

When you look back 3 years later, you will say, "Hey, I didn't even know that those things were that powerful in my life." They will disappear, not overnight, but over a gradual process as you spend time in the Word of God.

The key is right in front of you. The Bible. Get into the Bible, read the Word, meditate on the Word, and don't check every day. No parent measures their child everyday. But if you check over one year, you will be able to find the growth. You may not even notice yourself changing. I will guarantee you by the Word of God, that if you spend quality time in the Word and in prayer, especially meditating on the Word, you will grow. Remember, the Word is the important part. Prayer is good. Many people spend time in prayer, but you need to get into the Word. If you pray alone, and you don't have enough Word, the quality of your prayer can diminish. Quality is important as it will enable you

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to do in one hour what somebody takes 3 hours to do because you know the right way to do it. That's quality. Your one hour of quality prayer can be very effective when you know the Word as you will know how to battle with the Word. So get the Word of God in. Besides spending time in prayer and worship, meditate on the Word every day.

Every Christian should know the Bible like the back of their hands. They should know the Word. This was paid with blood. Christians have died to get this Bible translated for you and I. There are people in other countries who don't even have the written Word. If they had access to just one page of the written Word, they would have been willing to sell their house for it.

We have Bibles, we even have extra Bibles on our shelves. But the Bible is not good on your shelf; it is only good when it is in your heart, and if you and I will take time to let that Word come into our lives every day. What's the key to growth? Holiness is growth. Eat properly, exercise properly, being in the right environment, and you'll be all right.

Spiritual growth is the same. The Bible is your food. Prayer is your lungs breathing. Worship is the atmosphere around. You need to get the right food. Some people may say, "Do you mean that if I don't pray, I don't breathe?" Yes! "Then, shouldn't I be dead by now?" You are dying spiritually. Prayer is like breathing. The Bible tells us that the whole world is in darkness and we are the light of the earth. Can you imagine going down into the depths of the ocean and not being able to breathe? You need to take your oxygen with you and you need to be replenished. Prayer is like that.

Many Christians are not praying, and they end up getting drowned by the things of this world. You can tell that they are drowned because they are spiritually half-dead. They talk like the world, they think like the world, they desire like the world. They are half-drowned; spiritually half-dead Christians. God cannot use half-dead Christians.

You need to breathe fresh air again. And then when you worship, it's not just you; it creates an environment around you. You have proper food, proper exercise in prayer and worship – it's guaranteed that you'll be changed and transformed into His likeness.

I'll challenge you in the name of the Lord to meditate on the Word, one hour a day as a start, and tell me at the end of 6 months that nothing has changed in your life. I have given this challenge from years ago and in 25 years of ministry, I've not got someone come back to me and say, "Pastor, I've been reading the Word consistently for one whole year and nothing has happened." No one has come back to me saying nothing happened because it works. It's simple; it works.

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CHAPTER 5 HOLINESS AND RIGHTEOUSNESS

This book is a series on Holiness and this chapter will conclude that series. Let us recap what we have covered on Holiness thus far.

The word “holiness” is the word that is sometimes translated as “sanctify” and so when you are reading the English Bible, and you come across the words “holy” and “sanctify”, whether they be in the Old Testament or in the Greek New Testament, they are to be considered the same words. It’s only in English that differentiate the words “holiness” and “sanctify” when both actually mean the same thing. This is because in English, there are different forms of a word (such as the adjective, the noun and the verb etc.), but they are all from the same root word which means holiness or separation unto God.

We have learnt that holiness is an impartation from God and holiness is consecration or setting ourselves apart unto God. We realise that holiness can be progressive (as we have seen in the Bible). In this final chapter, we will look at how holiness relates to another word “righteousness”. There is holiness and there is righteousness. In Greek and in Hebrew, the words “holiness” and “righteousness” are two different words, which means there are two different concepts.

Let’s take a look at the Greek bible in the New Testament. 1 Corinthians 1:30, it says of Jesus – ***“But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God – and righteousness and sanctification (now, that’s the word “holiness”) and redemption–”*** The concept of righteousness and the concept of sanctification are two different concepts in the Bible. Two different words are used.

In the Old Testament in Hebrew, the word “righteousness” is the word “*tzedek*” and it has many forms. There is *tzedek*, *tzedakah*, etc. but it comes from the root word “*tzedek*” and it all refers to righteousness from the same Hebrew root word. That word is translated into English as righteousness, justice, rightness, and all those things that are involved in what we understand to be righteousness.

In the New Testament in Greek, the word “righteousness” is from the word “*dikaios*” and there are different forms of *dikaios*, but basically it’s from the Greek word “*dikaios*” and it means the same thing as it does in the Hebrew word “*tzedek*”, which means righteousness, rightness, justice etc.

So why did God use a different word for righteousness from holiness when in most of our minds we realise that holiness and righteousness are related. All of us know that they are related, that when you are holy, you are righteous; when you are righteous, yes, you must be holy. The question is: “What is the relationship? What is the difference?”

Let us define righteousness first.

Look at the parable of Job in the Bible. Job was so blessed by the Lord, and here’s the concept: he was righteous. The Bible says he was a man of righteousness and he was an upright man. He sought to do right, but he hadn’t gotten the concept of holiness yet

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until he met God. In part of his righteousness, there was “self-righteousness”. God dealt with his self-righteousness and he repented before God. Here is a man who had not committed any of the sins in the Ten Commandments, but he had to repent before God because of his self-righteousness, and then God reveals Himself to him.

Righteousness and holiness relate to us in our relationship with God. Holiness relates to His character; righteousness relates to His works, the legal part of Him. Righteousness is an important concept when you want to do something in God. The other relationship in holiness has to do with your coming before God. It is consecration. It always gives the picture of you setting yourself apart for Him, unto Him. So holiness is always towards God as you approach Him. You are giving yourself unto Him, which brings forth the concept that it is possible to be doing the works of God, but not be consecrated to God. Can you see the dichotomy of the whole idea, which is why you could have the concept that Job was doing something good. He was doing part of God’s work in this earth with all his blessings and wealth, but he was not really consecrated to God yet, fully. As you know, there are different degrees of consecration and holiness.

Remember the concept of progressive holiness is in the temple of Moses and in the temple of Solomon – there is the Outer Courtyard, there is the Holy Place and there is the Most Holy Place. So the fact that there is the Most Holy Place tells you that there are degrees and progression of holiness. There are different degrees in which we come into the character of God. The more we know God, the more we need to understand His character and let His character become a part of us.

Character and works are two separate entities even within us. For example, you could be doing your shopping at a mall. The salesgirl at the counter can be rude and she doesn’t greet you although she is trained to greet you; she is trained to be nice. Even though she snarls at you, she is still considered to be doing her job. She does the calculations correctly, gives you the right change and packs up the item etc. The only complaint you have is her character, but you can’t complain on her job.

In the secular world, you realise that there are lots of people out there like that. Some people do a good job, but they are not nice people. You could be the best electrician, the best architect or the best lawyer in town and still be a very terrible guy. People still need you because of your skill. They can’t help it because they cannot find anyone better, so they make use of your skill.

That is an example of the separation between works and character. Ideally, the two should be related. You would want the best architect in the world to be a very nice person too. That would be very nice, but it is not always true about human beings, although it is always true about God. He is always very nice and loving and all His works are perfect. There is no one else who can do a better job than God.

Amongst God’s people, - those of us who call God our Father, and have a relationship with God - you can see that we all have different degrees of character from God. Sometimes a person can be very Christ-like, but he doesn’t have that many assignments from God. Each one of us has been assigned different jobs by God. Instead of using the word “jobs”, we can use the word “works”. But works sometimes confuse people, so we use the word “job” to tell us that we all have a mission.

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So when a person is an evangelist and the person reaches to one million people, it doesn't mean that that person is greater than you. It just means that he has been given a job which is different from yours. You could be a housewife whose job is to pray for one million people throughout your life which could be different from an evangelist whose job is to actually harvest one million souls.

Can you see the difference? For the purpose of breaking down theological concepts, I'm going to make comparisons on the housewife and the evangelist. Remember that it is purely for the purpose of learning.

Let's say that we could measure the characteristics of God in our lives by points. Let's say 100 points is the maximum of character and 100 points is the maximum of God's works in our lives. Here is the housewife again, she could be, in character, so much like God until she reaches 80% points. And in her works, let's say she is faithful, she is 100%, she does everything God wants her to do. The world might not know her, you won't find her name in Charisma magazine or any Christian bulletin or radio station, but God knows her name. Because she was faithful and she could be praying faithfully for one million people in her lifetime; there she is, 80% in character, 100% in works.

Let's look at the evangelist. Let's say the evangelist is very, very anointed. You've got to be reasonably anointed to reach one million people. So let's say the evangelist is very anointed in the gifting of God, faithful, and in works 100%. However, his character is 30%. God still uses the person. In his character, he is only 30% like Christ. You say, "Is it possible?" Yes, it's entirely possible.

If you read about the men of God from the past, you will find that a lot of men of them had flaws in different areas. Some of them were bad-tempered. John Sung from China was a bad-tempered fellow. He scolded people if they didn't live up to his standards. He had a very hot temper and he offended a lot of people too. There was a time when he was preaching in a church and there were plants all over the place. He was illustrating the point about how we have to pull sin by the roots and he literally destroyed every plant. He made the organisers angry.

Smith Wigglesworth had a basic nice temperament, but when it came to the things of God, he can actually get very upset and angry it seems. There was a time when there was a long line waiting to be healed. Supernatural strength came to him and he asked the gentlemen in the line: "What's wrong with you?" He said: "My stomach." Smith Wigglesworth went "In Jesus' name", *pooh*, punched him on the stomach, and the guy fell down. You'd better make sure that's the Lord... The guy got up and was healed. But before he got up and before they found out that he was healed, Smith Wigglesworth had moved on to the next guy down the line. So Smith Wigglesworth asked him: "What's wrong with you?" He said: "Ah, headache." Although he had a stomach problem too, he didn't want to be punched.

The point is you have to separate the character from the works. Ideally they should be either 100% or aiming to be 100%. But the two don't always relate. We assume that you have 70% character and you have 70% works. That is not always the case. Character and works are not always related.

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If you regard works to be the righteousness part and character to be the holiness part, you begin to see the relationship of how you relate to God. For a person to do the works of God, he still has to relate, to hear the works that God wants him to do and get his job assignments from God. But to have the character of God is more than that. Because when you want the character of God, you have to come to God, not just to get jobs to be done. You have to come to God because of who He is and just enjoy spending time with Him. Let Him transform you. As you behold Him, He is transformed into your life.

Another way to relate to the two although not quite easy to understand is the difference between wisdom and knowledge. Now, we know that all knowledge, when it's directly related together in its proportion, produces wisdom. We also know that knowledge can exist without wisdom. It is possible for knowledge to exist without wisdom. But most of the time when wisdom is there, you do have knowledge. So just as wisdom represents holiness and knowledge represents righteousness, you can see the relationship. Wisdom and knowledge are two separate concepts, but they can be related. No doubt when you are walking with God in holiness, there is a realm of righteousness that is already flowing. But righteousness and holiness are two different concepts. One relates to the character of God; the other relates to the works of God.

Because God is so big, we've got to understand this concept separately. If you don't realise how big God is, borrow a telescope and look through the telescope. You will realise that the more you see, the less you see, the less you realise you have. God is huge and big. The whole galaxy – we on the planet earth are the third planet around our solar system. Our solar system is part of a big, giant galaxy. We think it's big but there is a bigger galaxy called the Milky Way and the Milky Way is so huge that its longest length is 100,000 light-years. A light-year is the time it takes for light which travels at 186,000 miles per second to travel in one year. So you need 100,000 of those light-years to cover the length of the whole galaxy and you haven't even left the galaxy yet. You could travel for 100,000 light-years, and you haven't left the Milky Way yet. They have found other galaxies beyond and our God made all those things.

Having understood the works of God and the righteousness of God, why is righteousness important then, as it relates to holiness? To do anything on this earth requires the outflow of righteousness. Because God has created this planet in such a way that it operates by laws and when certain laws are fulfilled, it can flow. This refers to righteousness in general. There are people out in the world (who are tapping upon the laws of God) prospering because they observe certain laws of God even though they have no knowledge of God. Whoever is partaking of the blessings that God has released is somehow obeying those laws.

When God created the world, all the blessings in this world operate through the laws of righteousness. All the Ten Commandments are only sub laws under the laws of righteousness. For you to partake of anything on this earth, any blessings on this earth, whether they be spiritual, whether they be emotional or whether they be material, you will have to work through these righteousness laws to receive them. You and I say, "Why should God make it that way?" Because God is a fair and just God. He has to make all the things of this earth flow by a set of laws to be fair. If He doesn't, then He will be guilty of favouritism. You see, if one person receives a blessing and the

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other doesn't receive a blessing, and you ask God, "God, why are You doing it?" And God says, "Because I like that person more than him." – That doesn't sound like God. But if God were to say, "I have made available blessings for both; it's up to both to keep those laws to get those blessings." – He is fair.

When Cain found problems with Abel and said: "Why did You accept Abel's offering and didn't accept mine?" – he was angry. God didn't just say I like Abel more than you. He never. He told Cain: "If you do well (relates to works again), wouldn't you be accepted?" What was He telling Cain? "If you do the same like him, I will accept you." So He is not playing favouritism. He is saying these are the laws that He has created – if you flow by them, the blessings will come, irrespective of any person.

God is a fair God, that's why He creates these laws of righteousness. These laws of righteousness are not fully understood by all of us. At the same time, because there are laws and there are works, it is possible sometimes not to differentiate between our own righteousness and the righteousness of God. This is because to a certain extent, once you have reached a certain level of ability, you could end up doing those things on your own steam and strength, and not on God's strength. That is where self-righteousness comes in. God does not favour those concepts and there will be a cycle of hitting back at the person because the person has forgotten his source of righteousness and has relegated his righteousness to himself, in his own power and strength. What will happen is somewhere down the road the person will fall flat on his face when he runs out of all his energy, until he realises that all is in vain without God.

So there is holiness and there is righteousness. Let's look at the Bible here in Romans, and begin to explore these concepts because they are important, for them to flow in our lives. In Romans 4, it says about Abraham (verses 21 & 22): ***"and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. And therefore 'it was accounted to him for righteousness.'*** " The works of God belong in the realm of righteousness. It is also telling here of the concept of righteousness which Paul is trying to bring forth. Remember there are two types of righteousness – self-righteousness and the righteousness which is a free gift of God.

To summarize, first we have separated holiness from righteousness. There is a relation between the two but they are different. Then we look into righteousness and we realise that there is self-righteousness and there is the gift of righteousness. This is what the Bible is trying to bring forth in the New Testament. The concept of the gift of righteousness. True righteousness must flow from the heart. It says that Abraham was told by God when he asked God, "God, how will I inherit a child?" God answered him by getting him to cut a covenant with God. When Abraham had cut a covenant with God, the bible says that Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness. He looked at the stars and he began to point towards that concept. It says he believed what God said and God treated it as if he had done it, as if he had "merited" it into his life.

The interesting concept is this: That the word "righteousness" or the word "accounted" in both the Old Testament and the New Testament (where it was accounted to him for righteousness) is an accountant's term that was used in the Greek days. With

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accountancy there will always be a debit side and credit side. It was like God saying it had been credited into Abraham's account. When it was accounted to him for righteousness, everything that he wanted on this earth...

In our modern world today, everything revolves around money. Money is a human invention for the exchange of goods. As almost every human being knows, if you have money in your bank, you can do a lot of things. You can buy a car, a house, good food or whatever – money in the bank can be converted.

Now, if somebody comes to you and says that he has credited your account in your name legally with one million dollars, as you will have realised, *wow*, it has now given you the capacity to get a lot of things. It has increased your capacity to buy things or to do good works if you so choose to do.

What had God actually done with did with Abraham – He said: "Abraham, because you believe Me, all these things..." Now, the whole planet earth, what is the medium of exchange for this planet earth? It's not money in God's sight. Righteousness. You have to look at righteousness as the medium of exchange for all things that you require in this life for your spirit, soul and body. Remember how we always say that money can't buy all these things? Money definitely can't buy all these things – things like a happy home, happiness, joy, all these emotional things. But do you know what can buy it? If I can use the concept, please pardon me - righteousness. You say, "Prove it."

In the Bible, doesn't it say (Romans 5:1): ***"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God..."***? You have love, you have joy. So if I can put it in a "very blunt and very raw" way, righteousness is the medium of exchange for all that you require in this life – spirit, soul and body. If you receive a portion of righteousness, then that credit in your spiritual account entitles you to be able to inherit and possess some things on this earth. Just as in a carnal way when you have a million dollars in your bank account, it enables you to possess more "material" things. It cannot buy spiritual things; it cannot buy emotional things although people have tried; it can buy only material things. But the medium of exchange for the whole planet earth when God created it is righteousness. That is why God told the Old Testament people, "If you obey My laws, you will be the head and not the tail. If you obey these laws, you will be blessed and not be cursed."

Now, in the world (as Paul says in Romans), there are Gentiles who never have the laws and they keep God's laws. By keeping God's laws, God blesses them in the same way as He would have blessed the Israelites in the Old Testament. That is how the whole world today operates although people don't realise they are knowingly or unknowingly keeping some of God's laws. Some of them just kept them by maybe somebody else teaching them those laws but not really understanding those laws. Righteousness is the medium of exchange.

So when God told Abraham, "Abraham, because you believe My word, I have credited into your account righteousness, enough righteousness to possess as many descendants as you want." That is why it was accounted to him for righteousness.

Let's progress on that concept and see here in Romans, as it brings forth those concepts. In chapter 5, it tells us, looking at verse 15 onwards. Verses 15-17: ***“But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.”*** Notice, when you receive the gift of righteousness, you will reign in life in Christ Jesus? Notice that the gift of righteousness relates to the abundance of grace?

Let's look at Hebrews very briefly. In Hebrews, in the portion on Melchizedek and speaking about Melchizedek as the king of righteousness, we look at chapter 7 verse 2: ***“to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated ‘king of righteousness,’ (that is Melchizedek) and then also king of Salem, meaning ‘king of peace,’ ”*** Abraham related to him and, in other words, became a part of the blessings that flow from Melchizedek. It goes on to tell us here about Jesus being in the order of the priest of Melchizedek, which means that here Melchizedek is like a type of Jesus, he is the king of righteousness. And Jesus is like Melchizedek; He is the king of righteousness. He is righteousness personified; therefore He can bring the gift of righteousness upon our lives.

Look back at Romans. In chapter 5 again, in verse 15: ***“But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many.”*** What Paul is trying to say is that in the Old Testament righteousness was the medium of exchange, and you've got to receive that righteousness through the gift of God, and by keeping the law, you would achieve a certain realm of righteousness. But he says when Jesus Christ came, the whole concept of righteousness is now more evolved. Righteousness is now no more just works in Jesus. Righteousness now is a person. Before Jesus came, it was just a concept of works. But when Jesus came, righteousness is now a person.

If righteousness is now a person, how does the gift of righteousness flow? When this person called “righteousness” comes into your life and flows through you, you begin to possess it, not really you, but the person of Jesus in you. We began with righteousness as a medium of exchange, now righteousness is a person. When you receive that person, He has now become your righteousness, my righteousness. He flows from us.

Now let's bring back the linkage to holiness. Holiness is us coming deeper and deeper into God – Outer Courtyard, Holy Place, the Most Holy Place. Righteousness is now God working outwards through our lives. Righteousness is Him flowing out through us to do works (again remember the word “works”). So He is now flowing within us to do works, which means that the righteousness concept is now different. If Jesus is now the beginning and the end of all righteousness, it empowers you to do more than the Old Testament. It is just like money is the medium of exchange in the world. The more money you have, the more things you can purchase in the world. But what happens if you meet Mr Money himself? Can you see the difference? Then there is no end to the

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supply. The only limit is what He works through you and that's what Jesus has come out for.

Let me give you a few examples here. 1 Corinthians 15 – here is Paul acknowledging how He is working now from inside. 1 Corinthians 15:10 – ***“But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, (Paul says yet not I) but the grace of God which was with me.”*** He is saying he did all those things, but it was not him; the grace of God was working in him. There was something else flowing out of him in his life.

In Galatians, he gives another example when he talks about his apostleship and Peter's apostleship. He recognises that it was God working in their lives. In Galatians 2, he says in verse 8: ***“for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles,”*** There was God working in him, through him.

In Ephesians 2, he summarises the Christian life and the works that we have to do in this Christian life. In chapter 2, first he says we are not like the Old Testament, we have died to all the works, and in chapter 2 verses 8-10: ***“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, (not of works, he says) lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”*** In other words, now there is something imparted to our lives, so that you and I will have the works flowing, something like Paul says “yet not I” but something in him that is beginning to do the works in him.

Having that concept in mind, he makes an interesting statement in Philippians 1:11 (Paul's prayer for them): ***“being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.”*** Notice what he calls it? Righteousness is now a fruit, but is a different type of fruit. He says here – *the fruits of righteousness*. How you obtain this *fruits of righteousness* is that you are first filled with it and then it flows out from you – *the fruits of righteousness*.

When God gives the gift of righteousness, it's like God saying, “I now give you the capacity to possess anything on this earth.” So if we understand righteousness and the gift of righteousness, we will understand the ability to possess and position ourselves on this earth to do what God wants us to do. That's a powerful concept.

It also says in 1 John 2:29 – ***“If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.”*** So everyone who does righteousness is born of the Spirit's influence and through Him.

And one final verse in John 15 which ties the whole thing together. Part of the work of the Holy Spirit is this: Righteousness is the medium of exchange; righteousness is a fruit of Him dwelling in us. We start with John 14. It tells us here (verses 17 & 18): ***“the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.”*** Then in chapter 16 verse 8 (it talks about the

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Holy Spirit): ***“And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:”*** There are three types of conviction. Most of us only know one type of conviction – conviction of sin. But there are three types of conviction. It says here: conviction of sin, conviction of righteousness, conviction of judgment. Judgment refers to Satan, as it explains in the next few verses. Sin, of course you know, of unbelief. But righteousness is different.

Why is the concept of righteousness important, as we look at the close of this series on holiness? Because holiness, as we walk with God, begins to produce a higher level of righteousness in our lives. As the gift of righteousness (some called it the force of righteousness) works in us. Paul says this: “It is not I, but the grace of God in me.” He refers to the grace of God. I have given you the verse in Romans 5 where the grace of God and the righteousness of God relate. Abounding in grace is because you are abounding in righteousness – the gift of righteousness. Through the gift of righteousness you rule and reign, so you are abounding in grace.

This life of ours depends on grace. But when God gives us grace, He cannot bypass His laws. In other words, you cannot break all the Ten Commandments and expect that the grace and the blessings of God will continue in your life. Obviously there is something wrong in that concept which some Christians run around with. They think that when Jesus has come, now that they are at liberty, they can do every wrong thing. You still can never do that, except that He gives you a higher capacity to do the right thing. So grace does not exclude you from keeping the Commandments, but grace enables you to keep the Commandments at a higher level.

The grace of God is so important in this life because everything you receive is going to be by the grace of God; the grace of God is working through the righteousness of God. Righteousness in an experiential way is like a conviction in your heart. You know, when you sense the presence of God and you know He is there, that is the conviction of your standing with Him. Similarly, when you feel good in God’s sight, it is a conviction of righteousness. You only know the negative side when you are convicted of sin. Yes, you were human and fallen before you knew what the conviction is, but you need to know what the opposite side of that is – the conviction of righteousness that brings boldness into your life and it can come in degrees.

In Hebrews 4, it tells us that we can become more skilful in the word of righteousness, as we begin to know Him and partake of Him more and more. It tells us here (Hebrews 4:12) – ***“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”*** And then it goes right down to Hebrews 5 where it differentiates between those who are still on milk versus those who are ready for strong meat, and it begins to tell us about the level that we can grow to. Look at chapter 5 verse 13: ***“For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness...”*** Notice there is skilled and unskilled in the word of righteousness? So righteousness is a conviction in your heart.

Look at Hebrews 11:1 – ***“... faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”*** In some old translations, it brings forth a different passage of

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Hebrews 11:1 which says *faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*. Now, look over to the Old King James version and it says here that *faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*. Let's look at another translation, the RSV which tells us a different aspect of it. We don't have an amplified one yet in this. Young's Literal Translation: ***"And faith is of things hoped for a confidence, of matters not seen a conviction,"***

When someone is convinced that God is about to bless him, that is righteousness working. Why is it important to be convinced? Because when you are convinced, doubt has been conquered. The gift of righteousness in our lives conquers all fears and doubts. I said in a previous chapter that the greatest enemy is yourself; not the devil; is yourself that prevents you? What is it inside us is preventing us? Our doubts, our fears, our unbelief – these are preventing it from working. That is why the gift of righteousness comes to enable us to do the things that God wants us to do, to move us into a higher dimension. That is why in Romans 10:10, it says with the heart you believe unto righteousness.

Romans 10:17 – ***"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."*** Preceding that, it says here (verses 6 & 7) – ***"But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' " (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or, " 'Who will descend into the abyss?' " (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what did it say in Romans 10:9 – "that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." Look at verse 10 – "For with the heart one believes unto righteousness..."***

With the heart, we believe unto righteousness. Righteousness is a gift unto us. How much it can operate depends on what your heart can believe. What your heart can believe depends on how much of the word flowing into your life. And there is a conviction. Unless your heart believes, your mouth confession is of no avail. It's empty. It must begin in the heart – the conviction is in your heart.

Righteousness is a gift unto us. Your greatest enemy is yourself, your doubts, your fears. That is why when Abraham could overcome the things around him; God showed him the stars and Abraham believed God, it was accounted to him for righteousness, and from that day onwards God could begin working that miracle for him.

The day God starts working, you may not see the miracle overnight, but I can guarantee you: the day God starts working that miracle in your life, the deliverance of your home, your family, your provision of things you are believing God for, breakthroughs in your life, it will not begin on the outside. It will begin on your inside, in your heart. If you have doubts and unbelief in your heart right now, righteousness hasn't begun its work.

That is why the way to deal with righteousness is from the inside. It says in Romans 6:13 – ***"And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God."*** In other words, you yield to the righteousness on the inside, you yield to the conviction from God. There is one man in the Bible that

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epitomises that. He said to Jesus, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" And it was regarding his son. His son was possessed by a demon, the disciples couldn't cast it out, and in the end Jesus was amazed at the unbelief that was present and Jesus came to this person.

As Jesus was coming down from the Mount of Transfiguration, this person came to Jesus and said, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" That epitomises a lot of what the Christian life struggle is. Inside your heart, your greatest enemy is doubt and unbelief. The greatest passage of Scripture on mountain moving faith – is hung by a balance in one little verse: If you believe in your heart and do not doubt (Mark 11:23-24). That means what goes on in the heart is going to destabilize the system.

So what can you believe for? You can only believe God for the areas that God reveals to you. That is, your job, your works, the area that God has assigned to you. Faith comes by hearing the rhema of God and the rhema of God comes (the spoken word of God comes) as you continue to hear Him. Faith comes by hearing. And so God establishes and allows His righteousness to flow into your heart, into your life.

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