

THE POWER TO BE HOLY

Sermon Study Guide

Point of Life Church | Pastor Anthony J. Shetley

August 9, 2026

KEY TRUTH

Holiness is not produced by legalism. It is the work of God's grace in the life of a believer who walks by faith and obeys Christ from the heart.

KEY SCRIPTURE

1 John 5:3-4 - God's commandments are not burdensome, and the victory that overcomes the world is our faith.

1. What Is Holiness?

Holiness is total devotion to God: a life set apart unto Him, set apart from sin, and set apart from the fallen world system.

READ: Leviticus 20:26; 1 Peter 1:15-16; Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; Hebrews 12:14

REFLECT / DISCUSS

1. How would you describe holiness in your own words?
2. How is holiness different from merely looking religious?
3. What competes most strongly for total devotion to God in your life?

2. Holiness and Worldliness

Worldliness is the fallen system of this age that resists God's character, rule, and righteousness. Holiness is the opposite: a life yielded to God.

READ: 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:1-3; James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17; Romans 8:5-8

REFLECT / DISCUSS

4. According to these passages, what makes the world system spiritually dangerous?
5. Where can worldly values quietly shape a believer's thinking?

3. Legalism: Trusting Law-Keeping for Righteousness

One form of legalism is attempting to earn or maintain right standing with God through obedience to the law rather than through Christ.

READ: Romans 3:20-28; Galatians 2:16; Galatians 3:21-25; Hebrews 7:18-19; Hebrews 8:6-13; Hebrews 10:1-18; Romans 8:1-4

- The law revealed God's righteousness and exposed sin.
- The law could not perfect the sinner or remove sin.
- The sacrificial system pointed forward to Christ.
- Jesus established a better covenant through a perfect sacrifice.

REFLECT / DISCUSS

6. What could the law do, and what could it not do?
7. Why was a new covenant necessary?
8. How does Romans 8:1-4 describe what God accomplished through Christ?

4. Legalism: Adding Human Rules to God's Commands

A second form of legalism is treating human traditions, preferences, and regulations as though they were God's commands. The scribes and Pharisees are a primary biblical example.

READ: Matthew 15:1-9; Mark 7:1-13; Matthew 23:1-36; Luke 11:37-54; Colossians 2:20-23; Titus 1:13-16

- Human tradition can be elevated above Scripture.
- Outward conformity can replace inward transformation.
- Religious rules can create burdens God never commanded.
- Jesus emphasized justice, mercy, faithfulness, and a clean heart.

REFLECT / DISCUSS

9. Why did Jesus condemn the traditions of the Pharisees?
10. What is the difference between biblical obedience and man-made religion?
11. What church traditions or personal preferences must never be confused with God's commands?

5. Grace Gives the Power to Be Holy

Grace does not remove God's desire for holiness. Grace provides what the law, weakened through the flesh, could never provide: forgiveness, a new heart, the indwelling Spirit, and power to obey.

READ: Romans 6; Romans 8; Ezekiel 36:25-27; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Titus 2:11-14; Philippians 2:12-13

REFLECT / DISCUSS

12. According to Titus 2:11-14, what does grace teach us?
13. What is different about obedience under the new covenant?
14. How does the Holy Spirit make holy living possible?

6. Obedience Is the Fruit of Faith

Obedience is not the opposite of faith. In Scripture, genuine faith acts. Abraham obeyed because he believed God's promise.

READ: Hebrews 11:8; Romans 1:5; Romans 16:26; James 2:14-26; John 14:15; Galatians 5:6; 1 John 2:3-6; 1 John 5:1-5

- Faith is the root; obedience is the fruit.
- Obedience is an act of love toward God.
- Obedience is an act of faith.
- True faith produces a changed life.

REFLECT / DISCUSS

15. What does 'By faith Abraham obeyed' teach about the relationship between faith and obedience?
16. How can obedience become legalistic if its motive is wrong?
17. How does love for Christ change the way we view His commands?

7. The Victory of Faith

The believer is not called merely to resist the world by self-discipline. Faith in Christ is the victory that overcomes the world.

READ: 1 John 5:3-5; Romans 6:14-18; Hebrews 2:1-4; Revelation 3:7-13

REFLECT / DISCUSS

18. Why are God's commandments described as 'not burdensome'?
19. What does it mean to overcome the world by faith?
20. What can we learn from the church at Philadelphia about keeping Christ's word?

SERMON SUMMARY

Legalism says, 'Obey so God will accept you.' The gospel says, 'In Christ you are accepted by grace; therefore, trust Him, love Him, and obey Him from the heart.'

Personal Application

REFLECT / DISCUSS

21. Have I confused holiness with legalism?
22. Am I trusting Christ, or am I trusting my own performance?
23. Is my obedience flowing from faith and love?
24. Where is God calling me to greater holiness?
25. What worldly influences compete for my devotion?
26. What command of Christ do I need to trust Him enough to obey?

Digging Deeper This Week

For a broader study, read these passages slowly and note what each teaches about law, grace, holiness, faith, and obedience.

READ: Romans 6-8; Hebrews 8-10; Galatians 2-3; Matthew 15; Matthew 23; 1 John 2; 1 John 5; Revelation 3:7-13

Suggested Memory Verses

- 1 Peter 1:15-16
- Romans 8:1-4
- Hebrews 11:8
- Romans 1:5
- 1 John 5:3-5
- Revelation 3:10-11