

KEEP IN STEP WITH THE SPIRIT (Part 4) (Eph. 5:1-17)

~The world's greatest NEED is the PERSONAL HOLINESS of Christian people.

~The ONLY “credible” opposition to the evil and unholiness of our generation is HOLY LIVING by those who call themselves Disciples of Christ.

~We hear much concerning the Church's quest for social, racial, and economic JUSTICE...and those are certainly goals that we should be reaching and fighting for...but it would be far healthier and more potent if our FIRST AIM was PERSONAL and RELATIONAL Holiness in every believers life.

~It is hard to fight a MORAL battle while living an IMMORAL life.

~Our POTENCY and EFFECTIVENESS in the world will always be directly tied the way we LIVE our Faith.

(D.L. Moody)—said “The place for the ship is in in the sea...but God help the ship if the sea gets into it.”

~Our problem has been that there is far too much of the SEA in the SHIP for the SHIP to effectively impact the SEA.

A. An increase in Holiness means an increased SENSITIVITY to what God “IS.” (Holy, Love, Grace, Mercy, Healing, Life)

~Until we see Him AS HE IS...we will never possess the AWE and reverence necessary to discipline our lives for the sake of Holiness. **(1 Tim. 4:7)**

~As we come into revelation of what God IS, it gives us a clearer estimate of our own sinfulness.

~As we realize our own sin, we are made to understand more fully our own need for God's pardoning and cleansing Mercy.

(“I NEED thee, oh, I need thee!!!”)

B. If “Godliness” is the GOAL...“Discipline” is the MEANS.

~Discipline is about training...and training is a “process” that must be repeated, perfected, and continued.

(1 Cor. 9:24-27) Paul says: “Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the **prize**? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So, I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I **discipline my body and keep it under control**, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.”

~**The power for self-discipline comes from the PRIZE**...whatever we really want, the reward we believe will yield us the greatest pleasure.

(Heb. 12:2) “Looking to Jesus the author and finisher of our Faith; who **for the joy that was set before Him** endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

1. The NATURE of holiness is TRANSFORMATION through CONSECRATION.

~The New Testament has two words for Holiness:

(“**Hagiasmos**”)—is a “relational” word, signifying the “state of being separated and set apart **FOR God and consecrated for SERVICE on the “human side”**; And **ACCEPTED for “USE” on the “Divine side.**”

~**“Relational Holiness” is realized through that “sustained” energy of consecration and dedication of oneself to the Savior.**

~Moral and Spiritual purification follows as God begins to **MATCH our CHARACTERS** to our **new position and privilege** as God’s adopted sons and daughters.

~When we refuse to allow the Holy Spirit to match our characters with our new positions in Christ...it’s not long before we lose our position!

(“**Hosiotes**”)—signifies an **INTRINSIC** moral and spiritual quality, that of being both **INWARDLY** and **OUTWARDLY** righteous and pure.

A. True transformation always requires a heart of continual REPENTANCE.

~Repentance means “turning from as much as you know of your SIN...and giving as much as you know of yourself...to as much as you know of your God.

~As your KNOWLEDGE grows at these THREE points, so our PRACTICE of Repentance must be enlarged.

~The “substance” of our Holiness is the active expression of our knowledge of the GRACE that separated us sinners to God through Christ our Savior and is now TRANSFORMING us into God’s image.

2. The CONTEXT of Holiness is Justification through Jesus Christ.

~God’s free gift of Justification is PARDON and ACCEPTANCE here and now!

~It is our UNINION by the Spirit, through Faith, with the Christ who died for us, that our subsequent life of Holiness is lived.

~Justification is an act of God whereby He pronounces a sinner to be righteous because of that sinner’s faith in Christ.

~Justification has to do with God’s declaration about the sinner, not any change within the sinner.

~Justification does not make anyone Holy; it simply declares him to be **not guilty** before God and therefore treated as holy.

1.) Justification comes apart from the law; that is, we cannot earn justification through rule-keeping or our own good works.

2.) Justification is made possible in the sacrificial death of Christ; it is based on the shed blood of Christ.

3.) Justification is the free and gracious gift of God bestowed on those who receive by faith the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

4.) Justification demonstrates the righteousness of God.

Related to God's justification of the sinner are several things:

1.) The remission of the penalty of sin, which was death (Romans 3:23; 8:1; 1 Peter 2:24).

2.) The restoration to God's favor, which had been lost due to our sin (John 3:36).

~So, justification is more than an acquittal; it is full acceptance...we are now friends of God (**James 2:23**) and co-heirs with Christ (**Romans 8:17**).

3.) The imputation of righteousness, which is the reckoning of Christ's righteousness to our account (Romans 4:5–8).

~We are declared to be righteous forensically (legally) because "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (**2 Corinthians 5:21**).

3. The ROOT of Holiness is co-crucifixion and co-resurrection with Christ.

~In (**Rom. 6**), Paul explains that all who have Faith in Christ are NEW CREATURES in Him.

A. They have been crucified WITH Him.

~That means that an END has been put to the sin-dominated life lives we were living before!

~"Old things have PASSED AWAY...and all things have been made NEW!"

B. We have been RAISED UP with Him to walk in NEWNESS of life.

~The power that raised Jesus from the dead is now AT WORK within in us causing us to live differently because in truth WE ARE DIFFERENT!

C. There is now a new controlling MOTIVE around which the whole of our lives must be built.

~We must develop a “heart after God”...which is a **SUSTAINED desire** to know Him, draw near to Him, seek him, find Him, love Him, honor him, and serve him.

D. A believers Holiness is a matter of LEARNING to be in ACTION what he already IS in heart.

~It is a matter of living out the life and expressing the disposition and instincts that God wrought in us when He made us “new creatures.”

4. The AGENT of Holiness is the Holy Spirit.

~By the Spirit’s enabling, we resolve to do things that are RIGHT. (It is not our resolve, but His “quickening” and strengthening that enables us)

~We then form HABITS of doing RIGHT THINGS, and out of these habits come’s a CHARACTER that is right.

~Sow and ACTION reap a HABIT...sow a habit reap a CHARACTER.

(Phil. 2:13 NIV) “For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.”

(NLT) “For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.”

(Amplified) “For it is not your strength, but it is God who is effectively at work in you, both to will and to work that is, strengthening, energizing, and creating in you the longing and the ability to fulfill your purpose, for His good pleasure.”

A. Habit forming is the Spirit’s ordinary way of leading us on in Holiness.

~The Fruit of the Spirit itself is, from our standpoint, a series of HABITS OF ACTION and REACTION.

5. The EXPERIENCE of Holiness is one of CONFLICT.

(Gal. 5:17 ESV) “For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.”

~These words alert us to the reality of TENSION and the necessity of effort that mark a life of Holiness.

~Every believer must push on against constant opposition WITHOUT.
(Temptations, trials, hardship in life)

~And we must war against moments of reluctance WITHIN that seem to come out of nowhere.

A. The desires of the Spirit are the inclinations of our RENEWED HEART.

~The desire to please Him...the desire to SERVE Him...the desire to be OBEDIENT...these are not OUR DESIRES; they are the desires of our renewed hearts.

~And He not only creates the DESIRE...He then comes behind and empowers us to DO what He has put in us a desire to do.

B. We must get comfortable with the fact that any real Holiness within us will be under hostile fire all the time.

(Matt. 26:41) “Watch and pray, that you enter not in temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

~We must face this fact with a Faith that refuses to TIRE!!!

(Heb. 12:3-4 NIV) “Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.”

6. The RULE of Holiness is God’s revealed law.

(Eph. 4:23-24) “And be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”

1.) Holiness is righteousness viewed as the expression of our being consecrated to God.

2.) Righteousness is Holiness viewed as the PRACTICE of conforming to God's LAW.

~God's law is God's REQUIREMENTS in human lives.

(Rom. 7:12,14) "Wherefore the law is Holy, and the commandment is Holy, and just, and good. For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal sold under sin."

A. God's requirements express and reflect the Creators own character.

~God only asks us to DO what He IS.

B. Conformity to His law is that aspect of God's IMAGE in man.

~That image was lost in the FALL...and is now being restored in us by GRACE!

~In the "doing" of what God **is** we are made into HIS IMAGE and LIKENESS.

C. The "proof" of our LOVE lies solely in our OBEDIENCE.

(John 14:15) "If you love me, keep my commandments."

7. The HEART of Holiness is the Spirit of LOVE.

(Matt. 22:26-40) READ

~Love of God and man is the WHOLE BURDEN of the law.

(1 Cor. 13:1-3 NKJV) "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am **nothing**. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it **profits me nothing**."

~Love is essentially not a feeling of affection...but a way of behaving.

~Love does something...it GIVES...that is how it establishes its IDENTITY.

(1 John 3:16-18 NKJV) “By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And **we also ought to lay down our lives** for the brethren. But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.”

(1 John 4:11) “Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.”

