Study 6: Living Holy Lives

Read: Ephesians 4:17–5:5
Memory Verse: Ephesians 5:1–2

The Big Idea

Because we belong to Jesus, our lives should look different from the world around us.

Start Here

When you hear the word *holiness*, what comes to mind?

Some people picture a pastor, missionary, or someone who spends all their time reading the Bible and praying. Others think holiness means following a long list of rules and never having any fun.

But that's not what the Bible teaches. Holiness isn't reserved for a select few Christians. It's something God calls every follower of Jesus to pursue.

Think about it this way: If you say you belong to Jesus, shouldn't your life begin to reflect Him?

That doesn't mean you'll never make mistakes. It means that as you grow in your relationship with Christ, the way you think, speak, act, and treat others should begin to change.

Read Ephesians 4:17–5:5

In this passage, Paul describes two different ways to live.

First, he describes people who live without God. Their thinking is misguided, their hearts are hardened, and their actions reflect their separation from God.

Then Paul reminds the Ephesian Christians that they have been taught something different. They have been taught to put off their old selves and put on their new selves in Christ.

Think about changing clothes. When you put on something new, you take off what you were wearing before. Paul uses this picture to explain what should happen in the life of a Christian.

We shouldn't continue living the same way we did before knowing Jesus. Instead, our minds should be renewed, and our actions should reflect the new life we have received through Him.

Paul gets practical, too. He talks about putting away dishonesty, anger, stealing, unwholesome speech, bitterness, and other sinful behaviors.

But he doesn't simply tell us what to stop doing. He also tells us what should take their place. Instead of lying, we should speak truthfully. Instead of stealing, we should work and share with others. Instead of tearing people down with our words, we should use our words to build them up.

In Ephesians 5, Paul takes it even further:

We are called to imitate God and walk in love, just as Christ loved us.

Holiness isn't simply about avoiding bad behavior. It's about becoming more like Jesus.

Talk About It

1. What do you think it means to "put off your old self" and "put on your new self"? How should that change the way a Christian lives?

2. What are some things in our culture that make it difficult for teenagers to live holy lives? How can we keep those things from influencing us?

Live It Out

One of the most important things Paul teaches in this passage is that our minds need to be renewed. The things we constantly watch, listen to, think about, and surround ourselves with influence the way we live.

If we continually fill our minds with things that pull us away from God, we shouldn't be surprised when our actions begin to reflect those things. When we spend time in God's Word, surround ourselves with people who encourage our faith, and intentionally pursue Jesus, our thinking begins to change.

Take a few minutes and answer this question:

"What is one thing I need to put off, and what is one thing I need to put on?"

For example:

- Put off gossip and put on encouraging words.

- Put off dishonesty and put on truthfulness.
- Put off bitterness and put on forgiveness.
- Put off selfishness and put on generosity.
- Put off anger and put on patience.

Choose one area where you need to grow and identify one practical step you can take this week.

Parents, consider sharing an area where God is still working on you. Remind your teenager that holiness is a lifelong process of becoming more like Jesus, not something we accomplish overnight.

Pray Together

Memory Verse

Ephesians 5:1–2

"Therefore, be imitators of God, as dearly loved children, and walk in love, as Christ also loved us and gave himself for us, a sacrificial and fragrant offering to God."