

The Beauty of Holiness

SAMPLE PAGES:

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Lesson One, Days One through Four

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Lesson *One*

Glorious in Holiness

God is holy. Most Christians are very familiar with this truth. If you have been a Christian for long, you have probably heard (and perhaps memorized) the words of Isaiah 6:3—

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!”

You may also know that “holy” is the only attribute of God that the Bible repeats three times in succession. You may be able to define “holy” as meaning “set apart” or “undefiled.” Perhaps you even know that Scripture’s first mention of the word “holy” is when God spoke to Moses from the burning bush (Exodus 3).

But as worshippers of a God who is glorious in holiness, we must ask ourselves: do we have a true understanding of what holiness is? Have we studied it? Meditated on it? Do we *really* (as much as is humanly possible) understand what it means that God is holy? Do we live in light of His holiness? Do we really care about holiness—if so, does it show? Does God’s holiness, and our own pursuit of holiness, make a difference in our everyday lives?

When I asked myself these questions, the answers were not always as I wanted them to be. The following prayer expresses the desire of my heart at the time that I began asking myself these questions. If you desire the same, would you pray these words with me as you begin this study?

Glorious God and Father,

I come before Your throne to humbly confess that there are many things in this world that distract my thoughts from You. Forgive me—it should not be so. But you know the desire of my heart today. You know that I want to love and understand and embrace the truth that You are holy. I want to worship You in the beauty of holiness and I want to be pleasing in Your sight. Please teach me...and as you teach me, please change me to be more like You.

*“Who is like You,
O LORD,
among the gods?
Who is like You,
glorious in holiness...”*

Exodus 15:11

DAYS ONE AND TWO

“Who _____ You, O _____, among the gods?
 Who _____ You, glorious in _____ ...”
 Exodus 15:11

By reading and examining the Scriptures, we can see the greatness and incomprehensibility of God. He is unlike us. He is loftier and higher than our minds can understand! We, the finite, cannot fully understand God, the infinite.

Even so, we can learn much about Him, and He commands us to do so. We must strive to know Him and diligently search out His truths.

This is not always easy! Yet we must not give up when the work becomes difficult. If we do, the Christian life can too quickly become for us merely a routine, a ministry opportunity, or an activity. **We must faithfully practice prayerful meditation and fervent striving to understand our God as He has revealed Himself in Scripture!** When we do so, the Spirit draws our hearts to true worship and leads us to live our lives to His glory.

“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.’ ...
 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God,
 that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God...”
 1 Corinthians 2:9-13

1. In Psalm 50:16-23 the LORD speaks to the wicked. In verse 21, He accuses the wicked of making a grave mistake—what mistake did they make?

2. Scripture repeatedly tells us, describes for us, and reminds us that God is not like us. He is separate and fully unlike sinful man. (In other words, He is transcendent.) As you read and meditate on the following passages, record the phrases which indicate that God is unlike man. (*If time is limited, complete only the bold entries.*)

Who is like You, O LORD?

a. **1 Samuel 2:2**

b. **Job 11:7-9**

Who is like You, O LORD?

c. Job 26:14 (*see vv. 7-14*)

d. Psalm 33:13-15

e. Psalm 86:8-10

f. Psalm 104:1-4

g. Psalm 113:4-6

h. Isaiah 40:18, 25-26 (*see vv. 15-26*)

i. Isaiah 55:8-9

3. God is unlike man in being, in power, in knowledge, in greatness, in thought, in glory, *in holiness...and we must never make the mistake of thinking that He is altogether like us.* Why might God repeat this truth so many times and in so many different ways? (*Take time to answer thoughtfully.*)

4. As you begin this study on holiness, will you commit to prayerful meditation and fervent striving in order to grow in your understanding of God? It is this kind of desire and commitment which our Lord will reward with an increase in spiritual understanding. After expressing the desires of your heart to your Lord, initial the box.

DAY THREE

“ _____ You, O LORD, among _____?
 _____ is like You, _____ holiness...”
 Exodus _____:11

Why is it important to study holiness? Today you will explore a few of the reasons.

Why Pursue an Understanding of Holiness?

Reason #1 **God is not like us: He is holy.** If we want to know and walk with our God, we must have some understanding of His holiness. Read or recite this week’s memory verse, taking time to think about the second line. Then write out Amos 3:3 in the space below.

Reason #2 **Holiness is commanded by God.** If we don’t understand it, how can we respond in obedience? And if we can’t respond in obedience, how can we walk with a holy God? You will study this call to holiness in more detail in Lesson Two, but for now, record what you learn from 1 Peter 1:15-16.

Reason #3 **Holiness is part of fulfilling God’s purpose for my life.** Every believer has been created for God’s glory (Isaiah 43:7) and chosen to be holy. Read Ephesians 1:4 out loud and note when God purposed for every believer to be holy...and His motivation for doing so.

Reason #4 **Holiness is essential to acceptable worship.** True worship is not self-generated—it is the redeemed heart’s spontaneous response to the person and work of God. If we do not understand the essential nature of God (that He is holy), then our response in worship will be affected. We will not be adequately aware of our sin (and thus drawn to humble confession), nor will we be able to see God in all of His beauty (and thus drawn to heartfelt adoration and praise). In the space below, record the words of either Romans 12:1 or Psalm 29:2.

Reason #5 **Holiness is essential to effective prayer.** The word “hallowed” is closely related to the word “holy.” When Jesus taught his disciples to pray, the foundational request was “hallowed be Thy name.” If our ultimate desire is *not* for the holiness of God’s character to be manifested and honored, then our prayers are amiss. Read James 4:3.

Reason #6 **Holiness is emphasized in Scripture.** Holiness is the only thrice repeated attribute of God (one commentator describes it as the “attribute of attributes”) and the word, in noun and verb forms, is used over 900 times in Scripture. Where God puts emphasis, we should also put emphasis!

God is declared to be “Holy, Holy, Holy” in Isaiah 6 and Revelation 4. Record the verses in which these words occur and the identity of the speakers. Conclude by writing out one or both of the verses.

God is acknowledged as “Holy, holy, holy” in:

Isaiah 6: _____

The speaker(s) _____

Revelation 4: _____

The speaker(s) _____

Reason #7 **Holiness is a prerequisite for seeing the LORD and enjoying heaven.** Do you yearn for heaven? Do you long to see your Lord? Do you earnestly desire to one day hear, “Well done...enter into the joy of your Lord” (Matthew 25:21-23)? Finish each passage below.

a. Hebrews 12:14

“Pursue...holiness, without which _____.”

b. Revelation 21:27

“But there shall by no means enter it [heaven] anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those _____.”

Reason #8 **Holiness is not well understood in today’s culture.** It has been noted that most people have a better developed concept of sin than they have of holiness—although it seems the concept of sin is fading rather quickly! If we wish to truly understand holiness (and to be holy), then we must go to the Scriptures! (This week’s lesson talks about holiness and gives you some thoughts as to what it includes, but Lesson Two will begin leading you into a much deeper understanding.)

Read 1 Peter 1:13-16 (you read vv. 15-16 in Reason #2). What two things should believers not do or be? v. 14

Other reasons? As you think about the holiness of God, and the holiness believers are called to, record:

a. Additional reasons every believer should strive to grow in their understanding of holiness

or

b. The one reason listed above which most motivates you to desire and study holiness. Why did you pick that reason?

