

Holiness: Set apart – Living by God’s Standards



The Apostle Peter quoted the book of Leviticus when he wrote that Christians are to be holy as God is holy. This call to holiness is a high calling, critical to our walk with the Lord *and* to healthy marriages. It means, as the Apostle John wrote, we are to be in the world, not of the world. We are to be set apart - different than the world - living by God’s standards, not the world’s standards. Jesus, the Apostles, and saints throughout history demonstrated what it meant to live holy lives. It is Christ’s death and resurrection that makes us “holy” before God; it is the Holy Spirit’s work in and through us that helps us walk in sanctification - aligning our lives with who we are in Christ. Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5 that we are to be sanctified (or holy), that we should learn to control our own bodies in a way that is holy and honorable.

Author Gary Thomas wrote that contrary to the world’s view, marriage is *not* meant to make us happy, but to make us *holy*. God wants our growth more than our happiness; in fact, Jesus said we would have trouble in this world. When we face the troubles we experience as a husband and wife *team*, not only will those troubles be easier to face, but they will work to our benefit - growing us in our faith. Marriage is one context in which Spiritual growth occurs. BUT, we must embrace the opportunities for growth, not fight against them.

We will not do this perfectly, but we *must* pursue this sanctification, this holiness, living by God’s standards, not our own and not by the world’s standards. We have to obey God’s Word, not obeying a list of rules, but seeking to live according to the heart of our Lord. Dying to self, giving of ourselves as Christ died to Himself and gave of Himself - to the point of death. Who are you going to serve? Self, pleasures, your own wants and desires? Or are you going to serve God, your Creator, the Lover of your soul? Seek holiness in your life, follow hard after the Lord our God - whether your not your spouse follows after Him. Living that set apart life has a way of drawing others toward it. Live by God’s standards.

Helpful Resources: *Fortified Marriages Resource page:* www.fortifiedmarriages.com

Books to check out:

Sacred Marriage by Gary Thomas

The Pursuit of Holiness by Jerry Bridges

Articles to check out:

Choosing holiness over happiness in marriage by Gary Thomas - www.focusonthefamily.com

What does the Bible say about holiness? What does it mean to be holy? - www.gotquestions.org