

Holy Spirit & Happy Holiness!

By Timothy Johns

The Word of God: “For it is not from man that we draw our life but from God as we are being **joined to Jesus**, the Anointed One. And now **he is our God-given wisdom, our virtue, our holiness**, and our redemption. (Passion Translation) It is because of him that you are **in Christ Jesus, who has become for us** wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, **holiness** and redemption.” ... Christ made us right with God; he made us pure and holy, and he freed us from sin. (NIV) 1 Corinthians 1:30

For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a *holy life*. Therefore, anyone who rejects this instruction does not reject a human being but God, *the very God who gives you his Holy Spirit*. (1 Thess. 4:7–8)

May God himself, the God of peace, *sanctify you through and through*. May your whole spirit, soul and body *be kept blameless* at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thess. 5:23)

Because God chose you as first fruits to be saved through *the sanctifying work of the Spirit* and through belief in the truth. (2 Thess. 2:13) “It is God’s will that you should be holy [or sanctified]” (1 Thess. 4:3). But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.” (1 Peter 1:15-16)

Introduction: One of the roles of the Holy Spirit is to make us holy. But the definition of “holiness” has been a much debated and very divisive topic in the Body of Christ. Holiness has been portrayed as a rigid compliance to a narrow set of rules, and living a boring restrictive life of “do’s” and “do not’s”. Christianity, in the minds of many, has been reduced to sin management and behavior modification requiring religious performance. In reality, holiness is such a secure attachment with our loving God, a deep connection with the Person of Jesus, that we are transformed into our true and powerful selves through Him. It is deliverance from the bondage of sin, and empowerment to fulfill our eternal destinies. Holiness is really all about deep relational intimacy, and therefore makes us the happiest and most joyful people on the planet. Joy is a manifestation of long term secure attachments and love bonds. Joy is relational. “Happy holiness” is the contagious joy of belonging to God, our true selves, and one another. **Belonging to God results in Being like God because we become like the One (s) who love us: loving, joyful, peaceful, kind, gentle, protective, humble, stable, etc.** “We are saved (securely attached) by grace through faith.” Eph. 2:8-9

Classic Biblical definitions of Holiness:

1. Set apart
2. Not living by the system of the world or from a worldly perspective... but living from the heavenly realm. Out of this world! Living from heaven to earth.
3. Purity, sanctification = our souls progressively transformed into the character and likeness of Christ.

Religious definitions of holiness:

1. Proper ethical behavior.
2. Making right moral choices.
3. Keeping the rules that a particular group defines as acceptable behavior. Total compliance with exacting laws and regulations. Not doing bad things. Religious rules change from group to group, and decade to decade. Less than 50 years ago, many evangelical and/or Pentecostal groups defined holiness by: a. your hair style, b. length of dresses, c. no playing of cards, d. no drinking of alcohol (sometimes no coffee), e. no tobacco products, f. no theaters, g. no dancing, h. no cussing, j. sex only for procreation...or perhaps “duty”. Common poem, “I don’t drink, I don’t chew, and I don’t go with the boys/girls that do!

The most Biblical definition of holiness:

1. True holiness is relational belonging. It means we are exclusively “married” to God, who is called “Jealous”. God so valued us that he first made us and then bought us back with the priceless blood of Jesus Christ. He did this while we were sinners. (Ro.5:8) “Atonement” means to be made “one”

through the finished work of the cross. God made us his through Jesus. From God's vantage point we belong to Him completely, our part is to change our minds (repent) and agree with God, believe this good news, and receive Him. The gift of belonging is not imposed on us by God. It is not automatic. We receive the free gift of belonging, we don't earn it, nor do we hold it by performing.

2. Holiness is when a secure attachment and love bond is established between us and God and His people, so that God's fruit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, mercy, humility, self-control), God's mind (wisdom & revelation), and God's power are transferred into our spirit, souls and bodies transforming us into the likeness of Christ. (Romans 8:28-30)
3. Holiness is a deep sense of belonging to God apart from religious performance, outer behavior, achievement. Belonging to the right God, Believing the right things, Behaving the right ways.
4. Holiness is more about Who's we are, than what we do. Doing flows from being, being from belonging.
5. Belonging (long term secure attachment and love bonds) leads to "Becoming" (like Christ). Becoming like Christ in our core is the basis for Building. Building disciples and advancing the kingdom involves Battling.

The process of becoming holy:

1. Sequence: God initiates. We respond. God responds to our response.
2. By God's mercy and grace, God has initiated our union with Him through Jesus Christ. When we believe and receive the gospel, our personal spirit becomes one with the Holy Spirit which results in being born again. Our personal spirit is "set apart" and made new, holy, and pure. We are a new creation with a new heart. (2 Cor. 5:17) The Holy Spirit is now one with our spirit. They are co-mingled. The Person of Holy Spirit influences our inner most being. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit have securely attached to us in the deepest part of our being. This occurred apart from having all the right beliefs, all the right behaviors, all the right performance. We repent (change our mind), believe, and receive the gift of God Himself who then comes to live inside of us. We are eternally one with God. This new birth, making us a new creation son/daughter of God, is eternally secure. (1 Cor. 6:19-20; Jn 3:3) Our spirits are instantly made perfect and holy and stay that way forever. One's transformed spirit into a born again son/daughter of God cannot be undone.
3. We receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes "on and all over us". We are "dipped" or immersed in God. This gives us supernatural power to **be** like Christ and **do** like Christ.
4. With leadership from the Holy Spirit in partnership with our human spirits, we bring our immature and wounded souls and bodies into submission to Christ and into a kingdom lifestyle. We appropriate the benefits of spiritual disciplines that securely attach us with the Trinity, the Word, and God's Family. We cultivate a lifestyle of secure attachments – abiding, belonging, being, becoming. Transformation/renovation occurs through secure attachments and love bonds with God and God's people. One's spirit is holy, but one's soul, body, and lifestyle are in the process of being made holy. The degree of our soul's holiness is the measure of our joy and happiness!

Group practice: Asking the Holy Spirit to change our minds (repenting) so that we believe the truth and enjoy being securely attached to God, ourselves, and others: Belonging, Becoming, Building, Battling

1. "I am" beliefs and statements: What are your thoughts about God and yourself that convince you that you are loved by God, belong to Him, and are securely attached to Him forever?
2. "I am not" beliefs and statements: What are your inner conversations, convictions, and beliefs that produce insecurity, fear, unbelief, self-protection, and walls between you and God and you and others? Where do those "I am not" thoughts come from? How are you going to eliminate them?