

# HOLINESS

## A BIBLE PERSPECTIVE

By: Phillip Hayes

*"Follow peace with all men, and holiness,  
without which no man shall see the Lord"  
[Hebrews 12:14].*

I am sure all Christians passionately desire to "See the Lord"! To actually see the One that gave His life that we might be saved is every child of God's longing.

Our opening verse of Scripture is plain. In order for anyone to "See The Lord" they must follow two things. Number One, "Follow or pursue Peace with all men". Number Two, "Follow or pursue Holiness".

To follow peace with all men seems to be obvious, but I can assure you, it is not a simple command that can be easily obeyed. We must be peacemakers, not troublemakers. In our world today we seem to be compassed about by many troublemakers. They are never fully pleased with anything or anyone. Some call them "Drama Queens". There is never any peace in their lives. They are forever complaining and pointing the finger of guilt at everyone except themselves.

In order for us to follow peace with all men we must understand this includes our brothers and sisters in Christ as well as those unsaved individuals we meet each and every day. I have found it to be much easier to be a Peacemaker when it comes to dealing with the unsaved as you expect the

worldly to be opposed to you. However, when it comes to fellow Christians, you expect a different mindset as they should also be seeking peace.

When confronted with issues that has brought misunderstandings or disagreements among our brothers and sisters they should choose to be the peacemaker instead of allowing the situation to escalate out of control. Having a Peacemaker's outlook will resolve the dispute quickly as each would offer to take the blame and seek God's forgiveness. Now I believe we have all failed in this, but that doesn't change the will of God for us.

Let me give you one example that Apostle Paul gave when there was a problem between two brothers in Christ. Apparently the brothers were going to court over their dispute and Apostle Paul advised that they should do no such thing. His godly view was that the church should be able to judge such things rather than going to the world to judge between them. He then asked, why didn't you just suffer the wrong? It's found in First Corinthians chapter six, verses five thru eight: *"I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren".* I hope you see the reasoning behind Paul's advice. He reasoned that Christians should always seek to settle their issues with one another between themselves and not go before the world where you might become a stumbling block to the unsaved world. We are called to be examples to the world that we may win them to Christ.

Before we leave this portion of our study, please remember this command of our Lord. Jesus said, *"Blessed*

*are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" [Matthew 5:9]. Jesus wants us to be "Peacemakers".*

I want you to see that Peace and Holiness are connected. There can be no true peace without following the way of holiness.

In our modern church world, the very word, "holiness" is frowned upon and rarely taught. Many assume the word Holiness refers to people that emphasizes the outward appearance. Women with long hair and long dresses come to the minds of many.

There are denominations and independent churches that have strict outward standards for their ministers and parishioners. They preach against worldly entertainment, excessive jewelry, women cutting their hair, women wearing pants and shorts; and men having long hair, etc. etc. Some of the standards imposed by these ministries are reasonable and Bible based, others go to such extremes as to be laughable. They are all guilty of representing themselves as Holiness People by their outward appearance; and because of this, many have a distorted understanding of holiness.

When I attended Public High School in the late fifties, the girls were not allowed to wear shorts or pants or tight-fitting clothes to school. The boys were not allowed to have long hair or wear tight fitting jeans. They had rules! They had standards! But these standards were not enacted to make us kids become holiness people! These rules were given because of the high standard of modesty and decency that the school system of the time required.

Today, you find no such standards in the public school system and sadly neither do you find them in the modern church! One would think that churches today would at least uphold the standards found in the Bible!

There is no question that the New Testament is clear on how men and women that are saved should present themselves to each other and the world and this includes the outward appearance. These apostolic teachings are as valid today as they were then!

However, if the outward appearance is the primary emphasis, we have missed what the Bible actually teaches about holiness. However, I don't want to diminish what the Bible says about outward holiness, but I do believe the Bible's emphasis is on inward holiness which we will soon discover.

The Bible states clearly, *"Women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works"*. This is found in First Timothy chapter two, verses nine and ten. There should be no debate on what modest apparel means. Women should not wear revealing clothing, nor should they proudly dress themselves with fancy hair styles, costly jewelry and costly clothing!

The Apostle Peter wrote, *"Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."* [1Peter 3:3-4]. Peter's instruction is to not dress according to the world. But rather to dress the inward! To mind those things that are spiritual and put on the ornaments of a meek and quiet spirit. Contrary to the Bible's clear teachings, today's women are obsessed with their outward appearance.

Apostle Paul says, *"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God"* [2Corinthians 7:1].

God has called us unto HOLINESS! We should do all we can to be holy inside, *and* outside as well. We are the Lord's witnesses in this evil world.

Here are two verses that I believe I can honestly say are hated by many professing Christians including ministers. *"Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering"* [1Corinthians 11:14-15]. Like it or hate it, the Truth is, women should look like women and men should look like men! When men have long hair like a woman, and women have short hair like a man they are offensive even unto nature itself.

*"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service"* [Romans 12:1]. Also, please look at these verses of First Peter: *"As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy"* [1Peter 1:14-16].

The clear message we find in the New Testament is, "Be Separate From The World"; "Be A Holy People". God's perfect will is for the OUTSIDE to reflect what's on the INSIDE. This should be every Christians desire!

My humble opinion is it should be very easy to live a holiness lifestyle outwardly, but “looks can be deceiving”. I fear there are too many Christians that look the part, but what’s on the inside betrays them. We can “look” the part but inwardly be filled with all manner of evil. Jesus said the false prophets would appear in sheep’s clothing but inwardly be ravaging wolves. Paul writes that Satan can appear as an angel of light and his ministers (demons) can appear as ministers of righteousness.

Let’s look at our opening scripture again: *“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” [Hebrews 12:14]*. Clearly, if holiness is not lived, no man shall see the Lord!

Strong’s Concordance defines the word holiness as: properly *purification*, that is, (the state) *purity*, sanctification. Therefore, holiness is a state of purity! Obviously dressing the outside in accordance with the Bible doesn’t necessarily produce purity. It is an outward sign of obedience to the scripture. Holiness MUST begin within and if it does, it will produce purity.

This has got to be every Christian’s desire! To be holy within and without! Otherwise, we are hypocrites! Our “dressing up the outside” means nothing as no man will truly see the Lord. All they see is a pretender!

Let’s dive deeper into God’s Word and see what the scriptures reveal about holiness.

First, we must understand that the holy life we live is not only for our benefit, but it is for the benefit of those in the world. You may have heard the expression, “The only Jesus most people will ever see is in you.” No doubt this statement comes from these verses: *“Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: Forasmuch as ye are*

*manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart” [2Corinthians 3:2-3]. We are a letter from God to the people of the world!*

When we submit ourselves to the Lord and live a holy life, we become witnesses to the world of God’s transforming power! Only then can the world see the Lord! Our body is the temple of the Lord! God lives in us!! God owns us! God wants us to glorify Him in our body and in our spirit! *“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's [1Corinthians 6:19-20].*

In First Thessalonians chapter four, verses one through twelve, we find the Apostle Paul exhorting the church that God has called us to holiness:

*“Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us **how ye ought to walk and to please God**, so ye would abound more and more. (Paul reminds them that they had received from the Apostles how they were to walk and please God, and it was and by doing this they would abound more and more). For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For **this is the will of God**, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That **every one of you should know how to possess his vessel** in sanctification and honour; Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. (The Apostle further states that the commandments they had given them*

is the will of God. Further that it was for their sanctification and honor) ***For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.*** (Their calling from God was holiness not uncleanness) *He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit. But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: **for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.** And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more; And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; That ye may **walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.***" (Paul concludes by saying he shouldn't have to teach them love for God teaches them to love one another. But if they would do what he is commanding them, they would lack nothing).

I hope you are seeing the relationship of, *"Follow peace with all men, and holiness"*. Truly, without God's people submitting themselves to God and obeying the commandments of Jesus and His Apostles, *"no man shall see the Lord"*.

We should be obedient children, not fashioning our lives after the world, but according to His commandments. We are to be a holy people in all areas of our lives. Look how the Apostle Peter addresses being holy. *"As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear"* [1Peter 1:14-17]. Think about that! Even your speech should be holy! Are you a holy man or woman of God?

I'm amazed at people that call themselves a Christian and still use filthy vulgar four letter words in their conversations! Sweet and bitter is not supposed to come out of the same mouth. Frankly, I don't think they have ever experienced the New Birth! When your persona is no different from the world, you are not following peace with all men, and holiness, you have failed God in the greatest call of all! Because of your failure to obey God, no man shall see the Lord!

*"And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" [Ephesians 4:24].* Apostle Paul tells us that True Holiness is the characteristic of the new man God has created. The "new man" is the new you! I believe he is speaking of the New Birth. Jesus said, "You must be born again". This verse confirms what I said previously, "Holiness must begin within".

Paul points out the attributes (fruit or product) of true holiness when you "put on" the new man.

In Ephesians chapter four Paul reveals the ministry God has given to the body of Christ. He gave the church apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. These Ministries are given for a Divine Purpose. They are designed to perfect the saints, do the work of the ministry (or dispense the doctrines of the gospel) and for the edifying of the church. These ordained ministry functions are implemented by God to ultimately bring the church to the unity of the faith, to the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. (Please see Ephesians 4:11-13).

Romans 8:29 states, *"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren"*. Therefore, God's ministry is ordained to bring the church to the image of God's Son! This is the "High Calling" Paul wrote

of in Philippians 3:14, *"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"*.

After Paul explains the purpose of the ministry and the awesome results that it is ordained to bring, he emphasizes how the church should conduct itself in their walk with the Lord.

In Ephesians chapter four, verses 17 through 19 Paul warns the church not to walk or live as others in the world. He says the gentiles (unsaved people) understanding is darkened because they are alienated from God. He says that they are ignorant and blind and have given themselves over to lasciviousness or wantonness to work uncleanness with greediness. In verse twenty, he says, *"But ye have not so learned Christ"*! Jesus doesn't teach us to live like the world! He teaches us to come out from among them and be separate! And likewise, his apostles teach the same!

The teaching of Jesus and the Apostles are given that we might fulfill the greatest call of God. *"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord"* [Hebrews 12:14].

I hope you can now see how following peace with all men and holiness is so very, very important. Would not it be wonderful if all God' people would have the same desire as Apostle Paul, *"For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh"* [2Corinthians 4:11].

I desire very much for the world to see Jesus in me that they might come to Christ by my example. What about you my friend?

*". . . . let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us"* [Hebrews 12:1].