



Daily Devotionals: Dear Church | October 23, 2022

Week 9 | Holiness Matters to God

Dear Church,

I know that “holiness” isn’t a word most of us use in our daily vocabulary. You may hear someone utter a “holy cow” out of surprise or they’re excited, but we don’t hear much about holiness in our culture as a *concept*.

Typically, when we think about something (or someone) being holy, we think about something that is morally good. “So and so” is a *holy* person because they’re always going to church, quoting Scripture, showing kindness, serving others, praying, and so on.

And when we think of holiness in relation to God, we often think about how God is inherently good and he opposes all sin and evil. This isn’t an incorrect understanding of holiness, but it isn’t quite complete.

When we think about holiness, we must also take into consideration “otherness.”

“Holy” means to be “set apart.” So, for instance, when the Bible talks about the “holy vessels” being brought into the Temple (**2 Chronicles 5:5**), they’re referring to specific items that are “set apart” to the Lord. These items – a lampstand, a table, etc. – are intended for ordinary, everyday use. They’re intended to be used for a specific purpose. In that sense, they are holy.

You probably have an idea of this from some items you own, too – a set of fine china used only on special occasions, a particular knife used only when you go hunting, a certain journal used only to scrawl your most intimate thoughts. All these items are “holy” because they are set apart for their intended purpose.

Regarding our understanding of holiness, I think it’s probably worth noting that **holy living** stems from a **holy identity**. Meaning, that traditional view of holiness that we have (right behavior) should stem from our identity as the “set apart” people of God. It’s not just something we strive for, *it’s who we are*.



When we relate this to sexuality, we quickly realize that we don't abide by God's standards for human sexuality solely because "those are the rules and we have to follow them."

We follow God's standards on sexuality because we are holy unto the Lord himself and made for specific purposes. Holy living flows out of our identity as holy ones.

As Paul writes at the very beginning of his letter to the Corinthians, we are those who have been "called to be his holy people" (**1 Corinthians 1:2**).

Applying this topic to our sexuality isn't easy, so take your time and go prayerfully to God as you seek to honor Him in this area of your life! Here are some questions and prompts to help you do just that:

1. Reflect on how you've understood God's holiness in your life. Have you ever felt like you weren't good enough for God or that He wouldn't want you? What's made you feel this way? If you haven't felt this way, have you ever interacted with someone who talked this way?
2. **Read 1 Peter 1:14-16.** When it comes to the topic of sexuality, where do you need to pursue holiness? Where are you not living into your "set apart unto God" identity?
3. What's keeping you from living a life fully "set apart" or "holy unto the Lord?"

Hopefully these questions are helpful to you. I know they have been to me. So often I'm reminded that I have something in my heart that rebels against God's good and loving standards for my life. Sometimes my loudest desires are not my deepest desires. Sometimes I mess up.

Despite that, I know God loves and forgives. He cares for me and has shouldered my sin and shame through his son Jesus' death on the cross.

As you continue reflecting on the topic this week, here are a few additional Scriptures and resources to help you along the way:

- Read the following passages about holiness and consider how important holiness is to God. Then, prayerfully apply what you learn to the topic of sexuality.



- **Exodus 3:1-15; 4:1-17**
 - **Numbers 20:1-13**
 - **2 Samuel 6:1-15**
 - **Isaiah 6:6-13**
 - **Luke 4:31-37**
- Watch a video on holiness by the Bible Project. Search for Bible Project Holiness.
 - I'd also suggest you check out an interview between Dr. Sean McDowell and Dr. Christopher Yuan on the topic of holy sexuality. You can find that discussion on YouTube.

As always, if you have any questions, comments, or concerns don't hesitate to reach out!

Grace and peace,
Emerson